

# Chapter 6 Religions



Why are all of these clothed people standing in the Ganges River? Page 204



Why is this rock important to many religions? Page 221

## KEY ISSUE 1

**Where Are Religions Distributed?**



**A World of Religions p. 183**

Only a few religions can claim the adherence of large numbers of people.

## KEY ISSUE 2

**Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?**

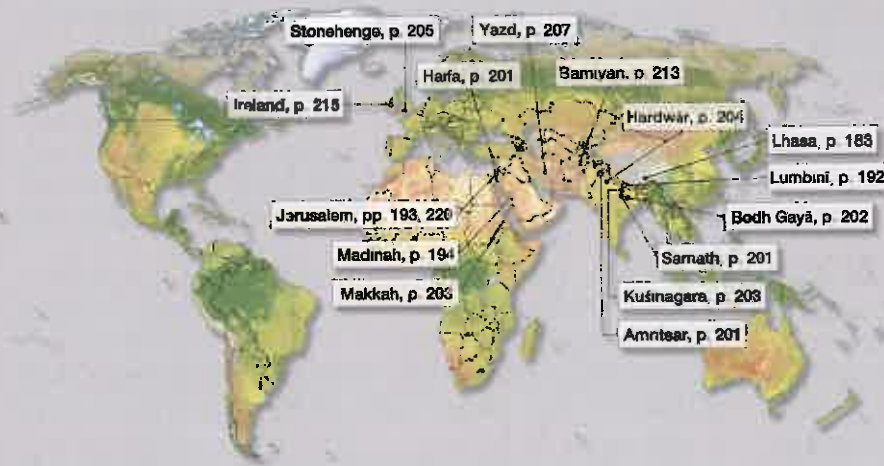


**Origin and Diffusion p. 192**

Some religions have known origins and diffusion, and some are shrouded in mystery.



▲ The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists, is as important to that religion as the Pope is to Roman Catholics. The Dalai Lama has become an articulate spokesperson for religious freedom, and in 1989 he was awarded the world's most prestigious award for peace, the Nobel Prize. Despite the efforts of the Dalai Lama and other Buddhists, though, when the current generation of priests dies, many Buddhist traditions in Tibet may be lost forever.



### KEY ISSUE 3

**Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?**



## Religions in the Environment p. 200

Religions leave their mark on the landscape in many ways.

### KEY ISSUE 4

**Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise Among Religious Groups?**



## Warring Religions p. 212

Followers of one religion often clash with followers of other religions, or with nonreligious institutions.



# Introducing Religions

Religion interests geographers because it is essential for understanding how humans occupy Earth. As always, human geographers start by asking “where?” and “why?”

Geographers document the places where various religions are located in the world and offer explanations for why some religions have widespread distributions and others are highly clustered in particular *places*. The predominant religion varies among *regions* of the world, as well as among regions within North America.

To understand why some religions occupy more *space* than others, geographers must look at differences among practices of various faiths. Geographers, though, are not theologians, so they stay focused on the elements of religions that are geographically significant. Geographers study spatial *connections* in religion:

- The distinctive place of origin of religions
- The extent of diffusion of religions from their places of origin
- The processes by which religions diffused to other locations
- The religious practices and beliefs that lead some religions to have more widespread distributions than others

Geographers find the tension in *scale* between globalization and local diversity especially acute in religion for a number of reasons:



▲ **FIGURE 6-1 MANY FAITHS** Annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Service, Trinity United Methodist Church, Austin, Texas

- People care deeply about their religion and draw from religion their core values and beliefs, an essential element of the definition of culture (Figure 6-1).
- Some religions are actually designed to appeal to people throughout the world, whereas other religions are designed to appeal primarily to people in geographically limited areas.
- Religious values are important in understanding not only how people identify themselves, as was the case with language, but also the meaningful ways they organize the landscape.
- Most (though not all) religions require exclusive adherence, so adopting a global religion usually requires turning away from a traditional local religion. In contrast, people can learn a globally important language such as English and at the same time still speak the language of their local culture.
- As with language, migrants take their religion with them to new locations, but although migrants typically learn the language of the new location, they retain their religion.

This chapter starts by describing the distribution of major religions, and then the second section explains why some religions have diffused widely and others have not. As a major facet of culture, religion leaves a strong imprint on the physical environment, discussed in the third section of the chapter.

Religion, like other cultural characteristics, can be a source of pride and a means of identification with a distinct culture. Unfortunately, intense identification with one religion can lead adherents into conflict with followers of other religions, as discussed in the fourth key issue of the chapter.

- **KEY ISSUE 1** describes *where* religions are distributed. The major world religions show patterns of globalization and local diversity. Some religions are distributed throughout the world, and in fact explicitly wish to be so distributed. Other religions are highly clustered and reflect diverse local cultural and physical conditions. Similarly, the distribution of religions varies within regions, such as Europe and North America.
- **KEY ISSUE 2** explains *why* religions have varying distributions. Some religions have well documented places of origin of origin and processes of diffusion to other regions. Other religions have unknown origins and limited diffusion.
- **KEY ISSUE 3** discusses distinctive patterns that religions have placed on the landscape. Religions have constructed places of worship and derive distinctive meaning from the physical landscape.
- **KEY ISSUE 4** examines conflicts among religions. Religious groups have fought with each other, as well as with governments. The attempt by adherents of one religion to organize Earth's surface can come in conflict with attempts by others.



## KEY ISSUE 1

# Where Are Religions Distributed?

- **Distribution of Religions**
- **Branches of Universalizing Religions**
- **Ethnic Religions**

When the Dalai Lama dies, Tibetan Buddhists believe that his spirit enters the body of a child. In 1937, a group of priests located and recognized a 2-year-old child named Tenzin Gyatso as the fourteenth Dalai Lama, the incarnation of the deceased thirteenth Dalai Lama, Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. The child was brought to Lhasa in 1939 when he was 4 and enthroned a year later. Priests trained the young Dalai Lama to assume leadership and sent him to college when he was 16. The Chapter Opener shows the fourteenth Dalai Lama at age 67.

The Dalai Lama—which translates as “oceanic teacher”—is not only the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism but was once also the head of the government of Tibet. Daily life in Tibet was traditionally dominated by Buddhist rites. As recently as the 1950s, one-fourth of all males were monks, and polygamy was encouraged among other males to produce enough children to prevent the population from declining. Figure 6-2 shows the Dalai Lama’s former palace in Tibet’s capital Lhasa, situated in the Himalayan Mountains.

▼ **FIGURE 6-2 POTALA PALACE, LHASA, TIBET** Dalai Lamas lived in the palace from 1649 until 1959, when the fourteenth Dalai Lama was forced to migrate.

China, which had ruled Tibet from 1720 until its independence in 1911, invaded the rugged, isolated country in 1950, turned it into a province named Xizang in 1951, and installed a Communist government in Tibet in 1953. The Chinese Communists sought to reduce the domination of Buddhist monks in the country’s daily life by destroying monasteries and temples. Farmers were required to join agricultural communes unsuitable for their nomadic style of raising livestock, especially yaks. After crushing a rebellion in 1959, China executed or imprisoned tens of thousands and forced another 100,000, including the Dalai Lama, to emigrate. Buddhist temples were closed and demolished, and religious artifacts and scriptures were destroyed.

In recent years, the Chinese have built new roads and power plants to help raise the low standard of living in Tibet. The Chinese argue that they have brought modern conveniences to Tibet, including paved roads, hospitals, schools, and agricultural practices. Some monasteries have been rebuilt, but no new monks are being trained. At the same time, the Chinese have secured their hold on Tibet by encouraging immigration from other parts of China. The Chinese government opposes efforts by other countries and international organizations to encourage greater autonomy for Tibet.

Why did the Chinese try to dismantle the religious institutions of a poor, remote country? At issue was the fact that the presence of strong religious feelings among the Tibetan people conflicted with the aims of the Chinese government.

The conflict between traditional Buddhism and the Chinese government is one of many examples of the impact of religion. In the modern world of global economics and culture, local religious belief continues to play a strong role in people’s lives.



# Distribution of Religions

## Learning Outcome 6.1.1

### Describe the distribution of the major religions.

Only a few religions can claim the adherence of large numbers of people. Each of these faiths has a distinctive distribution across Earth's surface.

Geographers distinguish two types of religions:

- **Universalizing religions** attempt to be global, to appeal to all people, wherever they may live in the world, not just to those of one culture or location.
- **Ethnic religions** appeal primarily to one group of people living in one place.

Statistics on the number of followers of religions can be controversial. No official count of religious membership is taken in the United States or in many other countries. Most statistics in this chapter come from Adherents.com, an organization not affiliated with any religion. According to Adherents.com, approximately 58 percent of the world's population practice a universalizing religion, 26 percent an ethnic religion, and 16 percent no religion.

The three universalizing religions with the largest numbers of adherents are Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. According to Adherents.com, there are 2.1 billion Christians, 1.5 billion Muslims, and 376 million Buddhists in the world. Each of these religions has a distinctive distribution (Figure 6-3). The next three largest universalizing religions are Sikhism (23 million adherents), Bahá'í (7 million), and Zoroastrianism (3 million).

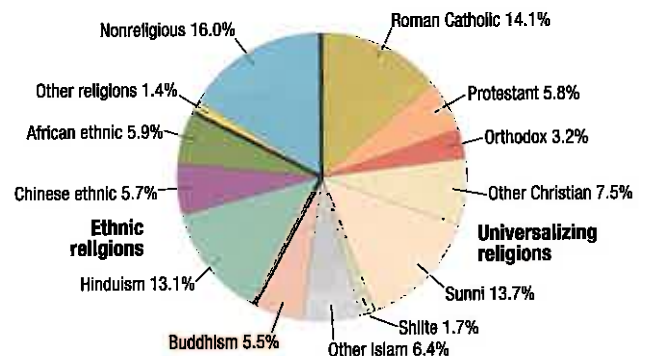
Hinduism is the ethnic religion with by far the largest number of adherents—900 million. Three other ethnic religions have at least 100 million adherents: Chinese traditional (394 million), Asian primal-indigenous (300 million), and African traditional religions (100 million). Three others—Juche, Spiritism, and Judaism—have between 14 million and 19 million adherents each.

The nonreligious category consists primarily of people who express no religious interest or preference and don't participate in any organized religious activity. Some people in this group espouse **atheism**, which is belief that God does not exist, or **agnosticism**, which is belief that nothing can be known about whether God exists. According to Adherents.com, most people in this category affirm neither belief nor lack of belief in God or some other Higher Power.

Figure 6-4 shows the worldwide percentage of people adhering to the various religions. The small pie charts in Figure 6-3 show the overall proportion of the world's religions in each world region. Table 6-1 shows the distribution of religions in the United States.

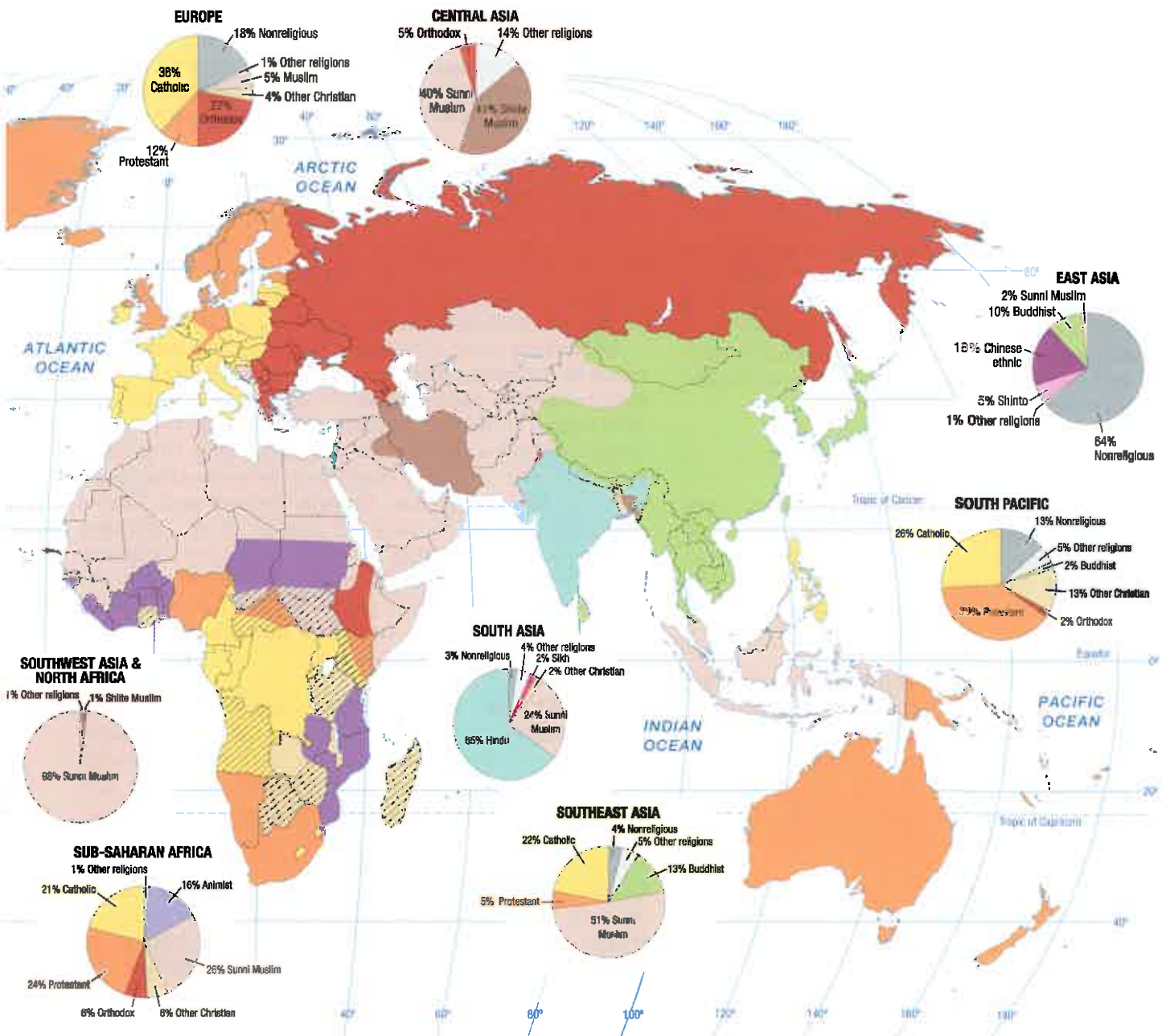


▲ **FIGURE 6-3 WORLD DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIONS** The pie charts show the share of major religions in each world region.



▲ **FIGURE 6-4 ADHERENTS OF WORLD RELIGIONS** Nonreligious includes atheists and agnostics.





**TABLE 6.1 RELIGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES**

<p><b>Nonreligious or atheist: 30 million</b>  <b>Christians: 161 million</b>                  Roman Catholics: 66 million                  Protestants: 82 million                  A Baptist church: 37 million                  A Southern Baptist Convention church: 17 million                  A National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., church: 8 million                  A National Baptist Convention of America church: 4 million                  A National Missionary Baptist Convention of America church: 3 million                  A Progressive National Baptist Convention church: 3 million                  An American Baptist Church, USA: 2 million                  Another Baptist church: 3 million</p>	<p>A Methodist church: 13 million                  A United Methodist church: 8 million                  An African Methodist Episcopal or Episcopal Zion church: 4 million                  A Pentecostal church: 11 million                  A Church of God in Christ: 6 million                  One of the Assemblies of God churches: 3 million                  One of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the world churches: 2 million                  A Lutheran church: 8 million                  An Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: 5 million                  One of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod churches: 3 million                  A Presbyterian Church U.S.A.: 4 million                  A Reformed church: 2 million                  A United Church of Christ: 1 million                  Another Reformed Church: 1 million                  An Episcopal church: 2 million</p>	<p>One of the Churches of Christ: 3 million                  A Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): 1 million                  A Seventh Day Adventist church: 1 million                  Orthodox: 3 million                  A church of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: 2 million                  Another Orthodox church: 1 million                  Other Christians: 10 million                  A Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: 6 million                  A Jehovah's Witness church: 1 million                  Other Christians: 3 million  <b>Buddhists: 1 million</b>  <b>Hindus: 1 million</b>  <b>Jews: 3 million</b>  <b>Muslims: 1 million</b>  <b>Other faiths: 6 million</b></p>
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## Branches of Universalizing Religions

### Learning Outcome 6.1.2

**Describe the distribution of the major branches of Christianity.**

The three principal universalizing religions are divided into branches, denominations, and sects. A **branch** is a large and fundamental division within a religion. A **denomination** is a division of a branch that unites a number of local congregations in a single legal and administrative body. A **sect** is a relatively small group that has broken away from an established denomination.

## CHRISTIANITY

Christianity has more than 2 billion adherents, more than any other world religion, and it also has the most widespread distribution. It is the predominant religion in North America, South America, Europe, and Australia, and countries with a Christian majority exist in Africa and Asia as well (Figure 6-5).

**BRANCHES OF CHRISTIANITY IN EUROPE.** Christianity has three major branches—Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Roman Catholics comprise 51 percent of the world's Christians, Protestants 24 percent, and Orthodox 11 percent. In addition, 14 percent of Christians belong to churches that do not consider themselves to be within any of these three branches.

In Europe, Roman Catholicism is the dominant Christian branch in the southwest and east, Protestantism in the northwest, and Orthodoxy in the east and southeast. The regions of Roman Catholic and Protestant majorities frequently have sharp boundaries, even when they

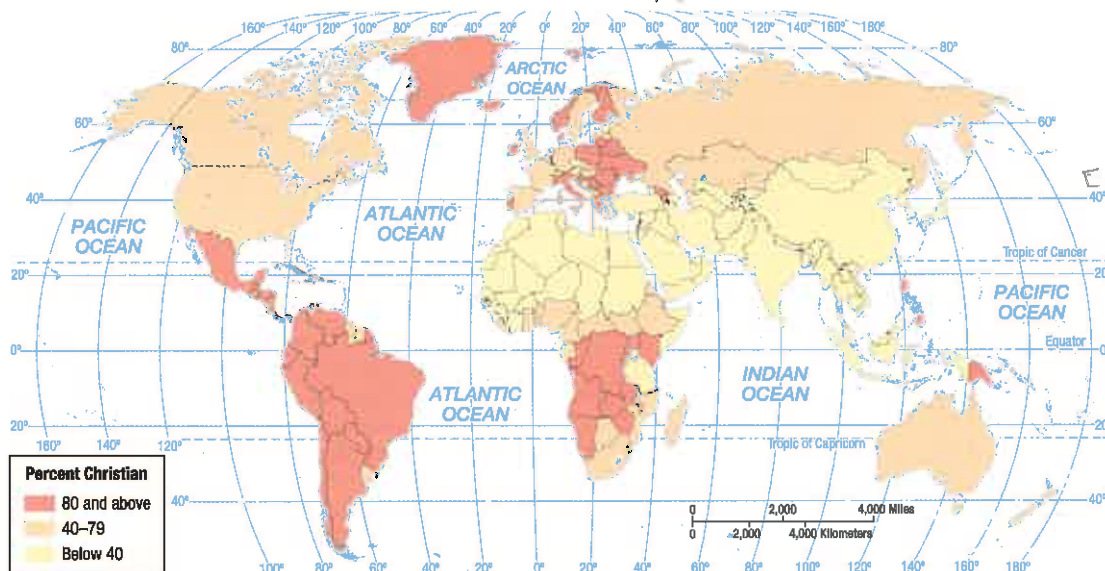
run through the middle of countries. For example, the Netherlands and Switzerland have approximately equal percentages of Roman Catholics and Protestants, but the Roman Catholic populations are concentrated in the south of these countries and the Protestant populations in the north.

The Orthodox branch of Christianity (often called Eastern Orthodox) is a collection of 14 self-governing churches in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. More than 40 percent of all Orthodox Christians belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, the largest of these 14 churches. Christianity came to Russia in the tenth century, and the Russian Orthodox Church was established in the sixteenth century.

Nine of the other 13 self-governing churches were established in the nineteenth century or twentieth century. The largest of these 9, the Romanian Church, includes 20 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians. The Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian Orthodox churches have approximately 10 percent each. The other 5 recently established Orthodox churches—those of Albania, Cyprus, Georgia, Poland, and Sinai—combined account for about 2 percent of all Orthodox Christians. The remaining 4 of the 14 Eastern Orthodox churches—those of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem—trace their origins to the earliest days of Christianity. They have a combined membership of about 3 percent of all Orthodox Christians.

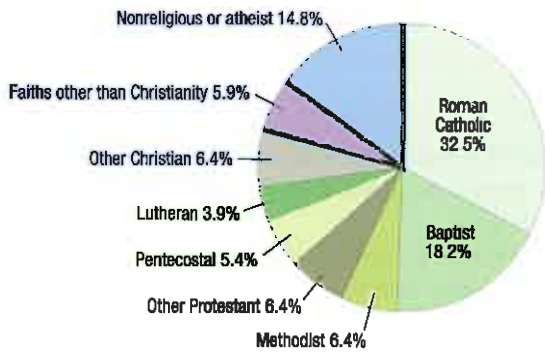
**BRANCHES OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.** The overwhelming percentage of people living in the Western Hemisphere—nearly 90 percent—are Christian. About 5 percent belong to other religions, and the remaining 6 percent profess adherence to no religion.

A fairly sharp boundary exists within the Western Hemisphere in the predominant branches of Christianity. Roman Catholics comprise 93 percent of Christians in Latin America, compared with 40 percent in North America. Within North America, Roman Catholics are clustered in the southwestern and northeastern United States and the Canadian province of Québec.



◀ **FIGURE 6-5 DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIANS** At least 80 percent of the population adheres to Christianity in Europe, the Western Hemisphere, the South Pacific, and selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa.





**▲ FIGURE 6-6 PERCENTAGE OF FAITHS IN THE UNITED STATES**  
Approximately 6 percent of the U.S. population adhere to a religion other than Christianity, and 15 percent adhere to no religion.

Protestant churches have approximately 82 million members, or about 28 percent of the U.S. population over age five (Figure 6-6). Baptist churches have the largest number of adherents in the United States, about 37 million combined over age five (refer to Table 6-1). Membership in some Protestant churches varies by region of the United States. Baptists, for example, are highly clustered in the southeast, and Lutherans in the upper Midwest. Other Christian denominations are more evenly distributed around the country (Figure 6-7).

**OTHER CHRISTIANS.** Several other Christian churches developed independently of the three main branches. Many of these Christian communities were isolated from others at an early point in the development of Christianity, partly because of differences in doctrine and partly as a result of Islamic control of intervening territory in Southwest Asia and North Africa.

Two small Christian churches survive in northeast Africa—the Coptic Church of Egypt and the Ethiopian Church. The Ethiopian Church, with perhaps 10 million

adherents, split from the Egyptian Coptic Church in 1948, although it traces its roots to the fourth century, when two shipwrecked Christians, who were taken as slaves, ultimately converted the Ethiopian king to Christianity.

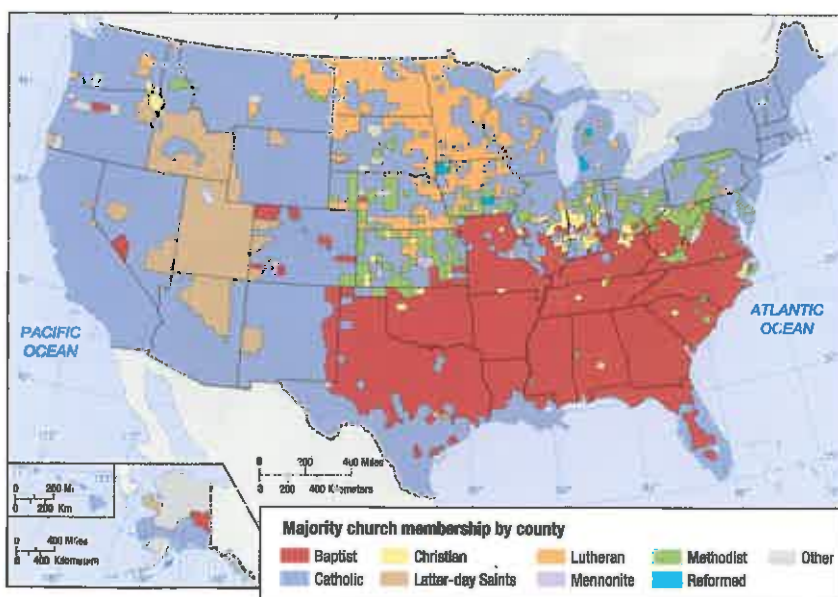
The Armenian Church originated in Antioch, Syria, and was important in diffusing Christianity to South Asia and East Asia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The church's few present-day adherents are concentrated in Lebanon and Armenia, as well as in northeastern Turkey and western Azerbaijan. Despite the small number of adherents, the Armenian Church, like other small sects, plays a significant role in regional conflicts. For example, Armenian Christians have fought for the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh, a portion of Azerbaijan, because Nagorno-Karabakh is predominantly Armenian, whereas the remainder of Azerbaijan is overwhelmingly Shiite Muslim (see Chapter 7).

The Maronites are another example of a small Christian sect that plays a disproportionately prominent role in political unrest. They are clustered in Lebanon, which has suffered through a long civil war fought among religious groups (see Chapter 7).

In the United States, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) regard their church as a branch of Christianity separate from other branches. About 3 percent of Americans are members of the Latter-day Saints, and a large percentage is clustered in Utah and surrounding states.

### Pause and Reflect 6.1.2

Based on what you see in Figure 6-6 or Table 6-1, what are some of the largest Christian denominations in the United States that do not have highly clustered distributions in Figure 6-7?



**◀ FIGURE 6-7**

**DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE UNITED STATES** The shaded areas are U.S. counties in which more than 50 percent of church membership is concentrated in either Roman Catholicism or one Protestant denomination. The distinctive distribution of religious groups within the United States results from patterns of migration, especially from Europe in the nineteenth century and from Latin America in recent years.



## ISLAM

### Learning Outcome 6.1.3

#### Identify the major branches of Islam and Buddhism.

Islam, the religion of 1.5 billion people, is the predominant religion of the Middle East from North Africa to Central Asia (Figure 6-8). Half of the world's Muslims live in four countries outside the Middle East—Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

The word *Islam* in Arabic means “submission to the will of God,” and it has a similar root to the Arabic word for *peace*. An adherent of the religion of Islam is known as a *Muslim*, which in Arabic means “one who surrenders to God.”

**BRANCHES OF ISLAM.** Islam is divided into two important branches:

- **Sunni.** The word *Sunni* comes from the Arabic for “people following the example of Muhammad.” Sunnis comprise 83 percent of Muslims and are the largest branch in most Muslim countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa.
- **Shiite.** The word *Shiite* comes from the Arabic word for “sectarian.” Shiites (sometimes called Shias in English) comprise 16 percent of Muslims, clustered in a handful of countries. Nearly 30 percent of all Shiites live in Iran, 15 percent in Pakistan, and 10 percent in Iraq. Shiites comprise nearly 90 percent of the population in

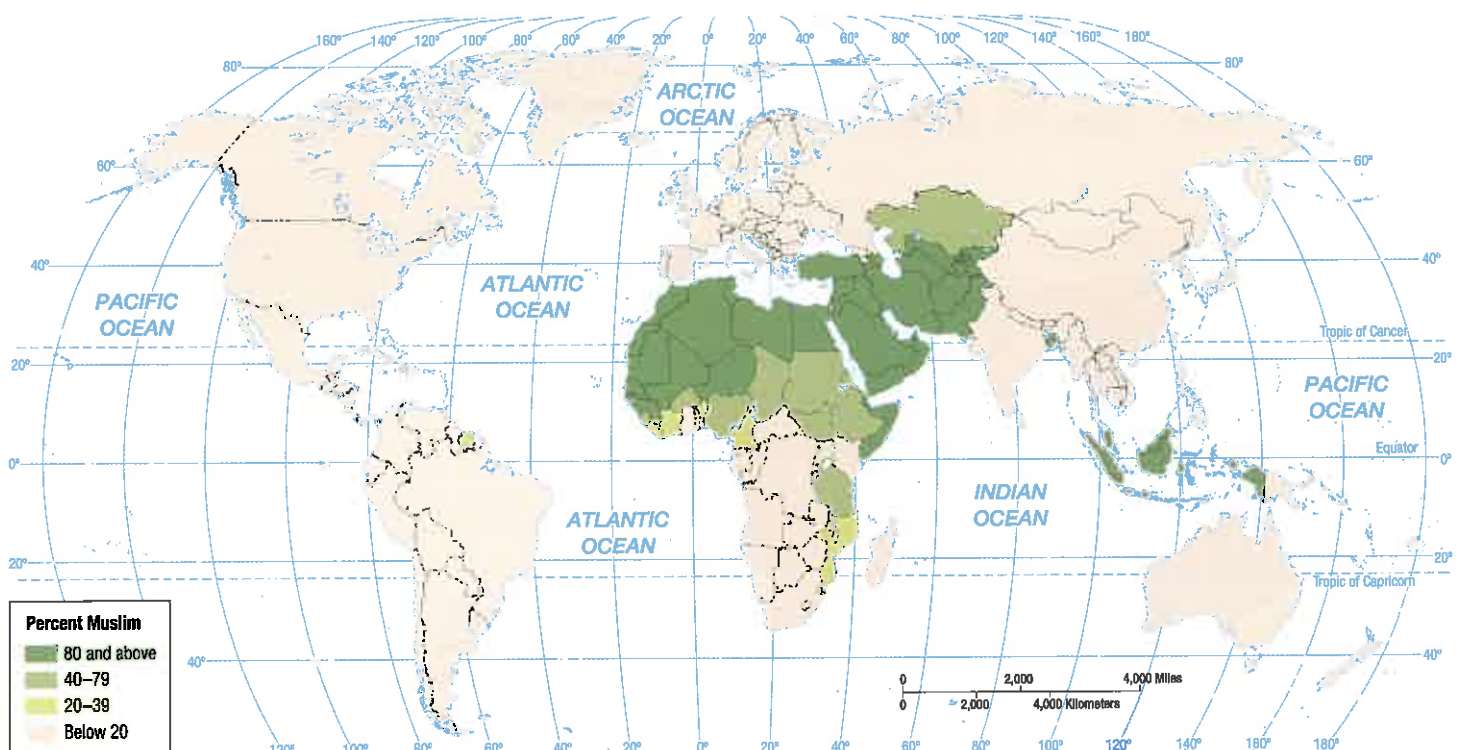
Iran and more than half of the population in Azerbaijan, Iraq, and the less populous countries of Oman and Bahrain.

**ISLAM IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA.** The Muslim population of North America and Europe has increased rapidly in recent years.

In Europe, Muslims account for 5 percent of the population. France has the largest Muslim population, about 4 million, a legacy of immigration from predominantly Muslim former colonies in North Africa. Germany has about 3 million Muslims, also a legacy of immigration, in Germany's case primarily from Turkey. In Southeast Europe, Albania, Bosnia, and Serbia each have about 2 million Muslims.

Estimates of the number of Muslims in North America vary widely, from 1 million to 5 million, but in any event, the number has increased dramatically from only a few hundred thousand in 1990. Muslims in the United States come from a variety of backgrounds. According to the U.S. State Department, approximately one-third of U.S. Muslims trace their ancestry to Pakistan and other South Asian countries and one-fourth from Arab countries of Southwest Asia and North Africa. Many of these Muslims immigrated to the United States during the 1990s. Another one-fourth are African Americans, who have converted to Islam.

Islam also has a presence in the United States through the Nation of Islam, also known as Black Muslims, founded in Detroit in 1930 and led for more than 40 years by Elijah Muhammad, who called himself “the messenger of Allah.”



▲ **FIGURE 6-8 DISTRIBUTION OF MUSLIMS** At least 80 percent of the population adheres to Islam in Southwest Asia & North Africa and selected countries in Southeast Asia.

Black Muslims lived austere and advocated a separate autonomous nation within the United States for their adherents. Tension between Muhammad and a Black Muslim minister, Malcolm X, divided the sect during the 1960s. After a pilgrimage to Makkah in 1963, Malcolm X converted to orthodox Islam and founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity. He was assassinated in 1965. After Muhammad's death, in 1975, his son Wallace D. Muhammad led the Black Muslims closer to the principles of orthodox Islam, and the organization's name was changed to the American Muslim Mission. A splinter group adopted the original name, Nation of Islam, and continues to follow the separatist teachings of Elijah Muhammad.

## BUDDHISM

Buddhism, the third of the world's major universalizing religions, is clustered primarily in East Asia and Southeast Asia. Like the other two universalizing religions, Buddhism split into more than one branch, as followers disagreed on interpreting statements by the founder, Siddhartha Gautama. The three main branches are (Figure 6-9):

- **Mahayana.** Mahayanists account for about 56 percent of Buddhists, primarily in China, Japan, and Korea.
- **Theravada.** Theravadists comprise about 38 percent of Buddhists, especially in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- **Vajrayana.** Vajrayanists, also known as Lamaists and Tantrayanists, comprise about 6 percent and are found primarily in Tibet and Mongolia.

An accurate count of Buddhists is especially difficult because only a few people participate in Buddhist institutions. Religious functions are performed primarily by monks rather than by the general public. The number of



▲ FIGURE 6-9 DISTRIBUTION OF BUDDHISTS AND SIKHS

At least 40 percent of the population adheres to Buddhism in East Asia and Southeast Asia. At least 40 percent of the population adheres to Sikhism in northwestern India.

Buddhists is also difficult to count because Buddhism, although a universalizing religion, differs in significant respects from the Western concept of a formal religious system. Someone can be both a Buddhist and a believer in other Eastern religions, whereas Christianity and Islam both require exclusive adherence. Most Buddhists in China and Japan, in particular, believe at the same time in an ethnic religion.

## OTHER UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS

Sikhism and Bahá'í are the two universalizing religions other than Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism that have the largest numbers of adherents. There are an estimated 23 million Sikhs and 7 million Bahá'ís. All but 3 million Sikhs are clustered in the Punjab region of India. Bahá'ís are dispersed among many countries, primarily in Africa and Asia.

Sikhism's first guru (religious teacher or enlightener) was Nanak (1469–1538), who lived in a village near the city of Lahore, in present-day Pakistan. God was revealed to Guru Nanak as The One Supreme Being, or Creator, who rules the universe by divine will. Only God is perfect, but people have the capacity for continual improvement and movement toward perfection by taking individual responsibility for their deeds and actions on Earth, such as heartfelt adoration, devotion, and surrender to the one God. Sikhism's most important ceremony, introduced by the tenth guru, Gobind Singh (1666–1708), is the Amrit (or Baptism), in which Sikhs declare they will uphold the principles of the faith. Gobind Singh also introduced the practice of men wearing turbans on their heads and never cutting their beards or hair. Wearing a uniform gave Sikhs a disciplined outlook and a sense of unity of purpose.

The Bahá'í religion is even more recent than Sikhism. It grew out of the Bábí faith, which was founded in Shiráz, Iran, in 1844 by Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad, known as the Báb (Persian for "gateway"). Bahá'ís believe that one of the Báb's disciples, Husayn 'Ali Nuri, known as Bahá'u'lláh (Arabic for "Glory of God"), was the prophet and messenger of God. Bahá'u'lláh's function was to overcome the disunity of religions and establish a universal faith through abolition of racial, class, and religious prejudices.

### Pause and Reflect 6.1.3

Refer to the small pie charts in Figure 6-3. Which regions have enough adherents of each of the three universalizing religions so that all three appear on the pie charts?



## Ethnic Religions

### Learning Outcome 6.1.4

**Describe the distribution of the largest ethnic religions.**

In contrast to universalizing religions, which often spread from one culture to another, ethnic religions tend to remain within the culture where they originated. Ethnic religions typically have much more clustered distributions than do universalizing religions. The ethnic religion with by far the largest number of followers is Hinduism. Ethnic religions in Asia and Africa comprise most of the remainder.

### HINDUISM

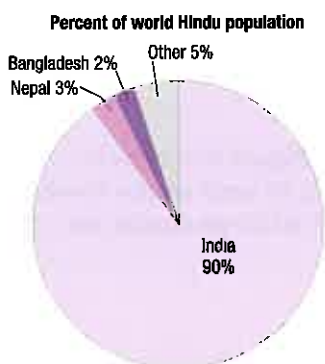
Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, with 900 million adherents, but 90 percent of Hindus are concentrated in one country, India, and most of the remainder can be found in India's neighbors Bangladesh and Nepal. Hindus comprise more than 80 percent of the population of India and Nepal, about 9 percent in Bangladesh, and a small minority in every other country (Figure 6-10).

The average Hindu has allegiance to a particular god or concept within a broad range of possibilities. The manifestation of God with the largest number of adherents—an estimated 80 percent—is Vaishnavism, which worships the god Vishnu, a loving god incarnated as Krishna. The second-largest is Sivaism, dedicated to Siva, a protective and destructive god.

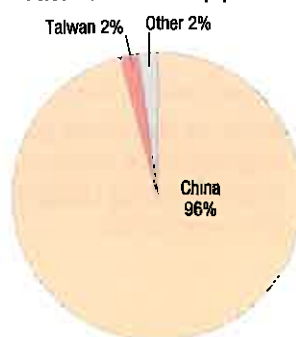
### OTHER ASIAN ETHNIC RELIGIONS

Three religions based in East Asia and Southeast Asia show the difficulty of classifying ethnic religions and counting adherents. Chinese traditional religions are **syncretic**, which means they combine several traditions. Primal-indigenous religions are especially difficult to document

▼ **FIGURE 6-10**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF HINDUS** All but 10 percent of the world's Hindus live in India.



► **FIGURE 6-11**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF TAOISTS** All but 4 percent of the world's Taoists live in China.



because they are based on oral traditions rather than writing. Juchte is classified as a religion by Adherents.com but not by other sources.

**CHINESE TRADITIONAL.** Adherents.com considers Chinese traditional religion to be a combination of Buddhism (a universalizing religion) with Confucianism, Taoism, and other traditional Chinese practices. Most Chinese who consider themselves religious blend together the religious cultures of these multiple traditions:

- **Confucianism.** Confucius (551–479 B.C.) was a philosopher and teacher in the Chinese province of Lu. His sayings, which were recorded by his students, emphasized the importance of the ancient Chinese tradition of *li*, which can be translated roughly as “propriety” or “correct behavior.” Confucianism prescribed a series of ethical principles for the orderly conduct of daily life in China, such as following traditions, fulfilling obligations, and treating others with sympathy and respect. These rules applied to China’s rulers as well as to their subjects.
- **Taoism.** Lao-Zi (604–531? B.C., also spelled Lao Tse) organized Taoism. Although a government administrator by profession, Lao-Zi’s writings emphasized the mystical and magical aspects of life rather than the importance of public service, which Confucius had emphasized. Tao, which means “the way” or “the path,” cannot be comprehended by reason and knowledge because not everything is knowable. (Figure 6-11).

Commingling of diverse philosophies is not totally foreign to Americans. The tenets of a religion such as Christianity, the wisdom of the ancient Greek philosophers, and the ideals of the Declaration of Independence can all be held dear without doing grave injustice to the others.

### Pause and Reflect 6.1.4

**Referring to Table 6-1, which ethnic religions have at least 1 million adherents in the United States?**

**PRIMAL-INDIGENOUS.** Several hundred million people practice what Adherents.com has grouped into the category primal-indigenous religions. Most of these people reside in Southeast Asia or South Pacific islands.

Relatively little is known about primal-indigenous religions because written documents have not come down from ancestors. Religious rituals are passed from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Followers of primal-indigenous religions believe that because God dwells within all things, everything in nature is spiritual. Narratives concerning nature are specific to the physical landscape where they are told.

Included in this group are Shamanism and Paganism. According to Shamans, invisible forces or spirits affect the lives of the living. **Pagan** used to refer to the practices of ancient peoples, such as the Greeks and Romans, who had multiple gods with human forms. The term is currently used to refer to beliefs that originated with religions that predated Christianity and Islam.

**JUCHTE.** Most North Koreans are classified by Adherents.com as following Juchte, which is a Korean word meaning “self-reliance.” Juchte was organized by Kim Il-sung, the leader of North Korea between 1948 and his death in 1994. Rather than a religion, Juchte is widely regarded as a government ideology or philosophy.

## OTHER ETHNIC RELIGIONS

Outside Asia, the principal ethnic religions are African. Spiritism and Judaism are other ethnic religions that have at least 10 million adherents worldwide.

**AFRICAN TRADITIONAL.** Approximately 100 million Africans, 12 percent of the continent’s people, follow traditional ethnic religions sometimes called **animism**. Animists believe that inanimate objects such as plants and stones, or natural events such as thunderstorms and earthquakes, are “animated,” or have discrete spirits and conscious life.

African animist religions are apparently based on monotheistic concepts, although below the supreme god there is a hierarchy of divinities. These divinities may be assistants to the supreme god or personifications of natural phenomena, such as trees or rivers.

Africa is 46 percent Christian—split about evenly among Roman Catholic, Protestant, and other—and another 40 percent are Muslims (Figure 6-12). The growth in the two universalizing refer to at the expense of ethnic religions reflects fundamental geographic differences between the two types of religions, discussed in the next key issue.

**SPIRITISM.** Spiritism is the belief that the human personality continues to exist after death and can communicate with the living through the agency of a medium or psychic. Most Spiritists reside in Brazil.

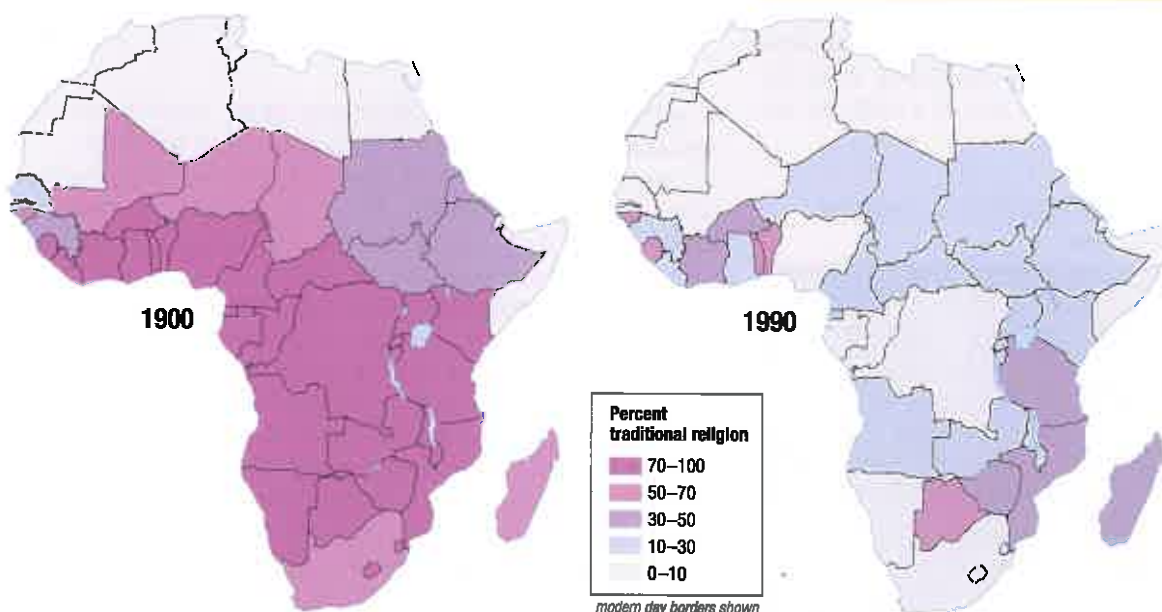
**JUDAISM.** Roughly two-fifths of the world’s 14 million Jews live in the United States and another two-fifths in Israel. The name *Judaism* derives from Judah, one of the patriarch Jacob’s 12 sons; Israel is another biblical name for Jacob. The Bible recounts the ancient history of the Jewish people. Judaism plays a more substantial role in Western civilization than its number of adherents would suggest:

- Judaism is the first recorded religion to espouse **monotheism**, belief that there is only one God. Fundamental to Judaism is belief in one all-powerful God. Judaism offered a sharp contrast to the **polytheism** practiced by neighboring people, who worshipped a collection of gods.
- Two of the three main universalizing religions—Christianity and Islam—find some of their roots in Judaism. About 4,000 years ago Abraham, considered the patriarch or father of Judaism, migrated from present-day Iraq to present-day Israel, along a route known as the Fertile Crescent (see discussion of the Fertile Crescent in Chapter 8 and Figure 8-10). About 2,000 years after Abraham, Jesus was born a Jew, and about 500 years after Jesus Muhammad traced his ancestry to Abraham.

### CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 1

#### Where Are Religions Distributed?

- ✓ Religions can be classified into universalizing and ethnic.
- ✓ The three largest universalizing religions are Christianity, which is found primarily in Europe, North America, and Latin America; Islam, which is found primarily in Southeast, Central, and Southwest Asia, as well as North Africa; and Buddhism, which is found primarily in East Asia.
- ✓ The largest ethnic religion is Hinduism, which is found primarily in South Asia.



◀ **FIGURE 6-12**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS** The percentage of animists in sub-Saharan Africa has declined from more than 70 percent in 1900 to around 12 percent in 2010. As recently as 1980, some 200 million Africans—half the population of the region at the time—were classified as animists. Followers of traditional African religions now constitute a clear majority of the population only in Botswana. The rapid decline in animists in Africa has been caused by increases in the numbers of Christians and Muslims.



## KEY ISSUE 2

# Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- Origin of Religions
- Diffusion of Religions

### Learning Outcome 6.2.1

Describe the origin of universalizing religions.

We can identify several major geographic differences between universalizing and ethnic religions. These differences include the locations where the religions originated, the processes by which they diffused from their place of origin to other regions, the types of places that are considered holy, the calendar dates identified as important holidays, and attitudes toward modifying the physical environment.

## Origin of Religions

Universalizing religions have precise places of origin based on events in the life of a man. Ethnic religions have unknown or unclear origins, not tied to single historical individuals.

Each of the three universalizing religions can be traced to the actions and teachings of a man who lived since the start of recorded history. The beginnings of Buddhism go back about 2,500 years, Christianity 2,000 years, and Islam 1,500 years. Specific events also led to the division of the universalizing religions into branches.

### ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM

The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, was born about 563 B.C. in Lumbinī in present-day Nepal, near the border with India (Figure 6-13). The son of a lord, he led

▼ **FIGURE 6-13 ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM** Ruins of shrines constructed around Buddha's birthplace in Lumbinī, Nepal.



## CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC TOOLS

# Counting Religious Adherents

An accurate count of the number of adherents to various religions, branches, denominations, and sects is impossible in the United States because the census does not ask questions about religion. Other countries do ask about religion.

In Canada, for example, the census asks:

“What is this person’s religion? Indicate a specific denomination or religion even if this person is not currently a practising member of that group. For example, Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, United Church, Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Islam, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, etc.”

- Specify one denomination or religion only \_\_\_\_\_
- No religion

Critics charged that including the phrase “even if this person is not currently a practising member” inflated the number of people who were thought to be religious in Canada.

Nonetheless, an analysis of recent census data by mathematicians showed that the fastest-growing response to census questions about religion in a number of countries is “unaffiliated.” When they extrapolated the growth of “unaffiliated” into the future, the mathematicians concluded that religion would become extinct during the twenty-first century in nine countries: Australia, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

a privileged existence, sheltered from life’s hardships. Gautama had a beautiful wife, palaces, and servants.

According to Buddhist legend, Gautama’s life changed after a series of four trips. He encountered a decrepit old man on the first trip, a disease-ridden man on the second trip, and a corpse on the third trip. After witnessing these scenes of pain and suffering, Gautama began to feel he could no longer enjoy his life of comfort and security. Then, on a fourth trip, Gautama saw a monk, who taught him about withdrawal from the world.

At age 29 Gautama left his palace one night and lived in a forest for the next 6 years, thinking and experimenting with forms of meditation. Gautama emerged as the Buddha, the “awakened or enlightened one,” and spent 45 years preaching his views across India. In the process, he trained monks, established orders, and preached to the public.

The foundation of Buddhism is represented by these concepts, known as the Four Noble Truths:

1. All living beings must endure suffering.
2. Suffering, which is caused by a desire to live, leads to reincarnation (repeated rebirth in new bodies or forms of life).
3. The goal of all existence is to escape suffering and the endless cycle of reincarnation into Nirvana (a state of complete redemption), which is achieved through mental and moral self-purification.
4. Nirvana is attained through an Eightfold Path, which includes rightness of belief, resolve, speech, action, livelihood, effort, thought, and meditation.

**THERAVADA BUDDHISM.** Theravada is the older of the two largest branches of Buddhism. The word means “the way of the elders,” indicating the Theravada Buddhists’ belief that they are closer to Buddha’s original approach. Theravadists believe that Buddhism is a full-time occupation, so to become a good Buddhist, one must renounce worldly goods and become a monk.

**MAHAYANA BUDDHISM.** Mahayana split from Theravada Buddhism about 2,000 years ago. *Mahayana* is translated as the great vehicle, and Mahayanists call Theravada Buddhism by the name *Hinayana*, or the inferior vehicle. Mahayanists claim that their approach to Buddhism can help more people because it is less demanding and all-encompassing. Theravadists emphasize Buddha’s life of self-help and years of solitary introspection, and Mahayanists emphasize Buddha’s later years of teaching and helping others. Theravadists cite Buddha’s wisdom and Mahayanists his compassion.

**VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM.** Vajrayanas emphasize the practice of rituals, known as Tantras, which have been recorded in texts. Vajrayanas believe that Buddha began to practice Tantras during his lifetime, although other Buddhists regard Vajrayana as an approach to Buddhism that evolved from Mahayana Buddhism several centuries later.

## ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity was founded upon the teachings of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem between 8 and 4 B.C. and died on a cross in Jerusalem about A.D. 30. Raised as a Jew, Jesus gathered a small band of disciples and preached the coming of the Kingdom of God. The four Gospels of the Christian Bible—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—document miracles and extraordinary deeds that Jesus performed. He was referred to as Christ, from the Greek word for the Hebrew word *messiah*, which means “anointed.”

In the third year of his mission, Jesus was betrayed to the authorities by one of his companions, Judas Iscariot. After sharing the Last Supper (the Jewish Passover Seder) with his disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus was arrested and put to death as an agitator. On the third day after his death, his tomb was found empty (Figure 6-14). Christians believe



▲ **FIGURE 6-14 ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY** This tomb in the center of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was erected on the site where Jesus is thought to have been buried and resurrected.

that Jesus died to atone for human sins, that he was raised from the dead by God, and that his Resurrection from the dead provides people with hope for salvation.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC BRANCH.** Roman Catholics accept the teachings of the Bible, as well as the interpretation of those teachings by the Church hierarchy, headed by the Pope. Roman Catholics recognize the Pope as possessing a universal primacy or authority, and they believe that the Church is infallible in resolving theological disputes. According to Roman Catholic belief, God conveys His grace directly to humanity through seven sacraments: Baptism, the Eucharist (the partaking of bread and wine that repeats the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper), Penance, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Anointing the Sick.

**ORTHODOX BRANCH.** Orthodoxy comprises the faith and practices of a collection of churches that arose in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. The split between the Roman and Eastern churches dates to the fifth century, as a result of rivalry between the Pope of Rome and the Patriarchy of Constantinople, which was especially intense after the collapse of the Roman Empire. The split between the two churches became final in 1054, when Pope Leo IX condemned the Patriarch of Constantinople. Orthodox Christians accept the seven sacraments but reject doctrines that the Roman Catholic Church added since the eighth century.

**PROTESTANT BRANCH.** Protestantism originated with the principles of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The Reformation movement is regarded as beginning when Martin Luther (1483–1546) posted 95 theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. According to Luther, individuals have primary responsibility for achieving personal salvation through direct communication with God. Grace is achieved through faith rather than through sacraments performed by the Church.



## ORIGIN OF ISLAM

### Learning Outcome 6.2.2

#### Understand differences in the origin of universalizing and ethnic religions.

Like other universalizing religions, Islam arose from the teachings of a historical founder. The core of Islamic belief involves performing five acts, known as five pillars of faith:

1. *Shahadah*, which means frequent recitation that there is no god worthy of worship except the one God, the source of all creation, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.
2. *Salat*, which means that five times daily, a Muslim prays, facing the city of Makkah (Mecca), as a direct link to God.
3. *Zakat*, which means that a Muslim gives generously to charity as an act of purification and growth.
4. *Sawm of Ramadan*, which means that a Muslim fasts during the month of Ramadan as an act of self-purification.
5. *Haji*, which means that if physically and financially able, a Muslim makes a pilgrimage to Makkah.

Islam traces its origin to the same narrative as Judaism and Christianity. All three religions consider Adam to have been the first man and Abraham to have been one of his descendants. According to the biblical narrative:

- Abraham married Sarah, who did not bear children; as polygamy was a custom of the culture, Abraham then married Hagar, who bore a son, Ishmael.
- Sarah's fortunes changed, and she bore a son, Isaac.
- Jews and Christians trace their story through Abraham's original wife Sarah and her son Isaac.
- Muslims trace their story through his second wife, Hagar, and her son Ishmael; the Islamic tradition tells that Abraham brought Hagar and Ishmael to Makkah (spelled Mecca on many English-language maps), in present-day Saudi Arabia.
- Centuries later, one of Ishmael's descendants, Muhammad, became the Prophet of Islam.

**PROPHET MUHAMMAD.** Muhammad was born in Makkah about 570. At age 40, while engaged in a meditative retreat, Muhammad received his first revelation from God through the Angel Gabriel. The Quran, the holiest book in Islam, is a record of God's words, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through Gabriel. Arabic is the lingua franca, or language of communication, within the Muslim world, because it is the language in which the Quran is written.

As he began to preach the truth that God had revealed to him, Muhammad suffered persecution, and in 622 he was commanded by God to emigrate. His migration from Makkah to the city of Yathrib—an event known as the *Hijra* (from the Arabic word for “migration,”



▲ **FIGURE 6-15 ORIGIN OF ISLAM** Muhammad is buried under the green dome in the Mosque of the Prophet in Madinah, Saudi Arabia. The mosque, built on the site of Muhammad's house, is the second holiest in Islam and the second largest mosque in the world.

sometimes spelled *hegira*)—marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Yathrib was subsequently renamed Madinah, Arabic for “the City of the Prophet” (Figure 6-15). After several years, Muhammad and his followers returned to Makkah and established Islam as the city's religion. By Muhammad's death, in 632 at about age 63, Islam had spread through most of present-day Saudi Arabia.

**SHIITES VERSUS SUNNIS.** Differences between the two main branches of Islam—Shiites and Sunnis—go back to the earliest days of the religion and basically reflect disagreement over the line of succession in Islamic leadership. Muhammad had no surviving son and no follower of comparable leadership ability. His successor was his father-in-law, Abu Bakr (573–634), an early supporter from Makkah, who became known as *caliph* (“successor of the prophet”). The next two caliphs, Umar (634–644) and Uthman (644–656), expanded the territory under Muslim influence to Egypt and Persia.

Uthman was a member of a powerful Makkah clan that had initially opposed Muhammad before the clan's conversion to Islam. The more ardent converts criticized Uthman for seeking compromises with other formerly pagan families in Makkah. Uthman's opponents found a leader in Ali (600?–661), a cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, and thus Muhammad's nearest male heir. When Uthman was murdered, in 656, Ali became caliph, although five years later he, too, was assassinated (Figure 6-16).

Ali's descendants claim leadership of Islam, and Shiites support this claim. But Shiites disagree among themselves about the precise line of succession from Ali to modern times. They acknowledge that the chain of leadership was broken, but they dispute the date and events surrounding the disruption.

During the 1970s both the shah (king) of Iran and an ayatollah (religious scholar) named Khomeini claimed to be the divinely appointed interpreter of Islam for the

Shiites. The allegiance of the Iranian Shiites switched from the shah to the ayatollah largely because the ayatollah made a more convincing case that he was more faithfully adhering to the rigid laws laid down by Muhammad in the Quran.

## ORIGIN OF OTHER UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS

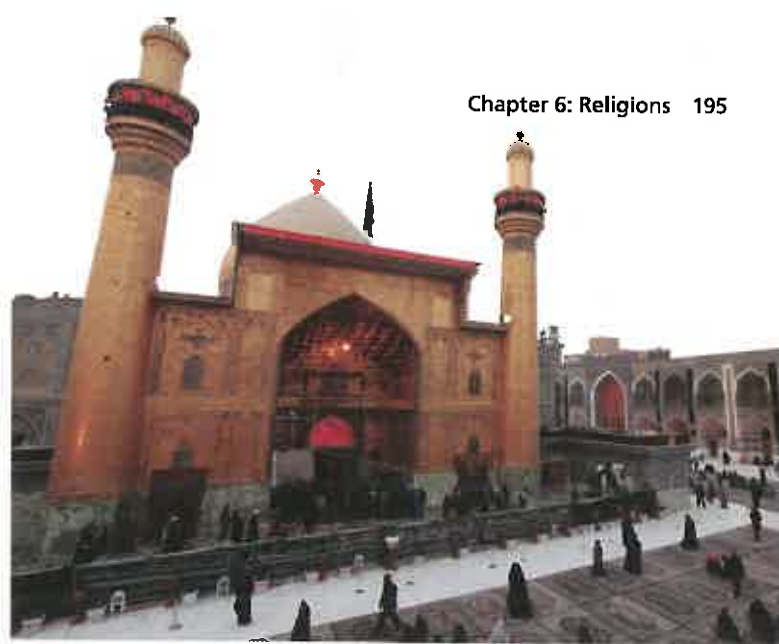
Sikhism and Bahá'í were founded more recently than the three large universalizing religions. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, traveled widely through South Asia around 500 years ago, preaching his new faith, and many people became his *Sikhs*, which is the Hindi word for “disciples.” Nine other gurus succeeded Guru Nanak. Arjan, the fifth guru, compiled and edited in 1604 the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Holy Granth of Enlightenment), which became the book of Sikh holy scriptures.

When it was established in Iran during the nineteenth century, Bahá'í provoked strong opposition from Shiite Muslims. The Báb was executed in 1850, as were 20,000 of his followers. Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet of Bahá'í, was also arrested but was released in 1853 and exiled to Baghdad. In 1863, his claim that he was the messenger of God anticipated by the Báb was accepted by other followers. Before he died in 1892, Bahá'u'lláh appointed his eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844–1921) to be the leader of the Bahá'í community and the authorized interpreter of his teachings.

## UNKNOWN ORIGIN OF HINDUISM

Unlike the universalizing religions, Hinduism did not originate with a specific founder. The origins of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism are recorded in the relatively recent past, but Hinduism existed prior to recorded history.

The word *Hinduism* originated in the sixth century B.C. to refer to people living in what is now India. The earliest



▲ **FIGURE 6-16 ORIGIN OF SHIITE ISLAM** The shrine of Imam Ali, in Najaf, Iran, contains the tomb of Ali, from whom traces the Shiite branch of Islam.

surviving Hindu documents were written around 1500 B.C., although archaeological explorations have unearthed objects relating to the religion from 2500 B.C. Aryan tribes from Central Asia invaded India about 1400 B.C. and brought with them Indo-European languages, as discussed in Chapter 5. In addition to their language, the Aryans brought their religion. The Aryans first settled in the area now called the Punjab in northwestern India and later migrated east to the Ganges River valley, as far as Bengal. Centuries of intermingling with the Dravidians already living in the area modified their religious beliefs (Figure 6-17).

### Pause and Reflect 6.2.2

**What is the significance of Abraham in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?**

### ◀ **FIGURE 6-17 ORIGIN OF HINDUISM**

Mount Kailās (also spelled Kailash) in Tibet is a place of eternal bliss in Hinduism, as well as several other religions. Because of its importance, no human in recorded history has ever climbed to its summit. Hindus believe that this mountain is home of Lord Siva (also spelled Shiva), who is the destroyer of evil and sorrow.





## Diffusion of Religions

### Learning Outcome 6.2.3

Describe the process of diffusion of universalizing religions.

The universalizing religions diffused from specific hearths, or places of origin, to other regions of the world. In contrast, most ethnic religions typically remain clustered in one location.

The hearths where each of the three largest universalizing religions originated are based on the events in the lives of the three key individuals. All three hearths are in Asia (Christianity and Islam in Southwest Asia, Buddhism in South Asia). Followers transmitted the messages preached in the hearths to people elsewhere, diffusing them across Earth's surface along distinctive paths, as shown in Figure 6-18.

### DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity's diffusion has been rather clearly recorded since Jesus first set forth its tenets in the Roman province of Palestine. Consequently, geographers can examine its diffusion by reconstructing patterns of communications, interaction, and migration.

In Chapter 1 two processes of diffusion were identified—relocation (diffusion through migration) and

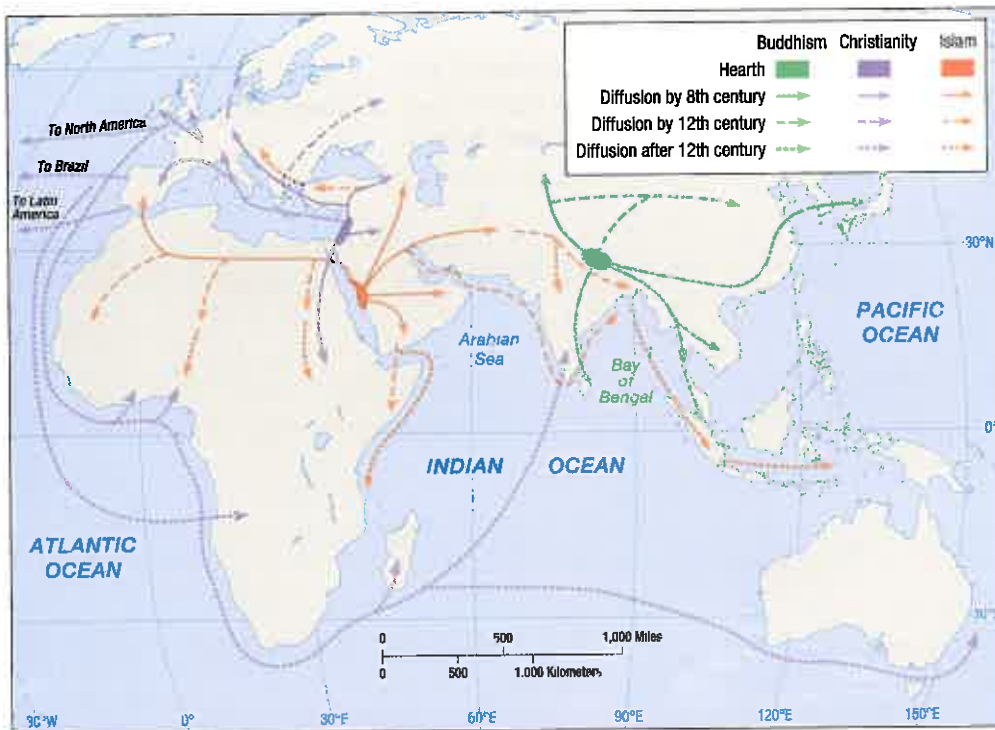
expansion (diffusion through a snowballing effect). Within expansion diffusion, we distinguished between hierarchical diffusion (diffusion through key leaders) and contagious diffusion (widespread diffusion). Christianity diffused through a combination of these forms of diffusion.

**HIERARCHICAL DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY.** The dominance of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire was assured during the fourth century through hierarchical diffusion—acceptance of the religion by the empire's key elite figure, the emperor. Emperor Constantine (274?–337) encouraged the spread of Christianity by embracing it in 313, and Emperor Theodosius proclaimed it the empire's official religion in 380. In subsequent centuries, Christianity further diffused into Eastern Europe through conversion of kings or other elite figures (Figure 6-19). Latin Americans are predominantly Roman Catholic because their territory was colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese, who brought with them to the Western Hemisphere their religion as well as their languages.

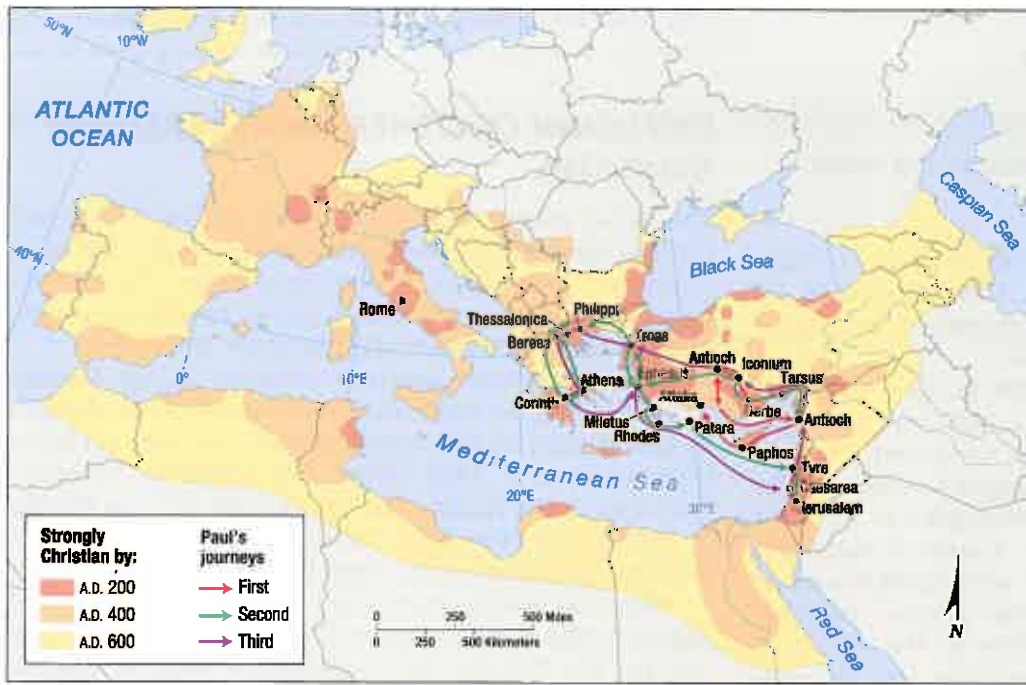
**RELOCATION DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY.** Christianity first diffused from its hearth in Palestine through relocation diffusion. **Missionaries**—individuals who help to transmit a universalizing religion through relocation diffusion—carried the teachings of Jesus along the Roman Empire's protected sea routes and excellent road network to people in other locations (Figure 6-19).

People in commercial towns and military settlements that were directly linked by the communications network received the message first from Paul and other missionaries. But Christianity spread widely within the Roman Empire through contagious diffusion—daily contact between believers in the towns and nonbelievers in the surrounding countryside.

Contagious diffusion, through migration and missionary activity by Europeans since the year 1500, has extended Christianity to other regions of the world, as shown in Figure 6-3. Through permanent resettlement of Europeans, Christianity became the dominant religion in North and South America, Australia, and New Zealand. Christianity's dominance was further achieved by conversion of indigenous populations and by intermarriage. In recent decades, Christianity has further diffused to Africa, where it is now the most widely practiced religion.



▲ **FIGURE 6-18 DIFFUSION OF UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS** Buddhism's hearth is in present-day Nepal and northern India, Christianity's in present-day Israel, and Islam's in present-day Saudi Arabia. Buddhism diffused primarily east toward East Asia and Southeast Asia, Christianity west toward Europe, and Islam west toward northern Africa and east toward southwestern Asia.



**▲ FIGURE 6-19 DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY** Christianity began to diffuse from Palestine through Europe during the time of the Roman Empire and continued after the empire’s collapse. Paul of Tarsus, a disciple of Jesus, traveled especially extensively through the Roman Empire as a missionary.

Canada (except Québec) and the United States have Protestant majorities because their early colonists came primarily from Protestant England. Some regions and localities within the United States and Canada are predominantly Roman Catholic because of immigration from Roman Catholic countries (refer to Figure 6-7). Immigration from Mexico and other Latin American countries has concentrated Roman Catholics in the Southwest, whereas French settlement from the seventeenth century, as well as recent immigration, has produced a predominantly Roman Catholic Québec.

**▼ FIGURE 6-20 DIFFUSION OF ISLAM** Islam diffused rapidly from its point of origin in present-day Saudi Arabia. Within 200 years, Muslims controlled much of Southwest Asia & North Africa and southwestern Europe. Subsequently, Islam became the predominant religion as far east as Indonesia.



Similarly, geographers trace the distribution of other Christian denominations within the United States to the fact that migrants came from different parts of Europe, especially during the nineteenth century. Followers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, popularly known as Mormons, settled at Fayette, New York, near the hometown of their founder Joseph Smith. During Smith’s life, the group moved several times in search of religious freedom. Eventually, under the leadership of Brigham Young, they migrated to the sparsely inhabited Salt Lake Valley in the present-day state of Utah.

### DIFFUSION OF ISLAM

Muhammad’s successors organized followers who extended the region of Muslim control over an extensive area of Africa, Asia, and Europe (Figure 6-20). Within a century of Muhammad’s death, Muslims controlled Palestine, the Persian Empire, and much of India, resulting in the conversion of many non-Arabs to Islam, often through intermarriage.

To the west, Muslims diffused across North Africa, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, and retained part of Western Europe, particularly much of present-day Spain, until 1492. During the same century in which the Christians regained all of Western Europe, Muslims took control of much of southeastern Europe and Turkey.

As was the case with Christianity, Islam, as a universalizing religion, diffused well beyond its hearth in Southwest Asia through relocation diffusion of missionaries to portions of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Although

it is spatially isolated in Southeast Asia from the Islamic core region, Indonesia, the world’s fourth-most-populous country, is predominantly Muslim because Arab traders brought the religion there in the thirteenth century.

**Pause and Reflect 6.2.3**  
**Does the diffusion of Islam provide a good example of hierarchical diffusion, relocation diffusion, or both?**



## DIFFUSION OF BUDDHISM

### Learning Outcome 6.2.4

Compare the diffusion of universalizing and ethnic religions.

Buddhism did not diffuse rapidly from its point of origin in northeastern India (Figure 6-21). Most responsible for the spread of Buddhism was Asoka, emperor of the Magadhan Empire from about 273 to 232 B.C.

The Magadhan Empire formed the nucleus of several powerful kingdoms in South Asia between the sixth century B.C. and the eighth century A.D. About 257 B.C., at the height of the Magadhan Empire's power, Asoka became a Buddhist and thereafter attempted to put into practice Buddha's social principles. A council organized by Asoka at Pataliputra decided to send missionaries to territories neighboring the Magadhan Empire. Emperor Asoka's son, Mahinda, led a mission to the island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), where the king and his subjects were converted to Buddhism. As a result, Sri Lanka is the country that claims the longest continuous tradition of practicing Buddhism. Missionaries were also sent in the third century B.C. to Kashmir, the Himalayas, Burma (Myanmar), and elsewhere in India.

In the first century A.D., merchants along the trading routes from northeastern India introduced Buddhism to China. Many Chinese were receptive to the ideas brought by Buddhist missionaries, and Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese languages. Chinese rulers allowed their people to become Buddhist monks during the fourth century A.D., and in the following centuries Buddhism turned into a genuinely Chinese religion. Buddhism further diffused from China to Korea in the fourth century

and from Korea to Japan two centuries later. During the same era, Buddhism lost its original base of support in India.

## DIFFUSION OF OTHER UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS

The Bahá'í religion diffused to other regions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, under the leadership of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, son of the prophet Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'í also spread rapidly during the late twentieth century, when a temple was constructed on every continent.

Sikhism remained relatively clustered in the Punjab, where the religion originated. Sikhs fought with Muslims to gain control of the Punjab region, and they achieved their ambition in 1802, when they created an independent state in the Punjab. The British took over the Punjab in 1849 as part of its India colony but granted the Sikhs a privileged position and let them fight in the British army.

When the British government created the independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947, it divided the Punjab between the two instead of giving the Sikhs a separate country. Preferring to live in Hindu-dominated India rather than Muslim-dominated Pakistan, 2.5 million Sikhs moved from Pakistan's West Punjab region to East Punjab in India.

## LACK OF DIFFUSION OF ETHNIC RELIGIONS

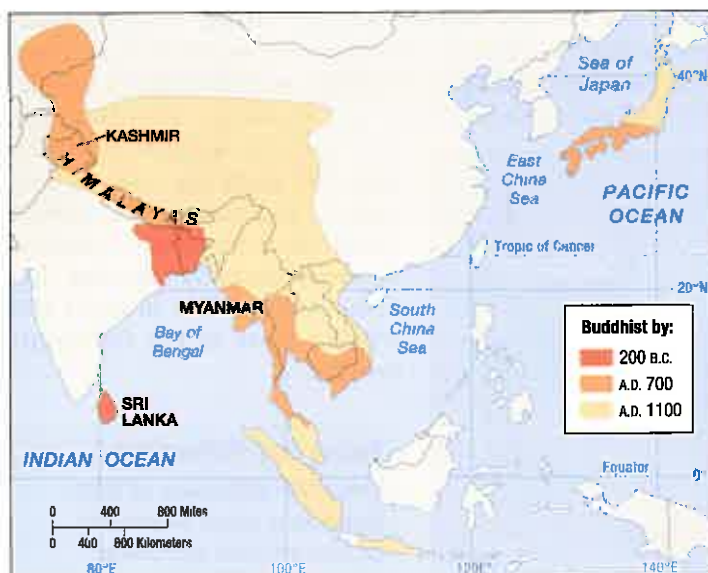
Most ethnic religions have limited, if any, diffusion. These religions lack missionaries who are devoted to converting people from other religions. Thus, the diffusion of universalizing religions, especially Christianity and Islam, typically comes at the expense of ethnic religions.

## MINGLING OF ETHNIC AND UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS.

Universalizing religions may supplant ethnic religions or mingle with them. In some African countries, Christian practices are similar to those of their former European colonial masters. Equatorial Guinea, a former Spanish colony, is mostly Roman Catholic; Namibia, a former German colony, is heavily Lutheran. Elsewhere, traditional African religious ideas and practices have been merged with Christianity. For example, African rituals may give relative prominence to the worship of ancestors. Desire for a merger of traditional practices with Christianity has led to the formation of several thousand churches in Africa not affiliated with established churches elsewhere in the world.

In East Asia, Buddhism is the universalizing religion that has most mingled with ethnic religions, such as Shintoism in Japan. Shintoists initially resisted Buddhism when it first diffused to Japan from Korea in the ninth century. Later, Shintoists embraced Buddhism and amalgamated elements of the two religions. Buddhist priests took over most of the Shinto shrines, but Buddhist deities came to be regarded by the Japanese as Shintoist deities instead.

The current situation in Japan offers a strong caution to anyone attempting to document the number of adherents of any religion. Although Japan is a wealthy country



**▲ FIGURE 6-21 DIFFUSION OF BUDDHISM** Buddhism diffused slowly from its core in northeastern India. Buddhism was not well established in China until 800 years after Buddha's death.

with excellent record keeping, the number of Shintoists in the country is currently estimated at either 4 million or 100 million. When responding to questionnaires, around 4 million, or 3 percent, of the Japanese state that they are Shintoist, and that's the number that Adherents.com uses. But Shinto organizations in Japan place the number at 100 million, or 80 percent, based on record keeping and participating in major Shinto holidays. Meanwhile, around 100 million Japanese say they are Buddhists. So if the higher number for Shintoists is correct, then most of the 123 million inhabitants of Japan profess to follow both religions.

**ETHNIC RELIGIONS AND MIGRATION.** Ethnic religions can diffuse if adherents migrate to new locations for economic reasons and are not forced to adopt a strongly entrenched universalizing religion. For example, the 1.3 million inhabitants of Mauritius include 52 percent Hindu, 28 percent Christian (26 percent Roman Catholic and 2 percent Anglican), and 17 percent Muslim. The religious diversity is a function of the country's history of immigration.

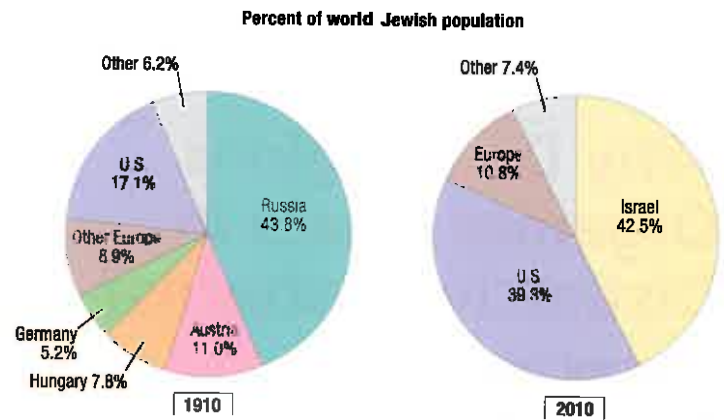
A 2,040-square-kilometer (788-square-mile) island located in the Indian Ocean 800 kilometers (500 miles) east of Madagascar, Mauritius was uninhabited until 1638, so it had no traditional ethnic religion. That year, Dutch settlers arrived to plant sugarcane and naturally brought their religion—Christianity—with them. France gained control of Mauritius in 1721 and imported African slaves to work on the sugarcane plantations. Then the British took over in 1810 and brought workers from India. Mauritius became independent in 1992. Hinduism on Mauritius traces back to the Indian immigrants, Islam to the African immigrants, and Christianity to the European immigrants.

**DIFFUSION OF JUDAISM.** The spatial distribution of Jews differs from that of other ethnic religions because Judaism is practiced in many countries, not just its place of origin. Only since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 has a significant percentage of the world's Jews lived in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Most Jews have not lived in the Eastern Mediterranean since A.D. 70, when the Romans forced them to disperse throughout the world, an action known as the *diaspora*, from the Greek word for "dispersion." The Romans forced the diaspora after crushing an attempt by the Jews to rebel against Roman rule.

Most Jews migrated from the eastern Mediterranean to Europe, although some went to North Africa and Asia. Having been exiled from the home of their ethnic religion, Jews lived among other nationalities, retaining separate religious practices but adopting other cultural characteristics of the host country, such as language.

Other nationalities often persecuted the Jews living in their midst. Historically, the Jews of many European countries were forced to live in *ghettos*, defined as city neighborhoods set up by law to be inhabited only by Jews. The



▲ **FIGURE 6-22 DISTRIBUTION OF JEWS, 1910 AND 2010** Most Jews lived in Europe (including Russia) a century ago; now most live in Israel or the United States.

term *ghetto* originated during the sixteenth century in Venice, Italy, as a reference to the city's foundry or metal-casting district, where Jews were forced to live. Ghettos were frequently surrounded by walls, and the gates were locked at night to prevent escape.

Beginning in the 1930s, but especially during World War II (1939–1945), the Nazis systematically rounded up a large percentage of European Jews, transported them to concentration camps, and exterminated them in the Holocaust. About 4 million Jews died in the camps and 2 million in other ways. Many of the survivors migrated to Israel. Today, less than 15 percent of the world's 15 million Jews live in Europe, compared to 90 percent a century ago (Figure 6-22).

### Pause and Reflect 6.2.4

What country had the largest Jewish population in 1910?

### CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 2

#### Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

- ✓ Ethnic religions typically have unknown or unclear origins, whereas universalizing religions have well documented places of origin based on events in the life of a man.
- ✓ Universalizing religions typically diffuse widely from their place of origin, whereas ethnic religions typically do not.



## KEY ISSUE 3

## Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- Sacred Space
- The Calendar
- Administration of Space

### Learning Outcome 6.3.1

Compare the role of places of worship in various religions.

Geographers study the major impact on the landscape made by all religions, regardless of whether they are universalizing or ethnic. In large cities and small villages around the world, regardless of the region's prevailing religion, the tallest, most elaborate buildings are often religious structures.

## Sacred Space

The distribution of religious elements on the landscape reflects the importance of religion in people's values. The impact of religion on the landscape is particularly profound, for many religious people believe that their life on Earth ought to be spent in service to God.

The impact of religion is clearly seen in the arrangement of human activities on the landscape at several scales, from relatively small parcels of land to entire communities. How each religion distributes its elements on the landscape depends on its beliefs. Important religious land uses include burial of the dead and religious settlements.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP IN UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS

Church, basilica, mosque, temple, pagoda, and synagogue are familiar names that identify places of worship in various religions. Sacred structures are physical "anchors" of religion. All major religions have structures, but the functions of the buildings influence the arrangement of the structures across the landscape. They may house shrines or be places where people assemble for worship. Some religions require a relatively large number of elaborate structures, whereas others have more modest needs.

**CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.** The Christian landscape is dominated by a high density of churches. The word *church* derives from a Greek term meaning "lord," "master," and

"power." *Church* also refers to a gathering of believers, as well as the building at which the gathering occurs.

The church plays a more critical role in Christianity than do buildings in other religions, in part because the structure is an expression of religious principles, an environment in the image of God. The church is also more prominent in Christianity because attendance at a collective service of worship is considered extremely important.

The prominence of churches on the landscape also stems from their style of construction and location. In some communities, the church was traditionally the largest and tallest building and was placed at an important square or other prominent location. Although such characteristics may no longer apply in large cities, they are frequently still true for small towns and neighborhoods within cities.

Since Christianity split into many denominations, no single style of church construction has dominated. Churches reflect both the cultural values of the denomination and the region's architectural heritage. Orthodox churches follow an architectural style that developed in the Byzantine Empire during the fifth century. Byzantine-style Orthodox churches tend to be highly ornate, topped by prominent domes. Many Protestant churches in North America, on the other hand, are simple, with little ornamentation. This austerity is a reflection of the Protestant conception of a church as an assembly hall for the congregation.

Availability of building materials also influences church appearance. In the United States, early churches were most frequently built of wood in the Northeast, brick in the Southeast, and adobe in the Southwest. Stucco and stone predominated in Latin America. This diversity reflected differences in the most common building materials found by early settlers.

**MUSLIM MOSQUES.** Religious buildings are highly visible and important features of the landscapes in regions dominated by religions other than Christianity. But unlike Christianity, other major religions do not consider their important buildings sanctified places of worship.

Muslims consider a mosque to be a space for community assembly. Unlike a church, a mosque is not viewed as a sanctified place but rather as a location for the community to gather together for worship. Mosques are found primarily in larger cities of the Muslim world; simple structures may serve as places of prayer in rural villages.

A mosque is organized around a central courtyard—traditionally open-air, although it may be enclosed in harsher climates. The pulpit is placed at the end of the courtyard facing Makkah, the direction toward which all Muslims pray. Surrounding the courtyard is a cloister used for schools and nonreligious activities. A distinctive feature of the mosque is the *minaret*, a tower where a man known as a *muezzin* summons people to worship.

**BUDDHIST PAGODAS.** The pagoda is a prominent and visually attractive element of the Buddhist landscape. Frequently elaborate and delicate in appearance, pagodas typically include tall, many-sided towers arranged in a series of tiers, balconies, and slanting roofs. Pagodas contain relics

that Buddhists believe to be a portion of Buddha's body or clothing (Figure 6-23). After Buddha's death, his followers scrambled to obtain these relics. As part of the process of diffusing the religion, Buddhists carried these relics to other countries and built pagodas for them. Pagodas are not designed for congregational worship. Individual prayer or meditation is more likely to be undertaken at an adjacent temple, at a remote monastery, or in a home.

**BAHÁ'Í HOUSES OF WORSHIP.** Bahá'ís have built Houses of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, in 1953; Sydney, Australia, and Kampala, Uganda, both in 1961; Lagenhain, near Frankfurt, Germany, in 1964; Panama City, Panama, in 1972; Tiapapata, near Apia, Samoa, in 1984; and New Delhi, India, in 1986 (Figure 6-24). The first Bahá'í House of Worship, built in 1908 in Ashgabat, Russia, now the capital of Turkmenistan, was turned into a museum by the Soviet Union and demolished in 1962 after a severe earthquake. Additional Houses of Worship are planned in Tehran, Iran; Santiago, Chile; and Haifa, Israel.

The locations have not been selected because of proximity to clusters of Bahá'ís. Instead, the Houses of Worship have been dispersed to different continents to dramatize Bahá'í as a universalizing religion with adherents all over the world. The Houses of Worship are open to adherents of all religions, and services include reciting the scriptures of various religions.



▲ **FIGURE 6-23 BUDDHIST PAGODA, SARNATH, INDIA** The Dhamek pagoda, in Deer Park, Sarnath, was built in the third century b.c., and is probably the oldest surviving Buddhist structure in the world.



▲ **FIGURE 6-24 BAHÁ'Í HOUSES OF WORSHIP** Shrine of the Báb, Haifa, Israel.

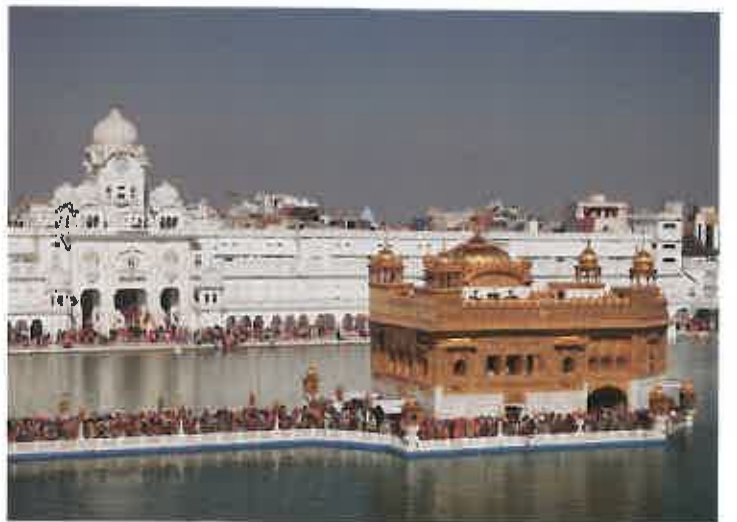
**SIKHISM'S GOLDEN TEMPLE OF AMRITSAR.** Sikhism's most holy structure, the Darbar Sahib, or Golden Temple, was built at Amritsar, in the Punjab, by Arjan, the fifth guru, during the sixteenth century (Figure 6-25). The holiest book in Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib, is kept there.

Militant Sikhs used the Golden Temple at Amritsar as a base for launching attacks in support of greater autonomy for the Punjab during the 1980s. In 1984, the Indian army attacked the Golden Temple at Amritsar and killed between 500 and 1,500 Sikhs defending the temple. In retaliation later that year, India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her guards, who were Sikhs.

### Pause and Reflect 6.3.1

**What is the purpose of the main religious structure in Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Bahá'í, and Sikhism?**

▼ **FIGURE 6-25 SIKH GOLDEN TEMPLE OF AMRITSAR, INDIA** The Darbar Sahib, or Gold Temple, at Amritsar, is the most holy structure for Sikhs, most of whom live in northwestern India.





## SACRED PLACES IN UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS

### Learning Outcome 6.3.2

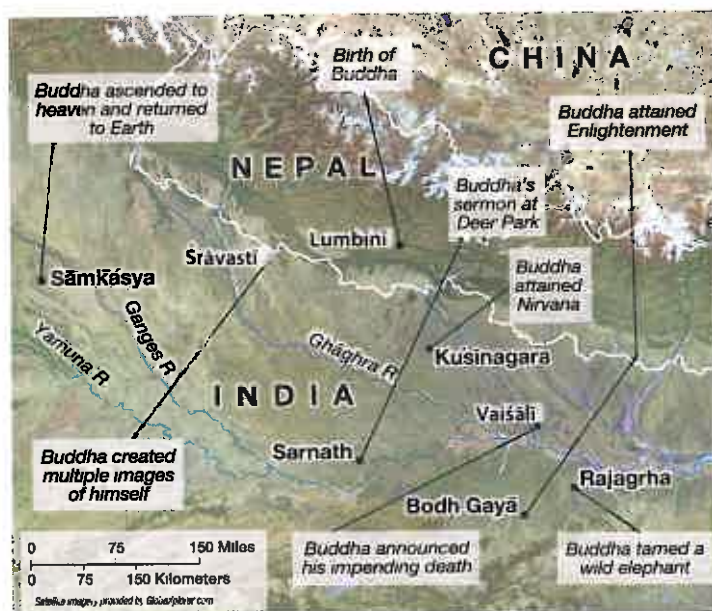
**Explain why places are sacred in universalizing religions.**

Religions may elevate particular places to holy positions. Universalizing and ethnic religions differ on the types of places that are considered holy:

- An ethnic religion typically has a less widespread distribution than a universalizing one in part because its holy places derive from the distinctive physical environment of its hearth, such as mountains, rivers, or rock formations.
- A universalizing religion endows with holiness cities and other places associated with the founder's life. Its holy places do not necessarily have to be near each other, and they do not need to be related to any particular physical environment.

Buddhism and Islam are the universalizing religions that place the most emphasis on identifying shrines. Places are holy because they are the locations of important events in the life of Buddha or Muhammad. Making a **pilgrimage** to these holy places—a journey for religious purposes to a place considered sacred—is incorporated into the rituals of some religions. Hindus and Muslims are especially encouraged to make pilgrimages to visit holy places in accordance with recommended itineraries.

**BUDDHIST SHRINES.** Eight places are holy to Buddhists because they were the locations of important events in Buddha's life (Figure 6-26). The four most important



▲ **FIGURE 6-26 HOLY PLACES IN BUDDHISM** Most are clustered in northeastern India and southern Nepal because they were the locations of important events in Buddha's life.

of the eight places are concentrated in a small area of northeastern India and southern Nepal:

- Lumbinī in southern Nepal, where Buddha was born around 563 B.C., is most important. Many sanctuaries and monuments were built there, but all are in ruins today.
- Bodh Gayā, 250 kilometers (150 miles) southeast of Buddha's birthplace, is the site of the second great event in his life, where he reached perfect wisdom. A temple has stood near the site since the third century B.C., and part of the surrounding railing built in the first century A.D. still stands. Because Buddha reached perfect Enlightenment while sitting under a bo tree, that tree has become a holy object as well (Figure 6-27). To honor Buddha, the bo tree has been diffused to other Buddhist countries, such as China and Japan.
- Deer Park in Sarnath, where Buddha gave his first sermon, is the third important location. The Dhamek pagoda at Sarnath, built in the third century B.C., is probably the oldest surviving structure in India (refer to Figure 6-23). Nearby is an important library of Buddhist literature, including many works removed from Tibet when Tibet's Buddhist leader, the Dalai Lama, went into exile.
- Kuśinagara, the fourth holy place, is where Buddha died at age 80 and passed into Nirvana, a state of peaceful extinction (Figure 6-28). Temples built at the site are currently in ruins.

Four other sites in northeastern India are particularly sacred because they were the locations of Buddha's principal miracles:

- Srāvastī is where Buddha performed his greatest miracle. Before an assembled audience of competing religious leaders, Buddha created multiple images of himself and



▲ **FIGURE 6-27 BO TREE, BODH GAYĀ, INDIA** A Buddhist monk sits under a Bo tree at Bodh Gayā, the place where Buddha reached perfect wisdom.



▲ **FIGURE 6-28 SLEEPING BUDDHA, KUŚINAGARA** The statue of Buddha asleep marks the location where Buddha is thought to have attained nirvana.

visited heaven. Srāvastī became an active center of Buddhism, and one of the most important monasteries was established there.

- Sāmkāśya, the second miracle site, is where Buddha is said to have ascended to heaven, preached to his mother, and returned to Earth.
- Rajagrha, the third site, is holy because Buddha tamed a wild elephant there, and shortly after Buddha's death, it became the site of the first Buddhist Council.
- Vaisālā, the fourth location, is the site of Buddha's announcement of his impending death and the second Buddhist Council.

All four miracle sites are in ruins today, although excavation activity is under way.

**HOLY PLACES IN ISLAM.** The holiest locations in Islam are in cities associated with the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The holiest city for Muslims is Makkah (Mecca), the birthplace of Muhammad. The word *mecca* now has a general meaning in the English language as a goal sought or a center of activity.

Now a city of 1.3 million inhabitants, Makkah contains the holiest object in the Islamic landscape, namely al-Ka'ba, a cubelike structure encased in silk, which stands at the center of the Great Mosque, Masjid al-Haram, Islam's largest mosque (Figure 6-29). The Ka'ba, thought to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael, contains a black stone given to Abraham by Gabriel as a sign of the covenant with Ishmael and the Muslim people.

The Ka'ba had been a religious shrine in Makkah for centuries before the origin of Islam. After Muhammad defeated the local people, he captured the Ka'ba, cleared it of idols, and rededicated it to the all-powerful Allah (God). The Masjid al-Haram mosque also contains the well of Zamzam, considered to have the same water source as that given to Hagar by the Angel Gabriel to quench the thirst of her infant, Ishmael.



▲ **FIGURE 6-29 MASJID AL-HARAM, MAKKAH, SAUDI ARABIA** The black cube-like Ka'ba at the center of Masjid al-Haram (Great Mosque) in Makkah is Islam's holiest object.

The second-most-holy geographic location in Islam is Madinah (Medina), a city of 1.3 million inhabitants, 350 kilometers (220 miles) north of Makkah. Muhammad received his first support from the people of Madinah and became the city's chief administrator. Muhammad's tomb is at Madinah, inside Islam's second-largest mosque (refer to Figure 6-15).

Every healthy Muslim who has adequate financial resources is expected to undertake a pilgrimage, called a *hajj*, to Makkah (Mecca). Regardless of nationality and economic background, all pilgrims dress alike, in plain white robes, to emphasize common loyalty to Islam and the equality of people in the eyes of Allah. A precise set of rituals is practiced, culminating in a visit to the Ka'ba. The *hajj* attracts millions of Muslims annually to Makkah. *Hajj* visas are issued by the government of Saudi Arabia according to a formula of 1 per 1,000 Muslims in a country. Roughly 80 percent come from Southwest Asia & North Africa and 20 percent from elsewhere in Asia. Although Indonesia is the country with the most Muslims, it has not sent the largest number of pilgrims to Makkah because of the relatively long travel distance.

### Pause and Reflect 6.3.2

Based on the lives of the Buddha and the prophet Muhammad, what types of sites are likely to be goals of pilgrimage for the followers of a universalizing religion?



## THE LANDSCAPE IN ETHNIC RELIGIONS

### Learning Outcome 6.3.3

Analyze the importance of the physical geography in ethnic religions.

One of the principal reasons that ethnic religions are highly clustered is that they are closely tied to the physical geography of a particular place. Pilgrimages are undertaken to view these physical features.

**HINDU LANDSCAPE.** As an ethnic religion of India, Hinduism is closely tied to the physical geography of India. According to a survey conducted by the geographer Surinder Bhardwaj, the natural features most likely to rank among the holiest shrines in India are riverbanks and coastlines. Hindus consider a pilgrimage, known as a *tirtha*, to be an act of purification. Although not a substitute for meditation, the pilgrimage is an important act in achieving redemption.

Hindu holy places are organized into a hierarchy. Particularly sacred places attract Hindus from all over India, despite the relatively remote locations of some; less important shrines attract primarily local pilgrims. Because Hinduism has no central authority, the relative importance of shrines is established by tradition, not by doctrine. For example, many Hindus make long-distance pilgrimages to Mt. Kailās, located at the source of the Ganges in the Himalayas, which is holy because Siva lives there (refer to Figure 6-17). Other mountains may attract only local pilgrims: Local residents may consider a nearby mountain to be holy if Siva is thought to have visited it at one time.

Hindus believe that they achieve purification by bathing in holy rivers. The Ganges is the holiest river in India because it is supposed to spring forth from the hair of Siva, one of the main deities. Indians come from all over the country to Hardwār, the most popular location for bathing in the Ganges (Figure 6-30).

The remoteness of holy places from population clusters once meant that making a pilgrimage required major

▼ **FIGURE 6-30 BATHING IN THE GANGES, HARDWĀR, INDIA** Hindus bathe in the Ganges River to wash away their sins.



commitments of time and money as well as undergoing considerable physical hardship. Recent improvements in transportation have increased the accessibility of shrines. Hindus can now reach holy places in the Himalaya Mountains by bus or car, and Muslims from all over the world can reach Makkah by airplane.

**HINDU TEMPLES.** Sacred structures for collective worship are relatively unimportant in Asian ethnic and universalizing religions. Instead, important religious functions are more likely to take place at home within the family. Temples are built to house shrines for particular gods rather than for congregational worship. The Hindu temple serves as a home to one or more gods, although a particular god may have more than one temple.

A typical Hindu temple contains a small, dimly lit interior room where a symbolic artifact or some other image of the god rests. Because congregational worship is not part of Hinduism, the temple does not need a large closed interior space filled with seats. The site of the temple, usually demarcated by a wall, may also contain a structure for a caretaker and a pool for ritual baths. Space may be devoted to ritual processions.

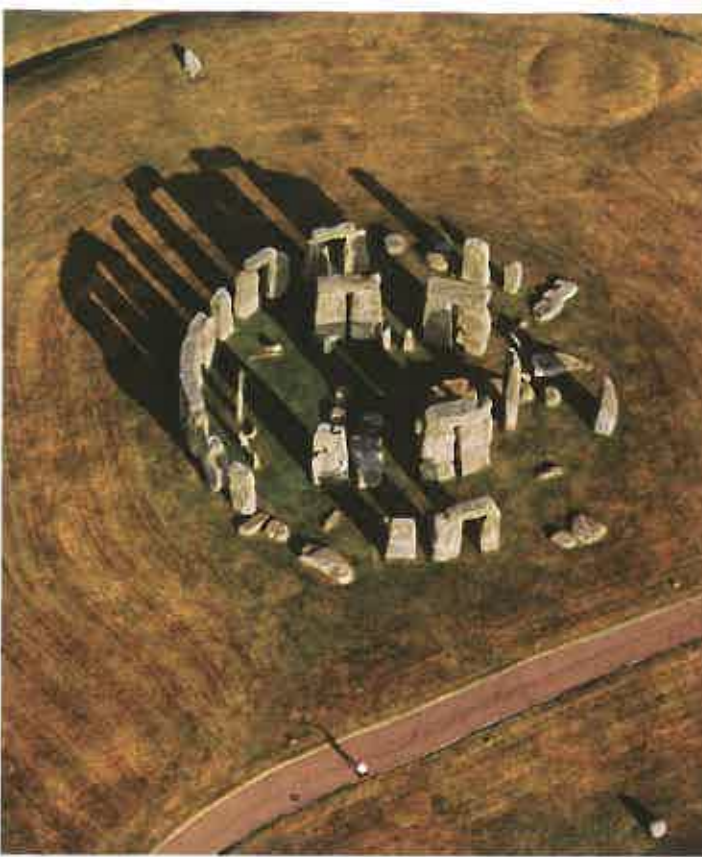
Wealthy individuals or groups usually maintain local temples. Size and number of temples are determined by local preferences and commitment of resources rather than standards imposed by religious doctrine.

## COSMOGONY

Ethnic religions differ from universalizing religions in their understanding of relationships between human beings and nature. These differences derive from distinctive concepts of **cosmogony**, which is a set of religious beliefs concerning the origin of the universe. A variety of events in the physical environment are more likely to be incorporated into the principles of an ethnic religion. These events range from the familiar and predictable to unexpected disasters.

**COSMOGONY IN ETHNIC RELIGIONS.** Chinese ethnic religions, such as Confucianism and Taoism, believe that the universe is made up of two forces, yin and yang, which exist in everything. The yin force is associated with earth, darkness, female, cold, depth, passivity, and death. The yang force is associated with heaven, light, male, heat, height, activity, and life. Yin and yang forces interact with each other to achieve balance and harmony, but they are in a constant state of change. An imbalance results in disorder and chaos. The principle of yin and yang applies to the creation and transformation of all natural features.

**COSMOGONY IN UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS.** The universalizing religions that originated in Southwest Asia, notably Christianity and Islam, consider that God created the universe, including Earth's physical environment and human beings. A religious person can serve God by cultivating the land, draining wetlands, clearing forests, building new settlements, and otherwise making



▲ **FIGURE 6-31 STONEHENGE** Stonehenge, in southwestern England, was constructed between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago.

productive use of natural features that God created. As the very creator of Earth itself, God is more powerful than any force of nature, and if in conflict, the laws of God take precedence over laws of nature.

Christian and Islamic cosmogony differ in some respects. For example, Christians believe that Earth was given by God to humanity to finish the task of creation. Obeying the all-supreme power of God means independence from the tyranny of natural forces. Muslims regard humans as representatives of God on Earth, capable of reflecting the attributes of God in their deeds, such as growing food or doing other hard work to improve the land. But they believe that humans are not partners with God, who alone was responsible for Earth's creation.

In the name of God, some people have sought mastery over nature, not merely independence from it. Large-scale development of remaining wilderness is advocated by some religious people as a way to serve God. To those who follow this approach, failure to make full and complete use of Earth's natural resources is considered a violation of biblical teachings. Christians are more likely to consider floods, droughts, and other natural disasters to be preventable and may take steps to overcome the problem by modifying the environment. Some Christians regard natural disasters as punishment for human sins.

Adherents of ethnic religions do not attempt to transform the environment to the same extent. To animists, for example, God's powers are mystical, and only a few people on Earth can harness these powers for medical or other purposes. God can be placated, however, through prayer and sacrifice. Environmental hazards may be accepted as normal and unavoidable.

**THE SOLSTICE.** The **solstice** has special significance in some ethnic religions. A major holiday in some pagan religions is the winter solstice, December 21 or 22 in the Northern Hemisphere. The winter solstice is the shortest day and longest night of the year, when the Sun appears lowest in the sky, and the apparent movement of the Sun's path north or south comes to a stop before reversing direction (*solstice* comes from the Latin to "stand still"). Stonehenge, a collection of stones erected in southwestern England some 3,500 years ago (Figure 6-31), is a prominent remnant of a pagan structure apparently aligned so the Sun rises between two stones on the summer and winter solstices (Figure 6-32).

If you stand at the western facade of the U.S. Capitol in Washington at sunset on the summer solstice (June 21 or 22 in the Northern Hemisphere) and look down Pennsylvania Avenue, the Sun is directly over the center of the avenue. Similarly, at the winter solstice, sunset is directly aligned with the view from the Capitol down Maryland Avenue. Will archaeologists of the distant future think we erected the Capitol Building and aligned the streets as a religious ritual? Did the planner of Washington, Pierre L'Enfant, create the pattern accidentally or deliberately, and if so, why?

### Pause and Reflect 6.3.3

**How do adherents of universalizing religions such as Christianity and Islam and adherents of ethnic religions tend to differ in their attitudes toward Earth's physical environment?**

▼ **FIGURE 6-32 SUNRISE ON THE SOLSTICE AT STONEHENGE** Stones were apparently aligned with regard for the solstice.





## DISPOSING OF THE DEAD

### Learning Outcome 6.3.4

**Describe ways in which the landscape is used in religiously significant ways.**

A prominent example of religiously inspired arrangement of land at a smaller scale is burial practices. Climate, topography, and religious doctrine combine to create differences in practices to shelter the dead.

**BURIAL.** Christians, Muslims, and Jews usually bury their dead in a specially designated area called a cemetery (Figure 6-33). The Christian burial practice can be traced to the early years of the religion. In ancient Rome, underground passages known as *catacombs* were used to bury early Christians (and to protect the faithful when the religion was still illegal).

After Christianity became legal, Christians buried their dead in the yard around the church. As these burial places became overcrowded, separate burial grounds had to be established outside the city walls. Public health and sanitation considerations in the nineteenth century led to public management of many cemeteries. Some cemeteries are still operated by religious organizations. The remains of the dead are customarily aligned in some traditional direction. Some Christians bury the dead with the feet toward Jerusalem so that they may meet Christ there on the Day of Judgment.

Cemeteries may consume significant space in a community, increasing the competition for scarce space. In congested urban areas, Christians and Muslims have traditionally used cemeteries as public open space. Before the widespread development of public parks in the nineteenth century, cemeteries were frequently the only green space in rapidly growing cities. Cemeteries are still used as parks in Muslim countries, where the idea faces less opposition than in Christian societies.

▼ **FIGURE 6-33 MUSLIM CEMETERY** Fatimid cemetery, in Aswan, Egypt, is approximately 1,000 years old.



Traditional burial practices in China have put pressure on agricultural land. By burying dead relatives, rural residents have removed as much as 10 percent of the land from productive agriculture. The government in China has ordered the practice discontinued, even urging farmers to plow over old burial mounds. Cremation is encouraged instead.

**OTHER METHODS OF DISPOSING OF BODIES.** Not all faiths bury their dead. Hindus generally practice cremation rather than burial (Figure 6-34). The body is washed with water from the Ganges River and then burned with a slow fire on a funeral pyre. Burial is reserved for children, ascetics, and people with certain diseases. Cremation is considered an act of purification, although it tends to strain India's wood supply.

Motivation for cremation may have originated from unwillingness on the part of nomads to leave their dead behind, possibly because of fear that the body could be attacked by wild beasts or evil spirits, or even return to life. Cremation could also free the soul from the body for departure to the afterworld and provide warmth and comfort for the soul as it embarked on the journey to the afterworld. Cremation was the principal form of disposing of bodies in Europe before Christianity. It is still practiced in parts of Southeast Asia, possibly because of Hindu influence.

To strip away unclean portions of the body, Zoroastrians (Parsis) traditionally exposed the dead to scavenging birds and animals. The ancient Zoroastrians did not want the body to contaminate the sacred elements of fire, earth, or water. The dead were exposed in a circular structure called a *dakhma*, or tower of silence (Figure 6-35). Tibetan Buddhists also practiced exposure for some dead, with cremation reserved for the most exalted priests.

Disposal of bodies at sea is used in some parts of Micronesia, but the practice is much less common than in the past. The bodies of lower-class people would be flung into the sea; elites could be set adrift on a raft or boat. Water burial was regarded as a safeguard against being contaminated by the dead.

▼ **FIGURE 6-34 HINDU CREMATION** Family members cover a body with wood for cremation, Agra, India.





▲ **FIGURE 6-35 ZOROASTRIAN TOWER OF SILENCE, YAZD, IRAN** Zoroastrians placed bodies in the pit in the center of the tower. The practice has been discontinued.

### Pause and Reflect 6.3.4

What are some of the cultural or religious factors that influence methods of disposing of bodies other than burial?

## RELIGIOUS SETTLEMENTS AND PLACE NAMES

Buildings for worship and burial places are smaller-scale manifestations of religion on the landscape, but there are larger-scale examples—entire settlements. Most human settlements serve an economic purpose (see Chapter 12), but some are established primarily for religious reasons.

**UTOPIAN SETTLEMENTS.** A *utopian settlement* is an ideal community built around a religious way of life. Buildings are sited and economic activities organized to integrate religious principles into all aspects of daily life. An early utopian settlement in the United States was Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, founded in 1741 by Moravians, Christians who had emigrated from the present-day Czech Republic. By 1858, some 130 different utopian settlements had begun in the United States, in conformance with a group's distinctive religious beliefs. Examples include Oneida, New York; Ephrata, Pennsylvania; Nauvoo, Illinois; and New Harmony, Indiana.

The culmination of the utopian movement in the United States was the construction of Salt Lake City by the Mormons, beginning in 1848. The layout of Salt Lake City is based on a plan of the city of Zion given to the church elders in 1833 by the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith. The city has a regular grid pattern, unusually broad boulevards, and church-related buildings situated at strategic points.

Most utopian communities declined in importance or disappeared altogether. Some disappeared because the inhabitants were celibate and could not attract immigrants; in other cases, residents moved away in search of better economic conditions. The utopian communities that have not been demolished are now inhabited by people who are not members of the original religious sect, although a few have been preserved as museums.

Although most colonial settlements were not planned primarily for religious purposes, religious principles affected many of the designs. Most early New England settlers were members of a Puritan Protestant denomination. The Puritans generally migrated together from England and preferred to live near each other in clustered settlements rather than on dispersed, isolated farms. Reflecting the importance of religion in their lives, New England settlers placed the church at the most prominent location in the center of the settlement, usually adjacent to a public open space known as a *common*, because it was for common use by everyone.

**RELIGIOUS PLACE NAMES.** Roman Catholic immigrants have frequently given religious place names, or *toponyms*, to their settlements in the New World, particularly in Québec and the U.S. Southwest. Québec's boundaries with Ontario and the United States clearly illustrate the difference between toponyms selected by Roman Catholic and Protestant settlers. Religious place names are common in Québec but rare in the two neighbors (Figure 6-36).



▲ **FIGURE 6-36 RELIGIOUS TOPONYMS** Place names near Québec's boundaries with Ontario and the United States show the impact of religion on the landscape. In Québec, a province with a predominantly Roman Catholic population, a large number of settlements are named for saints, where relatively few religious toponyms are found in predominantly Protestant Ontario, New York, and Vermont.



## The Calendar

### Learning Outcome 6.3.5

#### Compare the calendars and holidays of ethnic and universalizing religions.

Universalizing and ethnic religions have different approaches to the calendar. An ethnic religion typically has a more clustered distribution than a universalizing religion, in part because its holidays are based on the distinctive physical geography of the homeland. In universalizing religions, major holidays relate to events in the life of the founder rather than to the changing seasons of one particular place.

A prominent feature of ethnic religions is celebration of the seasons—the calendar's annual cycle of variation in climatic conditions. Knowledge of the calendar is critical to successful agriculture, whether for sedentary crop farmers or nomadic animal herders. The seasonal variations of temperature and precipitation help farmers select the appropriate times for planting and harvesting and make the best choice of crops. Rituals are performed to pray for favorable environmental conditions or to give thanks for past success.

### THE CALENDAR IN JUDAISM

Judaism is classified as an ethnic, rather than a universalizing, religion in part because its major holidays are based on events in the agricultural calendar of the religion's homeland in present-day Israel. These agricultural holidays later gained importance because they also commemorated events in the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt, as recounted in the Bible. The reinterpretation of natural holidays in light of historical events has been especially important for Jews in North America, Europe, and other regions who are unfamiliar with the agricultural calendar of Southwest Asia. Major Jewish holidays include:

- *Pesach* (Passover) derives from traditional agricultural practices in which farmers offered God the first fruits of the new spring harvest and herders sacrificed a young animal at the time when cows began to calve. It also recalls the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt and the miracle of their successful flight under the leadership of Moses.
- *Sukkot* celebrates the final gathering of fruits for the year, and prayers, especially for rain, are offered to bring success in the upcoming agricultural year (Figure 6-37). It derives from the Hebrew word for the booths, or temporary shelters, occupied by Jews during their wandering in the wilderness for 40 years after fleeing Egypt.
- *Shavuot* (Feast of Weeks) comes at the end of the grain harvest. It is also considered the date during the wandering when Moses received the Ten Commandments from God.

▼ **FIGURE 6-37 ETHNIC RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY** On the holiday of Sukkot, Jews carry a lulav (branches of date palm entwined with myrtle and willow) and an etrog (yellow citron) to symbolize gratitude for the many agricultural bounties offered by God.



- *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), the two most holy and solemn days in the Jewish calendar, come in the autumn, which is the season when grain crops are planted in the Mediterranean agricultural region and therefore a time of hope and worry over whether the upcoming winter's rainfall will be sufficient.

In daily business, North Americans use the solar calendar of 12 months, each containing 30 or 31 days, taking up the astronomical slack with 28 or 29 days in February. But Israel—the only country where Jews are in the majority—uses a lunar rather than a solar calendar.

### THE CALENDAR IN UNIVERSALIZING RELIGIONS

The principal purpose of the holidays in universalizing religions is to commemorate events in the founder's life. Examples can be found in the various universalizing religions:

- **Islam.** Like Judaism, Islam uses a lunar calendar (Figure 6-38). Whereas the Jewish calendar inserts an extra month every few years to match the agricultural and solar calendars, Islam as a universalizing religion retains a strict lunar calendar. In a 30-year cycle, the Islamic calendar has 19 years with 354 days and 11 years with 355 days.

As a result of using a lunar calendar, Muslim holidays arrive in different seasons from generation to generation. For example, during the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast during daylight every day and try to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah. At the moment, the start of Ramadan is occurring in the Northern Hemisphere summer—for example, June 18, 2015, on the western Gregorian calendar. In A.D. 1995, Ramadan fell on October 5, and in A.D. 2025 Ramadan will start



▲ **FIGURE 6-38 NEW MOON IN ISLAM** Islam and Judaism use a lunar calendars. The appearance of the new Moon, seen here over the Jumairah Mosque in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, marks the new month in Judaism and Islam and is a holiday for both religions.



▲ **FIGURE 6-39 RAMADAN** Eating food during a street celebration on the night before the start of fasting for Ramadan in Istanbul, Turkey.

February 28. Because Ramadan occurs at different times of the solar year in different generations, the number of hours of the daily fast varies widely because the amount of daylight varies by season and by location on Earth's surface (Figure 6-39).

Observance of Ramadan can be a hardship because it can interfere with critical agricultural activities, depending on the season. However, as a universalizing religion with 1.5 billion adherents worldwide, Islam is practiced in various climates and latitudes. If Ramadan were fixed at the same time of the Middle East's agricultural year, Muslims in various places of the world would need to make different adjustments to observe Ramadan.

- **Bahá'í.** The Bahá'ís use a calendar established by the Báb and confirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, in which the year is divided into 19 months of 19 days each, with the addition of 4 intercalary days (5 in leap years). The year begins on the first day of spring, March 21, which is one of several holy days in the Bahá'í calendar. Bahá'ís are supposed to attend the Nineteen Day Feast, held on the first day of each month of the Bahá'í calendar, to pray, read scriptures, and discuss community activities.
- **Christianity.** Christians commemorate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter, observed on the first Sunday after the first full Moon following the spring equinox in late March. But not all Christians observe Easter on the same day because Protestant and Roman Catholic branches calculate the date on the Gregorian calendar, but Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar.

Christians associate their holidays with seasonal variations in the calendar, but climate and the agricultural cycle are not central to the liturgy and rituals. Christians may relate Easter to the agricultural cycle, but that relationship differs depending on where they live. In Southern Europe, Easter is a joyous time of

harvest. Northern Europe and North America do not have a major Christian holiday at harvest time, which would be placed in the fall.

Most Northern Europeans and North Americans associate Christmas, the birthday of Jesus, with winter conditions, such as low temperatures, snow cover, and the absence of vegetation except for needle leaf evergreens. But for Christians in the Southern Hemisphere, December 25 is the height of the summer, with warm days and abundant sunlight.

- **Buddhism.** All Buddhists celebrate as major holidays Buddha's birth, Enlightenment, and death. However, not all Buddhists observe them on the same days. Japanese Buddhists celebrate Buddha's birth on April 8, his Enlightenment on December 8, and his death on February 15; Theravada Buddhists observe all three events on the same day, usually in April.
- **Sikhism.** The major holidays in Sikhism are the births and deaths of the religion's 10 gurus. The tenth guru, Gobind Singh, declared that after his death, instead of an eleventh guru, Sikhism's highest spiritual authority would be the holy scriptures the Guru Granth Sahib. A major holiday in Sikhism is the day when the Holy Granth was installed as the religion's spiritual guide. Commemorating historical events distinguishes Sikhism as a universalizing religion, in contrast to India's major ethnic religion, Hinduism, which glorifies the physical geography of India.

#### Pause and Reflect 6.3.5

**Why do some religions organize their annual calendars according to the lunar cycle?**



## Administration of Space

### Learning Outcome 6.3.6

Compare the administrative organization of hierarchical and locally autonomous religions.

Followers of a universalizing religion must be connected in order to ensure communication and consistency of doctrine. The method of interaction varies among universalizing religions, branches, and denominations. Ethnic religions tend not to have organized, central authorities.

### HIERARCHICAL RELIGIONS

A **hierarchical religion** has a well-defined geographic structure and organizes territory into local administrative units. Roman Catholicism provides a good example of a hierarchical religion.

**LATTER-DAY SAINTS.** Latter-day Saints (Mormons) exercise strong organization of the landscape. The territory occupied by Mormons, primarily Utah and portions of surrounding states, is organized into wards, with populations of approximately 750 each. Several wards are combined into a stake of approximately 5,000 people. The highest authority in the Church—the board and president—frequently redraws ward and stake boundaries in rapidly growing areas to reflect the ideal population standards.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY.** The Roman Catholic Church has organized much of Earth's inhabited land into an administrative structure ultimately accountable to the

Pope in Rome (Figure 6-40). Here is the top hierarchy of Roman Catholicism:

- The *Pope* is also the bishop of the Diocese of Rome.
- *Archbishops* report to the Pope. Each heads a province, which is a group of several dioceses. The archbishop also is bishop of one diocese within the province, and some distinguished archbishops are elevated to the rank of cardinal.
- *Bishops* report to an archbishop. Each administers a diocese, which is the basic unit of geographic organization in the Roman Catholic Church. The bishop's headquarters, called a "see," is typically the largest city in the diocese.
- *Priests* report to bishops. A diocese is spatially divided into parishes, each headed by a priest.

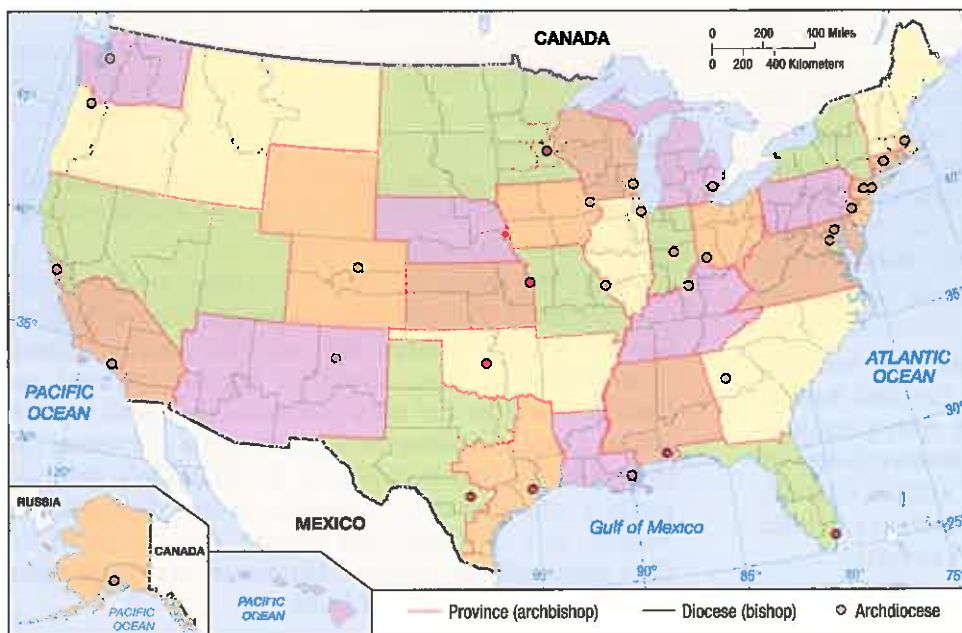
### Pause and Reflect 6.3.6

What are the different spatial units of administration in the Roman Catholic Church?

The area and population of parishes and dioceses vary according to historical factors and the distribution of Roman Catholics across Earth's surface. In parts of Europe, the overwhelming majority of the dense population is Roman Catholic. Consequently, the density of parishes is high. A typical parish may encompass only a few square kilometers and fewer than 1,000 people. At the other extreme, Latin American parishes may encompass several hundred square kilometers and 5,000 people. The more dispersed Latin American distribution is attributable partly to a lower population density than in Europe.

Because Roman Catholicism is a hierarchical religion, individual parishes must work closely with centrally located officials concerning rituals and procedures. If Latin America followed the European model of small parishes, many would be too remote for the priest to communicate with others in the hierarchy. The less intensive network of Roman Catholic institutions also results in part from colonial traditions, for both Portuguese and Spanish rulers discouraged parish development in Latin America.

The Roman Catholic population is growing rapidly in the U.S. Southwest and in suburbs of some large North American and European cities. Some of these areas have a low density of parishes and dioceses compared to the population, so the Church must adjust its territorial organization. New local administrative units can be



▲ **FIGURE 6-40 ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY IN THE UNITED STATES** The Roman Catholic Church divides the United States into provinces, each headed by an archbishop. Provinces are subdivided into dioceses, each headed by a bishop. The archbishop of a province also serves as the bishop of a diocese. Dioceses that are headed by archbishops are called archdioceses.

created, although funds to provide the desired number of churches, schools, and other religious structures might be scarce. Conversely, the Roman Catholic population is declining in inner cities and rural areas. Maintaining services in these areas is expensive, but the process of combining parishes and closing schools is very difficult.

## LOCALLY AUTONOMOUS RELIGIONS

Some universalizing religions are highly **autonomous religions**, or self-sufficient, and interaction among communities is confined to little more than loose cooperation and shared ideas. Islam and some Protestant denominations are good examples.

**LOCAL AUTONOMY IN ISLAM.** Among the three large universalizing religions, Islam provides the most local autonomy. Like other locally autonomous religions, Islam has neither a religious hierarchy nor a formal territorial organization. A mosque is a place for public ceremony, and a leader known as a *muezzin* calls the faithful to prayer (Figure 6-41), but everyone is expected to participate equally in the rituals and is encouraged to pray privately.

In the absence of a hierarchy, the only formal organization of territory in Islam is through the coincidence of religious territory with secular states. Governments in some predominantly Islamic countries include in their

bureaucracy people who administer Islamic institutions. These administrators interpret Islamic law and run welfare programs.

Strong unity in the Islamic world is maintained by a relatively high degree of communication and migration, such as the pilgrimage to Makkah. In addition, uniformity is fostered by Islamic doctrine, which offers more explicit commands than other religions.

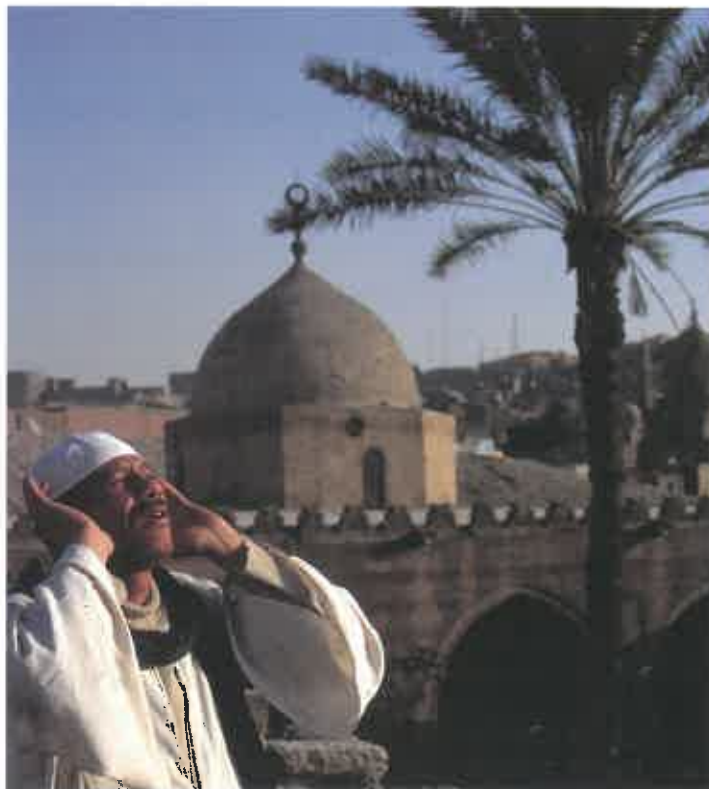
**PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS.** Protestant Christian denominations vary in geographic structure from extremely autonomous to somewhat hierarchical. The Episcopalian, Lutheran, and most Methodist churches have hierarchical structures, somewhat comparable to the Roman Catholic Church. Extremely autonomous denominations such as Baptists and United Church of Christ are organized into self-governing congregations. Each congregation establishes the precise form of worship and selects the leadership.

Presbyterian churches represent an intermediate degree of autonomy. Individual churches are united in a presbytery, several of which in turn are governed by a synod, with a general assembly as ultimate authority over all churches. Each Presbyterian church is governed by an elected board of directors with lay members.

**ETHNIC RELIGIONS.** Judaism and Hinduism also have no centralized structure of religious control. To conduct a full service, Judaism merely requires the presence of 10 adult males. (Females count in some Jewish communities.)

Hinduism is even more autonomous because worship is usually done alone or with others in the household. Hindus share ideas primarily through undertaking pilgrimages and reading traditional writings.

▼ **FIGURE 6-41 CALLING MUSLIMS TO PRAYER, CAIRO, EGYPT**  
Muslims are called to prayer by a muezzin, who recites the *shahadah*.



### CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 3

#### Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?

- ✓ Religious structures, such as churches and mosques, are prominent features of the landscape.
- ✓ Some religions encourage pilgrimages to holy places.
- ✓ Ethnic religions are more closely tied to their local physical environment than are universalizing religions.
- ✓ The calendar typically revolves around the physical environment in ethnic religions and the founder's life in universalizing religions.
- ✓ Some religions have hierarchical administrative structures, whereas others emphasize local autonomy.



## KEY ISSUE 4

# Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?

- Religion versus Government Policies
- Religion versus Religion

### Learning Outcome 6.4.1

Understand reasons for religious conflicts arising from government policies.

The twentieth century was a century of global conflict—two world wars during the first half of the century and the Cold War between supporters of democracy and communism during the second half. With the end of the Cold War, the threat of global conflict has receded in the twenty-first century, but local conflicts have increased in areas of cultural diversity, as will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

An element of cultural diversity that has led to conflict in many localities is religion. The attempt by intense adherents of one religion to organize Earth's surface can conflict with the spatial expression of other religious or nonreligious ideas.

Contributing to more intense religious conflict has been a resurgence of religious **fundamentalism**, which is a literal interpretation and a strict and intense adherence to basic principles of a religion (or a religious branch, denomination, or sect). In a world increasingly dominated by a global culture and economy, religious fundamentalism is one of the most important ways in which a group can maintain a distinctive cultural identity. A group convinced that its religious view is the correct one may spatially intrude upon the territory controlled by other religious groups.

## Religion versus Government Policies

Religious groups may oppose government policies seen as promoting social change conflicting with traditional religious values. The role of religion in organizing Earth's surface has diminished in some societies because of political and economic change.

Islam has been particularly affected by a perceived conflict between religious values and modernization of the economy. Hinduism also has been forced to react to new nonreligious ideas from the West. Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam have all been challenged by Communist governments that diminish the importance of religion in

society. Yet, in recent years, religious principles have become increasingly important in the political organization of countries, especially where a branch of Christianity or Islam is the prevailing religion.

## RELIGION VERSUS SOCIAL CHANGE

In developing countries, participation in the global economy and culture can expose local residents to values and beliefs originating in developed countries of North America and Europe. North Americans and Europeans may not view economic development as incompatible with religious values, but many religious adherents in developing countries do, especially where Christianity is not the predominant religion.

**TALIBAN VERSUS WESTERN VALUES.** When the Taliban gained power in Afghanistan in 1996, many Afghans welcomed them as preferable to the corrupt and brutal warlords who had been running the country. U.S. and other Western officials also welcomed them as strong defenders against a possible new invasion by Russia.

The Taliban (which means “religious students”) had run Islamic Knowledge Movement [religious] schools, mosques, shrines, and other religious and social services since the seventh century A.D., shortly after the arrival of Islam in Afghanistan. Once in control of Afghanistan's government in the 1990s, the Taliban imposed very strict laws inspired by Islamic values as the Taliban interpreted them:

- “Western, non-Islamic” leisure activities were banned, such as playing music, flying kites, watching television, and surfing the Internet.
- Soccer stadiums were converted to settings for executions and floggings.
- Men were beaten for shaving their beards and women stoned for committing adultery.
- Homosexuals were buried alive, and prostitutes were hanged in front of large audiences.
- Thieves had their hands cut off, and women wearing nail polish had their fingers cut off.

Western values were not the only targets: Enormous Buddhist statues as old as the second century A.D. were destroyed in 2001 because they were worshipped as “graven images,” in violation of Islam (Figure 6-42). The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice enforced the laws. The Taliban believed that they had been called by Allah to purge Afghanistan of sin and violence and make it a pure Islamic state. Islamic scholars criticized the Taliban as poorly educated in Islamic law and history and for misreading the Quran.

A U.S.-led coalition overthrew the Taliban in 2001 and replaced it with a democratically elected government. However, the Taliban was able to regroup and resume its fight to regain control of Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan (see Chapter 8).



▲ **FIGURE 6-42 TALIBAN DESTRUCTION** (top) An image taken in 1998 of a 55-meter (180-foot) statue of Buddha in Bamiyan, Afghanistan. (bottom) The empty niche after the Taliban destroyed the statue in 2001.

### Pause and Reflect 6.4.1

**Why did the Taliban destroy priceless artistic works from Afghanistan's ancient past?**

**HINDUISM VERSUS SOCIAL EQUALITY.** Hinduism has been strongly challenged since the 1800s, when British colonial administrators introduced their social and moral concepts to India. The most vulnerable aspect of the Hindu religion was its rigid caste system, which was the class or distinct hereditary order into which a Hindu was assigned, according to religious law.

The caste system apparently originated around 1500 B.C., when Aryans invaded India from the west. The Aryans divided themselves into four castes that developed strong differences in social and economic position:

- Brahmins, the priests and top administrators (Figure 6-43)
- Kshatriyas, or warriors
- Vaisyas, or merchants
- Shudras, or agricultural workers and artisans

The Shudras occupied a distinctly lower status than the other three castes. Below the four castes were the Dalits, outcasts, or untouchables, who did work considered too dirty for other castes. In theory, the untouchables were



▲ **FIGURE 6-43 HINDU CASTE** Young boys of the Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaisya castes perform a ceremony to mark the beginning of their studies.

descended from the indigenous people who dwelled in India prior to the Aryan conquest.

Over the centuries, these original castes split into thousands of subcastes. Until recently, social relations among the castes were limited, and the rights of non-Brahmins, especially Dalits, were restricted. In Hinduism, because everyone was different, it was natural that each individual should belong to a particular caste or position in the social order. British administrators and Christian missionaries pointed out the shortcomings of the caste system, such as neglect of the untouchables' health and economic problems.

The type of Hinduism practiced depends in part on an individual's caste. A high-caste Brahman may practice a form of Hinduism based on knowledge of relatively obscure historical texts. At the other end of the caste system, a low-caste illiterate in a rural village may perform religious rituals without a highly developed set of written explanations for them.

The rigid caste system has been considerably relaxed in recent years. The Indian government classifies untouchables, shudras, and other historically discriminated castes as "scheduled castes." They comprise 16 percent of India's total population and are now often called Dalit (Figure 6-46). Consciousness of caste persists: A government plan to devise a quota system designed to give untouchables more places in the country's universities generated strong opposition. People looking for a marriage partner advertise their caste and the castes they are willing to consider for a spouse.

▼ **FIGURE 6-44 DALIT** A Dalit cleans the streets in India.





## RELIGION VERSUS COMMUNISM

### Learning Outcome 6.4.2

Summarize reasons for conflicts between religions.

Organized religion was challenged in the twentieth century by the rise of Communism in Eastern Europe and Asia. The three religions most affected were Orthodox Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. Communist regimes generally discouraged religious belief and practice.

**CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM VERSUS THE FORMER SOVIET UNION.** In 1721, Czar Peter the Great made the Russian Orthodox Church a part of the Russian government (Figure 6-45). The patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church was replaced by a 12-member committee, known as the Holy Synod, nominated by the czar.

Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which overthrew the czar, the Communist government of the Soviet Union pursued antireligious programs. Karl Marx had called religion “the opium of the people,” a view shared by V. I. Lenin and other early Communist leaders. Marxism became the official doctrine of the Soviet Union, so religious doctrine was a potential threat to the success of the revolution.

The Soviet government in 1918 eliminated the official church–state connection that Peter the Great had forged. All church buildings and property were nationalized and could be used only with local government permission. People’s religious beliefs could not be destroyed overnight, but the role of organized religion in Soviet life could be reduced—and it was. The Orthodox religion retained adherents in the Soviet Union, especially among the elderly, but younger people generally had little contact with the church beyond attending a service perhaps once a year. With religious organizations prevented from conducting social and cultural work, religion dwindled in daily life.

The end of Communist rule in the late twentieth century brought a religious revival in Eastern Europe,

▼ **FIGURE 6-45 ST BASIL’S, MOSCOW** A Russian Orthodox cathedral has stood at the center of Moscow since the sixteenth century. The communists turned it into a museum.



especially where Roman Catholicism is the most prevalent branch of Christianity, including Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Property confiscated by the Communist governments reverted to Church ownership, and attendance at church services increased.

In Central Asia, countries that were former parts of the Soviet Union—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—most people are Muslims. These newly independent countries are struggling to determine the extent to which laws should be rewritten to conform to Islamic custom rather than to the secular tradition inherited from the Soviet Union.

### Pause and Reflect 6.4.2

How did the end of communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe affect religion?

### BUDDHISM VERSUS SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES.

In Southeast Asia, Buddhists were hurt by the long Vietnam War—waged between the French and later by the Americans, on one side, and Communist groups on the other. Neither antagonist was particularly sympathetic to Buddhists. U.S. air raids in Laos and Cambodia destroyed many Buddhist shrines, and other shrines were vandalized by Vietnamese and by the Khmer Rouge Cambodian Communists. On a number of occasions, Buddhists immolated (burned) themselves to protest policies of the South Vietnamese government.

The current Communist governments in Southeast Asia have discouraged religious activities and permitted monuments to decay, most notably the Angkor Wat complex in Cambodia, considered one of the world’s most beautiful Buddhist and Hindu structures (Figure 6-46). In any event, these countries do not have the funds necessary to restore the structures, although international organizations have helped.



▲ **FIGURE 6-46 VANDALIZING RELIGIOUS SHRINES** Angkor Wat, Cambodia, considered one of the world’s most important Hindu and Buddhist shrines, was vandalized by the Khmer Rouge.

## Religion versus Religion

Refer to the map of world religions near the beginning of this chapter (Figure 6-3). Conflicts are most likely to occur where colors change, indicating a boundary between two religious groups.

Two long-standing conflicts involving religious groups are in Northern Ireland and Southwest Asia.

### RELIGIOUS WARS IN IRELAND

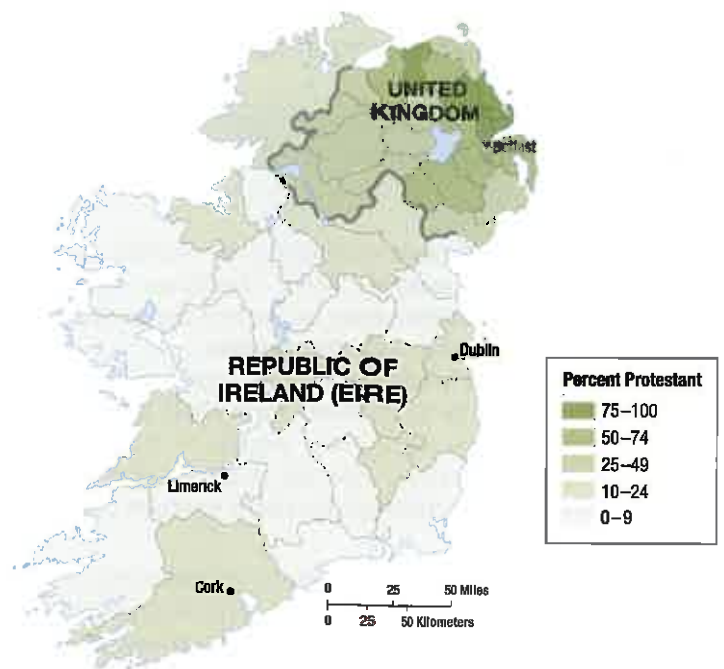
The most troublesome religious boundary in Western Europe lies on the island of Eire (Ireland). The Republic of Ireland, which occupies five-sixths of the island, is 87 percent Roman Catholic, but the island's northern one-sixth, which is part of the United Kingdom rather than Ireland, is 46 percent Protestant and 40 percent Roman Catholic, according to the 2001 census. (The remaining 14 percent stated no religion or did not respond.)

The entire island was an English colony for many centuries and was made part of the United Kingdom in 1801. Agitation for independence from Britain increased in Ireland during the nineteenth century, especially after poor economic conditions and famine in the 1840s led to mass emigration. Following a succession of bloody confrontations, Ireland became a self-governing dominion within the British Empire in 1921. Complete independence was declared in 1937, and a republic was created in 1949. When most of Ireland became independent, a majority in six northern counties voted to remain in the United Kingdom. Protestants, who comprised the majority in Northern Ireland, preferred to be part of the predominantly Protestant United Kingdom rather than join the predominantly Roman Catholic Republic of Ireland (Figure 6-47).

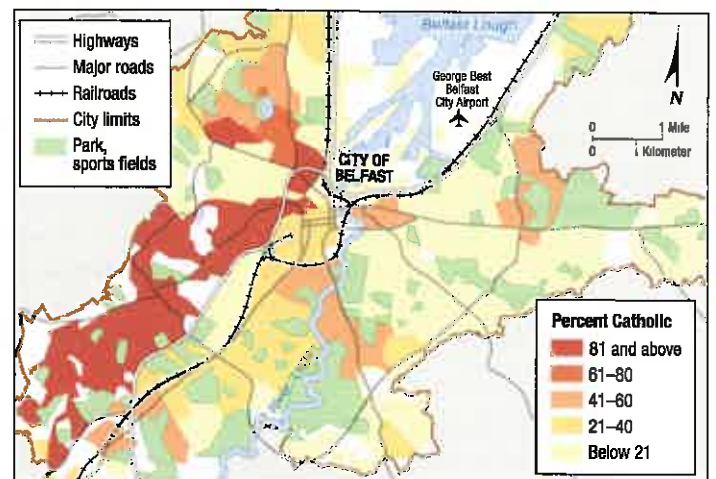
Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland have been victimized by discriminatory practices, such as exclusion from higher-paying jobs and better schools. The capital Belfast is highly segregated, with predominantly Catholic neighborhoods to the west and Protestant neighborhoods to the east (Figure 6-48). Demonstrations by Roman Catholics protesting discrimination began in 1968. Since then, more than 3,000 have been killed in Northern Ireland—both Protestants and Roman Catholics—in a continuing cycle of demonstrations and protests.

A small number of Roman Catholics in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland joined the Irish Republican Army (IRA), a militant organization dedicated to achieving Irish national unity by whatever means available, including violence. Similarly, a scattering of Protestants created extremist organizations to fight the IRA, including the Ulster Defense Force (UDF).

Although the overwhelming majority of Northern Ireland's Roman Catholics and Protestants are willing to live peacefully with the other religious group, extremists disrupt daily life for everyone and do well in elections. As long as most Protestants are firmly committed to remaining in the United Kingdom and most Roman Catholics are



**▲ FIGURE 6-47 DISTRIBUTION OF CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS IN IRELAND, 1911** Long a colony of England, Ireland became a self-governing dominion within the British Empire in 1921. In 1937, it became a completely independent country, but 26 districts in the north of Ireland chose to remain part of the United Kingdom. The Republic of Ireland today is 87 percent Roman Catholic, whereas Northern Ireland has a Protestant majority. The boundary between Roman Catholics and Protestants does not coincide precisely with the international border, so Northern Ireland includes some communities that are predominantly Roman Catholic. This is the root of a religious conflict that continues today.



**▲ FIGURE 6-48 DISTRIBUTION OF CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS IN BELFAST** Belfast, Northern Ireland, is highly segregated. Most Roman Catholics live to the west, and Protestants to the east.

equally committed to union with the Republic of Ireland, peaceful settlement appears difficult. Peace agreements implemented in 1999 provided for the sharing of power, but the British government has suspended the arrangement several times because of violations.



## RELIGIOUS WARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

### Learning Outcome 6.4.3

#### Analyze reasons for religious conflict in the Middle East.

Conflict in the Middle East is among the world's longest standing and most intractable. Jews, Christians, and Muslims have fought for 2,000 years to control the same small strip of land in the Eastern Mediterranean.

To some extent, the hostility among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Middle East stems from their similar heritage. All three groups trace their origins to Abraham in the Hebrew Bible narrative, but the religions diverged in ways that have made it difficult for them to share the same territory:

- *Judaism*, an ethnic religion, makes a special claim to the territory it calls the Promised Land. The major events in the development of Judaism took place there, and the religion's customs and rituals acquired meaning from the agricultural life of the ancient Hebrew tribe. Descendants of 10 of Jacob's sons, plus 2 of his grandsons, constituted the 12 tribes of Hebrews who emigrated from Egypt in the Exodus narrative. Each received a portion of Canaan. After the Romans gained control of the area, which they called the province of Palestine, they dispersed the Jews from Palestine, and only a handful were permitted to live in the region until the twentieth century.
- *Islam* became the most widely practiced religion in Palestine after the Muslim army conquered it in the seventh century A.D. Muslims regard Jerusalem as their third holiest city, after Makkah and Madinah, because it is the place from which Muhammad is thought to have ascended to heaven.
- *Christianity* considers Palestine the Holy Land and Jerusalem the Holy City because the major events in Jesus's life, death, and Resurrection were concentrated there. Most inhabitants of Palestine accepted Christianity after the religion was officially adopted by the Roman Empire and before the Muslim army conquest in the seventh century.

**CRUSADES.** In the seventh century, Muslims, now also called Arabs because they came from the Arabian peninsula, captured most of the Middle East, including Palestine and Jerusalem. The Arab Muslim presence the Arabic language across the Middle East and diffused subsequently converted most of the people from Christianity to Islam.

The Arab Muslims moved west across North Africa and invaded Europe at Gibraltar in A.D. 711 (see Figure 6-20). The army conquered most of the Iberian Peninsula, crossed the Pyrenees Mountains a few years later, and for a time occupied much of present-day France. Its initial advance in Europe was halted by the Franks (a West Germanic people), led by Charles Martel, at Poitiers, France, in 732. The

Muslims made further gains in Europe in subsequent years and continued to control portions of present-day Spain until 1492, but Martel's victory ensured that Christianity rather than Islam would be Europe's dominant religion.

To the east, Ottoman Turks captured Eastern Orthodox Christianity's most important city, Constantinople (present-day Istanbul in Turkey), in 1453 and advanced a few years later into southeast Europe, as far north as present-day Bosnia & Herzegovina. The recent civil war in that country is a legacy of the fifteenth-century Muslim invasion (see Chapter 7).

To recapture the Holy Land from its Muslim conquerors, European Christians launched a series of military campaigns, known as Crusades, over a 150-year period. Crusaders captured Jerusalem from the Muslims in 1099 during the First Crusade, lost it in 1187 (which led to the Third Crusade), regained it in 1229 as part of a treaty ending the Sixth Crusade, and lost it again in 1244.

### Pause and Reflect 6.4.3

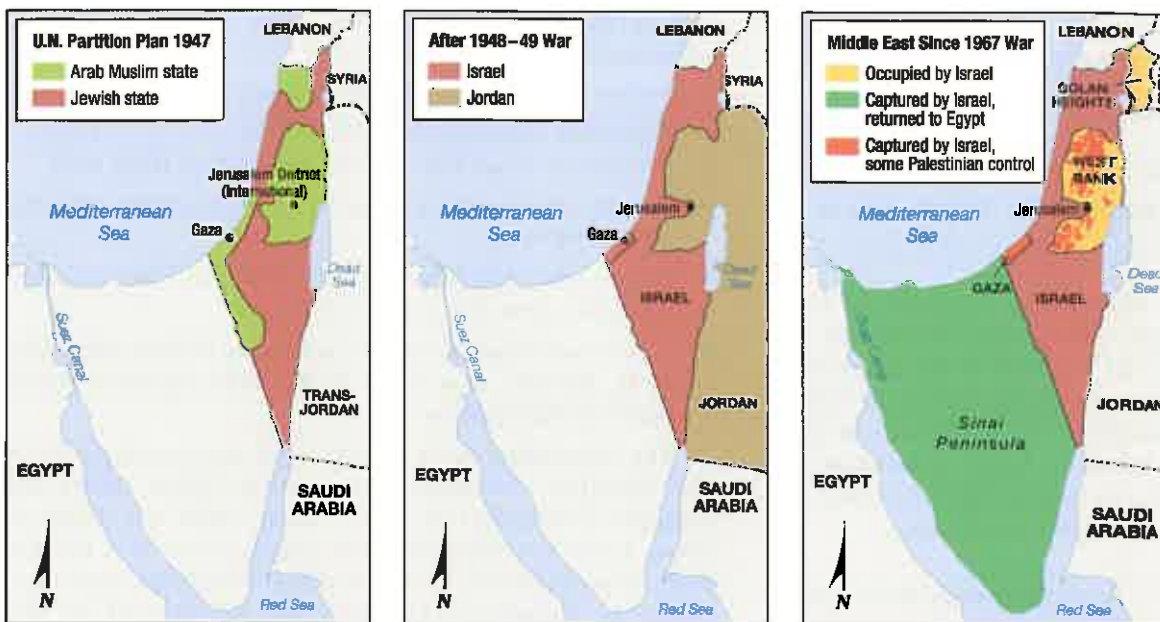
**Why is a narrow strip of land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea so important in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?**

**PARTITION OF PALESTINE.** The Muslim Ottoman Empire controlled Palestine for most of the four centuries between 1516 and 1917. Upon the empire's defeat in World War I, the United Kingdom took over Palestine, under a mandate from the League of Nations, and later from the United Nations.

For a few years, the British allowed some Jews to return to Palestine, but immigration was restricted again during the 1930s, in response to intense pressure by Arabs in the region. As violence initiated by both Jewish and Muslim settlers escalated after World War II, the British announced their intention to withdraw from Palestine. The United Nations voted in 1947 to partition Palestine into two independent states, one Jewish and one Muslim (Figure 6-49, left). Jerusalem was to be an international city, open to all religions, and run by the United Nations.

**WARS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND NEIGHBORS.** When the British withdrew in 1948, Jews declared an independent state of Israel within the boundaries prescribed by the UN resolution. Over the next quarter-century, Israel fought four wars with its neighbors:

- **1948–1949 Independence War.** The day after Israel declared independence, the neighboring Arab Muslim states declared war. Israel survived the attack, and the combatants signed an armistice in 1949. Israel's boundaries were extended beyond the UN partition, including the western suburbs of Jerusalem. Jordan gained control of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including the Old City, where holy places are clustered. Egypt gained the Gaza Strip.
- **1956 Suez War.** Egypt seized the Suez Canal, a key shipping route between Europe and Asia that had been



◀ **FIGURE 6-49**  
**BOUNDARY CHANGES IN ISRAEL/PALESTINE** (left) The 1947 UN partition plan, (center) Israel after the 1948–1949 war, (right) Israel and its neighbors since the 1967 Six-Day War.

built and controlled up until then by France and the United Kingdom. Egypt also blockaded international waterways near its shores that Israeli ships were using. Israel, France, and the United Kingdom attacked Egypt and got the waterways reopened, although Egypt retained control of the Suez Canal.

- **1967 Six-Day War.** Israel's neighbors massed a quarter-million troops along the borders and again blocked Israeli ships from using international waterways. In retaliation, Israel launched a surprise attack, destroying the coalition's air forces. Israel captured territory:
  - From Jordan, the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank (the territory west of the Jordan River taken by Jordan in the 1948–1949 war) (Figure 6-50)
  - From Syria, the Golan Heights
  - From Egypt, the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula
- **1973 Yom Kippur War.** A surprise attack on Israel by its neighbors took place on the holiest day of the year for Jews. The war ended without a change in boundaries.

- **1979 Peace Treaty.** Egypt's President Anwar Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed a peace treaty in 1979, following a series of meetings with U.S. President Jimmy Carter at Camp David, Maryland. Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, and in return Egypt recognized Israel's right to exist. Sadat was assassinated by Egyptian soldiers, who were extremist Muslims opposed to compromising with Israel, but his successor Hosni Mubarak carried out the terms of the treaty. A half-century after the Six-Day War, the status of the other territories occupied by Israel has still not been settled.

▶ **FIGURE 6-50 WEST BANK SETTLEMENT** In this Google Earth image from 2010, the Israeli settlement Betar Illit is under construction (top of the photo) in the West Bank, on a hillside overlooking the Palestinian villages Nahalin (bottom) and Husan (top right).





## CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES OF THE HOLY LAND

### Learning Outcome 6.4.4

#### Describe differences in geographic frameworks in the Middle East.

After the 1973 war, the Palestinians emerged as Israel's principal opponent. Egypt and Jordan renounced their claims to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, respectively, and recognized the Palestinians as the legitimate rulers of these territories. The Palestinians in turn also saw themselves as the legitimate rulers of Israel. Palestinian and Israeli perspectives over the future of Palestine/Israel have not been reconciled over the past four decades.

**ISRAELI PERSPECTIVES.** In dealing with its neighbors, Israel considers two elements of the local landscape especially meaningful:

- Israel is a very small country (smaller than New Hampshire), with a Jewish majority, surrounded by a region of hostile Muslim Arabs encompassing more than 25 million square kilometers (10 million square miles). Israel's people live extremely close to international borders, making them vulnerable to attack.
- Palestine is divided into three narrow, roughly parallel physical regions (Figure 6-51):
  - A coastal plain along the Mediterranean Sea
  - A series of hills reaching elevations above 1,000 meters (3,300 feet)
  - The Jordan River valley, much of which is below sea level

The UN plan for the partition of Palestine in 1947 (as modified by the armistice ending the 1948–1949 war) allocated most of the coastal plain to Israel, whereas Jordan took most of the hills between the coastal plain and the Jordan River valley, a region generally called the West Bank (of the Jordan River). Farther north, Israel's territory extended eastward to the Jordan River valley, but Syria controlled the highlands east of the valley, known as the Golan Heights.

Jordan and Syria used the hills between 1948 and 1967 as staging areas to attack Israeli settlements on the adjacent coastal plain and in the Jordan River valley. Israel captured these highlands during the 1967 war to stop attacks on the lowland population concentrations. Israel still has military control over the Golan Heights and West Bank a generation later, yet attacks by Palestinians against Israeli citizens have continued.

Israeli Jews were divided for many years between those who wished to retain the occupied territories and those who wished to make compromises with the Palestinians. In recent years, a large majority of Israelis have supported construction of a barrier to deter Palestinian attacks (refer to the Sustainability and Inequality in Our Global Village box).

**PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVES.** Five groups of people consider themselves Palestinians:

- People living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem territories captured by Israel in 1967
- Citizens of Israel who are Muslims rather than Jews
- People who fled from Israel to other countries after the 1948–1949 war
- People who fled from the West Bank or Gaza to other countries after the 1967 Six-Day War
- Citizens of other countries, especially Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, who identify themselves as Palestinians

The Palestinian fight against Israel was coordinated by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), under the longtime leadership of Yassir Arafat, until his death in 2004. Israel has permitted the organization of a limited form of government in much of the West Bank and Gaza, called the Palestinian Authority, but Palestinians are not satisfied with either the territory or the power they have received thus far.

The Palestinians have been divided by sharp differences, reflected in a struggle for power between the Fatah and Hamas parties. Some Palestinians, especially those aligned with the Fatah Party, are willing to recognize the state of Israel with its Jewish majority in exchange for return of all territory taken by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War. Other Palestinians, especially those aligned with the Hamas Party, do not recognize the right of Israel to exist

▼ **FIGURE 6-51 ISRAEL/PALESTINE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY** The physical geography of Israel/Palestine consists of narrow coastal lowlands and interior highlands interrupted by the Jordan River valley.



and want to continue fighting for control of the entire territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The United States, European countries, and Israel consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization.

After capturing the West Bank from Jordan in 1967, Israel permitted Jewish settlers to construct more than 100 settlements in the territory (refer to Figure 6-51 in the Sustainability and Inequality in our Global Village feature). Some Israelis built settlements in the West Bank because they regarded the territory as an integral part of the biblical Jewish homeland, known as Judea and Samaria. Others migrated

to the settlements because of a shortage of affordable housing inside Israel's pre-1967 borders. Jewish settlers comprise about 10 percent of the West Bank population, and Palestinians see their immigration as a hostile act. To protect the settlers, Israel has military control over most of the West Bank.

#### Pause and Reflect 6.4.4

What is the difference in elevation between Hebron (the largest city in the West Bank) and Tel Aviv (the largest city in Israel)?

## SUSTAINABILITY AND INEQUALITY IN OUR GLOBAL VILLAGE

### West Bank Barrier: Security Fence or Segregation Wall

Constructing a barrier to keep out the unwanted is one of the oldest of geographic tools. The United States is using this tool today, building a fence along the border with Mexico (refer to Figure 3-39 in Chapter 3).

To deter Palestinian suicide bombers from crossing into Israel, the Israeli government has constructed barriers along the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The West Bank barrier is especially controversial because it places on Israel's side around 10 percent of the land, home to between 10,000 and 50,000 Palestinians,

according to various sources (Figure 6-52).

According to Israel's government, the routes of the barrier were selected for two technical reasons:

- The area had to be wide enough to make construction of a barrier 60-meters (200 feet) wide feasible.
- High ground was placed on the Israeli side.

Critics charge that the circuitous route was chosen to encompass most of the 327,000 Israelis living

in West Bank settlements that most other countries consider illegal.

Naming the structure is controversial. Israel calls the barrier a "security fence," and Palestinians call it a "racial segregation wall." Neutral sources call it a "separation barrier."

The Israel Supreme Court has twice declared portions of the route illegal because Palestinian rights were violated. The barrier made daily life unsustainable for some Palestinians. They could no longer reach their fields, water sources, and places of work.



▲ FIGURE 6-52 WEST BANK SEPARATION BARRIER (left) Route of the barrier (right) The barrier separating Palestinian land (foreground) from Jewish settlement near Jerusalem (rear)



## JERUSALEM: CONTESTED GEOGRAPHY

### Learning Outcome 6.4.5

**Explain the importance of Jerusalem to Jews and Muslims.**

One of the most intractable obstacles to comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the status of Jerusalem (Figure 6-53). As long as any one religion—Jewish, Muslim, or Christian—maintains exclusive political control over Jerusalem, the other religious groups will not be satisfied. But Israelis have no intention of giving up control of the Old City of Jerusalem, and Palestinians have no intention of giving up their claim to it.

The geography of Jerusalem makes it difficult if not impossible to settle the long-standing religious conflicts. The difficulty is that the most sacred space in Jerusalem for Muslims was literally built on top of the most sacred space for Jews.

**JUDAISM'S JERUSALEM.** Jerusalem is especially holy to Jews as the location of the Temple, their center of worship in ancient times. The First Temple, built by King Solomon in approximately 960 B.C. was destroyed by the

Babylonians in 586 B.C. After the Persian Empire, led by Cyrus the Great, gained control of Jerusalem in 614 B.C., Jews were allowed to build a Second Temple in 516 B.C. The Romans destroyed the Jewish Second Temple in A.D. 70. The Western Wall of the Temple survives.

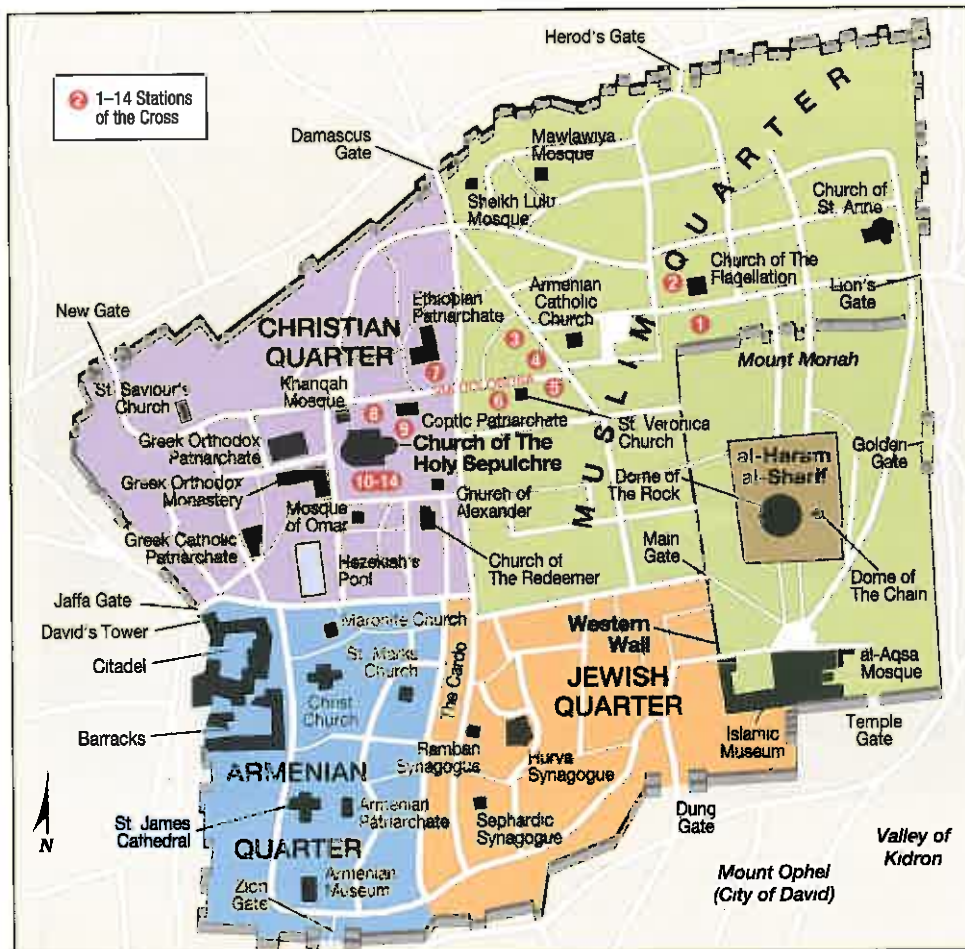
Christians and Muslims call the Western Wall the Wailing Wall because for many centuries Jews were allowed to visit the surviving Western Wall only once a year to lament the Temple's destruction. After Israel captured the entire city of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War, it removed the barriers that had prevented Jews from visiting and living in the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Western Wall. The Western Wall soon became a site for daily prayers by observant Jews.

**ISLAM'S JERUSALEM.** The most important Muslim structure in Jerusalem is the Dome of the Rock, built in 691 (Figure 6-54). Muslims believe that the large rock beneath the building's dome is the place from which Muhammad ascended to heaven, as well as the altar on which Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac (according to Jews and Christians) or his son Ishmael (according to Muslims). Immediately south of the Dome of the Rock is the al-Aqsa Mosque. The challenge facing Jews and Muslims is that al-Aqsa Mosque was built on the site of the ruins of the Jewish Second Temple. Thus, the surviving Western Wall of the Jewish Temple is situated immediately beneath holy Muslim structures.

Israel allows Muslims unlimited access to that religion's holy structures in Jerusalem and some control over them. Ramps and passages patrolled by Palestinian guards provide Muslims access to the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque without having to walk in front of the Western Wall, where Jews are praying. However, because the holy Muslim structures sit literally on top of the holy Jewish structure, the two sets of holy structures cannot be logically divided by a line on a map (Figure 6-55).

The ultimate obstacle to comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the status of Jerusalem. As long as any one religion—Jewish, Muslim, or Christian—maintains exclusive political control over Jerusalem, the other religious groups will not be satisfied. But Israelis have no intention of giving up control of the Old City of Jerusalem, and Palestinians have no intention of giving up their claim to it.

**FIGURE 6-53 OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM** The Old City of Jerusalem is less than 1 square kilometer (0.4 square miles). It is divided into four quarters.





### Pause and Reflect 6.4.5

Why are the Western Wall important in Judaism and the Dome of the Rock important in Islam?

#### CHECK-IN: KEY ISSUE 4

#### Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?

- ✓ Religious groups have opposed government policies, especially those of Communist governments.
- ✓ Religious principles seen as representing Western social values have been opposed by groups in Asia.
- ✓ An especially long-standing and intractable conflict among religious has been centered in Israel/Palestine, an area considered holy by Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

▲ **FIGURE 6-54 DOME OF THE ROCK** The large rock, which is under the golden dome of the Dome of the Rock is believed by Jews, Christians, and Muslims to be the place where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son. The son to be sacrificed was Isaac according to Jews and Christians, and Ishmael according to Muslims.



▲ **FIGURE 6-55 WESTERN WALL AND DOME OF THE ROCK** A crowd of Jews are praying at the Western Wall (right), situated immediately below the mount containing Islam's Dome of the Rock (top left) and al-Aqsa Mosque (top right).



# Summary and Review

## KEY ISSUE 1

### Where Are Religions Distributed?

Religions are classified as universalizing or ethnic. The world has three large universalizing religions—Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, each of which is divided into branches and denominations. Hinduism is the largest ethnic religion.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.1.1:** Describe the distribution of the major religions.

- Christianity predominates in Europe and the Western Hemisphere, Buddhism in East Asia, Hinduism in South Asia, and Islam in other regions of Asia, as well as North Africa.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.1.2:** Describe the distribution of the major branches of Christianity.

- Christianity is divided into three main branches: Roman Catholic, which predominates in southwest Europe and Latin America; Protestant, which predominates in northwest Europe and North America; and Orthodox, which predominates in Eastern Europe.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.1.3:** Identify the major branches of Islam and Buddhism.

- Islam's two major branches are Sunni and Shiite. The two largest branches of Buddhism are Mahayana and Theravada.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.1.4:** Describe the distribution of the largest ethnic religions.

- Hinduism is clustered primarily in India. Other ethnic religions with the largest numbers of followers are clustered elsewhere in Asia.

**THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 6.1:** Islam seems strange and threatening to some people in predominantly Christian countries. To what extent is this attitude shaped by knowledge of the teachings of Muhammad and the Quran, and to what extent is it based on lack of knowledge of the religion?

**GOOGLE EARTH 6.1:** The large square in front of Saint Peter's Basilica, in the Vatican, is the length of approximately how many football fields?



## Key Terms

**Agnosticism** (p. 184) Belief that nothing can be known about whether God exists.

**Animism** (p. 191) Belief that objects, such as plants and stones, or natural events, like thunderstorms and earthquakes, have a discrete spirit and conscious life.

**Atheism** (p. 184) Belief that God does not exist.

**Autonomous religion** (p. 211) A religion that does not have a central authority but shares ideas and cooperates informally.

**Branch** (p. 186) A large and fundamental division within a religion.

**Caste** (p. 213) The class or distinct hereditary order into which a Hindu is assigned, according to religious law.

## KEY ISSUE 2

### Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?

A universalizing religion has a known origin and clear patterns of diffusion, whereas ethnic religions typically have unknown origins and little diffusion.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.2.1:** Describe the process of origin of universalizing religions.

- A universalizing religion originated with a single historical individual.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.2.2:** Understand differences in the origin of universalizing and ethnic religions.

- Ethnic religions typically have unknown origins.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.2.3:** Describe the process of diffusion of universalizing religions.

- Universalizing religions have diffused from their place of origin to other regions of the world.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.2.4:** Compare the diffusion of universalizing and ethnic religions.

- Ethnic religions typically do not diffuse far from their place of origin.

**THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 6.2:** People carry their religious beliefs with them when they migrate. Over time, change occurs in the regions from which most U.S. immigrants originate and in the U.S. regions where they settle. How has the distribution of U.S. religious groups been affected by these changes?

**GOOGLE EARTH 6.2:** Fly to 80 Ft Tall Lord Buddha, Bodhgaya, Bihar, India, click on 3D Buildings, and switch to ground-level view. Pan around the statue, what other Buddhist structure is visible in 3D?



**Cosmogony** (p. 204) A set of religious beliefs concerning the origin of the universe.

**Denomination** (p. 186) A division of a branch that unites a number of local congregations into a single legal and administrative body.

**Ethnic religion** (p. 184) A religion with a relatively concentrated spatial distribution whose principles are likely to be based on the physical characteristics of the particular location in which its adherents are concentrated.

**Fundamentalism** (p. 212) Literal interpretation and strict adherence to basic principles of a religion (or a religious branch, denomination, or sect).

**Ghetto** (p. 199) During the Middle Ages, a neighborhood in a city set up by law to be inhabited only by Jews, now used to denote a section of a city in which members of any minority group live because of social, legal, or economic pressure.

**Hierarchical religion** (p. 210) A religion in which a central authority exercises a high degree of control.

**Missionary** (p. 196) An individual who helps to diffuse a universalizing religion.

**Monotheism** (p. 191) The doctrine of or belief in the existence of only one god.

## KEY ISSUE 3

**Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?**

Holy places and holidays in a universalizing religion are related to events in the life of its founder or prophet and are related to the local physical geography in an ethnic religion. Religions affect the landscape in other ways. Religious communities are built, religious toponyms mark the landscape, and extensive tracts are reserved for burying the dead.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.3.1:** Compare the role of places of worship in various religions.

- Religions have places of worship, but these places play differing roles for the various religions.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.3.2:** Explain why places are sacred in universalizing religions.

- In universalizing religions, holy places derive from events in the founder's life.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.3.3:** Analyze the importance of the physical geography in ethnic religions.

- In ethnic religions, holy places derive from the physical geography where the religion's adherents are clustered.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.3.4:** Describe ways in which the landscape is used in religiously significant ways.

- Religions have varying practices for handling the dead.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.3.5:** Compare the calendars and holidays of ethnic and universalizing religions.

- In ethnic religions, holidays derive from the physical geography where the religion is clustered.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.3.6:** Compare the administrative organization of hierarchical and locally autonomous religions.

- Religions can be divided into those that are administered through a hierarchy and those that are locally autonomous.

**THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 6.3:** Some Christians believe that they should be prepared to carry the word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ to people who have not been exposed to them, at any time and at any place. Are missionary activities equally likely to occur at any time and at any place, or are some places more suited than others? Why?

**GOOGLE EARTH 6.3:**

What is the physical environment around Badrinath Temple, one of Hindu's holiest temples, to Vishnu, in Badrinath, India?



**Pagan** (p. 190) A follower of a polytheistic religion.

**Pilgrimage** (p. 202) A journey to a place considered sacred for religious purposes.

**Polytheism** (p. 191) Belief in or worship of more than one god.

**Sect** (p. 186) A relatively small group that has broken away from an established denomination.

**Solstice** (p. 205) An astronomical event that happens twice each year, when the tilt of Earth's axis is most inclined toward or away from the Sun, causing the Sun's apparent position in the sky to reach its most northernmost or southernmost extreme, and resulting in the shortest and longest days of the year.

**Syncretic** (p. 190) A religion that combines several traditions.

**Universalizing religion** (p. 184) A religion that attempts to appeal to all people, not just those living in a particular location.

## KEY ISSUE 4

**Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?**

With Earth's surface dominated by four large religions, expansion of the territory occupied by one religion may reduce the territory of another. In addition, religions must compete for control of territory with nonreligious ideas, notably communism and economic modernization.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.4.1:** Understand reasons for religious conflicts arising from government policies.

- Religions can come into conflict with government policies, social changes, or other religions.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.4.2:** Summarize reasons for conflicts between religions.

- Conflicts among religions have been especially strong in Ireland and in the Middle East.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.4.3:** Analyze reasons for religious conflict in the Middle East.

- Religious conflict in the Middle East goes back thousands of years. Jews, Muslims, and Christians have fought for control of the Middle East land that is now part of Israel/Palestine.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.4.4:** Describe differences in geographic frameworks in the Middle East.

- Combatants in the Middle East have different perspectives on the division of land in the area.

**LEARNING OUTCOME 6.4.5:** Explain the importance of Jerusalem to Jews and Muslims.

- The most sacred space in Jerusalem for Muslims was built on top of the most sacred space for Jews.

**THINKING GEOGRAPHICALLY 6.4:** Sharp differences in demographic characteristics, such as natural increase, crude birth, and migration rates, can be seen among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Middle East and between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. How might demographic differences affect future relationships among the groups in these two regions?

**GOOGLE EARTH 6.4:** The Abraj Al Bait (Royal Hotel Clock Tower) in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the tallest hotel in the world, towers over what holy Muslim structure described in this chapter?



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# Chapter

# 7

# Ethnicities



Why was this bridge blown up? Page 250



Why are these people burning torches on a mountain? Page 243

## KEY ISSUE 1

Where Are Ethnicities Distributed?



### A World of Ethnicities p. 227

Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans are the most numerous U.S. ethnicities.

## KEY ISSUE 2

Why Do Ethnicities Have Distinctive Distributions?



### Ethnic Segregation p. 232

Migration of ethnicities can result in patterns of segregation, sometimes caused by discrimination.