Chapter 4

HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Tribal/Animism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witness and Christianity—are all religions basically the same? Some think this way, believing that it does not matter what a person believes, as long as he or she is sincere. Yet Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me.” Just because someone may sincerely believe in something does not necessarily make it true.

A recent homeschool graduate I know was attending a local college. In one of her classes, the professor began questioning the reality of absolute truth. A debate began, with most students siding with the idea that all truth is relative. After listening to several humanistic arguments, this bold young lady decided to speak up. “In this room,” she began, “there are thirty-five desks. You can count them yourself and see that this is the truth. It does not matter if you believe it or if you think that the number is relative or if you try to reason it away, because there will still be thirty-five desks.” In the same manner, there are absolutes in this world, and the Word of God is our ultimate foundation and truth.

As Christians, it is important to know what we believe and why. Likewise, it is also important to understand what others believe in order to know how to share the Gospel with them. If we do not know the foundation of other people’s beliefs it will be difficult to direct them to Christ.

In this chapter, we will look at the four major religions besides Christianity: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Tribal/Animism. For each, a brief summary is given of what they believe, followed by several “keys” on how to witness to people from each religious group. Also, there is a true testimony of someone from that religion who came to Christ along with helpful maps and charts. Lastly, there are also helpful “keys” on how to witness to Jews, religious Catholics and Protestants (who are NOT born-again), Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses. This section is only meant to be an introduction to these religions. For more detailed information, please refer to So What’s The Difference? by Fritz Ridenour or Eerdman’s Handbook to the World’s Religions.

HINDUISM

In the fourth century B.C., the Aryans conquered the people of the Indus Valley in India. The combination of their many gods and the Indian traditions of meditation came to be known as Hinduism. Today, there are over 700 million Hindus in the world. Most followers of this reli-
For the higher classes, there are four stages in life. Once a Hindu boy is initiated, he is considered “twice-born” and will live his life in four stages:
1. He will be a student.
2. He will be the head of a house with a wife and children.
3. He will be a meditating hermit seeking enlightenment.
4. He will be a homeless wanderer who has renounced all things of the world.

His four major goals are:
1. to become righteous and virtuous
2. to have material goods
3. to enjoy life through love, pleasure and appreciation of beauty
4. to have spiritual victory over life.

These goals are called maya. Although a man can have these goals, he is taught that everything he sees is temporary with no real meaning.

Hindus believe that everything that lives and breathes has a soul (atman) and is part of the world soul (paramatman). Because of this belief they will not eat meat or kill any living thing, if possible. Although there are many starving people, cows (which are thought to be especially sacred) are allowed to roam the streets and eat freely of the grain. Rats are also allowed to consume huge amounts of grain. As a result, many people have died.

A newer “People’s Hinduism” offers a way of salvation for all people by either dharma (the way of works and duty), the way of knowledge, or the way of devotion to a certain god. For the uneducated masses, this final way of devotion is the easiest way to be reborn into a higher caste in future lives.

Keys to Sharing Christ with Hindus:

1. It is important to try to understand Hindu mindset. Although their beliefs are complicated, do not be afraid to witness and to share the love of Jesus.
   Hindus are desperately searching for truth, and are in need of salvation. Know that their emptiness can only be filled by a personal relationship with God.
2. Emphasize that there is only ONE Almighty God,
and that He became man only once—in Jesus Christ.

3. Hindus are aware of their sin and of their need for salvation, although their religion offers them no sure hope. Ghandi, one of Hindu’s great leaders wrote, “For it is an unbroken torture to me that I am still so far from Him...I know that it is the evil passions within that keep me so far from Him and yet I cannot get away from them.” Hindus need to know that the penalty for their sin was paid by the sinless death of God’s only Son.

4. Share about how Jesus Christ was born as a simple man, and that He came to bring salvation to all classes of people: rich and poor, men and women, of all nationalities.

5. Show from God’s Word that when a person dies, they are not reborn in another form, but that they enter eternal life in heaven or hell. Hinduism gives a person no hope or peace, only fear and temporary bliss through meditation.

Hindu Testimony

Raju: A Hindu Finds the One True God

In a remote village in the province of Uttar Pardesh, young Raju woke to the typical sounds of the morning. Lingered for just a moment on his bamboo-slatted bed, he could hear the crackling of the cooking fire and the sizzling of his mother’s japoti. Raju sat up and looked around his family’s simple thatched-roof home. Several chicken scurried across the dirt floor as he thought about his life.

Just yesterday, the ten-year-old boy had gone to play “cricket” in the empty lot across the village. He was amazed to hear that a strange family had moved into the empty house nearby. While he and his friends played with small sticks and a round rock, the foreign white man had come out to say hello. It was funny to him to speak in Hindustani, but the man’s smile put Raju at ease. It seemed strange for this man to talk with them. Raju and his friends were very poor—yet this man was from a country far away. In India, people from different classes would never mingle together.

Raju had been taught that his family had been born in poverty for a reason, and that it was to be their caste throughout their present life. Raju was curious to find out more about this strange man.

Why had he come to their village? And why did he not follow the strict rules of the caste system?

After getting up and quickly eating his japoti, Raju ran to meet his friends. Coming closer to the empty lot, he could not believe his eyes! This tall white man was out with his friends, and everyone was playing together with a real wooden cricket set.

“Look, Raju!” his friend excitedly called. “This man gave each of us a real cricket mallet...and we have a real ball too! His name is Larry, and he is a missionary from America.”

At first, Raju was afraid, but as he watched this man playing with his friends, he began to laugh, and soon joined in the fun.

“Tonight, Raju, we are going to a special meeting,” Larry said as a friend interpreted. “Would you like to come with us to our church?”

Raju was curious. Larry was nice, yet so different from any foreigner he had ever seen. Without hardly thinking, Raju quickly answered “yes” and within a few hours, found himself crowded in Larry’s van.

Raju wondered—as they bumped over potholes in the road—what this strange church would be like. Would the building be ornate, with elaborate carvings and mosaics. What would the gods of this foreign man’s church look like? Would the priests be dressed in yellow and red like the Brahmans at the Hindu temple near his home. Would there be strange-smelling incense or foreign music?

As the van stopped, Raju looked around bewildered. Was this the church? They had stopped at an old warehouse; yet from inside, he could hear joyful singing and clapping. Everyone from the van piled out, and together they en-
tered the simple building. Inside this strange church, Raju could see no gods at all. There were no ornate decorations, but only plain woven mats which covered the dirt floor.

Larry led them to a place toward the front, as Raju stared in amazement around the building. Young and old, rich and poor, Indian and foreigners, all sat together on the floor. Everyone looked happy as they sang to the beat of traditional Indian music.

After a time, Larry stood up and began to speak in English. An Indian man repeated the same phrases in simple Hindustani. “There is only one God...” they began.

What? thought Raju, How can there be only one God? Aren’t there hundreds and millions of gods? Yet, as Larry continued, Raju listened intently to a wonderful story about this one God who created the whole world. He heard about how this God sent His only Son—Jesus—down to earth, and then was shocked as he heard how this Son of God died for the salvation of all. How could this have happened?, Raju questioned. But just then, Larry explained how this same Jesus had risen from the dead and was still alive today.

Tears welled up in Raju’s closed eyes as Larry shared about how the one true God cared for him. God’s only Son had died for him—for poor Raju. He did not need to be afraid any longer. Even though he was in the lowest caste, Larry’s God offered a way of salvation that was possible—even for him. When he died, he did not have to be reborn again and again, but he could go immediately to heaven.

“Would you like to receive this salvation through Jesus Christ alone?” Larry asked. “And would you like to become a Christian?”

Yes, said Raju in his heart, I want to know more about this Jesus!

BUDDHISM

The Buddhist world, including the Chinese who are basically folk Buddhists, is geographically the largest religion in the world today. 700 million Buddhists in the world scattered among twenty-two nations. The United States is Buddhism’s fastest growing region, with over sixteen major Buddhist centers in cities including New York City, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Seattle, Dallas, and Ft. Worth.

What do Buddhists believe?

Buddhism refers to the philosophy of a man named Siddhartha Gautama, known as “The Enlightened One,” or Buddha. In 560 B.C., Gautama was born as a Hindu near the border of India. As a child and young adult, his parents tried to isolate him from seeing anything that would make him unhappy. Living in a palace, he married a beautiful young girl and they had a son.

One day he saw three people: an old feeble man covered with sores, begging monk, and someone who had just died. Gautama began to search for the meaning of life. At twenty-nine he left the palace, shaved his head, put on a yellow robe, and became a monk. For years, he studied religious writings and fasted—nearly starving himself to death. Still, he did not find happiness.

Finally, he sat motionless under a tree for forty days
and nights—meditating and thinking deeply. At the end of this time, his mind went blank, and he experienced what he felt was the ultimate experience, or nirvana—the final escape from all desire. He thought that he had finally found salvation, and devoted the rest of his life to sharing this experience with others. It was after this that he was referred to as the Enlightened Buddha.

Buddha accepted the Hindu teaching of reincarnation (the belief that when a person dies they do not go to heaven, but are continually reborn into another life). He believed that this life could be as another person, an animal, or an insect. He also believed in karma (the Hindu teaching that people will experience the repercussion of all their actions, either in this life or in the next).

Buddha incorporated these beliefs into a new religious teaching. Instead of accepting the Hindu belief that salvation was only available for the highest classes of people, Buddha taught that by following his Four Noble Truths, every person could attain salvation. Because of this, his teaching was very popular with the discontented lower class. Included in Buddha’s Four Noble Truths were the following teachings:

1. Suffering is universal. Everyone must suffer, and the only escape in this unending cycle is nirvana.

2. The cause of human suffering is desire and selfish craving or tanha.

3. The cure for suffering is to eliminate all desire.

4. The way to eliminate desire is to follow the Middle Way, or the Noble Eightfold Path including right knowledge, right feeling, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right insight, and right meditation.

Buddha believed that anyone who followed this path would eventually reach nirvana, yet he himself could not define this state.

Although he believed suffering was real, Buddha thought it could be escaped. He offered a “plan of salvation” which was available to all, appealing especially to the poor. Although he never claimed to believe in any god, or that he himself was a god, many Buddhists began worshiping him and other deities. Demons (and not just imaginary ones) have become as familiar to Buddhists as the many cliff-hugging monasteries, prayer flags and prayer wheels.

**Keys to Sharing Christ with Buddhists**

1. Emphasize that suffering is a result of man’s sin and disobedience against God. In the beginning, there was no sin, suffering, or death, for God had created the world good.

2. Share how Jesus came to provide a way for mankind to be saved. In Buddhism, no matter how hard a person tries, he can never be sure of his salvation. Share about Jesus’ love, His healing of the sick, His miracles, and how He could raise the dead. Through His sinless life, death, and resurrection, Jesus conquered death and provided us a way of salvation.

3. Compare the lives of Jesus and Buddha. Buddha claimed to have found a way to truth; Jesus stated that He was the way and the truth. Buddha died and was buried; the tomb of Jesus is empty.

4. Be very cautious about using the term “born-again” without explaining what you mean. A Buddhist will think of reincarnation. Share how anyone can receive a new life in Jesus...right now.

5. Share the love of Jesus. As a Christian, you have a supernatural peace that sharply contrasts with the fear and striving of Buddhism.

**Buddhist Testimony**

*Son of a Buddhist monk comes to Christ*

(Names and locations have been changed or deleted for security purposes.)

In the Tibetan language, my name means “Omniscient Buddha.” I was born in a small village on the border of India and Tibet, an area which served as a major trading center for business. Horses, donkeys and ponies carried most of the traded items over the high passes.

My father had been a staunch Buddhist monk in Tibet. After leaving his monastic life, he married and started a small business. There were six in my family: my parents, two brothers, one sister, and myself. My father strictly adhered to the religious beliefs and traditions of Buddhism and so trained us in Buddhist teachings. Traditionally, there was a practice in Tibet to part with one son from every family to become a monk. My father had chosen me for this purpose. I was to become a very religiously pious person, and hopefully even a monk. As a young boy of only eight years old, I would rise up early in the morning at 4:00 a.m. and begin memo-
rizing and reciting Tibetan Buddhist scriptures for at least two to three hours. Everyday I offered holy water to the house shrine gods, and paid homage three different times. Yet, throughout the rest of the day, I remained as far away from these gods as possible. The very sight of a Tibetan idol scared me with their big eyes, angry faces, daggers in hand and attacking postures. A sense of great fear dominated my life. It was more out of compulsion than joy that I performed all the religious ceremonies. From the ages of eight to twelve, all these practices meant nothing to me. I only knew that it made a difference to my father, who had vowed to teach me nothing less than Tibetan Buddhism.

I can remember sitting crossed-legged with my father and together reciting many memorized parts of the Tibetan scriptures. Our Tibetan neighbors looked up to our family because of my father’s religious commitment and goals. Basically, the monks serve as the “middlemen” between the general public and the deities. Their whole religious rites and ceremonies are geared toward appeasing these deities to free humanity from any harm and suffering. In many ways, the people in general do not have a direct approach to the gods. Neither do they have a personal relationship with any of their deities. In short, I felt like I was groping in the darkness looking for some “god” or “truth.” When I did not find it, I felt frustrated and tried to compensate my inner hunger to know God through mere performance of religious rites and ceremonies.

Over the years, as I was finishing higher secondary exams in school, my interest in knowing about the Bible grew purely out of a comparative study point of view. The Lord, however, graciously provided me with opportunities to meet Christians friends and to listen to Christians preaching from the Bible. What made a deep impression in my mind about these groups of people was the enthusiasm in their faith and the joy they reflected of being followers of Christ. As I studied the Word of God, the Holy Spirit showed me that the fear I had felt all of these years could be lifted. Through Christ, I too could receive a spirit of joy instead. It was thrilling to know that in Christ I could enjoy a personal relationship with God, and therefore need not walk in darkness anymore. As a Buddhist, I had feared death. To me, it meant only darkness. The whole explanation of reincarnation to another life was only a temporary comfort to my mind to ease the fear. Yet now I had hope and life, and a great sense of fulfillment.

Later, I graduated from a university when the Lord spoke to me from John 15:16, “You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should last.” On that day, I dedicated my future to the Lord, and promised that I would live for Him. This also was the day I was baptized and when I chose a Christian name to be added to my former Buddhist name. In Tibetan culture, this was a testimony that I was now a follower of Christ.

My friends and relatives had great difficulty accepting me with my new faith and name. My aunt spat on my face for carrying a Bible and friends ridiculed me for my new attitude.

But I thank the Lord because He also walked through hard times—many more severe—and even prayed for those who persecuted Him.

I too wanted to fulfill God’s purpose for my life. The next year, I received a scholarship to study at a Theological seminary in Canada. There I earned a Master’s degree in Christian Education and have since moved back to India and stepped out into ministry. For four years, I ministered to children and have now worked for ten years as a national pastor among a Tibetan people group in northern India. With God, nothing is impossible!

**TRIBAL/ANIMISM**

Thousands of diverse people groups follow tribal religious beliefs that have been passed down from generation to generation. Some groups consist of a handful of people, while others total millions of followers. Although practices are varied, these primitive religions have several common characteristics.

**What do Tribal/Animists Believe?**

Most tribal religions acknowledge that there is one supreme God who created the world. They usually believe that this God is not concerned with their personal lives. As a result, primitive religions are subject to various “local gods” or evil spirits which require religious acts or ceremonies. Often the people are aware of their sin and offer blood sacrifice to the spirits to keep them from becoming angry. This sacrifice could be an animal sacrifice, or even the
human sacrifice of a child.

Ancestral worship is also a predominant part of primitive religions. Many tribes believe their relatives who have already died become spirits who can either help or harm them. Often, sacrifices are made or homage is given to them.

In most cases, there is usually a special man or woman within the tribe designated with “special power” and access to the spirit world. This person is referred to as a witchdoctor or sorcerer, and usually he or she has tremendous political and spiritual power over the other tribe members. Even if other religions are present—such as Islam or Catholicism—these beliefs are often mixed together and dominated by witchcraft and tribal traditions. Members of the tribe often go to the witch doctor for healing from sickness, to curse an enemy, or to keep from getting a curse from someone else. Charms, fetishes, bones or skulls, ancient chants, and tribal dances are sometimes used as a remedy.

Many tribal/animists believe everything has a spirit, from the animals to the earth. The following people groups are tribal/animists: North American Indians, Alaskan Eskimos, Australian Aborigines, remote tribes in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands.

**Keys to Sharing Christ with Those of Tribal Religions**

1. Often tribes believe in blood sacrifice—which can be related to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. There may also be a tribal tradition that can directly relate to the Gospel message. (See *Peace Child or Eternity in Their Hearts*.)

2. Acknowledge the one all-powerful Creator God, and tell them that He is concerned for them and loves them. If these people believe in an Almighty God and have a name for Him, pray about using this name in your preaching of the Gospel.

3. Teach that the power of Jesus Christ is greater than the power of spirits. These spirits are not gods, but demonic spirits subject to the power of Christ.

4. When sharing the plan of salvation, begin at creation, emphasizing mankind’s sin and separation from God and Jesus’ redemption through the cross. Keep your sharing very simple, and be sensitive to cultural behaviors.

5. Your purpose is to share Christianity, not Western Americanism. When traditions are not scripturally prohibited, be lenient and understanding. If cultural traditions are unsanitary or unhealthy, pray for creative and sensitive ways to introduce them to necessary changes.

**An African/Tribal Testimony**

*Chief Tumuhairwe and the Answer to Prayer*

Chief Tumuhairwe dreaded what had to be done. The tribal laws stated that only his son must become his successor, yet his beloved wife had given him only daughters. By the rules of the tribe, he would have to “chase” his wife away and get a new one. His ancestors and the spirits demanded that this be done, and no matter how much the chief regretted it, he felt that there was no other choice.

As his wife heard the news, she cried out in despair. In desperation, she prayed—not to the local spirit gods—but to the Almighty God of Creation to grant her a baby boy.

Within a short period of time, Chief Tumuhairwe’s wife became pregnant and gave birth to her first son, Naboth Tumuhairwe.

This little boy grew strong and tall and soon excelled in school. In time, he became an educator and then a school principal. As an adult, Naboth heard about Jesus Christ and became a Christian. Later he was chosen to be an interpreter at a large Gospel crusade, and felt called by God to be a missionary to his own people.

This miracle son became a national pastor—founding a church that is currently running several hundred in attendance. In addition, he has pioneered nine churches and raised up many other national ministers. He founded the first Christian health clinic in his area, along with his own school for national pastors’ children.

As he travels to remote villages, his tribal position has given him favor with others, and he has seen thousands come to Christ. At times, Naboth has faced opposition from local witchdoctors, but God has always provided protection.

Once, a witch doctor threw a poisonous snake on him and he felt the Lord instruct him to pick it up and throw it...
down on the ground. The villagers were certain that he would die, but he killed the snake and as a result, the entire village came to Christ.

Another time, Naboth found a crippled beggar in a witchdoctor's hut. This man could not walk, but had to push himself along the ground with his hands. The situation looked helpless, and it seemed as if this man was destined to be a beggar for the rest of his life.

But after much prayer, the man was able to stand up with the aid of sticks. Later, the whole church prayed fervently and fasted for his healing.

Soon afterward, this crippled man was able to walk without any crutch! He became a strong Christian leader and now pastors a church has a beautiful wife and they named their firstborn son, “Salvation.”

Naboth Tumuhairwe has since gone back to his home village and shared the Gospel with his parents. Today, Chief Tumuhairwe, his wife, and nearly the entire village have become Christians.

The one true God had answered their prayers with a son, and now this very son had introduced them to God Himself—and His Son, Jesus Christ.

**ISLAM**

In A.D. 570, an Arab child named Mohammed was born in the land of present day Saudi Arabia. The Arabs were monotheistic, believing in one god whom they called Allah. They were divided into many small clans, each with their own idols and fetishes.

Mohammed spent his early years as a shepherd boy. He traveled with a merchant caravan and was exposed to both Judaism and Christianity. He spent much time in solitary meditation and thought.

As a young man, Mohammad believed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and appointed him as the prophet of Allah. Over a period of twenty-two years, Mohammed received many supernatural revelations which he recorded in the Qur'an (or Koran), the Muslim holy book.

Mohammed was opposed by many people, and in 622, had to flee for his life. This journey (called the hejira) marks the official beginning of the Islamic religion.

Over the years, Mohammed's teachings and "miracles" united the Arabic tribes into a strong army. His "miracles" were military victories, and many saw him as the greatest prophet and ruler of all Arabia. The people of Mecca tried to destroy Mohammed, but the Islamic forces triumphed. When Mohammed took control of the city of Mecca, he had all the idols destroyed except the Black Stone—a sacred rock which he claimed that Allah had given to Adam at creation. Mohammed declared this site Kaaba, to be the most holy site. To this day, all Muslims bow in the direction of Mecca five times each day. Muslims also look to Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock for their roots. They believe that on this sight, their forefather Abraham offered up his first-born son Ishmael as a sacrifice to Allah.

**What Do Muslims Believe?**

The word Islam means "submission" (to Allah), and the term Muslim means “one who submits.” Each Muslim is taught the following six doctrines, which he must believe and submit to:

1. There is only one true God, and his name is Allah.
2. Angels and demons are real. The head angel Gabriel appeared to Mohammed, and a fallen angel—Shaitan—has many demonic followers (called the djinn).
3. Along with the Qur'an, there are three other holy and inspired scriptures: the Torah of Moses (the first five books of the Bible), the Psalms of David (the Zaibur) and the Gospel of Jesus (the Injil).
4. Twenty-eight prophets are listed in the Qur'an. Including Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and Mohammed. Mohammed is the greatest prophet.
5. In the end times, the dead will be resurrected and will face judgement. Allah is the final judge and will determine if a person goes to heaven or hell. In Islam, there is no guarantee of salvation. Allah will weigh their good works against their bad works.
6. Everything that happens is Allah's perfect predetermined, unchangeable will.

In Islamic countries, children are taught that boys are worth twice as much as girls. Girls often do not have the opportunity to go to school. Muslim women dress very mod-
They also believe that there are times when a holy war (jihad) is necessary. Although there is no guarantee of salvation, Islam teaches that if a person must kill or be killed for Allah's sake, he will automatically go to heaven. (Note: to Muslims, heaven is a place of endless sensual pleasures.)

There are five pillars of the Islamic faith which are requirements for every Muslim:

1. Confession of Faith: To become a Muslim, a person must declare, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

2. Prayer: Five times each day, every Muslim bows toward Mecca to recite prayers to Allah. To signal this time for prayer a loud call goes forth from the minaret of a nearby mosque (Moslem place of worship). No matter what the country or local language, these prayers are always recited in Arabic.

3. Giving: Every Muslim is required to give 1/40th of his income to the poor.

4. Fast of Ramadan: In the Muslim, the ninth month is Ramadan. Each year this entire month is set aside for fasting and feasting. During the daylight hours, Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink. In the evening a time of feasting begins which continues through most of the night.

5. Pilgrimage to Mecca: At least once in a Muslim's lifetime, he is required to take a pilgrimage to Mecca. This journey is called the Hajji.

**Keys to Sharing Christ with Muslims**

1. Since Muslims believe that the Gospel of Jesus (Injil) is a holy scripture, introduce them to the person of Jesus Christ. Emphasize that Jesus is the Son of God, more than a prophet or a teacher. Although Mohammed never claimed to be divine, point out how Jesus boldly claimed to be the Son of God, and the one and only way to the Father.

2. Share how they can have a personal relationship with God. Tell how much God loves them and cares for them. Emphasize that you can pray to God in your own language and from your heart.

3. Explain how our good works can never lead to salvation. Mohammed knew that he had sinned and needed forgiveness. Every Muslim prays for Mohammed to have peace each time they mention his name. This shows that the Islamic people do not even know if he was saved. Only through the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ and His sinless life and death on the cross can we be sure of our forgiveness and salvation.

4. Share about the life of Jesus and His miracles. Emphasize Jesus’ love, and His holy, sinless life.

**Muslim Testimony**

**The Story of Rafiq**

Rafiq grew up in a village in the rugged foothills of the central Brahui Range on the edge of the Sandy Desert of Baluchistan in central Pakistan. He lived in a village where the center of life was the Mosque and where five times daily the call to prayer was heard ringing across the village from the minaret of the mosque.

The eldest son in a family of twelve (eight brothers and three sisters), he became a devout Muslim in his early years. As a boy, he learned to pray five times daily kneeling and touching his head to the floor. He learned to recite and sing the Koran (or Qur'an, the Muslim holy book) from rote memory. He worshipped Allah, the Muslim god, and proclaimed the Muslim creed, "There is but one God, his name is Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." He celebrated Muslim holy days with his family, especially the month of Ramadan, when the whole village would fast from sunrise to sunset for an entire month. He learned that Allah was pleased with such things, but often wondered if Allah really cared about him.

He deeply wanted Allah's favor and as a teenager he would volunteer for the local mosque by knocking on doors and rounding people up for prayers five times a day. He taught Qur'an classes and could quote the entire Qur'an in Arabic by heart. He even traveled with a group of young men sent out by the mullah to other villages to teach and encourage the people to be faithful to Allah. At night the team of young men would take turns sharing with each other about Muslim law and the Qur'an.

The day finally came when Rafiq needed to earn his college degree (the equivalent of our high school diploma). His family sent him to the city of Karachi to study. There he found a job working in a factory with some men from his mother's tribe. The factory was owned by foreigners who
were very kind to Rafiq, inviting him into their homes for dinner and to spend the night. They began to speak to him about the Muslim prophet Isa, or Jesus, and talked much about the Ingil, or New Testament. One day, they invited Rafiq to study the Ingil with them in order to learn more about the prophet Jesus. Rafiq was very interested in the words of these men and wanted to know more about Isa.

As he read the New Testament in his mother’s tongue and discussed the life of Isa with his new friends, he fell deeply in love with the Jesus of the Gospels. He was surprised to learn that the prophet Jesus was the Son of God and that God existed in three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He was deeply touched to learn that Jesus had died for him so that his sins could be forgiven and he could have a personal relationship with God. One day, unknown to his friends, he accepted Jesus in his heart. Later, he read that believers in Jesus should be baptized in water. What a surprise it was to his friends when he asked them if he could be baptized! Rafiq publicly proclaimed his faith in Jesus and was baptized in the Arabian Sea in the spring of 1994.

After believing in Jesus, Rafiq began to tell his friends about them. He could hardly contain his excitement. He began to pray the Bible instead of the Qur’an, and when he visited the mosque to pray he no longer prayed to Allah, but to Jesus.

A few months later he returned to his village where he began to spend his nights with his whole family relating stories from the gospel of Luke and asking them questions about the content—just like the foreigners had done with him. His uncle began to read the New Testament. He visited many people who were sick and troubled and shared the importance of prayer in the name of Jesus in overcoming difficulties. His father stopped visiting the graves of his ancestors and instead began to pray in the name of Jesus. He walked all around his area praying over it and claiming it for the Lord.

And Rafiq still goes on trips with the disciples of the Imam, but instead of talking to them about Islam, now he tells the young men about Jesus and the cross on which he died so that they could be forgiven and become part of God’s family. He shares with them how he found the light (noor) that the Qur’an speaks about.

Rafiq asks us to pray for his village and his family; that all his brothers and sisters, aunts, and uncles, mother and father would soon come to believe in Jesus with the same zeal with which they now worship Allah.

**JUDAIISM**

The Jewish people are very special in God’s sight. From the time of Abraham, God chose them to be His people. Throughout the Bible, the Jews have had a unique plan and purpose. The Jewish law and religious practices were originated by God, and all point the way to Jesus Christ. Although most Jews have rejected Jesus (Y’shua) as their Messiah, the Bible shows us that in the end times, multitudes of Jews will come to Christ. Witnessing to Jews is different than sharing with other people groups because Jews are not “heathen.” They know God but in order to be saved, they need to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.
Keys to Sharing Christ with Jews

1. Be respectful, loving, and grateful to Jews for how they preserved the law and prepared the way for the Messiah. In behalf of other Christians throughout history, humbly seek forgiveness for the Christian treatment of the Jewish people.

2. Explain how the Messiah was prophesied to come first as a suffering Savior to bring salvation to all, but soon He will be returning as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

3. Look to Isaiah 53 and other specific prophecies about the coming Messiah. Show how all of these prophecies point to Y'shua—Jesus Christ—and how these prophecies had to be fulfilled before the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

4. Challenge them to study the complete Bible, beginning with the Gospel of Matthew, to see if Y'shua is their Messiah.

5. Encourage them that they can be both Jewish and Christian. Y'shua did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. Throughout the world there are many Messianic Jews and many coming to Christ every day.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM AND PROTESTANTISM

Throughout the world there are many people who claim to be “Christian” but have not been born again. Many of these people know about Jesus, but do not know they can have a personal relationship with Him. Build upon the foundation that they already have and do not come against their church or particular religion.

Keys to sharing Christ with “Religious” Catholics and Protestants (who are NOT born again)

1. Ask if they know for sure that if they died they would go to heaven. If they have not been saved and are merely religious, they will likely respond with “I certainly hope so,” “I'm trying,” or “I'm a good person, and I don't think I've ever done anything bad enough to send me to hell.”

2. Read the story of Nicodemus and Jesus from John chapter 3. Emphasize that Nicodemus was a very good, religious person. As a religious leader, he prayed, fasted, memorized the Scriptures, and was regularly in the temple. Yet Jesus told him that “unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

3. Emphasize it is not religion which saves us, but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Through the blood of Jesus, we receive God’s forgiveness. By making Jesus Christ the Lord and master of our lives, God can give us a new life and assurance of salvation.

4. Let them see—through the witness of your life—what it means to be a Christian. Going to church, saying prayers, and doing good things is not enough. We need to put our faith in Jesus Christ.

MORMONISM

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints may appear to be Christian. Their strong emphasis on the family and high morals seem good, but are their beliefs consistent with the Bible? Founded in 1823 by an American named Joseph Smith, Mormonism has now grown to be one of the major religions in the United States. Mormons strongly emphasize missions and have established churches throughout the world. In addition to the Bible, Mormons have three other holy books called the Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, and The Doctrine of Covenants. Joseph Smith once said that “God Himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man.” This belief lowers God to our state, and lifts man up to the level of God.

Keys to Sharing Christ with Mormons

1. Share the love of Jesus and let them see you have a peace and confidence in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Do not argue with Mormons, but come against the spirit of religious pride with humility. Share that your salvation is not based on works but on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

2. Point out verses such as Psalms 145:13, John 4:24, and 1 Timothy 1:17 which show there is ONE God. There
is none like Him. God is not an exalted man, He is God.

3. Point out Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Hebrew 1:1-2, and Revelation 22:18-19, and share how it is forbidden to add to the Word of God. Many of the doctrines established in the Mormon books directly contradict the teachings of the Bible.

4. Most of these people are earnestly seeking answers. Do not be afraid or intimidated to share your faith and personal testimony.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESS

Two-by-two they come to your door armed with literature and talking about the end times. Most Christians do not know how to deal with this situation, so they simply slam their doors or say they are not interested. Yet each of these people is special in God’s sight. Many deceived by this cult were previously in Christian churches.

The major false belief of Jehovah Witnesses is that Christ already returned to earth—invisibly—in 1914, and that He now reigns from heaven. They do not believe in the Trinity or that Jesus is God. They do not believe He bodily rose from the dead. Jehovah Witnesses cannot comprehend how a loving God could send someone to hell, so they do not believe in eternal punishment. According to their doctrine, if a person is not good enough for heaven they will simply cease to exist.

NOTES: Keys to Sharing Christ with Jehovah Witnesses

1. Do not be afraid to share Christ and the Gospel message and the truth of God’s Word. Do not argue or try to win a debate.

2. Share the deity of Christ (John 1:1; Colossians 1:15-19, 2:9; 1 John 5:7-8). Point out that after Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas bowed down before Him saying, “My Lord and My God” (John 20:28). Jesus did not rebuke Thomas, but commended him and received worship as God.

3. Ask, “Who raised Jesus from the dead?” When they answer that only Jehovah could raise Jesus from the dead, point out in John 2:19 how Jesus said, “Destroy this temple (His body) and in three days I will raise it up.” In this statement, Jesus was claiming to be Jehovah.

4. Encourage them to read the book of John, which reveals Jesus as God. Share that it was because Jesus claimed to be the Messiah and one with the Father that He was crucified.

5. Share the love of Jesus. How has God been real in your life? Do you have a personal testimony you can share? Through your testimony, share how you are sure of your salvation—not because of your works—but because of your faith in Jesus.