

CHAPTER 11: RELIGIOUS ORIGINS AND DISTRIBUTIONS

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
 - A. Religion and language lie at the foundation of culture
 1. Religion is the great binding force in societies less dominated by technology
 2. Religions change continually with the times
 3. The great religions have been adopted across cultural barriers and language boundaries
 4. Map of religions, like languages, continues to change
- II. Geography of religion
 - A. Religion's role in society
 1. In some countries it practically constitutes culture
 2. Religion is difficult to define
 3. It manifests itself in many different ways
 - a) Worship of souls of ancestors in living natural objects
 - b) Belief that certain living persons possess capacities granted by a supernatural power
 - c) Belief in a deity or deities
 4. In Western, industrialized, urbanized societies religion has become subordinate
 5. In Africa and Asia, religious doctrine may exert tight control over behavior
 6. Each religion has sets of doctrines, beliefs, and complex rituals
 7. Major world-scale faiths have produced vast and complex organizational structures
 8. How religion's doctrines and beliefs can affect culture
 - a) The ideas that a "good" life has rewards and "bad" behavior risks punishment
 - b) Modes of dress
 - c) Kinds of food a person can or cannot eat
 - d) Commercial practices
 - e) Location and structure of houses
 - f) Slogan on our money "In God We Trust"
 9. Religion has had powerful positive as well as deep negative effects on human societies
 10. One of the most complex—and often controversial—aspects of the human condition
 - B. Sources and distribution
 1. Spatial distribution the world's major religions (Figure 11-1)
 - a) Figure should be viewed as a generalization
 - b) Because of scale cannot reveal the intricate mosaic existing in many countries
 - c) Minority religions in each area are dominated by one religion or another
 - d) Many Christian Africans continue to believe in traditional powers
 - e) In some areas many people have moved away from organized religion entirely
 - f) Diffusion of Christian religions dispersal of Islam
 2. ***Universalizing religions***
 - a) Global religions
 - b) Actively seek converts
 - c) Spread of Christianity was important consequence of colonialism
 - d) Relatively few in number and of recent origin

3. ***Ethnic religions***
 - a) Sometime called cultural religions
 - b) Do not seek converts outside the group
 - c) Tend to be spatially concentrated
 - d) Main exception is Judaism
 4. Table 11-1 reports the latest data on religious affiliation
 - a) Information must be used cautiously
 - b) Data are not always reliable
 - c) Should be viewed as a rough estimate
 5. Christianity—a divided religion
 - a) Roman Catholicism—largest segment
 - b) Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches
 6. Islam
 - a) Fastest growing of the world's major religions
 - b) Main division within Islam—Sunni and the Shiah or Shiite cluster concentrated in Iran
 - c) Over 1 billion followers
 7. Hinduism
 - a) Ranks after Islam in number of adherents
 - b) Characterized by a great diversity of institutional forms and practices
 - c) Does not have a holy book
 - d) Is an ethnic religion concentrated in a single geographic realm
 - e) Regarded as the world's oldest organized religion
 - f) Majority of estimated 757 million adherents live in India
 8. Buddhism
 - a) Buddhism originated in India—now a minority faith in that country
 - b) Remains strong in Southeast Asia
 - c) Estimated to have 347 million adherents
 9. Shintoism
 - a) Shintoism is a Japanese ethnic religion closely related to Buddhism
 - b) Became state religion in the nineteenth century
 - c) World War II brought its dominance to an end
 10. The Chinese religions
 - a) Have elements of Buddhism mixed with local belief systems
 - b) ***Confucianism*** was mainly a philosophy of life
 - c) ***Taoism*** held human happiness lies in maintaining proper relationship with nature
 11. Judaism
 - a) One of the world's great religions
 - b) Outside of Israel is scattered across much of the world
 - c) Three main branches—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform
 12. Shamanism and traditional religions
 - a) Community faith in which people have a ***shaman***—religious leader, teacher, healer, and visionary
 - b) Shamanist faiths are small and comparatively isolated
 - c) ***Traditional religion***—an intimate part of a local culture and society
 - d) Traditional African religions involve beliefs in a god as creator and provider
- III. Minority religions
- A. Abound within major religious realms
 1. ***Sikhism***

- a) Long-time fusion of different religious ideas in a particular place
 - b) Contains elements of Hinduism and Islam
 - c) Found in northwestern India
 - 2. Most minority religions are the product of some combination of migration and conversion
 - B. ***Nation of Islam***—founded in the United States
 - 1. About 6 million adherents
 - 2. Product of migration from Islamic parts of the world over time
 - 3. Movement was born in the 1930s
 - 4. A minority religion in the United States and among its African-American population
 - 5. One example of religious coexistence
- IV. Syncretic religions
- A. Northern Europe
 - 1. ***Syncretic religion*** defined as: an intermixing of Christian and traditional cultural elements
 - 2. Example of Christianity mixing with traditional Norse elements
 - 3. Gave way eventually to mainstream form of Christianity
 - B. Modern example of South Korea
- V. The rise of secularism
- A. Hundreds of millions of people practice no religions at all
 - 1. Religion membership figures do not accurately reflect the number of active members
 - 2. In North America, the church plays only a modest in culture and society
 - 3. Communist influence in China and the former Soviet Union promoted an antireligious effort
 - 4. Can be traced back over the centuries
 - a) In the Middle Ages, much of Western Europe was controlled by the Catholic church
 - b) Following the Protestant challenge, erosion of clerical power accelerated
 - c) The state took over functions of the church
 - d) Separation of church and state
 - e) Freedom to choose meant many people chose to abandoned organized religion
 - 5. Weakening of traditions
 - a) Businesses and shops were closed on Sundays
 - b) Today shopping centers are open on Sundays
 - c) Business and personal affairs are handled on Sundays, fewer attend church
 - 6. The Mormon culture still observes the cultural tradition of closing everything on Sunday
 - 7. Western Europe shows decline in religion as a cultural force
 - a) Even Catholic countries show more secularization
 - b) Religious prescriptions relating to birth control serve to fuel disaffection
 - 8. The Muslim world shows a strengthening of Islam's position
 - a) New-found power based on oil revenues
 - b) A resurgence of revolutionary fervor
 - 9. In more conservative, rural societies, the strength of the faiths remain strong
- VI. Central beliefs and source areas
- A. The three classifications of religions
 - 1. ***Monotheistic religions***—worship a single deity
 - 2. ***Polytheistic religions***—worship more than one deity

3. ***Animistic religions***—involve the belief that inanimate objects possess souls and should be revered
- B. Source areas
1. ***Zoroastrianism***
 - a) Developed as a monotheistic religion around the middle of the first millennium B.C.
 - b) Believed by some to be the predecessor of late Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
 - c) Others believe Judaism itself was the first monotheistic religion
 2. All major contemporary religions originated in a small areas of the world
 - a) Area stretched from eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea to southwestern flanks of the Himalayas
 - b) Source areas coincide quite strongly with the culture hearths (Figure 2-6)