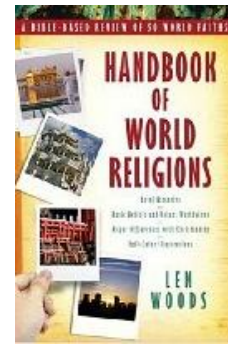


# What's the Difference?

## Lesson # 11, 4/5/2009

### What Now Shall I Do?

### Engaging a World of Differences



## BRAINSTORMING DISCUSSION...Q/A

### Islam

What similarities are there with the gospel message of Christianity? Where is there "common ground"?

- God—creator, judge, purpose for life, sets rights and wrong, reveals Himself
- Punishment for disobedience

What elements of Christianity are radically different, that might be very difficult for them to understand or might even offend them?

- Nature of God—Trinity, incarnation of Christ
- Need of humans—different ideas about sin's effects and our ability to overcome them
- Salvation—the way of it, the certainty of it
- Christianity allows for more cultural manifestations
- The Bible versus the Koran

What are issues you might want to avoid discussing in your conversation about the gospel with them?

- Discussion of politics and radical groups
- Attacking Muhammad

If a person from this group became a Christian, what areas do you think would be difficult for them to understand?

- They will be rejected by their family and community
- They will need help to see that sin is forgiven
- They need to remember that works are not to gain salvation
- They might be able to keep many of the same practices (fasting, etc.) but make sure they have the right meaning in them
- A different understanding of Scripture than the Koran

### Hinduism, Buddhism (Not Discussed in Class)

What similarities are there with the gospel message of Christianity? Where is there "common ground"?

- Connectedness of all things (all of life is spiritual, not just "church" stuff)
- Suffering
- The world is not permanent, need to not clear to "impermanence"

What elements of Christianity are radically different, that might be very difficult for them to understand or might even offend them?

- Person of God
- The nature of persons
- Resurrection of Christ and of our bodies
- The beginning and end of the universe
- Exclusivism of Christ—not one among many manifestations

What are issues you might want to avoid discussing in your conversation about the gospel with them?

- Cultural practices without too much knowledge of them
- Assuming you know what they believe
- Calling their beliefs "crazy" because you do not understand them

If a person from this group became a Christian, what areas do you think would be difficult for them to understand?

- Linear view of history and universe
- The personal relationship with God
- The importance of the physical in the spiritual life

#### Mormonism

What similarities are there with the gospel message of Christianity? Where is there "common ground"?

- Christ was real, died
- The Bible (Mormons emphasize KJV as Bible)
- Passing along their faith
- Obedience and morals—they will look very similar to us
- Many of the same terms

What elements of Christianity are radically different, that might be very difficult for them to understand or might even offend them?

- The sufficiency of Bible alone (not other books) (the revelation of Book of Mormon does not fit Scriptures)
- The nature of the afterlife
- The person of Christ, as he is God in a unique way
- Salvation by grace

What are issues you might want to avoid discussing in your conversation about the gospel with them?

- Bigamy/polygamy
- Eternal progression (they might not know about it or think they can talk about it with outsiders)
- Secret practices (cultic)

If a person from this group became a Christian, what areas do you think would be difficult for them to understand?

- They will be excluded from family likely
- They will move towards legalism, thinking that their works bring righteousness
- They have to re-define their terms

#### Smorgasbord/New Age

What similarities are there with the gospel message of Christianity? Where is there "common ground"?

- Spirituality—that there is more to this word
- Making a personal decision, not just what others tell you, but you have to decide
- The powerful message of Jesus Christ

What elements of Christianity are radically different, that might be very difficult for them to understand or might even offend them?

- The starting point of God (not humans)
- The depravity of humans
- The idea of absolute truth, you cannot pick and choose when faiths contradict each other

What are issues you might want to avoid discussing in your conversation about the gospel with them?

- Politics!
- Bible-thumping, "The Bible says it so there it is..." as they do not respect or believe in the Bible the same way
- Judging them too quickly

If a person from this group became a Christian, what areas do you think would be difficult for them to understand?

- Accepting tradition and authority of others might be an issue
- Applying absolute standards wholistically (that there are rights and wrongs)

# Who is Jesus?

What Makes Gospel Christianity Different is the Person and Work of Christ

	Who Jesus Is	What He has done
<b>Christianity</b>	Fully God, Fully Man, one person in two natures	Died for our sins and given us his righteousness
<b>Islam</b>	A major prophet, spirit of Allah on him, virgin born but not divine; miracles showed that he was a prophet come from God; returns to defeat antichrist	Jesus' mission was to show the signs of Allah; he did not die on the cross but Allah took him to heaven
<b>Judaism</b>	At best, a rabbi who has been misinterpreted, at worse a misguided, revolutionary figure	He might give us some insight into the teachings of Torah, but also might have misinterpreted them
<b>Mormonism</b>	A first spirit child of God (our older brother), who was created by union of Mary and God; appeared in American after work in Holy Land	His death has helped us be able to overcome sin but it happens through faith, works, and baptism
<b>Jehovah's Witness</b>	The first creation of Jehovah, was Michael the archangel; lived a perfect life; spirit was resurrected but not body	He has made us savable by dying on the cross
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventism</b>	Many have orthodox teachings, others note that Christ had no human soul or might deny pre-existence	There is a further stress on his second coming and what is known as his current work in the "investigative judgment"
<b>Hinduism</b>	For some, Jesus was an Avatar or an incarnation of God—one among many Avatar; a guru	Jesus' teachings can be valuable for today because he was a great teacher; he did not die or come back from the dead
<b>Buddhism</b>	Jesus was a teacher who may have possessed Buddhahood; one among many, not unique	Jesus' teachings can be valuable for today because he was a great teacher
<b>Christian Science</b>	He was the one who best understood the divine principle; he understood that all things are spiritual, but not "fully God and fully man"	He has shown us how to understand the divine principle, his death was just an illusion, as his work was correcting false beliefs
<b>Scientology</b>	Not that important in the system; might pay attention to some teachings in a New Age fashion	Not that important in the system; might pay attention to some teachings in a New Age fashion
<b>Pluralist</b>	Jesus helps us to see who God is and how we can connect back to him (but not the only way)	He has given a form of knowledge about God and how to relate back to him
<b>Agnostic</b>	We cannot be sure who exactly he was; we can read the Bible but do not know if it is from God	We can't totally know what he really did, but we can see what he was supposed to have do
<b>Atheist</b>	At best, he was a good man who people have tried into someone special. At worst, he was a lunatic	We should follow his teachings when they make sense
<b>New Age, Smorgasbord</b>	He was a wise teacher but not uniquely divine	Have him be your "homeboy" when you like his teachings!