

Sunday Morning Series

THE
GREAT
QUESTIONS

Are all religions basically the same?

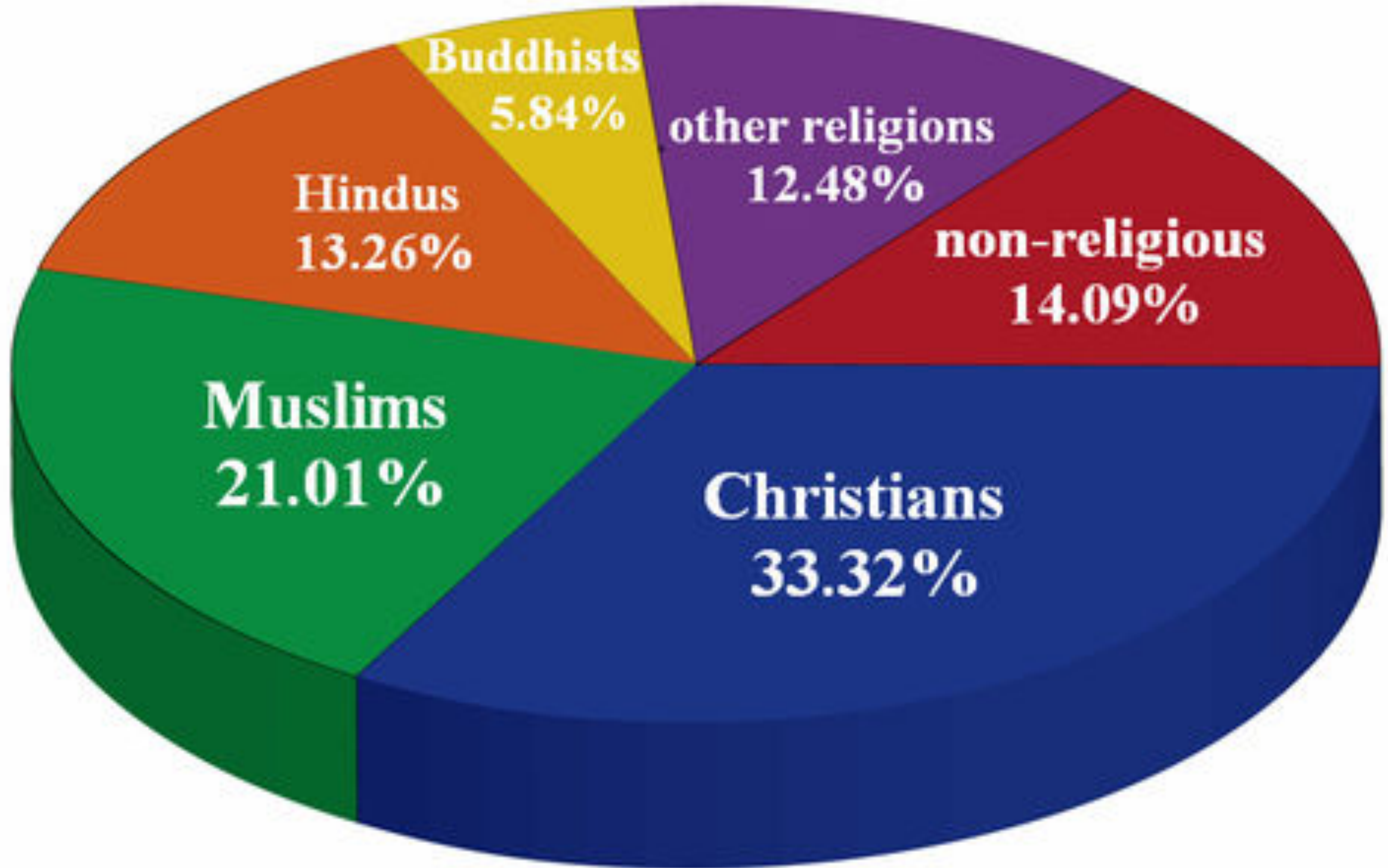
Aren't they all just different paths going up the same mountain?



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Religions of the World

From a
2016
Gallup Poll



Why it's important to talk about this...

1. People assume that investigation is unnecessary. What difference does it make what you believe, if any path is good?
2. And if it doesn't, the Gospel is irrelevant.
3. Most Christians admit they don't know much about the major religions.
4. It matters because people matter, and it matters what people think about God.



1. It is a common belief that all religions are different ways of saying the same thing.



Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902, disciple of
Ramakrishna)

“By the study of different religions we find that
in essence they are one.”



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From author Ray Bradbury:

“My religion encompasses all religions. I believe in God, I believe in the universe. I believe you are god, I believe I am god; I believe the earth is god and the universe is god. We're all god.”



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2. What *do* the 5 major world religions teach?



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Religions have a common general *moral* teaching, but are different in their *theological* teaching.

For instance, each religion of the world falls into one of two basic theologies...



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Dualism

**The
Divine
*Creator***

Judaism

Christianity

Islam

**The
*Creation***

Monism

Hinduism
Buddhism

**The
Divine**



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	What is God?	Eternal Destiny?	How to achieve Eternal Destiny?	Is there any other way?
Hinduism	<p>Conflicting views: Philosophical Hindus believe <u>God</u> is Everything and Everything is <u>God</u>.</p> <p>Some believe God is personal. Cultural Hinduism believes there are millions of gods.</p>	<p>Nirvana after many reincarnations. Oneness with the Divine Everything. Like a drop of ocean water falling into the ocean.</p> <p><u>End</u> of the individual person or soul.</p>	<p>We <u>achieve</u> it, by living a moral and pious Hindu life, after many (maybe millions) of reincarnations.</p>	No



The **Four Noble Truths** of Buddhism

1. All of life is full of suffering.
2. Suffering is due to attachment.
3. End of suffering can be realized through detachment.
4. Detachment can be achieved by the Eight-Fold Path, a way of life involving right meditating, right thinking, and right moral living.



These actions are important as a person's actions in life will determine what they are reborn as in their next life.



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A researcher friend of mine asked a Buddhist teacher, “How many lifetimes will it take to verify that this philosophy is true?”

His answer: *100 million* lifetimes.



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	What is God?	Eternal Destiny?	How to achieve Eternal Destiny?	Any other way?
Buddhism	The large majority of Buddhists don't believe in or talk about _____. Some Buddhists believe in many gods, who are humans who have reached Nirvana but return to guide mortals. These guides are called Bodhisattvas.	Nirvana after many reincarnations. Nothingness. End of the individual person or soul.	We <u>achieve</u> it. Follow the 4 Noble Truths, and practice the 8-fold path toward release from the cycle of reincarnations, toward eventual Enlightenment.	No



	What is God?	Eternal Destiny?	How to achieve Eternal Destiny?	Any other way?
Judaism	There is one God, infinite, and personal. Judaism rejects the <u>Trinity</u> .	After <u>one</u> earthly life. Not defined. No specific belief about a heaven or hell.	We <u>achieve</u> it. For the more orthodox: Live according to the Law of Moses. For the less orthodox: Live a moral life. No assurance of heaven.	No



	What is God?	Eternal Destiny?	How to achieve Eternal Destiny?	Any other way?
Islam	There is one God, infinite, and personal. Islam strongly rejects the <u>Trinity</u> .	After <u>one</u> earthly life. Eternity in Paradise, full of pleasures and happiness.	We <u>Achieve</u> it. Practice the 5 Pillars of Islam and believe the 6 Articles of Faith. No assurance of Paradise.	No



Islamic teachers adamantly deny

- the deity of Jesus Christ and
- that Jesus died on the cross.



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Surah 112 (Named *The Purity of Faith*)

“Say, ‘He is God the One, God the eternal. He begot no one nor was He begotten. No one is comparable to Him.’”



Surah 4:156-57

“And [for] their saying, ‘Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, the messenger of Allah.’ And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them. And indeed, those who differ over it are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it except the following of assumption. And they did not kill him, for certain.”



	What is God?	Eternal Destiny?	How to achieve Eternal Destiny?	Any other way?
Christianity	<p>There is one God, who exists in three persons.</p> <p>The Trinity is a <u>central</u> belief.</p>	<p>After <u>one</u> earthly life, an eternity of love and peace with God and others in Heaven.</p>	<p><u>Jesus</u> achieved it for us. Accept and trust in Christ's payment for sin for assurance of right standing before God, and heaven after death.</p>	No



3. Can they all be true?

- Can it be true that Christ is the Son of God, *and* that Jesus Christ is *not* the Son of God, at the same time?
- Can it be true that we reach heaven only as a gift from God, *and* that we can reach heaven only by good works?



4. How is Christianity unique?

1. It is about God coming down to us, not us working our way to God.
2. It is verifiable, based not on philosophical ideas but on historical events.
3. It offers assurance of salvation.



Conclusion and encouragement:

1. Religions really are different and can't all be true.
2. God loves people, no matter what they believe.
3. We can love friends by listening to them about what they believe.
4. Your friend may not know it yet, but everyone needs Christ, and you can be the ambassador that leads them to Him.

