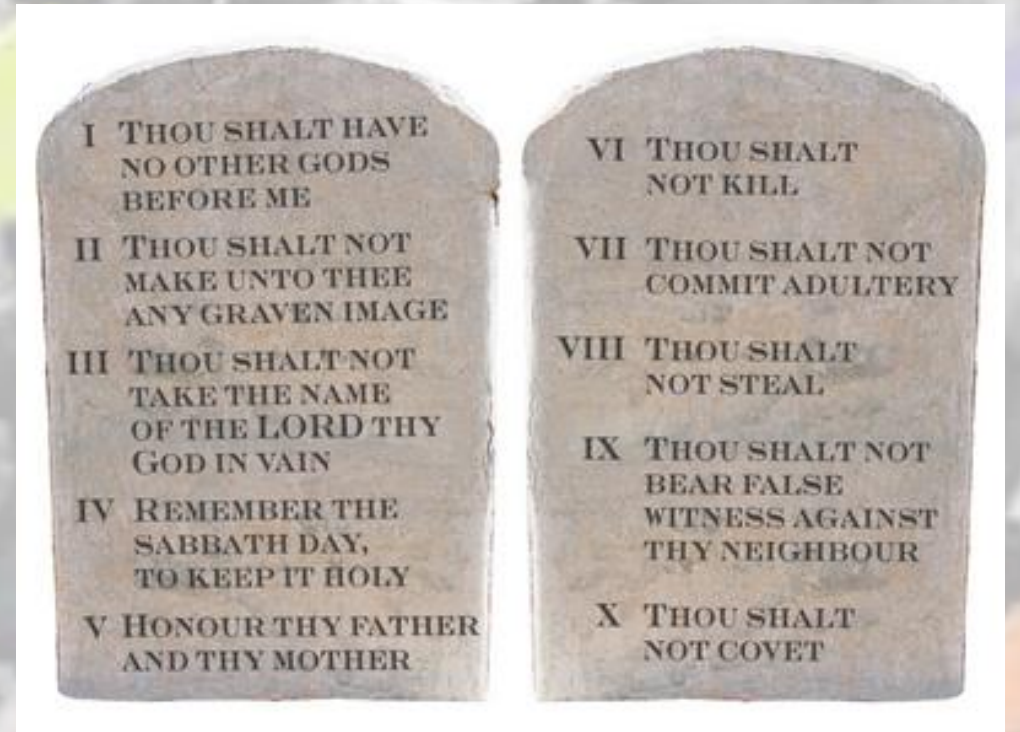


A large, dense crowd of people is shown from an overhead perspective. Many individuals are wearing bright, colorful clothing in shades of red, blue, yellow, green, and purple, which stands out against the more muted tones of the rest of the crowd. The overall scene suggests a large gathering or event. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "Components of a Religion" in a large, black, sans-serif font.

Components of a Religion

Understanding Religions

- At their base understanding a religion is a set of ideas tied together under the belief in some type of divine being, a guiding set of morality, and a belief in an afterlife
 - Buddhism by definition is not a religion because its lack of a god
 - Guiding principles for follower to live by give direction and how the religion should be practiced



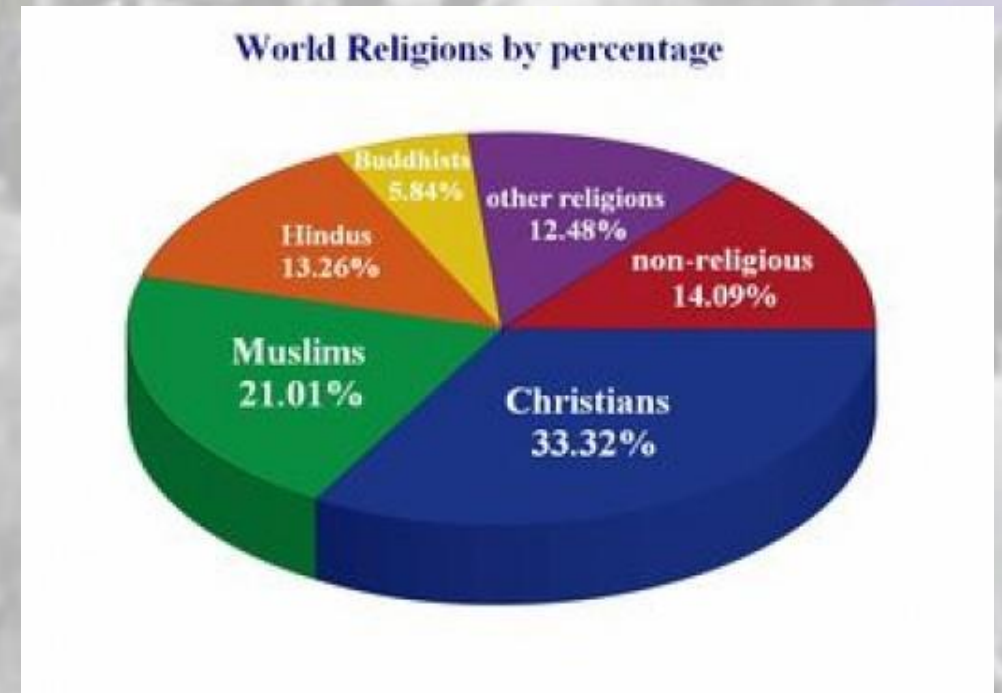
Polytheistic and Monotheistic Religions

- Religions can be divided based on their structure in the belief of one god (monotheism) or their belief in many gods (polytheism)
 - Monotheistic religions offer greater cultural cohesion as cults or sects can develop around different gods within a polytheistic society
 - Example – All followers of Christianity follow just one god, whereas Hinduism has millions of gods



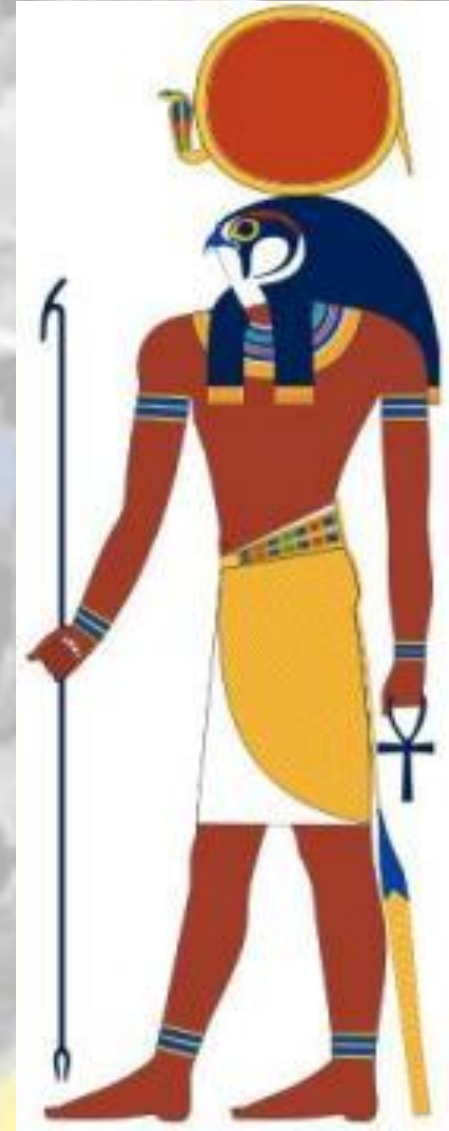
Universalizing and Ethnic Religions

- Religions differ in their ideas on how someone can actually join their religion.
 - Universalizing religions are open to all and will actively seek converts to join their religion
 - Islam and Christianity are main examples and because of this they are also the largest religions world wide
 - In an Ethnic religion the members are born into it and the religious ideas are connected to their ethnicity. Because of this they tend to be smaller
 - Hinduism and Judaism are common examples of ethnic religions. Judaism remains rather small, whereas Hinduism is quite large due to its large population in India



Folk Religions and Animism

- In Folk cultures that have unique cultures specific to their environment they have often adopted unique religions that are specific to their culture only
- Many are animistic, meaning they attribute supernatural powers to plants, animals, and inanimate objects
 - Example – Mongolian Mythology had a sky god, horse god, etc...



Branches, Denominations, and Sects

- Branch – Large divisions of religions based on structural beliefs (ex. division of Islam between Shi'a and Sunni or Christianity (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox))
- Denomination – Further separation of Religious branches (ex. Splitting Orthodox Christianity between Eastern and Greek Orthodox denominations)
- Sect – A further division a religious denomination who develop specific but fundamental differences than the rest of the main practice (Ex. The “Old Believers” in Eastern Orthodox church)
 - Sometimes considered to be derogatory

World Religions

