

## Chapter 6. Religion

Most religious people pray for peace, but religious groups may not share the same vision of how peace will be achieved. Geographers see that the process by which one religion diffuses across the landscape may conflict with the distribution of others. Geographers also observe that religions are derived in part from elements of the physical environment, and that religions, in turn, modify the landscape.

(185)

### Key Issues

1. Where are religions distributed?
2. Why do religions have different distributions?
3. Why do religions organize space in distinctive patterns?
4. Why do territorial conflicts arise among religious groups?

(187)

Religion interests geographers because it is essential for understanding how humans occupy Earth. Geographers, though, are not theologians, so they stay focused on those elements of religions that are geographically significant. Geographers study spatial *connections* in religion: the distinctive place of origin, . . . the extent of diffusion, . . . the processes by which religions diffused, . . . and practices and beliefs that lead some to have more widespread distributions.

Geographers find the tension in *scale* between *globalization* and *local diversity* especially acute in religion for a number of reasons. People care deeply about their religion; . . . some religions are . . . *designed* to appeal to people throughout the world, whereas other religions . . . appeal primarily . . . in geographically limited areas; religious values are important in . . . how people identify themselves, . . . (and) the . . . ways they organize the landscape; adopting a global religion usually requires turning away from a traditional local religion; and while migrants typically learn the language of the new location, they retain their religion.

This chapter starts by describing the distribution of major religions, then . . . explains why some religions have diffused widely, whereas others have not. The third section of the chapter discusses religion's strong imprint on the physical environment. Unfortunately, intense identification with one religion can lead adherents into conflicts discussed in the fourth key issue of the chapter.

### Key Issue 1. Where Are Religions Distributed?

- **Universalizing religions**
- **Ethnic religions**

**Universalizing religions** attempt to be global, to appeal to all people. An **ethnic religion** appeals primarily to one group of people living in one place. About 60 percent of the world's population adheres to a universalizing religion, 25 percent to an ethnic religion, and 15 percent to no religion.

### Universalizing Religions

The three main universalizing religions are Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. Each is . . . divided into branches, denominations, and sects. A **branch** is a large and fundamental division within a religion. A **denomination** is a division of a branch that unites a number of local congregations. A **sect** is a relatively small group that has broken away from an established denomination.

**Christianity.** Christianity has about 2 billion adherents, far more than any other world religion, and has the most widespread distribution.

**Branches of Christianity.** Christianity has three major branches: Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox. Within Europe, Roman Catholicism is the dominant Christian branch in the southwest and east, Protestantism in the northwest, and Eastern Orthodoxy in the east and southeast.

The regions of Roman Catholic and Protestant majorities frequently have sharp boundaries, even when they run through the middle of countries.

(188)

The Eastern Orthodox branch of Christianity is a collection of 14 self-governing churches in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. More than 40 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians belong to . . . the Russian Orthodox Church, . . . established in the sixteenth century. Nine of the other 13 self-governing churches were established in the nineteenth or twentieth century. The largest of these 9, the Romanian church, includes 20 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians.

The remaining 4 of the 14 Eastern Orthodox churches—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem—trace their origins to the earliest days of Christianity. They have a combined membership of about 3 percent of all Eastern Orthodox Christians.

(189)

**Christianity in the Western Hemisphere.** The overwhelming percentage of people living in the Western Hemisphere—about 90 percent—are Christian. About 5 percent belong to other religions. Roman Catholics comprise 95 percent of Christians in Latin America, compared with 25 percent in North America. Within North America, Roman Catholics are clustered in the southwestern and northeastern United States and the Canadian province of Québec. Protestants comprise 40 percent of Christians in North America. The three largest Protestant denominations in the United States are Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal, followed by Lutheran, Latter-Day Saints, and Churches of Christ.

Membership in some Protestant churches varies by region of the United States. Baptists, for example, are highly clustered in the southeast, Lutherans in the upper Midwest, and Latter-Day Saints in Utah. Other Christian denominations are more evenly distributed around the country.

(190)

**Smaller Branches of Christianity.** Several other Christian churches developed independent of the three main branches. Many . . . were isolated . . . at an early point in the development of Christianity, partly because of differences in doctrine and partly as a result of Islamic control of intervening territory in Southwest Asia and North Africa. Two small Christian churches survive in northeast Africa: the Coptic Church of Egypt and the Ethiopian Church. The Armenian Church originated in Antioch, Syria, and was important in diffusing Christianity to South and East Asia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The Armenian Church, like other small sects, plays a significant role in regional conflicts. The Maronites, (clustered in Lebanon) are another example of a small Christian sect that plays a disproportionately prominent role in political unrest.

**Islam.** Islam, the religion of 1.2 billion people, is the predominant religion of the Middle East from North Africa to Central Asia. However, half of the world's Muslims live in four countries outside the Middle East: Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

(191)

**Branches of Islam.** Islam is divided into two important branches: Sunni (from the Arabic word for orthodox) and Shiite (from the Arabic word for sectarian, sometimes written Shia in English). Sunnis comprise 83 percent of Muslims and are the largest branch in most Muslim countries. Sixteen percent of Muslims are Shiites, clustered in a handful of countries.

**Islam in North America and Europe.** The Muslim population of North America and Europe has increased rapidly in recent years, mostly through immigration. In Europe, France has the largest Muslim population, a legacy of immigration from former colonies in North Africa. Islam also has a presence in the United States through the Nation of Islam, also known as Black Muslims, founded in Detroit in 1930 and led for more than 40 years by Elijah Muhammad, who called himself "the messenger of Allah." Since Muhammad's death, in 1975, his son Wallace D. Muhammad led the Black Muslims closer to the principles of orthodox Islam, and the organization's name was changed to the American Muslim Mission.

(192)

**Buddhism.** Buddhism, the third of the world's major universalizing religions, has 350 million adherents, especially in China and Southeast Asia.

Like the other two universalizing religions, Buddhism split into more than one branch. The three main branches are Mahayana, Theravada, and Tantrayana. An accurate count of Buddhists is especially difficult, because only a few people participate in Buddhist institutions. Buddhism . . . differs in significant respects from the Western concept of a formal religious system. Christianity and Islam both require exclusive adherence. Most Buddhists in China and Japan, in particular, believe at the same time in an ethnic religion.

**Other Universalizing Religions.** Sikhism and Bahá'í are the two universalizing religions other than Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism with the largest numbers of adherents. Sikhism's first guru (religious teacher or enlightener) was Nanak (A.D. 1469–1538), who lived in a village near the city of Lahore, in present-day Pakistan. The Bahá'í religion is even more recent than Sikhism. It grew out of the Bábi faith, which was founded in Shíráz, Iran, in 1844 by Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad, known as the Báb (Persian for gateway).

(193)

### **Ethnic Religions**

The ethnic religion with by far the largest number of followers is Hinduism. With 900 million adherents, Hinduism is the world's third-largest religion, behind Christianity and Islam. Ethnic religions in Asia and Africa comprise most of the remainder.

**Hinduism.** Ethnic religions typically have much more clustered distributions than do universalizing religions. Ninety-seven percent of Hindus are concentrated in one country, India. Two percent are in the neighboring country of Nepal, and the remaining one percent are dispersed around the world.

The appropriate form of worship for any two individuals may not be the same. Hinduism does not have a central authority or a single holy book. The largest number of adherents—an estimated 70 percent—worships the god Vishnu, a loving god incarnated as Krishna. An estimated 25 percent adhere to . . . Siva, a protective and destructive god. Shaktism is a form of worship dedicated to the female consorts of Vishnu and Siva.

### **Other Ethnic Religions**

Several hundred million people practice ethnic religions in East Asia, especially in China and Japan. Buddhism does not compete for adherents with Confucianism, Daoism, and other ethnic religions in China, because many Chinese accept the teachings of both universalizing and ethnic religions.

**Confucianism.** Confucius (551–479 B.C.) was a philosopher and teacher in the Chinese province of Lu. Confucianism prescribed a series of ethical principles for the orderly conduct of daily life in China.

**Daoism (Taoism).** Lao-Zi (604–531? B.C., also spelled Lao Tse), a contemporary of Confucius, organized Daoism. Daoists seek dao (or tao), which means the way or path. Dao cannot be comprehended by reason and knowledge, because not everything is knowable. Daoism split into many sects, some acting like secret societies, and followers embraced elements of magic.

**Shintoism.** Since ancient times, Shintoism has been the distinctive ethnic religion of Japan. Ancient Shintoists considered forces of nature to be divine, especially the Sun and Moon, as well as rivers, trees, rocks, mountains, and certain animals. Gradually, deceased emperors and other ancestors became more important deities for Shintoists than natural features. Shintoism still thrives in Japan, although no longer as the official state religion.

(194)

**Judaism.** About 6 million Jews live in the United States, 4 million in Israel, 2 million in former Soviet Union republics, . . . and 2 million elsewhere. The number of Jews living in the former Soviet Union has declined rapidly since the late 1980s, when emigration laws were liberalized.

Judaism plays a more substantial role in Western civilization than its number of adherents would suggest, because two of the three main universalizing religions—Christianity and Islam—find some of their roots in Judaism. The name Judaism derives from Judah, one of the patriarch Jacob's 12 sons; Israel is another biblical name for Jacob.

**Ethnic African Religions.** About 10 percent of Africans follow traditional ethnic religions, sometimes called animism. African animist religions are apparently based on monotheistic concepts, although below the supreme god there is a hierarchy of divinities, . . . assistants to god or personifications of natural phenomena, such as trees or rivers. Some atlases and textbooks persist in classifying Africa as predominantly animist, even though the actual percentage is small and declining. Africa is now nearly 50 percent Christian, and another 40 percent are Muslims. The growth in the two universalizing religions at the expense of ethnic religions reflects fundamental geographical differences between the two types of religions.

### **Key Issue 2. Why Do Religions Have Different Distributions?**

- **Origin of religions**
- **Diffusion of religions**
- **Holy places**
- **The calendar**

We can identify several major geographical differences between universalizing and ethnic religions: locations where the religions originated, processes by which they diffused . . . to other regions, types of places . . . considered holy, calendar dates identified as important holidays, and attitudes toward modifying the physical environment.

(195)

### **Origin of Religions**

Universalizing religions have precise places of origin, based on events in the life of a man. Ethnic religions have unknown or unclear origins, not tied to single historical individuals.

**Origin of Universalizing Religions.** Each of the three universalizing religions can be traced to the actions and teachings of a man who lived since the start of recorded history. Specific events also led to the division of the universalizing religions into branches.

**Origin of Christianity.** Christianity was founded upon the teachings of Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem between 8 and 4 B.C. and died on a cross in Jerusalem about A.D. 30.

Christians believe that Jesus died to atone for human sins, that he was raised from the dead by God, and that his Resurrection from the dead provides people with hope for salvation. Roman Catholics accept the teachings of the Bible, as well as the interpretation of those teachings by the Church hierarchy, headed by the Pope. Eastern Orthodoxy comprises the faith and practices of a collection of churches that arose in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. The split between the Roman and Eastern churches dates to the fifth century, as a result of rivalry between the Pope of Rome and the Patriarchy of Constantinople. Protestantism originated with the principles of the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

**Origin of Islam.** Islam traces its origin to the same narrative as Judaism and Christianity. All three religions consider Adam to have been the first man and Abraham to have been one of his descendants. Jews and Christians trace their story through Abraham's original wife and son, Sarah and Isaac. Muslims trace their story through his second wife and son, Hagar and Ishmael. One of Ishmael's

descendants, Muhammad, became the Prophet of Islam. Muhammad was born in Makkah about A.D. 570.

Differences between the two main branches—Shiites and Sunnis—go back to the earliest days of Islam and basically reflect disagreement over the line of succession in Islamic leadership.

(196)

**Origin of Buddhism.** The founder of Buddhism, Siddhartha Gautama, was born about 563 B.C. . . . in present-day Nepal, near the border with India. The son of a lord, he led a privileged existence sheltered from life's hardships. At age 29 Gautama left his palace . . . and lived in a forest for the next six years, thinking and experimenting with forms of meditation. Gautama emerged as the Buddha, the "awakened or enlightened one," and spent 45 years preaching his views across India. While the Theravadists emphasize Buddha's life of self-help and years of solitary introspection, Mahayanists emphasize Buddha's later years of teaching and helping others.

**Origin of Other Universalizing Religions.** Sikhism and Bahá'í were founded more recently than the three large universalizing religions. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, traveled widely through South Asia around 500 years ago preaching his new faith, and many people became his Sikhs, which is the Hindi word for disciples. When it was established in Iran during the nineteenth century, Bahá'í provoked strong opposition from Shiite Muslims. The Báb was executed in 1850, as were 20,000 of his followers.

**Origin of Hinduism, an Ethnic Religion.** Unlike the . . . universalizing religions, Hinduism did not originate with a specific founder. Hinduism existed prior to recorded history. Aryan tribes from Central Asia invaded India about 1400 B.C. and brought . . . their religion. Centuries of intermingling with the Dravidians already living in the area modified their religious beliefs.

### Diffusion of Religions

The three universalizing religions diffused from specific hearths, or places of origin, to other regions of the world. In contrast, ethnic religions typically remain clustered in one location.

**Diffusion of Universalizing Religions.** The hearths . . . of the three largest universalizing religions . . . are in Asia (Christianity and Islam in Southwest Asia, Buddhism in South Asia). Today these three . . . together have several billion adherents distributed across wide areas of the world.

(197)

**Diffusion of Christianity.** Christianity's diffusion has been rather clearly recorded . . . . Consequently, geographers can examine its diffusion by reconstructing patterns of communications, interaction, and migration. Chapter 1 identified two processes of diffusion—relocation (diffusion through migration) and expansion (diffusion through a snowballing effect)—and within expansion diffusion we distinguished between hierarchical (diffusion through key leaders) and contagious (widespread diffusion). Christianity diffused through a combination of all of these forms of diffusion. Christianity first diffused from its hearth in Palestine through relocation diffusion. **Missionaries** . . . carried the teachings of Jesus along the Roman Empire's protected sea routes and excellent road network . . . . People in commercial towns and military settlements that were directly linked by the communications network received the message first. Christianity (also) spread widely . . . through contagious diffusion—daily contact between believers in the towns and nonbelievers in the surrounding countryside. **Pagan**, the word for a follower of a polytheistic religion in ancient times, derives from the Latin word for *countryside*. The dominance of Christianity . . . was assured during the fourth century through hierarchical diffusion. Emperor Constantine . . . embraced it in A.D. 313, and Emperor Theodosius proclaimed it the empire's official religion in 380. In subsequent centuries Christianity further diffused into Eastern Europe through conversion of kings or other elite figures.

Migration and missionary activity . . . since . . . 1500 has extended Christianity to other regions, through permanent resettlement of Europeans, . . . by conversion of indigenous populations, and by

intermarriage. In recent decades Christianity has further diffused to Africa, where it is now the most widely practiced religion. Latin Americans are predominantly Roman Catholic, colonized by the Spanish and Portuguese. Canada (except Québec) and the United States have Protestant majorities because colonists came primarily from Protestant England. Mormons, originating at Fayette, New York, then eventually migrated to the sparsely inhabited Salt Lake Valley in the present-day state of Utah.

(198)

**Diffusion of Islam.** Muhammad's successors organized followers into armies that extended the region of Muslim control over an extensive area of Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Islam . . . diffused well beyond its hearth . . . through relocation diffusion of missionaries to portions of sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Spatially isolated from the Islamic core region . . . Indonesia . . . is predominantly Muslim, because Arab traders brought the religion there in the thirteenth century.

(199)

**Diffusion of Buddhism.** Buddhism did not diffuse rapidly from its point of origin in northeastern India. Most responsible for the spread of Buddhism was Asoka, emperor of the Magadhan Empire from about 273 to 232 B.C. About 257 B.C., at the height of the Magadhan Empire's power, Asoka became a Buddhist and thereafter attempted to put into practice Buddha's social principles. In the first century A.D., merchants along the trading routes from northeastern India introduced Buddhism to China. Chinese rulers allowed their people to become Buddhist monks during the fourth century A.D. Buddhism further diffused from China to Korea in the fourth century and from Korea to Japan two centuries later. During the same era, Buddhism lost its original base of support in India.

**Diffusion of Other Universalizing Religions.** The Bahá'í religion diffused to other regions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, . . . (then) spread rapidly during the late twentieth century, when a temple was constructed in every continent. Sikhism remained relatively clustered in the Punjab, where the religion originated. In 1802 . . . they created an independent state in the Punjab. But when the British government created the independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947, it divided the Punjab between the two instead of giving the Sikhs a separate country.

**Lack of Diffusion of Ethnic Religions.** Most ethnic religions have limited, if any, diffusion. These religions lack missionaries. Diffusion of universalizing religions, especially Christianity and Islam, typically comes at the expense of ethnic religions.

**Mingling of Ethnic and Universalizing Religions.** Universalizing religions may supplant ethnic religions or mingle with them. Equatorial Guinea, a former Spanish colony, is mostly Roman Catholic, whereas Namibia, a former German colony, is heavily Lutheran. Elsewhere, traditional African religious ideas and practices have been merged with Christianity. In East Asia, Buddhism is the universalizing religion that has most mingled with ethnic religions, such as Shintoism in Japan. The current situation in Japan offers a strong caution to anyone attempting to document the number of adherents of any religion. About 90 percent of Japanese say they are Shintos and about 75 percent say they are Buddhists. Ethnic religions can diffuse if adherents migrate to new locations for economic reasons and are not forced to adopt a strongly entrenched universalizing religion. The religious diversity of Mauritius is a function of the country's history of immigration. Mauritius was uninhabited until 1638, so it had no traditional ethnic religion. Hinduism on Mauritius traces back to the Indian immigrants, Islam to the African immigrants, and Christianity to the European immigrants.

(201)

**Judaism, an Exception.** Only since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 has a significant percentage of the world's Jews lived in their Eastern Mediterranean homeland. The Romans forced the Jewish diaspora, (from the Greek word for dispersion) after crushing an attempt by the Jews to rebel against Roman rule. Jews lived among other nationalities, retaining separate religious practices

but adopting other cultural characteristics of the host country, such as language. Other nationalities often persecuted the Jews living in their midst. Historically, the Jews of many European countries were forced to live in a **ghetto**, . . . a city neighborhood set up by law to be inhabited only by Jews. During World War II . . . the Nazis systematically rounded up . . . European Jews . . . and exterminated them. Many of the survivors migrated to Israel. Today about 10 percent of the world's 14 million Jews live in Europe, compared to 90 percent a century ago.

### **Holy Places**

Religions may elevate particular places to a holy position. (For) an ethnic religion . . . holy places derive from the distinctive physical environment of its hearth, such as mountains, rivers, or rock formations. A universalizing religion endows with holiness cities and other places associated with the founder's life. Making a **pilgrimage** to these holy places . . . is incorporated into the rituals of some universalizing and ethnic religions.

**Holy Places in Universalizing Religions.** Buddhism and Islam are the universalizing religions that place the most emphasis on identifying shrines.

(202)

**Buddhist Shrines.** Eight places are holy to Buddhists because they were the locations of important events in Buddha's life. Because Buddha reached perfect enlightenment while sitting under a bo tree, that tree has become a holy object as well. To honor Buddha, the bo tree has been diffused to other Buddhist countries, such as China and Japan.

**Holy Places in Islam.** The holiest city for Muslims is Makkah (Mecca), the birthplace of Muhammad.

(203)

The second most holy geographic location in Islam is Madinah (Medina). Muhammad's tomb is at Madinah, inside Islam's second mosque. Every healthy Muslim who has adequate financial resources is expected to undertake a pilgrimage, called a *hajj*, to Makkah (Mecca).

**Holy Places in Sikhism.** Sikhism's most holy structure, the Darbar Sahib, or Golden Temple, was built at Amritsar, . . . during the seventh century. Militant Sikhs used the Golden Temple . . . as a base for launching attacks in support of greater autonomy . . . during the 1980s.

**Holy Places in Ethnic Religions.** Ethnic religions are . . . closely tied to the physical geography of a particular place. Pilgrimages are undertaken to view these physical features.

**Holy Places in Hinduism.** The natural features most likely to rank among the holiest shrines in India are riverbanks or coastlines. Hindus consider a pilgrimage, known as a *tirtha*, to be an act of purification. Hindus believe that they achieve purification by bathing in holy rivers. The Ganges is the holiest river in India, because it is supposed to spring forth from the hair of Siva. Recent improvements in transportation have increased the accessibility of shrines.

(204)

**Cosmogony in Ethnic Religions.** Ethnic religions differ from universalizing religions in their understanding of relationships between human beings and nature. These differences derive from distinctive concepts of **cosmogony**, which is a set of religious beliefs concerning the origin of the universe. For example, Chinese ethnic religions, such as Confucianism and Daoism, believe that the universe is made up of two forces, yin and yang, which exist in everything.

The universalizing religions that originated in Southwest Asia, notably Christianity and Islam, consider that God created the universe, including Earth's physical environment and human beings. A religious person can serve God by cultivating the land, draining wetlands, clearing forests, building new settlements, and otherwise making productive use of natural features that God created. In the

name of God, some people have sought mastery over nature, not merely independence from it. Large-scale development of remaining wilderness is advocated by some religious people as a way to serve God.

Christians are more likely to consider . . . natural disasters to be preventable and may take steps to overcome the problem by modifying the environment. However, some Christians regard natural disasters as punishment for human sins. Ethnic religions do not attempt to transform the environment to the same extent. Environmental hazards may be accepted as normal and unavoidable.

(205)

### **The Calendar**

Universalizing and ethnic religions have different approaches to the calendar. An ethnic religion typically has . . . holidays based on the distinctive physical geography of the homeland. In universalizing religions, major holidays relate to events in the life of the founder rather than to the changing seasons of one particular place.

**The Calendar in Ethnic Religions.** A prominent feature of ethnic religions is celebration of the seasons. Rituals are performed to pray for favorable environmental conditions or to give thanks for past success.

**The Jewish Calendar.** Judaism is classified as an ethnic, . . . religion in part because its major holidays are based on events in the agricultural calendar of the religion's homeland in present-day Israel. The reinterpretation of natural holidays in the light of historical events has been especially important for Jews in the United States, Western Europe, and other regions who are unfamiliar with the agricultural calendar of the Middle East. Israel . . . uses a lunar rather than a solar calendar. The appearance of the new Moon marks the new month in Judaism and Islam and is a holiday for both religions. The lunar month is only about 29 days long, so a lunar year of about 350 days quickly becomes out of step with the agricultural seasons. The Jewish calendar solves the problem by adding an extra month 7 out of every 19 years.

(206)

**The Solstice.** The solstice has special significance in some ethnic religions. A major holiday in some pagan religions is the winter solstice, . . . the shortest day and longest night of the year. Stonehenge . . . is a prominent remnant of a pagan structure apparently aligned so the Sun rises between two stones on the solstice.

**The Calendar in Universalizing Religions.** The principal purpose of the holidays in universalizing religions is to commemorate events in the founder's life. Christians . . . associate their holidays with seasonal variations, . . . but climate and the agricultural cycle are not central to the liturgy and rituals.

**Islamic and Bahá'í calendars.** Islam, like Judaism, uses a lunar calendar. Islam as a universalizing religion retains a strict lunar calendar. As a result of using a lunar calendar, Muslim holidays arrive in different seasons from generation to generation. The Bahá'ís use a calendar . . . in which the year is divided into 19 months of 19 days each, with the addition of four intercalary days (five in leap years). The year begins on the first day of spring.

(207)

**Christian, Buddhist, and Sikh Holidays.** Christians commemorate the resurrection of Jesus on Easter, observed on the first Sunday after the first full Moon following the spring equinox in late March. But not all Christians observe Easter on the same day, because . . . Eastern Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar. Christians may relate Easter to the agricultural cycle, but that relationship differs with where they live. Northern Europeans and North Americans associate Christmas, the birthday of Jesus, with winter conditions. But for Christians in the Southern Hemisphere, December 25 is the height of the summer, with warm days and abundant sunlight. All Buddhists celebrate as major holidays Buddha's birth, Enlightenment, and death. However, Buddhists do not all observe



them on the same days. The major holidays in Sikhism are the births and deaths of the religion's 10 gurus. Commemorating historical events distinguishes Sikhism as a universalizing religion, in contrast to India's ethnic religion, Hinduism, which glorifies the physical geography of India.

### **Key Issue 3. Why Do Religions Organize Space in Distinctive Patterns?**

- **Places of worship**
- **Sacred space**
- **Administration of space**

Geographers study the major impact on the landscape made by all religions, regardless of whether they are universalizing or ethnic. The distribution of religious elements on the landscape reflects the importance of religion in people's values.

#### **Places of Worship**

Church, basilica, mosque, temple, pagoda, and synagogue are familiar names that identify places of worship in various religions. Some religions require a relatively large number of elaborate structures, whereas others have more modest needs.

#### **Christian Churches**

The Christian landscape is dominated by a high density of churches. The word *church* derives from a Greek term meaning *lord, master, and power*. *Church* also refers to a gathering of believers, as well as the building where the gathering occurs. The church building plays a more critical role in Christianity than in other religions, in part because the structure is an expression of religious principles, an environment in the image of God . . . (and) because attendance at a collective service of worship is considered extremely important. The prominence of churches on the landscape also stems from their style of construction and location.

(208)

**Church Architecture.** Early churches were modeled after Roman buildings for public assembly, known as *basilicas*. Churches built during the Gothic period, between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, had a floor plan in the form of the cross. Since Christianity split into many denominations, no single style of church construction has dominated.

**Places of Worship in Other Religions.** Unlike Christianity, other major religions do not consider their important buildings a sanctified place of worship.

**Muslim Mosques.** In contrast to a church, however, a *mosque* is not viewed as a sanctified place but rather as a location for the community to gather together for worship. The mosque is organized around a central courtyard . . . although it may be enclosed in harsher climates. A distinctive feature of the mosque is the minaret, a tower where a man known as a muzzan summons people to worship.

**Hindu Temples.** In Asian ethnic and universalizing religions . . . important religious functions are . . . likely to take place at home within the family. The Hindu temple serves as a home to one or more gods, although a particular god may have more than one temple. Because congregational worship is not part of Hinduism, the temple does not need a large closed interior space filled with seats. The site of the temple . . . may also contain . . . a pool for ritual baths.

**Buddhist and Shintoist Pagodas.** The pagoda is a prominent and visually attractive element of the Buddhist and Shintoist landscapes. Pagodas contain relics that Buddhists believe to be a portion of Buddha's body or clothing. Pagodas are not designed for congregational worship.

(209)

**Bahá'í Houses of Worship.** Bahá'ís built seven Houses of Worship . . . dispersed to different continents to dramatize Bahá'í as a universalizing religion, . . . open to adherents of all religions. Services include reciting the scriptures of various religions.

### **Sacred Space**

The impact of religion is clearly seen . . . at several scales. How each religion distributes its elements on the landscape depends on its beliefs.

**Disposing of the Dead.** A prominent example of religiously inspired arrangement of land at a smaller scale is burial practices.

**Burial.** Christians, Muslims, and Jews usually bury their dead in a specially designated area called a *cemetery*. After Christianity became legal, Christians buried their dead in the yard around the church. Public health and sanitation considerations in the nineteenth century led to public management of many cemeteries. The remains of the dead are customarily aligned in some traditional direction. In congested urban areas, Christians and Muslims have traditionally used cemeteries as public open space. Traditional burial practices in China . . . have removed as much as 10 percent of the land from productive agriculture.

**Other Methods of Disposing of Bodies.** Not all faiths bury their dead. Hindus generally practice cremation rather than burial. Cremation was the principal form of disposing of bodies in Europe before Christianity. Motivation for cremation may have originated from unwillingness on the part of nomads to leave their dead behind. Cremation could also free the soul from the body. To strip away unclean portions of the body, Parsis (Zoroastrians) expose the dead to scavenging birds and animals. Tibetan Buddhists also practice exposure for some dead, with cremation reserved for the most exalted priests. Disposal of bodies at sea is used in some parts of Micronesia, but the practice is much less common than in the past.

(210)

**Religious Settlements.** Buildings for worship and burial places are smaller-scale manifestations of religion on the landscape, but there are larger-scale examples: entire settlements. A utopian settlement is an ideal community built around a religious way of life. By 1858 some 130 different utopian settlements had begun in the United States.

Most utopian communities declined in importance or disappeared altogether. Although most colonial settlements were not planned primarily for religious purposes, religious principles affected many of the designs. New England settlers placed the church at the most prominent location in the center of the settlement.

(211)

**Religious Place Names.** Roman Catholic immigrants frequently have given religious place names, or toponyms, to their settlements in the New World, particularly in Québec and the U.S. Southwest.

### **Administration of Space**

Followers of a universalizing religion must be connected so as to assure communication and consistency of doctrine. Ethnic religions tend not to have organized, central authorities.

**Hierarchical Religions.** A hierarchical religion has a well-defined geographic structure and organizes territory into local administrative units.

**Roman Catholic Hierarchy.** The Roman Catholic Church has organized much of Earth's inhabited land into an administrative structure, ultimately accountable to the Pope in Rome. Reporting to the Pope are *archbishops*. Each archbishop heads a *province*, which is a group of several *dioceses*. Reporting to each archbishop are *bishops*. Each bishop administers a diocese, of which there are several thousand. A diocese in turn is spatially divided into parishes, each headed by a priest.

(212)

**Latter-Day Saints.** Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) exercise strong organization of the landscape. The highest authority in the Church . . . frequently redraws ward and stake boundaries in rapidly growing areas to reflect the ideal population standards.

**Locally Autonomous Religions.** Some universalizing religions are highly **autonomous religions**, or self-sufficient, and interaction among communities is confined to little more than loose cooperation and shared ideas. Islam and some Protestant denominations are good examples.

**Local Autonomy in Islam.** Islam has neither a religious hierarchy nor a formal territorial organization. Strong unity within the Islamic world is maintained by a relatively high degree of communication and migration, such as the pilgrimage to Makkah. In addition, uniformity is fostered by Islamic doctrine, which offers more explicit commands than other religions.

**Protestant Denominations.** Protestant Christian denominations vary in geographic structure from extremely autonomous to somewhat hierarchical. Extremely autonomous denominations such as Baptists and United Church of Christ are organized into self-governing congregations. Presbyterian churches represent an intermediate degree of autonomy. The Episcopalian, Lutheran, and most Methodist churches have hierarchical structures, somewhat comparable to the Roman Catholic Church.

**Ethnic Religions.** Judaism and Hinduism also have no centralized structure of religious control.

#### **Key Issue 4. Why Do Territorial Conflicts Arise among Religious Groups?**

- **Religion vs. government policies**
- **Religion vs. religion**

The twentieth century was a century of global conflict. The threat of global conflict has receded in the twenty-first century, but local conflicts have increased in areas of cultural diversity, as will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. The element of cultural diversity that has led to conflict in many localities is religion. In a world increasingly dominated by a global culture and economy, religious fundamentalism is one of the most important ways that a group maintains a distinctive cultural identity.

(213)

**Religion vs. Government Policies.** The role of religion in organizing Earth's surface has diminished in some societies, owing to political and economic change. Yet in recent years religious principles have become increasingly important in the political organization of countries, especially where a branch of Christianity or Islam is the prevailing religion.

**Religion vs. Social Change.** Participation in the global economy and culture can expose local residents to values and beliefs originating in more developed countries . . . North Americans and Western Europeans may not view economic development as incompatible with religious values, but many religious adherents in less developed countries do, especially where Christianity is not the predominant religion.

**Hinduism vs. Social Equality.** Hinduism has been strongly challenged since the 1800s, when British colonial administrators introduced their social and moral concepts to India. The most vulnerable aspect of the Hindu religion was its rigid **caste** system. British administrators and Christian missionaries pointed out the shortcomings of the caste system, such as neglect of the untouchables' health and economic problems. The Indian government legally abolished the untouchable caste, and the people formerly in that caste now have equal rights with other Indians.

(214)

**Religion vs. Communism.** Organized religion was challenged in the twentieth century by the rise of communism in Eastern Europe and Asia.

**Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Islam vs. the Soviet Union.** In 1721 Czar Peter the Great made the Russian Orthodox Church a part of the Russian government. Following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, which overthrew the czar, the Communist government of the Soviet Union pursued antireligious programs. People's religious beliefs could not be destroyed overnight, but the role of organized religion in Soviet life was reduced.

All church buildings and property were nationalized and could be used only with local government permission. With religious organizations prevented from conducting social and cultural work, religion dwindled in daily life. The end of Communist rule in the late twentieth century brought a religious revival in Eastern Europe, especially where Roman Catholicism is the most prevalent branch. Property confiscated by the Communist governments reverted to Church ownership, and attendance at church services increased. Central Asian countries that were former parts of the Soviet Union . . . are struggling to determine the extent to which laws should be rewritten to conform to Islamic custom rather than to the secular tradition inherited from the Soviet Union.

**Buddhism vs. Southeast Asian Countries.** In Southeast Asia, Buddhists were hurt by the long Vietnam War. Neither antagonist was particularly sympathetic to Buddhists. The current Communist governments in Southeast Asia have discouraged religious activities and permitted monuments to decay. These countries do not have the funds necessary to restore the structures.

### **Religion vs. Religion**

Conflicts are most likely to occur (at) . . . a boundary between two religious groups. Two long-standing conflicts involving religious groups are in the Middle East and Northern Ireland.

**Religious Wars in the Middle East.** Jews, Christians, and Muslims have fought for 2,000 years. All three religions have especially strong attachments to the city of Jerusalem. As an ethnic religion, Judaism makes a special claim to the territory it calls the Promised Land. The religion's customs and rituals acquired meaning from the agricultural life of the ancient Hebrew tribe. Jerusalem is especially holy to Jews because it was the location of the Temple, their center of worship in ancient times. Christians consider Palestine the Holy Land and Jerusalem the Holy City because the major events in Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection were concentrated there. Muslims regard Jerusalem as their third holiest city, after Makkah and Madinah. The most important Muslim structure in Jerusalem is the mosque at the Dome of the Rock, built in 691. The rock is thought to be the place from which Muhammad ascended to heaven.

**Crusades between Christians and Muslims.** In the seventh century, Muslims . . . captured most of the Middle East . . . and converted most of the people from Christianity to Islam. The Arab army . . . moved west across North Africa and invaded Europe at Gibraltar in 710 . . . (and) crossed the Pyrenees Mountains a few years later. Its initial advance in Europe was halted by the Franks . . . led by Charles Martel, at Poitiers, France, in 732. The Arab army . . . continued to control portions of present-day Spain until 1492

(216)

To the east, the Arab army captured Eastern Orthodox Christianity's most important city, Constantinople (present-day Istanbul in Turkey), in 1453 and advanced a few years later into Southeast Europe, as far north as present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. The current civil war in that country is a legacy of the fifteenth-century Muslim invasion. To recapture the Holy Land from its Muslim conquerors, European Christians launched a series of military campaigns, known as Crusades.

**Jews vs. Muslims in Palestine.** The Muslim Ottoman Empire controlled Palestine . . . between 1516 and 1917. Great Britain took over Palestine under a mandate from the League of Nations. The British allowed some Jews to return to Palestine, but immigration was restricted again during the 1930s in response to intense pressure by Arabs in the region. As violence initiated by both Jewish and Muslim settlers escalated after World War II, the British announced their intention to withdraw from Palestine. The United Nations voted to partition Palestine into two independent states. Jerusalem was to be an

international city, open to all religions, and run by the United Nations. When the British withdrew in 1948, Jews declared an independent state of Israel within the boundaries prescribed by the U.N. resolution. The next day its neighboring Arab Muslim states declared war. The combatants signed an armistice in 1949 that divided control of Jerusalem. Israel won three more wars with its neighbors, in 1956, 1967, and 1973. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel captured the entire city of Jerusalem and removed the barriers that had prevented Jews from visiting and living in the Old City of Jerusalem. The ultimate obstacle to comprehensive peace in the Middle East is the status of Jerusalem.

(217)

**Conflict over the Holy Land: Palestinian Perspective.** After the 1973 war, Egypt and Jordan signed peace treaties with Israel, and Syria stopped actively plotting an attack on Israel. Despite the movement toward peace among the neighboring nationalities in the Middle East, unrest persists because of the emergence of a new nationality in the late 1960s, known as the Palestinians. To complicate the situation, five groups of people consider themselves Palestinians. After capturing the West Bank from Jordan in 1967, Israel permitted Jewish settlers to construct more than 100 settlements in the territory. Although Jewish settlers comprise only about 7 percent of the West Bank population, Palestinians see their presence as a reflection of Israel's reluctance to grant independence to the occupied territory.

Israel has turned over control of the Gaza and much of the West Bank to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Some Palestinians . . . are willing to settle for all of the territory taken by Israel in the 1967 War, including the Old City of Jerusalem, while others want to continue fighting Israel for the entire territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

**Conflict over the Holy Land: Israeli Perspective.** Israel sees itself as a very small country . . . with a Jewish majority, surrounded by a region of hostile Muslim Arabs. Israel considers two elements of the local landscape especially meaningful. First, the country's major population centers are quite close to international borders, making them vulnerable to surprise attack. The second geographical problem from Israel's perspective derives from local landforms.

(218)

The partition of Palestine in 1947 . . . allocated most of the coastal plain to Israel, while Jordan took most of the hills between the coastal plain and the Jordan River, . . . called the West Bank (of the Jordan River). Farther north, Israel's territory extended eastward to the Jordan River valley, but Syria controlled the highlands east of the valley, known as the Golan Heights. Between 1948 and 1967 Jordan and Syria used the hills as staging areas to attack Israeli settlements on the adjacent coastal plain and in the Jordan River valley. During the 1967 War, Israel captured these highlands to stop attacks on the lowland population concentrations. Israeli Jews are divided between those who wish to retain some of the occupied territories and those who wish to make compromises with the Palestinians. Peace . . . will be difficult to achieve because Israelis have no intention of giving up control of the Old City of Jerusalem, and Palestinians have no intention of giving up their claim to it.

(220)

**Religious Wars in Ireland.** The most troublesome religious boundary in Western Europe lies on the island of Eire (Ireland). The Republic of Ireland, which occupies five-sixths of the island, is 92 percent Roman Catholic, but the island's northern one-sixth, which is part of the United Kingdom rather than Ireland, is about 58 percent Protestant and 42 percent Roman Catholic.

Ireland became a self-governing dominion within the British Empire in 1921. Complete independence was declared in 1937, and a republic was created in 1949. When most of Ireland became independent, a majority in six northern counties voted to remain in the United Kingdom. Demonstrations by Roman Catholics protesting discrimination began in 1968. Since then, more than 3,000 have been killed in Northern Ireland—both Protestants and Roman Catholics. A small number of Roman Catholics in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland joined the Irish Republican Army

(IRA), a militant organization dedicated to achieving Irish national unity by whatever means available, including violence. Similarly, a scattering of Protestants created extremist organizations to fight the IRA, including the Ulster Defense Force (UDF). As long as most Protestants are firmly committed to remaining in the United Kingdom and most Roman Catholics are equally committed to union with the Republic of Ireland, peaceful settlement appears difficult.

### Key Terms

Animism (p.194)

Autonomous religion (p.212)

Branch (p.187)

Caste (p.213)

Cosmogony (p.204)

Denomination (p.187)

Diocese (p.211)

Ethnic religion (p.212)

Fundamentalism (p.212)

Ghetto (p.201)

Hierarchical religion (p.211)

Missionary (p.197)

Monotheism (p.194)

Pagan (p.197)

Pilgrimage (p.201)

Polytheism (p.194)

Sect (p.187)

Solstice (p.206)

Universalizing religion (p.187)

Ethnicity is a source of  
The ethnic group to whi  
in places with a history

The significance of ethn

- To what extent
- Should preferer
- To what extent

### Key Issues

1. Where are ethn
2. Why have ethn
3. Why do ethnici
4. What is ethnic c

(227)

Ethnicity is identity with  
or hearth. Ethnicity con  
interested in *where* ethn  
cultural elements, ethnic  
isolation from them. Eth  
our ethnic identity is im  
preservation of local div  
attempting or even aspir  
stands as the strongest b

### Key Issue 1. Where Ar

- **Distribution of**
- **Differentiating**

This section of the chapt  
issue looks at ethnicities

### Distribution of Ethnicit

The two most numerous  
Hispanics or Latinos, ab  
American Indian.

### Clustering of Ethnicitie

Clustering of ethnicities  
particular neighborhoods