
Religion's Role In Society

Global imperialism helped religion spread across the World and is one of the main reasons why religions are still around. Imperialism is a theology of expanding a nation's rule over other countries by either military force or through influence and has been used all throughout history. While countries were expanding, religious people made it their mission to convert people. Many churches were established in conquered territories by Christian missionaries (Cleary). By starting those churches they also spread Western values.

Christianity

Christianity began after the death of Jew named Jesus. Jesus preached people should love one another, even their enemies. He performed many miracles such as the healing of a blind man and raising people from the dead. Ancient prophecies claimed that there would be a Messiah to save the people of Israel. Jesus proclaimed that he was the son of God and that he was the Messiah the people were waiting for. This made the religious authorities angry and they handed Jesus over to Roman authorities to be killed (2009). He was found guilty of heresy and was crucified. Three days after his death a group of women went to his tomb and found it empty. Jesus later appeared to his disciples and other followers and they knew that God had raised him from the dead (2009).

Throughout Jesus' ministry and even after his death he had made many followers. Although he had many followers, his death would not have made as big of an impact on the world that it did if not for Paul (2009). Paul was once known as Saul and persecuted thousands of Christians. However, that all changed when he was traveling on the road to Damascus and was blinded by God. Saul was then aware of what he had been doing and felt the Holy Spirit upon himself and he could see. After this encounter his name was changed to Paul and began spreading Christianity. Christianity was not only spread by Paul but also by other believers who traveled from place to place and spread their beliefs.

Islam

Islam's rise was heavily contributed to the prophet Muhammad. Muhammad had visions and heard voices so in hope of clarity he went to Mount Hira to meditate. On one of his trips up the Mount he had an encounter with an angel named Gabriel (2016). His encounter with the angel inspired him to write the Qur'an. The significance of his encounter was that he believed there is only one God which went against the polytheistic beliefs. Muhammad was from one of the most influential tribes in Mecca. There were several trade routes that ran through Mecca which made spreading Islamic practices easy.

When he started to receive the following the merchants in Mecca became angry because trade was believed to be protected by the pagan gods and would therefore suffer (2016). Muhammad was shunned in Mecca but the status that his wife and uncle possessed kept him from being prosecuted. Muhammad and his followers fled from Mecca and continued his teachings wherever they went. He returned back to his home after Mecca surrendered to Quarish. Once him and his followers returned they destroyed all the pagan god idols and began spreading their

belief in one God (2016).

Judaism

Judaism is one of the oldest religions in the world. Jewish people that there is one God and He made a covenant with them. The majority of Jews believe that the Messiah has not come yet but will one day and this is the biggest difference between Judaism and Christianity (2016). Abraham is considered the father of Judaism because he taught that there was only one God. Jews have been persecuted for their faith for centuries. The Holocaust was one of the worst mass killing of the Jews in history. During World War II, Nazis murdered more than a third of the World's Jewish population (2018).

Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world and yet tracing its history is difficult due to the fact there was no specific founder (2017). It is not as organized as other religions because Hinduism is more of a way of life than a religion. Hindus recognize other gods however they only worship Brahman. Reincarnation and karma are key beliefs in Hinduism. They believe that in order to stop being born again after you die you must become part of the absolute soul. Karma is the belief that actions whether good or bad decide your current and future life. Many Hindus are vegetarian because animals are sacred to their culture especially the cow (2017). Just like many other religions Hinduism spread throughout the world by trading posts and people traveling from city to city.

Buddhism

Siddhartha Guatama founded Buddhism more than 2,500 in India and quickly spread throughout East and Southeast Asia. He was born into a rich family but gave it up to be poor. Siddhartha sought a life free from temptations but without deprivation as well. After he searched for six years he found enlightenment and spent the rest of his life instructing others on how to become enlightened. Buddhists do not believe in a God or gods; rather they're goal in life is to achieve enlightenment. Enlightenment is a state of inner peace and wisdom and when reached they are said to have a state of nirvana ("Buddhism," 2017). The way to enlightenment is through meditation and morality.

Ability to Stay Around

These religions were able to spread and stick around over the years because they appealed to people. Disease and poverty had made many people lose hope in life but these religions gave it to them. While all five religions believe different things they all give people a purpose. For Buddhists their purpose is to find enlightenment while for Christians their purpose is to help others find God. All of these religions faced persecution of some sort. However, these religions were able to stay around because religion was important to people and so it passed down from generation to generation.

Compatibility with Today's Society

All of these religions were not only an important part of history but they are also an important part of everyday life today. They helped establish the way that society views the world and the people in it. Religion gives people hope that even though their life might be hard now it'll be okay if they have faith. These religions preach love rather than hate which is an important thing that today's society needs to remember. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism are five of the most well-known religions. They were not only relevant to ancient society but also to today's society. Religion teaches virtue and plays a huge role in the society's code of morals. In fact, many leaders looked to religions to help them write their rules and laws for their country