

RELIGIOUS LITERACY

*What Every American
Needs to Know—and Doesn't*

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A Dictionary of Religious Literacy

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In *Cultural Literacy* E. D. Hirsch provided a sixty-four-page appendix of terms literate Americans supposedly already knew. Hirsch did not define those terms. He said that you should know who the Abominable Snowman is, but he didn't tell you that you could find him in *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (or for that matter in Himalayan mythology). The following dictionary, instead of providing a similarly exhaustive accounting of what religiously literate Americans ought to know, offers a more modest list. Learning five thousand terms is not necessary; a hundred or so is a good start. But knowing what these terms mean is essential. So unlike Hirsch's appendix, this chapter provides definitions of its terms.

This dictionary does not try to duplicate the information you might learn in a Religion 101 course. It focuses instead on information US citizens need to make sense of their country and the world—the key stories, doctrines, practices, symbols, scriptures, people, places, phrases, groups, and holidays of the world's major religions. When it came to preparing this list, the key question was: What does one need to know to understand and participate in religiously inflected public debates? Consider Sufism: a primer on Islam would doubtless deal with Sufi mysticism, but this dictionary ignores Sufism in order to focus on sectarian divisions inside Islam that are more salient in the contemporary United States (including Wahhabism, which has ridden a wave of Saudi money into American mosques). Or consider Hanukkah. As any rabbi can tell you, this is a minor Jewish holiday. So why is it included here while more important festivals—Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)—are not? Because Hanukkah comes up repeatedly in public disputes about Christmas, including lawsuits about the

constitutionality of nativity displays (some of which include menorahs and other Hanukkah symbols) on public property. Another of this dictionary's principles of inclusion is public confusion. Terms that are widely misunderstood or misused—*evangelicalism* and *fundamentalism*, for example—are stressed here.

In addition to defining these terms, this dictionary tries to make them relevant by noting how they are used (or abused) in public policy discussions—how the Genesis story of Adam and Eve is cited in debates about gay marriage or the Good Samaritan is drafted into fights over immigration law. In discussing American Christianity, it notes that Catholics are underrepresented in the US Congress relative to their overall population while Episcopalians and Presbyterians are overrepresented.

This chapter begins with a short section called “Religion by the Numbers.” This section includes such basics as the 4 Noble Truths of Buddhism, the 5 Pillars of Islam, and the 10 Commandments. The rest of this chapter proceeds alphabetically with “What Americans Need to Know.” Those who master this dictionary will be prepared to engage the controversial social and political issues of our time. Closer to home, they will also be able to understand what is being said (and implied) in town meetings and school committees. And they will have the confidence to participate in conversations about religion among coworkers and friends.

One final note: Much of the information included here derives from sources that are not without a point of view—from Lutherans or Shiites, the Bhagavad Gita or the Quran. Accuracy might dictate the repeated inclusion of caveats such as “according to the Bible” or “from the Buddhist perspective.” But felicity of expression dictates otherwise. The reader should know that if I write that Joseph Smith Jr. found gold plates in the hills of New York in the 1820s I am not reporting the facts or even the facts as I understand them but rather the facts as Mormons believe them to be.

Religion by the Numbers

4 Gospels. The four narratives of the life of Jesus included in the New Testament of the Christian churches. They are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In Greek, the language in which these books were written, the term *gospel* refers to “good news.” So these Gospels are the “good news” of the birth, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Although these books all narrate Jesus’ life, they have different emphases. Matthew shows how Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies. Mark structures his

story around the “messianic secret” that Jesus is the long-awaited messiah of the Jews. Luke accents Jesus’ concern for women and the poor. John contains a variety of “I am” sayings, which underscore Jesus’ divinity. Mark (circa 70 CE) is likely the earliest of the Gospels, which were written in the late first century. Matthew and Luke are probably based in part on Mark. Because of their similarities in structure and content these three books are called the synoptic Gospels. Of the Gospels, Americans’ favorite is Matthew, followed by John, then Luke, then Mark. In recent decades noncanonical gospels such as the Gospel of Thomas have piqued considerable interest. The best-selling novel *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) spurred interest in the Gospel of Mary, and the publication in 2006 of the long-lost Gospel of Judas, which depicts Judas not as Jesus’ betrayer but as his closest confidante, caused a stir.

4 Noble Truths. Buddhism’s core teachings, delivered by the Buddha in his first sermon at Sarnath, outside Varanasi in what is now northern India. The first truth (the Existence of Suffering) states that human life is characterized by *dukkha*, which is usually translated as suffering but also means unsatisfactoriness. The second truth (the Origin of Suffering) says that suffering is caused by clinging, which is caused in turn by ignorance, particularly ignorance of the impermanence of things. The third truth (the Cessation of Suffering) says that the chain of cause and effect that produces suffering can be reversed, resulting in liberation from suffering or nirvana. The fourth truth (the Path to the Cessation of Suffering) outlines the way to nirvana via the Eightfold Path of Buddhist practice.

5 Ks. Symbols that identify male members of a Sikh order called the Khalsa, so called because each begins in Punjabi with the letter *k*. They are: *kes*, uncut hair; *kangha*, comb; *kirpan*, ceremonial sword; *kara*, steel wrist bangle; *kachh*, short pants. The 5 Ks were instituted in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhism’s tenth guru, as a way to distinguish Sikhs from surrounding Hindus and Muslims. The kirpan has prompted many controversies in the United States. Public schools have wrestled with whether, as a matter of religious freedom, Sikhs should be allowed to wear kirpans at schools while Sikhs have struggled with whether it is permissible, in order to comply with school weapons bans, to dull their kirpans’ blades or confine them permanently in their sheaths. After 9/11 one of the people arrested was a turbaned Sikh man innocently carrying a kirpan on a train in Providence, Rhode Island.

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5 Pillars of Islam. The key practices of Islam, obligatory for all Muslims. They are: *Shahadah*, or witnessing that "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God"; *salat*, or prayer in the direction of Mecca five times a day (dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening); *sawm*, or fasting (from sunrise to sunset) during the lunar month of Ramadan; *zakat*, or almsgiving to the poor (via an asset tax); *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, once in a lifetime for all who are physically and financially able. Some critics of Islam wrongly claim that jihad is one of the Five Pillars. It is not. Muslims' emphasis on these Five Pillars underscores the fact that Islam is more focused on right practice (orthopraxy) than on right belief (orthodoxy).

7 sacraments. A sacrament is a religious rite that involves the manipulation of some tangible object (water, oil, bread, wine) and conveys God's grace to participants. Catholics (and most Orthodox Christians) acknowledge seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, reconciliation (also known as penance or confession), Holy Communion, marriage, ordination of priests, and anointing of the sick (once referred to as last rites). Protestants classically acknowledge only two—baptism and Holy Communion—while some Protestant sects, notably the Quakers, reject sacramentalism altogether. Early twenty-first century debates about gay marriage highlighted the question of the sacramentalism of matrimony. If marriage is purely contractual, perhaps it can change with the times. But if marriage is ordained by God—"the visible form of invisible grace," in Saint Augustine's terms—the barriers to gay marriage are much higher.

7 deadly sins. In Roman Catholicism the most weighty human failings, sometimes referred to as the Seven Capital Sins. The standard list, which the thirteenth-century Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas dated to Pope Gregory the Great (540–604), includes: pride, envy, greed, anger, sloth, lust, and gluttony. In the 1995 film *Se7en* detectives try to track down a murderer who kills in keeping with the Seven Deadly Sins.

8-Fold Path of Buddhism. Buddhism's Eightfold Path, the culmination of the Four Noble Truths, charts the course from suffering to nirvana. This practical path is classically divided into three parts: wisdom (right view and right intention); morality (right speech, right conduct, right livelihood); and concentration (right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration). It is often described as a "middle way" between asceticism and hedonism.

10 Commandments. Religious and moral laws given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai and inscribed on two stone tablets. Also known as the Decalogue or the Ten Words, these laws begin with human beings' duties to God and conclude with their obligations to one another. The Bible contains two versions of the Ten Commandments, in Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21, which are also scattered throughout the Quran. The Bible does not number these commandments, however, so Jews, Catholics, and Protestants have different iterations of them. There is no single Jewish version, but one widely used version begins with "I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage." Then follows, "You shall have no other gods besides me." The Protestant version and the Catholic version (also accepted by most Lutherans) collapse these two injunctions into one. The Protestant Decalogue includes a prohibition against "graven images" not found in the Jewish or Catholic lists. The most important difference is between the Jewish commandment not to "murder" and the Catholic and Protestant commandment not to "kill." Capital punishment and war would seem to be permissible in the former case, since arguably neither is murder, but not in the latter, since both involve killing. These three versions also differ at the end—to enable each to add up to ten. While Catholics conclude with separate injunctions against coveting your neighbor's wife and coveting your neighbor's goods, Jews and Protestants compress covetousness into a single commandment.

The Decalogue has a long history in American public life. Cecil B. DeMille directed a popular silent version of *The Ten Commandments* in 1923, and his 1956 remake of the same name was a blockbuster. Inspired by the remake, which starred Charlton Heston as Moses, a Catholic group called the Fraternal Order of Eagles began constructing Ten Commandments monuments on public lands across the country. These displays occasioned a flurry of litigation in the 1990s and beyond. In 2005 the Supreme Court, whose courtroom is itself adorned with a carving of Moses and other lawgivers, banned two such monuments (both Protestant versions in Kentucky courthouses) and approved another (a Judeo-Christian version in the Texas capitol). The most famous recent spat on this subject featured the "Ten Commandments Judge," Roy Moore, who, after refusing a court order to remove a Ten Commandments monument he had installed at Alabama's state judiciary building, was removed from his post as Alabama's chief justice in 2003. Most Ten Commandments controversies have concerned displays on public property. A nonprofit group called Project Moses erects similar displays on private land. This

organization is also lobbying for a Ten Commandments monument on the National Mall in Washington DC.²⁵⁵

Jewish Version

1. I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage.
2. You shall have no other gods besides Me.
3. You shall not swear falsely by the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or ... anything that is your neighbor's.

Catholic Version

1. I am the Lord your God: You shall not have strange Gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Protestant Version

1. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make yourself a graven image.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill.

7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or ... anything that is your neighbor's.

12 apostles. The original followers, or disciples, of Jesus, dispatched by him to spread the Christian message, are referred to as the twelve apostles (from the Greek for "those who are sent forth"). They are: Peter, Andrew, James (the greater), John, Philip, Bartholomew (aka Nathaniel), Matthew, Thomas, James (the lesser), Jude, Simon, Judas. After Judas betrayed Jesus and committed suicide, he was replaced by Matthias.

What Americans Need to Know

Abraham. The Hebrew Bible patriarch and father of the "Abrahamic" religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. According to Genesis, Abraham and God enter into a covenant. Although Abraham is old and his wife, Sarah, is barren, God promises to make him the father of a great nation residing in a Promised Land, and Abraham agrees in turn to circumcise his male children. Abraham is best known for obeying God's command to sacrifice his son Isaac. After Abraham bound Isaac on an altar and raised a knife to slay him, an angel stayed his hand and a nearby ram was sacrificed instead. Abraham is also revered among Christians, who see him as a person of great faith, and by Muslims, who call him Ibrahim and cite the story of the binding of his son (not Isaac but Ishmael—Ismail in Arabic—according to Muslims) to support their view of him as the first Muslim, and their understanding of themselves as heirs of his promises (including the Land of Canaan). Toward the end of the twentieth century, and particularly after the events of September 11, 2001, Americans began to speak of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as "Abrahamic religions." In September 2002 Abraham appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine as the father of these faiths.

Abrahamic tradition. See Judeo-Christian-Islamic.

Adam and Eve. The Bible begins in the book of Genesis with two creation accounts. In the latter God creates Adam as the first human. God then creates Eve, the first woman, out of one of Adam's ribs and instructs the

two not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Tricked by a serpent, however, they eat this "forbidden fruit," prompting God to banish them from Eden. According to many Christians, who describe this catastrophe as the Fall, all subsequent humans were born with a rebellious nature called original sin. At least since the publication of *The Woman's Bible* (1895), Jewish and Christian feminists have wrestled with the gender implications in this story, which according to some interpreters makes women both secondary and subordinate to men—Eve is described as Adam's "handmaid" or "helper"—and blames a woman for the Fall. Feminists have responded by emphasizing the first creation account, which refers to God creating male and female at the same time and both in the divine image. Muslims wrestle with similar questions. The story of the first woman's creation from Adam's rib appears in the hadith, but in the Quran most references to creation speak of God fashioning male and female from the same substance.

In the contemporary gay marriage debate, opponents have invoked the Garden of Eden story, arguing that in Genesis God ordains marriage as a contract between one man and one woman. In the beginning, they argue, it was "Adam and Eve," not "Adam and Steve." There is no mention in Genesis, however, of Adam and Eve getting married.

Adventism. See Seventh-Day Adventism.

African Methodist Episcopal Church. One of the largest black church denominations in the United States, the AME (as it is popularly called) was founded in Philadelphia in 1816 by Richard Allen, who went on to become this denomination's first bishop. The AME boasts over a dozen colleges and seminaries in the United States and roughly 3.5 million American members.

ahimsa. Term in Hinduism, Buddhism, and especially Jainism, often translated as nonviolence, referring to not harming or wishing to harm. Described by Jains as the highest moral duty, this ideal informs such diverse practices in India as vegetarianism and the veneration of cows. It also motivates Jain ascetics to wear face masks and sweep the ground before them in order to avoid injuring even tiny insects. *Ahimsa* profoundly influenced Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948) and his nonviolent campaign for Indian independence, though Gandhi creatively reinterpreted this ideal in more positive terms—as universal compassion. Through Gandhi, *ahimsa* also informed the nonviolent struggles of the

Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement. Today this ideal plays a major part in the Dalai Lama's nonviolent struggle for Tibetan cultural autonomy.

Allah. Term for God in Arabic and Islam. In the Quran Allah is described as merciful, gracious, and compassionate and is said to be the creator, sustainer, ruler, judge, and redeemer of the universe. Muslims traditionally ascribe to God ninety-nine "beautiful names," including "The Just," "The Mighty," and "The Perfectly Wise." The most important teaching about Allah, however, is *tawhid*, or divine oneness, a view inscribed in the *Shahadah*, or Muslim creed, as "There is no God but God." Rival understandings of God, including polytheism and the Christian view that God is somehow three in one, Muslims reject as *shirk*, or ascribing partners to Allah (who alone is divine).

One of the most common Muslim sayings is "*Allahu Akbar*," or "God is great." These words were the last sounds recorded on the cockpit voice recorder for United Flight 93, which terrorists crashed in rural Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, and there is a Muslim tradition of reciting this saying when going into battle to defend Islam. But *Allahu Akbar* is more commonly heard in both the traditional call to daily prayers and in the prayer ritual itself. Since 9/11 Americans have debated whether, as Muslims have traditionally claimed, the Islamic God is the same as the Jewish and Christian God. After 9/11 President George W. Bush affirmed that Muslims and Christians "worship the same God," but many evangelicals disagreed. "We should always remember," Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention said of Bush, "that he is commander in chief, not theologian in chief."²⁵⁶

al-Qaeda. International terrorist organization founded in the late 1980s by the wealthy Saudi-born financier Osama bin Laden (b. 1957). Al-Qaeda is best known for hijacking three jets on September 11, 2001, and crashing them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a Pennsylvania field. Influenced by Wahhabism and other forms of Islamist thought, al-Qaeda ("the base" in Arabic) emerged in 1989 out of an organization bin Laden used to finance the struggle of the Mujahideen ("holy warriors") against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan—a struggle funded in part by the United States. After the Soviets withdrew that same year, al-Qaeda enjoyed safe haven in Afghanistan under the Taliban, a theocratic Sunni state that punished theft by amputation, banned television, and mandated that women wear the full *burqa* (veil covering the entire

body) in public. From that base al-Qaeda launched a "holy war" against Western occupation of Muslim lands, especially the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia. That jihad, as members called it, proceeds on two fronts: against the "near enemy," Muslim-majority states—Saudi Arabia chief among them—that it regards as apostate; and against the "far enemy" of the United States and other Western powers that support those apostate regimes.

What al-Qaeda opposes is plainer than what it desires, but the organization seems to seek a transnational Islamic empire that adheres to a strict interpretation of Islamic law. In the nearer term al-Qaeda seems intent on instigating a "clash of civilizations" between Muslims and "the Zionist-crusaders alliance"—a clash that goes back to medieval crusades and the life of Muhammad himself. Their hope is that such a struggle will, as another al-Qaeda leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri (b. 1951), put it, "purge our land from the aggressors."²⁵⁷

Responding to suicide bombings against US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the US military bombed al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan that was reportedly making nerve gas for bin Laden. After 9/11 the United States invaded Afghanistan and ousted the Taliban, sending bin Laden and his organization scattering. Although bin Laden eluded capture, roughly one thousand al-Qaeda members were arrested in dozens of countries, but al-Qaeda continued to operate.

Anglicanism. See Episcopalianism.

Apocalypse. Catastrophic end times battle in which the forces of good triumph over the forces of evil and usher in of a new age of justice and peace. In Greek, the term *apocalypse* refers to the unveiling of hidden things; what is being disclosed here is the messiah or the Christ and the horrors and glories that attend his coming. The most famous apocalyptic literature in the West is the New Testament book of Revelation, which is sometimes referred to as the Apocalypse. However, Christians borrowed the genre, which classically attends to such matters as the bodily resurrection and the last judgment, from Jews. This genre lives on in secular films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and the pious *Left Behind* novels (1995–) of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. Many of America's new religious movements have anticipated an impending apocalypse. Seventh-Day Adventism emerged out of the prophecies of the Baptist farmer William Miller that the world would end on October 22, 1844. And the Branch Davidi-

ans of Waco, Texas, believed that their leader, David Koresh, was close to decoding the Seven Seals of Revelation when their compound went up in flames in 1993. Apocalypticism also plays a role in contemporary American politics, motivating many evangelicals and fundamentalists to support the state of Israel on the theory that the Jews must return to the Holy Land promised by God before Jesus will return to establish his kingdom. In a secular guise apocalypticism fueled the Y2K frenzy, which led many to fear that a minor computer bug would lead to a global economic meltdown on January 1, 2000.

Apostles' Creed. Short statement of Christian beliefs, traditionally attributed to Jesus' apostles but actually composed long after their deaths. The most popular creed in Christian worship services in the West, it reads (in one traditional English version):

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Armageddon. This Christian term, which appears only once in the Bible—Revelation 16:16: "the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon"—refers most narrowly to the place where the fiery battle between good and evil will take place in the last days. More broadly, it refers to this battle itself. Armageddon has captured the imaginations of many Christians and inspired a variety of best-selling novels, including Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) and the *Left Behind* series (1995–) of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. This term, which is employed regularly in US House and Senate debates, has also been used to describe many historical conflicts, including the Civil War, World War I, and World War II. It is a transliteration of the Hebrew for "Mount Megiddo" in northern Israel.

atheism. Denial of the existence of any and all gods. Although many commonly believe that affirming God is a prerequisite for any religion, some religions are atheistic; neither Buddhists nor Taoists typically worship any divinity. Atheism has made some inroads in Europe but few in the United States. According to recent polls, most Americans say that they would not vote for an atheist for president. Some local and state governments still have laws on the books forbidding atheists from testifying in court or running for office.

atonement. For Christians, the death of Jesus on the cross, which somehow gets sinners right with God and wins them salvation. The “somehow” here is significant since Christians disagree on how the atonement operates, whom it affects, and what metaphors—sacrifice? ransom? payment?—best describe it. Substitutionary views, held by many conservative Christians, claim that on the cross Jesus either took upon himself the punishment brought on by human sins or paid a ransom to the devil to free humans from everlasting torment. Exemplary views, typically held by liberal Christians, see Jesus’ death as an example of divine love. Theologians have also differed over whether Jesus died for everyone (unlimited atonement) or just for the elect (limited atonement) and over whether the benefits of the atonement are available, as Protestants believe, to anyone who has faith or, as Catholics have traditionally affirmed, only to those who partake of the Catholic sacraments.

Atonement is also a feature of Judaism. On Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), which falls in the Jewish calendar just after Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Jews fast and pray, asking God to forgive them for sins committed in the prior year. Christian atonement theories were widely discussed after the release of the film *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) reinvigorated an ancient debate about whether Jews are responsible for Jesus’ crucifixion, but for the most part concerns about the atonement are muted in the contemporary United States, probably because hell is no longer a real and present danger for most Americans.

baptism. Rite of initiation into the Christian community in which candidates are immersed in water or water is sprinkled or poured over them. Christians describe this practice, which they trace to Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist, as dying and rising to new life, a cleansing of sins, and an infusion of the Holy Spirit. Baptism has provoked some of the most bitter disputes in Christian history. Is baptism a sacrament? Catholics and most Protestants say yes, but Quakers say no. Should it be administered

to infants? Most Christians say yes, but Baptists insist on believers’ baptism. The Salvation Army does not baptize at all; and “Jesus Only” Pentecostals baptize in Jesus’ name alone rather than in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. A related practice is the baptism of the Holy Spirit (or spirit baptism), which Holiness, Pentecostal, and charismatic groups see as separate from water baptism and believe conveys such gifts of the Holy Spirit as speaking in tongues.

Baptists. The largest Protestant group in the United States. Baptists distinguish themselves from other Christians chiefly by their rejection of infant baptism in favor of believers’ baptism. Baptism, they argue, is not a means of grace but a sign of grace already received. Throughout American history Baptists have been staunch advocates of the separation of church and state. Thomas Jefferson’s famous 1802 letter to Baptists in Danbury, Connecticut, commending a “wall of separation between church and state” was preaching to the choir; and one of the most powerful voices for strict church/state separation was Baptist Supreme Court justice Hugo Black, who grafted the “wall” metaphor onto the Constitution in *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947). Since the 1980s, however, Baptists—Jerry Falwell and the “Ten Commandments Judge” Ray Moore among them—have been some of the most vocal opponents of strict separationism. Like most US Protestant denominations, Baptists split regionally (into North and South) and racially (into black and white) in the nineteenth century. Their largest denomination today is the Southern Baptist Convention, which claims about twenty million members. The other major white Baptist group, American Baptist Churches in the USA, reports just under two million members and is more liberal both theologically and politically. Black Baptists cluster in four denominations: National Baptist Convention, USA; National Baptist Convention of America; Progressive National Baptist Convention; and National Missionary Baptist Convention of America.

Although Baptists came to prominence during the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, they did not place a member in the White House until Warren Harding in 1921. Three more Baptist presidents—Harry Truman, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton—followed. Carter was a Southern Baptist, but he cut ties with that denomination in 2000 after it lurched to the right in the Reagan era. Despite a widespread perception among secularists that Christian conservatives are overrunning American politics, Baptists are actually underrepresented in the Capitol. On surveys that ask Americans to name their religious preference, roughly

16 percent call themselves Baptists, but Baptists constituted only 14 percent of US Senators and House members in the 109th Congress.

Bhagavad Gita. The most popular scripture in contemporary Hinduism, part of a Hindu epic called the Mahabharata, written in Sanskrit between 200 BCE and 200 CE. Central to the Gita is a battlefield discussion of Hindu ethics between an Indian warrior named Arjuna and the Hindu god Krishna (disguised as Arjuna's charioteer). A classic example of *bhakti* (or devotional) Hinduism, the book popularizes the teachings of the earlier and more philosophical Upanishads by describing three different paths to God: the disciplines of devotion (*bhakti yoga*), action (*karma yoga*), and knowledge (*jnana yoga*). First translated into English in 1785, the Gita became a favorite of the Transcendentalists, and Ralph Waldo Emerson once mistakenly referred to it as "the much renowned book of Buddhism."²⁵⁸ Among American Hindus today it is the Hindu holy book par excellence, read and discussed in Gita study groups that mimic Christian Bible study groups. Robert Oppenheimer, who as a member of the Manhattan Project helped to design the first atomic bomb, reports that a quotation from the Gita came to mind when he witnessed the first nuclear explosion in New Mexico in 1945: "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

Bible. The Jewish and Christian scriptures are both referred to as the Bible. The Hebrew Bible consists of twenty-four books divided into three sections: the Law, consisting of the Pentateuch, or the five books attributed to Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); the Prophets (Jeremiah, Isaiah, and so on); and the Writings (various additional books, including Psalms, Proverbs, and Job). The Hebrew Bible is also called the Tanakh, which is an acronym for the Hebrew words for each of these three parts (*Torah* for Law; *Neviim* for Prophets; and *Ketuvim* for Writings). The Christian Bible consists of the Old and New Testaments. Most Christian groups restrict the New Testament to twenty-seven books: four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John); the Acts of the Apostles; twenty-one letters, or Epistles, many attributed to Paul; and the apocalyptic book of Revelation. The Protestants' Old Testament mirrors the content of the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible but divides them into thirty-nine books, for a total of sixty-six biblical books. Roman Catholic Bibles include seven additional Old Testament books, known to Protestants as the Apocrypha, for a total of seventy-three (or, if Prophecy of Jeremias and Lamentations of Jeremias are published as one book,

seventy-two). Of the many English translations of the Bible, which was originally written in Hebrew and Greek, the most popular is the King James Version (1611). Today Americans can select from dozens of different translations, including New Testaments published as glossy magazines for youth and inclusive-language Bibles sensitive to feminist sensibilities.

The Bible has enjoyed a long and winding afterlife in American culture, inspiring thousands of novels, poems, films, plays, paintings, sculptures, songs, and other works of the imagination. It is the best-selling book in American history and an oft-invoked text in American public life. ("Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other," President Lincoln said of the North and the South in 1865 in his Second Inaugural Address.) Many Americans regard the Bible as the Word of God, yet it is not universally beloved. Thomas Paine, whom Theodore Roosevelt once blasted as a "filthy little atheist," called the Bible "a book of lies and contradictions and a history of bad times and bad men." This is a minority view.

bin Laden, Osama (b. 1957). Saudi-born head of the international terrorist organization al-Qaeda, one of the CIA's most wanted men, and a Che Guevara-style hero to many Muslim youth. Bin Laden inherited considerable wealth when his father, a Yemeni construction magnate, died in 1968. In 1979 bin Laden went to Afghanistan to fight with the Mujahideen ("holy warriors") against Soviet occupation of that Muslim-majority nation. He later founded and financed a Sunni organization devoted to this cause, which would evolve into al-Qaeda ("the base"). Returning to Saudi Arabia after the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, bin Laden became incensed when, following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Saudis allowed US troops to be stationed in that country, which is home to Islam's two most sacred cities. Expelled from Saudi Arabia for his public assertion that his country had abandoned Islamic law, he moved to Sudan in 1991. Expelled by the Sudanese in 1996, he found safe haven in Afghanistan under the Taliban, a theocratic Sunni state. That same year he declared a holy war against US forces. Two years later he issued a so-called fatwa—"Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders"—referring to American soldiers as "crusader armies spreading in [the Arabian Peninsula] like locusts, eating its riches" and urging all Muslims "to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian and military."²⁵⁹ Bin Laden has been linked to terrorist attacks in many different countries, but none as spectacular as the September 11, 2001, attacks that killed thousands of people in New York City, Washington DC, and rural Pennsylvania. Following these

attacks the United States military invaded Afghanistan, uprooting the Taliban and forcing bin Laden into hiding. Since 9/11 he has appeared on a series of video and audio tapes.

Bin Laden, whom scholars describe as a brilliant writer and popular polemicist, is said to have been influenced by Wahhabism, the dominant school of Islamic thought in Saudi Arabia, but the stronger influence is "the father of Islamist fundamentalism," the Egyptian scholar Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966). Many themes in Qutb's thought—an emphasis on holy war, demonization of Christians and Jews, hostility to secularism and democracy, and denunciation of Muslim-majority societies that do not scrupulously follow Islamic law—are also themes of bin Laden.

Black Muslims. Members of the black nationalist sect the Nation of Islam (NOI) founded in Detroit in the 1930s by W. D. Fard (?–1934?) and led today by Louis Farrakhan (b. 1933). Under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad (1897–1975), who spearheaded this group after Fard's disappearance in 1934, the NOI preached a heterodox combination of black nationalism and Islam that denounced whites as "blue-eyed devils" and hoped for a separate black nation. More traditional Muslims looked askance at the Black Muslims' doctrines (the view that Fard was divine) and practices (fasting in December instead of Ramadan), but the movement grew throughout the sixties, particularly among black males in prisons, who gravitated to its strict discipline and its emphasis on self-help and self-respect. One prison convert was Malcolm X (1925–1965), who before his assassination in 1965 was the most powerful alternative to the more moderate civil rights message of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. The most famous convert was the heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay, who proclaimed his conversion to Islam and changed his name to Muhammad Ali in 1964.

After Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, his son and successor, Warith Deen Muhammad (b. 1933), took the Nation of Islam in the direction of orthodox Sunni Islam, admitting whites and renaming it the American Society of Muslims. In 1977 Farrakhan led a group that disagreed with Warith Deen Muhammad's mainstreaming strategy into a reconstituted Nation of Islam. Although his explosive rhetoric led many to denounce him as racist and anti-Semitic, Farrakhan retained sufficient clout among African Americans to organize the Million Man March on Washington DC in 1995. Not all African American Muslims are Black Muslims. In fact, the overwhelming majority of African American Muslims are members of far more traditional Sunni Muslim groups.

born-again Christian. Someone who has accepted Jesus as his or her Savior and Lord, typically in a sudden conversion experience or "new birth." This rather imprecise term comes from John 3:7, where Jesus says, "Ye must be born again." Pollster George Barna draws a sharp distinction between born-again Christians and evangelicals, defining the former as people (roughly 40 percent of Americans) who say they have had a "new birth" experience and the latter as a much smaller subset of born-again Christians (about 7 percent of Americans) who exhibit additional criteria, including belief in Satan and the conviction that salvation comes through grace alone. This distinction has not caught on. For the most part the terms *born-again Christian* and *evangelical* are synonymous.

Buddhism. Religion founded in northern India by Siddhartha Gautama, who became known as the Buddha ("Awakened One") after experiencing enlightenment. Many Buddhists trace the life of the Buddha (and thus the origins of Buddhism) to the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, but the scholarly consensus is that he lived and died during the fourth century BCE. Converts to Buddhism vow to "take refuge" in the "Three Jewels": the Buddha; the Dharma (teaching); and the Sangha (Buddhist community). They see *dukkha* (suffering or unsatisfactoriness) as the core human problem and trace the origin of suffering to ignorance. They refer to the uprooting of ignorance and suffering as enlightenment, or nirvana. One of their most difficult and distinctive teachings is that the person we refer to as "I" is actually a composite of other things (or, in some interpretations, a figment of our imagination). In Buddhism practitioners seek to bring an end to suffering by eliminating desire and ignorance. They do so via a variety of techniques, including chanting and meditation. And they do not traditionally see the Buddha as a god.

The Buddhist tradition is divided into three major "vehicles": Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Theravada ("Way of the Elders") is the oldest of the three. Popular in South and Southeast Asia, it is a difficult path oriented around the efforts of monks and nuns to achieve wisdom for themselves. According to this tradition karmic merit can be transferred only with great difficulty. So you have to earn nirvana by self-help. Mahayana ("Great Vehicle") is popular in China, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere in East Asia. According to this easier path, karmic merit can be transferred fairly simply, so it is possible to win nirvana—and even become a Buddha yourself—with the help of others. Here the key virtue is not wisdom but compassion, which is embodied in the *bodhisattva*, who takes a vow to help all beings achieve nirvana. The third major Buddhist

vehicle, Vajrayana, combines elements of the Theravada and Mahayana traditions and is most popular in Tibet and Mongolia. Vajrayana Buddhists use a variety of techniques, including esoteric texts called *Tantras*, cosmic maps called mandalas, and sacred sounds called mantras, to achieve nirvana. They are represented by the Dalai Lama, who serves both as the political leader of the Tibetan people in exile and the spiritual leader of Vajrayana's "Yellow Hat" (Gelugpa) sect.

Buddhism first came to America through Chinese immigration in the 1840s. Since that time the United States has experienced a series of Buddhists awakenings, including a Japanese Buddhist vogue in the late nineteenth century and a Zen vogue in the 1950s. The most recent Buddhist boom came during the 1990s, which saw three different feature films about Buddhism—*The Little Buddha* (1993), *Kundun* (1997), and *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997)—plus a *Time* magazine cover on "America's Fascination with Buddhism" (1997). Although many college students embraced the Free Tibet cause during the 1990s and Vice President Al Gore was embroiled in a fund-raising scandal at a Buddhist temple during that same decade, Buddhists have not been particularly active in American politics. However, the Buddhist Churches of America, which dates to the 1890s and is the closest the United States gets to a Buddhist mainline, has spoken out against school prayer and for same-sex marriage. Buddhism also has a presence in American higher education—in Naropa University, founded in 1974 in Boulder, Colorado, by the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Chogyam Trungpa; and in Soka University of America, which opened in 2001 in Aliso Viejo, California, under the auspices of the Japan-based Soka Gakkai International.

Calvinism. Protestant theological tradition based on the teachings of the Swiss theologian John Calvin (1509–1564), established in the North American colonies through the Puritans, and spread nationwide through Congregational and Presbyterian churches. Also known as Reformed theology, Calvinism draws its dynamism from two foundational tenets: the absolute sovereignty of God and the total depravity of human beings. One controversial doctrine that flows from these tenets is double predestination: the belief that God fated every human being, before birth, to either heaven or hell. Calvinism is most carefully encapsulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647). It is most succinctly summarized in the Five Points of Calvinism of the Synod of Dort (1618–1619), which can be remembered via the acronym *TULIP*: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace,

and the perseverance of the saints. Calvinism dominated American theology until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Arminianism—the view, popular among evangelicals, that humans are free to accept or reject the saving grace of Jesus—took hold. German sociologist Max Weber argued that Calvinism gave birth to capitalism by producing powerful theological motivations for both working hard and saving money.

Catholicism, Roman. One of Christianity's three main branches, along with Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism, and the largest of the three. The term *catholic* means universal, and Catholics have always tried to be the church for the whole world. But as the adjective *Roman* implies, this church is centered in Rome and is led by a pope who doubles as that city's bishop. Roman Catholicism is administered by a hierarchy of bishops and priests, and since 1870 the pope has been empowered to speak infallibly on matters of faith and morals. While Protestants recognize only two sacraments, Catholics recognize seven: baptism, confirmation, reconciliation (also known as penance or confession), Holy Communion, marriage, ordination of priests, and anointing of the sick (once referred to as last rites). Catholics also differ from Protestants in their veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints, their insistence that the Bible be read in light of church traditions, and their restriction of the priesthood to males who take a vow of celibacy.

Roman Catholics preceded Protestants to the New World, planting their faith in both New Spain and New France, and were welcomed in the colony of Maryland, which was founded as a safe haven for Catholics in a sea of antipathetic Puritans and Anglicans. Catholics did not come in large numbers to the United States until the 1830s, but by 1860 they were the nation's largest single Christian denomination. Still, anti-Catholicism remained a major theme in American history well into the twentieth century; the country did not have a Catholic president until John Kennedy in 1960. American Catholics have a long history of speaking out on issues of war and peace, poverty and inequality. But the capacity of Catholic leaders to speak authoritatively on such matters was crippled in the early twenty-first century by a series of scandals involving sex between priests and young male parishioners.

Today American Catholics cluster in New England, the upper Midwest, and the Southwest, including southern California. Catholics are underrepresented in the US Congress but overrepresented in the Supreme Court. Five of its nine justices, including Chief Justice John Roberts, are

Catholics, making the current Supreme Court the first in US history with a Catholic majority.

Christ. Although sometimes mistaken for Jesus' last name, *Christ* is actually a title derived from *christos*, the Greek term for messiah, or "anointed one." To call Jesus the Christ, therefore, is to make a theological claim—that he is the messiah long expected by the Jews. It is from this term that the word *Christian* arises.

Christian Coalition. A successor of sorts to the Moral Majority, this conservative political pressure group, supported largely by white evangelicals and Catholics, was established in 1989 by Pat Robertson (b. 1930) after his failed bid for the Republican presidential nomination. Under the direction of Ralph Reed (b. 1961), who led it during its heyday in the mid-1990s, the Christian Coalition claimed more than 1.6 million members. It fell on hard times, however, in the early twenty-first century, in part because the Republican Party's ascent to power complicated its identity as a group of outside agitators. Today the Christian Coalition of America, as it is formally known, bills itself as a promoter of "family values" and "America's leading grassroots organization defending our godly heritage." One testament to this group's success is a competing organization, called the Secular Coalition of America (established 2002), which represents the political interests of the American Humanist Association, Atheist Alliance International, and other skeptics.

Christianity. The largest of the world's religions, with perhaps one-third of the world's population. Christians see sin as the core human problem and describe liberation from sin as salvation. The key to salvation, which brings with it eternal life in heaven, lies in the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. The Jesus story is recorded in the New Testament, which along with the Old Testament constitutes the Christian Bible and is interpreted through church documents such as the Nicene Creed of the fourth century. In the New Testament Jesus is variously described as Son of God, Son of Man, and Christ (from the Greek word for messiah), and over the centuries Christians have debated precisely who he was (and is). The dominant view, expressed in the Nicene Creed, has been that Jesus is "very God of very God"—one of the three persons (with the Father and the Holy Spirit) of the Trinity—and that his death on the cross somehow makes salvation possible. Christianity's key practices include baptism, a rite of initiation by water, and Holy Communion,

a reenactment of the Last Supper, which Jesus shared with his followers right before his arrest, trial, and execution.

Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism are Christianity's three main branches. Christianity split into Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy in 1054, and Protestantism splintered off of Roman Catholicism during the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Of these three branches, Roman Catholicism is the largest, followed by Protestantism and then Eastern Orthodoxy. In the United States, however, Protestantism accounts for well over half of the total population, and Roman Catholicism for roughly one-quarter. Americans have long debated whether the United States is a "Christian nation." The country is secular by law, but Christmas is a national holiday here, the Bible is the unofficial scripture of political rhetoric, and every US president has pledged his allegiance to Jesus.

Christmas. Typically celebrated on December 25, Christmas is both a Christian holy day commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger in Bethlehem and an official US holiday marked by Santa Claus, trees, and gift exchanges. The Supreme Court has repeatedly been asked to rule on how secular and how sacred Christmas is. Many of its Christmas cases concerned the constitutionality of nativity scenes (displays of Mary and Joseph with Jesus in the manger) placed on municipal properties. During the early twenty-first century, Fox News personality Bill O'Reilly and other cultural conservatives decried a "war on Christmas" by the Secular Left. The first American opponents of Christmas, however, were New England's Puritans, who considered the observation of Christmas a Roman Catholic abomination and passed legislation outlawing its celebration in 1659. The climate is quite different today. According to a 2000 poll, 96 percent of Americans—including many non-Christians—say that they celebrate Christmas.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. See Mormons.

city upon a hill. This biblical image became part of the American public lexicon through a sermon delivered in 1630 on board the *Arabella* off the New England coast by the Massachusetts Bay Colony governor John Winthrop. "We shall be as a city upon a hill," Winthrop said. "The eyes of all people are upon us." President Ronald Reagan later popularized and reinterpreted the phrase, which in his usage typically became "shining city on a hill." The core concept here is that Americans will lead by

example. For Winthrop, however, the idea was conditional. Only if God's people acted well would God bless them. For Reagan, however, there was little conditional about this covenant between God and his chosen people. Winthrop's image derives from Matthew 5:14: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid."

Confucius. See Confucianism.

Confucianism. Religion (or, according to some, simply a philosophy) founded by Confucius (551–479 BCE) during the Warring States period of Chinese history. Preserved in the Analects, Confucius's teachings focus on this world rather than the next and show scant interest in theological speculation. Confucius's goal was social harmony, which resulted in his view from a combination of individual self-cultivation and social rites. He emphasized virtues such as humaneness (*jen*) and filial piety (*hsiao*) and described the noble person who embodied them as a sage (*chun-tzu*). But Confucius also stressed the importance of ritual propriety (*li*), especially when it came to what he called the Five Great Relationships: between parent and child; between elder and younger siblings; between husband and wife; between friend and friend; and between ruler and subject. Confucius also taught the Negative Golden Rule: "Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you."

Confucianism, which along with Taoism and Buddhism constitutes one of China's "Three Teachings," had a profound impact on China after it became the official state religion of the Han dynasty during the second century BCE. It subsequently spread across East Asia, where its emphasis on ancestor veneration and respect for elders resonate today. Confucianism came to the United States with Chinese immigrants as early as the 1840s. Today a group of Boston-area philosophers refer to themselves as Boston Confucians.

Congregationalism. One of the mainline Protestant denominations, most visible in contemporary America in the United Church of Christ. Congregationalism arrived in the United States when the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth and the Puritans established the Massachusetts Bay Colony. During the Great Awakening of the early eighteenth century Congregationalism split into prorevival (New Light) and antirevival (Old Light) factions. It later split along Trinitarian/Unitarian lines. In 1957 various Congregational groups merged into the United Church of Christ, whose 1.7 million members make it America's largest Congregationalist group.

Congregationalists get their name from their insistence on the autonomy of the local congregation—a form of church governance that characterizes some other denominations, including the Baptists, and many non-Christian groups.

Conservative Judaism. Middle path between Orthodox and Reform Judaism originally known as "Historical Judaism." Conservative Judaism, which arose in nineteenth-century Europe in response to perceived excesses of Reform Judaism, is closer to Orthodox Judaism when it comes to observing the Sabbath and kosher dietary laws. Like Reform Jews, however, Conservative Jews accept the ordination of women, mixed-gender seating in synagogues, and biblical criticism. In the United States Conservative Judaism traces its roots to the opening in 1887 of the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), which was established in opposition to the Reform Jews' Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 (and a notorious banquet at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati where guests were served shrimp, a food forbidden by Jewish dietary laws). Thanks to the leadership of JTS president Solomon Schechter (1847–1915), Conservative Judaism took organizational shape with the founding in 1913 of the United Synagogue of America (now United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism), a group that currently accounts for roughly one-third of all religiously observant American Jews. Outside the United States Conservative Judaism is known as *Masorti* ("Traditional") Judaism. Reconstructionist Judaism, which views Judaism as a civilization and not just a religion, is an offshoot of the Conservative movement.

creationism. The belief that the creation account in Genesis is historically and scientifically correct. The key claim here is not so much that God created the world in precisely seven days—creationists differ on this point—but that God created all species in a short time span and that human beings are not the result, as Charles Darwin argued, of the random process of natural selection. This creationist view, which has its roots in *What Is Darwinism?* (1874) by Princeton Theological Seminary theologian Charles Hodge, is often associated with the fundamentalist fringe. But surveys show that most Americans side in this debate with Hodge and only a small minority with Darwin.²⁶⁰ The battle between creation and evolution stood at the center of the Scopes "Monkey Trial" of 1925, which featured a Dayton, Tennessee, science teacher accused of violating a state law forbidding teachers from mentioning "any theory that denies the Story of Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible." In 1987 the

Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law requiring public school districts that teach evolutionary theory to give equal treatment to "creation science."

Since then Darwin's critics have increasingly spoken of "intelligent design" (ID) rather than creationism. According to intelligent design theory, both the universe and individual organisms in it are too complex to be the result of either chance or natural selection and must instead have been caused by an intelligent designer. Almost all scientists view this theory as pseudoscientific. In a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of an ID curriculum in public school biology classes in Dover, Pennsylvania, a US district judge agreed. Intelligent design may or may not be true, he ruled in 2005, but there is "overwhelming evidence" that it is "a religious view, a mere re-labeling of creationism, and not a scientific theory." Still, ID has its supporters, particularly on the Religious Right. President George W. Bush said in 2005 that public schools should teach both evolutionary theory and intelligent design.

crusades. Medieval military campaigns of the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries waged by Christians to recapture the Holy Lands from Muslims. The church offered indulgences for the remission of sins to crusaders, as Christian participants were called, and lauded those who died in these "holy wars" as martyrs. Although successful militarily, the crusades badly damaged Christian-Muslim relations, bringing on an era of mistrust and hostility that continues to characterize these relations today. In September 2001 President George W. Bush referred to the war on terrorism as a "crusade," sparking anger among Muslims aware of the history of medieval crusades and the religious meaning of the term as "taking the cross." Meanwhile, Osama bin Laden referred to the war on terrorism as "a crusade against Islam," and his followers lauded him as "the Second Saladin"—a reference to the Muslim hero who took Jerusalem by force in 1187.

Dalai Lama (b. 1935). The spiritual leader of the Gelugpa lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and the political leader of the Tibetan people, understood by his followers to be the reincarnation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and, as such, a person of extraordinary wisdom and compassion. Like the terms *Christ* and *Buddha*, *Dalai Lama* ("Ocean of Wisdom") is a title rather than a proper name. Today's Dalai Lama, born Lhamo Dhondrub in 1935, is the fourteenth in a lineage that began in the fifteenth century. While still an infant, he was recognized as a reincarnation of the thirteenth Dalai Lama and given the name Tenzin Gyatso.

(Each Dalai Lama is said to be a reincarnation of his predecessor.) He fled to India in 1959 after the Chinese government occupied Tibet and now operates the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala, India. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. In the United States he has become something of an icon, personifying both Buddhism itself and the ongoing struggle for a free Tibet. He has met with a series of US presidents, beginning with George H.W. Bush in 1991, and was featured in the "Think Different" advertising campaign of Apple Computer.

Daoism. See Taoism.

David and Goliath. Antagonists in a classic underdog story that appears in the Hebrew Bible in 1 Samuel 17. David was a small Israelite shepherd boy who would later become the second king of Israel and the author of the Psalms. Goliath was a Philistine giant. While the Israelites and the Philistines were engaged in battle, David felled Goliath with a single stone rocketed from his slingshot. This act of bravery scattered the Philistines and propelled the Israelites to victory. This story provides the template for hundreds of Hollywood sports movies—a template made explicit in the film *Hoosiers* (1986) when a prayer before the Indiana high school state championship basketball game specifically likens the small-town heroes to David and their big-city antagonists to Goliath.

Decalogue. See 10 Commandments.

Deism. Rationalistic religion based on reason and nature rather than revelation. Rejecting both miracles and prayer, Deists classically describe the Almighty as a Watchmaker, who, after creating the world, sits back and observes history without intervening in it. They are critical of "priestcraft" and institutional religion. They believe in one God and in afterlife rewards and punishments. And they see morality as the essence of religion. ("My religion," wrote Thomas Paine, "is to do good.") Deism, which emerged in seventeenth-century Europe and spread under the influence of the Enlightenment, was popular in the colonies at the time of the American Revolution and was the faith of many of the nation's founders. It was quickly overrun, however, by forms of faith that were more heartfelt and more recognizably Christian.

Disciples of Christ. One of American Protestantism's mainline denominations, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) emerged in 1831 out of

the efforts of Alexander Campbell's "Disciples," Barton W. Stone's "Christians," and other "restorationists" to reconstruct modern Christianity in the image of the early church. Along with Methodists and Baptists, Disciples of Christ were one of the fastest growing denominations in nineteenth-century America. They accepted no creeds or catechisms, putting their faith in the New Testament instead. "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak," said restorationist leader Thomas Campbell. "Where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Citing the example of the early church, Disciples of Christ today perform baptism by immersion and celebrate Holy Communion every Sunday. Three American presidents—James Garfield, Lyndon Johnson, and Ronald Reagan—were raised in this denomination, and Garfield was an ordained Disciples of Christ minister.

Today the Disciples of Christ claim just over one million American members. The Churches of Christ, which split from the Disciples of Christ in the early twentieth century (in part over opposition to instrumental music in worship services), has a slightly larger membership than the Disciples of Christ.

dispensational premillennialism. Dispensationalism is a school of Bible interpretation that divides sacred history into distinct periods, called dispensations, in which different plans for salvation apply. Premillennialism is the view that Jesus will return before the thousand-year reign (millennium) prophesied in the New Testament book of Revelation. When put together, these two terms create a core teaching of Protestant fundamentalism: dispensational premillennialism. According to this teaching, the end of the current dispensation is imminent. It will conclude with the Rapture of believers into heaven, followed for those who are left behind by a Great Tribulation of seven years, which will include the appearance of the Antichrist and the battle of Armageddon. But Jesus will come down from the clouds, defeat the Antichrist, and establish a thousand-year reign of peace and justice. This eschatology (or theology of the last days) was developed by the British theologian John Nelson Darby (1800–1882), and it spread across the United States after the Civil War. Its greatest expression is the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) of Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843–1921). More popular manifestations include Hal Lindsey's best seller, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and the *Left Behind* novels (1995–) of Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. Today dispensational premillennialism is the most popular form of prophecy belief in the United States, informing (among other things) conservative Christian support for the state of Israel.

Easter. The most important Christian holy day, commemorating the resurrection of Jesus three days after his crucifixion on Good Friday. In a more secular guise, Easter is a popular spring celebration of fertility and new life, replete with marshmallow bunnies, chocolate eggs, flowers, and fancy new clothes.

Edwards, Jonathan (1703–1758). American philosopher, theologian, and Congregationalist preacher whose church in Northampton, Massachusetts, stood at the center of the Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s. Edwards's writings on revivalism in particular and religious experience in general attempted to synthesize "head religion" and "heart religion," the intellect and the emotions. His broader theology combined Calvinist orthodoxy, the philosophy of John Locke, and the physics of Isaac Newton. After being dismissed by his Northampton congregation in 1750, Edwards served as a missionary to Housatonic Indians in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Shortly before his death in 1758 he was appointed president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741) may be the most famous sermon in American history, but its fire-and-brimstone rhetoric is not at all characteristic of Edwards's preaching style.

Eid. This term, Arabic for "feast," refers to two festivals in the Muslim calendar: Eid al-Fitr, the feast of the breaking of the fast at the end of the month of Ramadan; and Eid al-Adha, the feast of sacrifice that concludes the pilgrimage to Mecca. On Eid al-Fitr, the lesser of these two festivals, Muslims pray, visit friends and family, and exchange gifts. On Eid al-Adha, they sacrifice a lamb or some other animal to commemorate both Abraham's willingness to offer his son Ishmael to Allah and Allah's mercy in accepting a lamb instead. In February 1996 President Bill Clinton welcomed Muslim families into the White House to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, prompting First Lady Hillary Clinton to call that holiday "an American event."²⁶¹ In September 2001 the US Postal Service issued a postage stamp (its first on a Muslim theme) celebrating both Eids. The calligraphy on the stamp read "*Eid mubarak*"—a traditional holiday greeting meaning, "May your festival be blessed."

Eightfold Path of Buddhism. See 8-fold Path of Buddhism.

encyclicals. Official letters circulated by the Roman Catholic Church on matters of faith, practice, and morals. Found in these influential

pronouncements are Catholic teachings on many controversial social issues—on labor-capital relations (*Rerum Novarum*, 1891), human rights (*Pacem in Terris*, 1963), contraception (*Humanae Vitae*, 1968), and abortion, birth control, euthanasia, and capital punishment (*Evangelium Vitae*, 1995).

Episcopalianism. The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is part of the international Anglican Communion, which claims some 70 million members in a worldwide fellowship of self-governing churches that trace their roots to the Church of England. This church was founded in 1534 when King Henry VIII (1491–1547) rejected papal authority and declared himself the head of the Church of England. Episcopalians take their name from the Anglican form of church governance, which is episcopal, meaning it includes bishops. Of all the major Protestant denominations, Episcopalianism is closest to the Roman Catholic tradition. Like Catholicism, it is liturgical, and its churches generally practice Holy Communion weekly. Also like Catholicism, Episcopalianism vests authority not only in scripture but also in tradition, though, unlike Catholics, Episcopalians add reason to this list of theological authorities.

The Church of England was established in colonial Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Maryland, but it suffered mightily during and after the American Revolution since many of its clergy, particularly in the north, sided with the British. Still, many of the nation's founders, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, were Anglicans, as were two-thirds of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Today Episcopal churches are suffering through membership declines. In 2000 the Episcopal Church in the USA claimed only 2.5 million members (down from 3.4 million in 1960), and its unity was severely tested in 2003 when the Diocese of Vermont elected Gene Robinson as the first openly gay Episcopalian bishop. But Episcopalianism continues to have influence in corridors of power way out of proportion to its numbers. Roughly one-third of all Supreme Court justices and one-quarter of all US presidents have been Episcopalians, far more than any other denomination. And Episcopalians commanded forty-two seats in the 109th Congress—about thirty-three more than their current share of the US population would warrant.

establishment clause. See First Amendment.

Eucharist. See Holy Communion.

evangelicalism. The term *evangelical* (from a Greek word meaning “good news”) is often confused with the word *evangelistic*, which means intent on proselytizing. Although evangelicals are typically also evangelistic, the term *evangelical* has a more specific meaning. It refers to theologically conservative Protestants who stress the experience of conversion (being “born again”), view the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, emphasize evangelism, and believe that salvation comes by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Or, as British historian David Bebbington has put it, they affirm conversionism, Biblicism, activism, and crucicentrism.

Since the early nineteenth century, when evangelicalism became the dominant religious impulse in the United States, evangelicals have played a major role in American political and social life (often on the left), spearheading such movements as abolitionism, temperance, and women's rights, and otherwise acting as an informal yet potent Protestant establishment. Evangelicals largely disappeared from public view after the embarrassment of the Scopes “Monkey Trial” of 1925, only to reemerge—this time on the right—in the late 1970s.

Evangelicals should not be confused with fundamentalists. Whereas fundamentalists describe the Bible as the infallible Word of God, evangelicals insist merely that the Bible is divinely inspired. Fundamentalists also tend to be more antimodern than evangelicals, whose success in American culture can be attributed in considerable measure to their ingenuity in applying all manner of modern conveniences (books, magazines, radio, television, the Internet) to Christian ends.

Evangelicals are exceedingly unpopular among those on the Secular Left. A 2002 poll concerning non-Christians' perceptions of such groups as military officers, lawyers, and lesbians found that evangelicals ranked tenth out of eleven groups, ahead only of prostitutes. There is reason to believe, however, that this antipathy is based in part on misunderstanding. Although many evangelicals today are conservative Republicans, significant minorities describe themselves either as “liberal” or “moderate.” Moreover, most evangelicals favor increasing taxes to help the poor and stricter government regulations to protect the environment. In 2004 the National Association of Evangelicals (established 1943) issued “an evangelical call to civic responsibility” that interpreted Genesis as a call to “show our love for the Creator by caring for his creation.” In 2005 an Evangelical Climate Initiative, supported by many leading American evangelicals, urged the US government to tackle the problem of global warming by substantially reducing carbon-dioxide emissions.

Exodus. Exodus ("departure" in Greek) refers both to the second book of the Hebrew Bible and to the epic story told in that book—of the flight of the Israelites and their leader Moses out of slavery in Egypt and (after forty years in the wilderness and Moses's death) into the Promised Land. Key events in this grand narrative include Moses's receipt of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the Ten Plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the appearance of manna from heaven, and God's guidance of his chosen people by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. This story has inspired a variety of American groups, who have read into it analogies with their own experiences. African Americans interpreted their passage from slavery to freedom to civil rights as an Exodus tale. Mormons also understood their trek from Illinois to the Great Salt Lake basin in Utah as an exodus, complete with Brigham Young (1801–1877) as their "American Moses." The Puritans too saw themselves as a chosen people in covenant with God in the Promised Land of New England. Exodus imagery also captured the imaginations of the nation's founders. Thomas Jefferson once suggested that the national seal should depict "the children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night"; Benjamin Franklin favored an image of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.²⁶²

Fall. See Adam and Eve.

Falwell, Jerry. See Moral Majority.

family values. Although this term sounds ancient, it is actually of recent vintage, first used in its current sense in the late 1960s and injected into American cultural politics in the late 1970s. The Republican Party platforms of 1976 and 1980 endorsed "family values" as an antidote to what conservatives saw as the moral degradation of American society brought on by the sexual revolution, rock 'n' roll, and the counterculture. By the early 1980s this phrase—and related ones such as *traditional values* and *moral values*—had come to serve as code for opposition to "atheistic schools, rampaging crime, God-forsaken homes, drugs, abortion, pornography, permissiveness and a sense of cynicism and spiritual desolation absolutely unprecedented in our country's history." At the 1992 Republican Party Convention, secretary of education William Bennett (b. 1943) called family values "a great dividing line between the parties," and presidential candidate Pat Robertson accused President Clinton of hatching "a radical plan to destroy the traditional family." Groups such as Focus on

the Family (established in 1977) later extended the family values agenda to include support for parochial school vouchers and public school prayer.²⁶³

The term *family values* often serves as a proxy for "religious" in American political rhetoric. To be a family values candidate is to be a person of faith (and to appeal to conservative Christians). Many question, however, whether either Jesus or Paul exhibited family values. Both opposed divorce, but Paul preferred celibacy to marriage, and—*The DaVinci Code* (2003) notwithstanding—Jesus never married or had children. Moreover, Jesus repeatedly told his followers that he had come not to strengthen families but to set family members against one another: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also," he said, "he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

fatwa. Islamic legal opinion given by a legal scholar (*mufti*) in the context of a particular school of law and in response to a specific question posed by a court or individual. Although many non-Muslims believe that fatwas are infallible declarations, most Muslims understand them to be binding only on those who recognize the authority of the legal scholar who issues them. This term burst into public prominence in the West after Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989) issued a fatwa calling for the assassination of Salman Rushdie, whose novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) he deemed blasphemous. More recently, Americans have had to grapple with the 1998 "fatwa" of Osama bin Laden, which stated, "The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim." Less well known is the July 2005 fatwa issued by the eighteen-member Fiqh Council of North America, which declared, "All acts of terrorism targeting civilians are *haram* (forbidden) in Islam." Many Muslim leaders have observed that bin Laden, who is not a legal scholar, has no authority to issue a fatwa. Even Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar admitted that any so-called fatwas issued by bin Laden are "illegal and null and void."²⁶⁴

First Amendment. The First Amendment to the US Constitution contains—in addition to protections of freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition—two clauses concerning religion: the establishment clause, which states that "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion," and the free exercise clause, which adds, "or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Rejecting the European model of one

religion per state, the First Amendment transformed the American religious landscape into a thriving spiritual marketplace in which different religions, and different versions of each, competed for believers, donations, and public power.

Upon its ratification in 1791, the First Amendment applied only to the federal government—Massachusetts maintained a Congregational establishment until 1833—but after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, all state and local laws had to answer to the entire Bill of Rights. In recent years the Supreme Court has turned to the First Amendment to decide establishment clause cases concerning “under God” language in the Pledge of Allegiance, school prayer, and Ten Commandments displays on public property. Free exercise cases have taken up animal sacrifice by Santeria practitioners and the ritual use of the hallucinogen peyote by members of the Native American Church. In the last of these cases, *Oregon v. Smith* (1990), the Supreme Court ruled that laws can restrict religious freedom as long as they are universally applicable; in this case, drug laws can abridge the religious freedom of Native Americans as long as those laws apply to all citizens and all religions. Strong opposition to this controversial decision, which severely restricted the range of religious freedoms protected by the First Amendment, led to the passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which became law in 1994 but was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1997.

Five Ks. See 5 Ks.

Five Pillars of Islam. See 5 Pillars of Islam.

Four Noble Truths. See 4 Noble Truths.

free exercise clause. See First Amendment.

Friends, Religious Society of. See Quakers.

fundamentalism. Many Americans today cannot tell an evangelical from a fundamentalist, but the differences are significant. Both groups stress conversion. Both typically oppose premarital sex, abortion, and homosexuality. Both also emphasize the Bible, though evangelicals usually speak of its divine inspiration, especially in matters of the spirit, while fundamentalists affirm its inerrancy on all subjects, including history and science. The most salient distinction between the two groups, however,

concerns their attitudes toward modernity. Historian George Marsden once defined a fundamentalist as “an evangelical who is angry about something.”²⁶⁵ And what fundamentalists are angry about is modernity. Evangelicals, by contrast, are unabashedly modern, having taken to new technologies—from the radio to television to the Internet—with glee.

The roots of fundamentalism run to the late nineteenth century, when conservative Protestants first distilled their faith down to such basics as biblical inerrancy, the virgin birth of Jesus, miracles, the substitutionary atonement, and Jesus’ bodily resurrection. But fundamentalism proper first emerged with (and took its name from) the publication of *The Fundamentals* (1910–1915), a twelve-volume series that sought to distinguish true Christianity from liberal Protestantism, which fundamentalists refused to recognize as legitimately Christian. Fundamentalists had their coming-out party at the “Monkey Trial” in 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, where a public school science teacher was tried for illegally teaching evolutionary theory. William Jennings Bryan, who represented the creationists and the state of Tennessee, won the trial, but Clarence Darrow, his courtroom antagonist, won the public relations war, sending fundamentalists into self-imposed exile for decades. Although fundamentalists have long been stereotyped as anti-intellectual rubes, they have always stressed the importance of doctrine. *The Fundamentals* is a broadside against theological modernism, but it also criticizes evangelicals for neglecting truth in the name of experience.

Some scholars have tried to apply this term to other modes of religiously inspired antimodernism: to the Wahhabi school of Islam, which insists on reading the Quran literally and strictly applying its teachings to contemporary life; to right-wing Hindu nationalists in the Bharatiya Janata Party in India; or to Ultra-Orthodox Jews. But fundamentalism proper is a Protestant impulse that bears only superficial similarities to such movements.

Garden of Eden. See Adam and Eve.

Genesis. The first book in the Bible and the most influential biblical book in American life, Genesis has given the world an extraordinary rich religious and cultural legacy: characters such as Adam, Eve, the Serpent, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, and the Pharaoh; places such as the Garden of Eden and Sodom and Gomorrah; events such as creation, the flood, and the binding of Isaac; and perennial themes such as the covenant between God and humans, the conflict between good and evil, and

the battle of the sexes. Genesis' account of creation in seven days occasioned a pitched battle over the new geology before the Civil War and over evolution after it. That battle continues today in lawsuits over the propriety of teaching intelligent design in the public schools. On the contentious question of global warming and the environment, Green Christians read Genesis as commanding human beings to act as stewards of the Earth while those who dismiss Christian environmentalists as tree-hugging pagans read that same text as commanding humans to exert dominion over it.

Gnosticism (from *gnosis*, Greek for wisdom). A religious impulse, found in ancient Judaism, ancient Christianity, and other religions, that promises salvation through secret wisdom. Such noncanonical texts as the Gospel of Thomas, discovered in Egypt in 1945, fall into this tradition, as does the Gospel of Judas, first published in 2006. Literary critic Harold Bloom has argued that Gnosticism is the real American religion, and he finds evidence for his claim in Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, Mormonism and Pentecostalism.

"God Bless America." Over the last quarter century, US presidents routinely asked God to bless the nation at the end of their speeches. Whereas President Carter often concluded his speeches with a simple thank-you, President Reagan typically signed off with "God bless America." President George H. W. Bush followed with "God bless you, and God bless the United States of America." Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have made God-blessings part and parcel of presidential rhetoric. The phrase is also the title of the Irving Berlin song made famous by Kate Smith in the 1930s and, since 9/11, sung during the seventh-inning stretch at major league baseball games.

Golden Rule. The most common moral maxim in the world's religions, expressed by Jesus as, "Do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12, NIV). The Golden Rule is often confused with the related admonition to "love your neighbor as yourself," which appears repeatedly in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. In his October 2000 presidential debate with Al Gore, George W. Bush (in response to a question on gun control) conflated these two commandments when he said Americans needed to follow the "larger law" to "Love your neighbor like you would like to be loved yourself." President Kennedy got the Golden Rule right in June 1963 in a televised speech regard-

ing a court order to desegregate the University of Alabama. "The heart of the question," he said, "is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated." The Golden Rule has also been attributed to other religious leaders, including Confucius, Muhammad, and the first-century rabbi Hillel.²⁶⁶

Good Samaritan. The best-known parable of Jesus is a story of the kindness of strangers. When asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus spoke of a man who had been attacked and left for dead by the roadside. Various people passed by, but a person from Samaria stopped to help. Like many of Jesus' parables, this one comes as a surprise. Jewish listeners would have regarded Samaritans as undesirables, but in this case the hero is a Samaritan. Today the Good Samaritan is a popular character in American public life. Stories of looting were endemic after attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, and after Hurricane Katrina submerged New Orleans in 2005. But so were stories of Good Samaritans. During the last decade the US Congress has debated the "Good Samaritan Food Donation Act," the "Good Samaritan Tax Act," and a "Good Samaritan Exemption" to the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In March 2006 New York Senator Hillary Clinton said that Republican efforts to outlaw giving assistance to illegal immigrants would "criminalize the Good Samaritan and probably even Jesus himself."²⁶⁷

gospel of wealth. Capitalism's answer to the Social Gospel, the gospel of wealth derives from a 1900 book of the same name by the steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919). This theology was later popularized by "Acres of Diamonds," a sermon delivered over six thousand times by Baptist minister Russell Conwell (1843–1925). Part Calvinism, part social Darwinism, and part laissez-faire capitalism, the gospel of wealth teaches that prosperity is God's reward for morality and hard work. A frequently forgotten corollary is that the wealthy have a responsibility to give their wealth away. The gospel of wealth survives today—minus the philanthropy—in "prosperity theology," also known as the "Word of Faith" or "name it and claim it" theology, which promises that health and wealth are readily available to any Christian who asks God for either (or both) in faith.

Graham, Billy (1918–). The most visible religious leader to generations of twentieth-century Americans, Billy Graham served for decades as a

globe-trotting evangelist, preaching to more people than anyone else in history. Raised a Southern Presbyterian in Charlotte, North Carolina, he was converted during a revival in his hometown in 1934 and began his career as an evangelist at Youth for Christ revivals in 1945. Although Graham got off on the wrong foot with President Harry Truman, who judged him a “counterfeit,” he later served as an unofficial American Protestant pope, consulting and praying with Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Johnson, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton. President George W. Bush has credited Graham with helping to crack his drinking habit and to bring him to Jesus. Although often labeled a fundamentalist, Graham is actually an evangelical who has repeatedly drawn fire from fundamentalists for his policy of involving in his revivals (which he calls “crusades”) all the Christian denominations in a given city, including liberal Protestant groups. Graham ceded many of the activities of his Billy Graham Evangelical Association to his son Franklin Graham in 2000.

Great Awakening. A series of revivals that shook the colonies between the 1720s and the 1760s. Led by such preachers as Dutch Calvinist Theodore Frelinghuysen, Presbyterian Gilbert Tennent, Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards, and Anglican George Whitefield, this movement broke out up and down the eastern seaboard, putting the experience of conversion front and center in American Protestant life and introducing a more extemporaneous and emotional style to both sermons and worship. In the process the Great Awakening split colonial Protestantism into two factions: prorevival “New Lights” and antirevival “Old Lights.” It also helped to turn revivalism into a key component of American religion and to make evangelicalism the nation’s dominant religious impulse. In the political realm the Great Awakening served to knit Americans of all colonies into one people—a perspective that contributed greatly to the coming American Revolution.

hadith. Islamic sacred tradition, second in importance only to the Quran, relating the words and deeds of Muhammad and his companions as transmitted by trusted confidantes. Muslims interpret the Quran in light of these hadith and use their teachings, which they believe to be divinely inspired, to conform their lives to the exemplary life of Muhammad. A given hadith contains two parts: a text and a chain of authority. The latter, which traces the transmitters of the text back to its source, is used to determine how much trust to place in a given hadith (which Muslim scholars classify as “sound,” “good,” or “weak”). Those who have com-

pared the Quran in Islam to Jesus in Christianity—both are the revelations of God—see the hadith as analogous to the Christian New Testament. In any case, it stands alongside the Quran itself as one of two key sources of Islamic law. There are six major Sunni compilations, the most authoritative of which are the “authentic” compilations of *Bukhari* and *Muslim* (each named after its compiler). Shiites have their own collections of hadith, which include in addition to the sayings and deeds of Muhammad those of their imams.

“Hail Mary.” See Mary.

hajj. See 5 Pillars of Islam.

Hanukkah. Jewish festival of lights, which lasts for eight days and roughly coincides with Christmas. This minor holiday commemorates a miracle first described in a compilation of rabbinic disputations called the Talmud. After foreign soldiers desecrated Jerusalem’s Second Temple in the second century BCE, Judas Maccabee purified and rededicated it on the twenty-fifth day of the Jewish month of Kislev (when Hanukkah now starts). Although there was only a one-day supply of holy oil, that supply miraculously lasted for the eight days it took Maccabee to complete his work. Today Jews celebrate Hanukkah (lit. “dedication”) by saying prayers and lighting candles each evening for eight days. The lamp that holds the eight candles is called a menorah.

In the United States Hanukkah has become something of a Jewish Christmas, with gift giving and (in some cases) tree trimming. The holiday has been widely discussed in US politics in the context of public displays of nativity scenes, which often include menorahs and other Hanukkah symbols to signal their interreligious nature (and therefore their constitutionality). In “The Hanukkah Song,” comedian Adam Sandler pokes fun at fellow Jews who feel somewhat underserved by Hanukkah at Christmastime, offering them a long list of “people who are Jewish, just like you and me.” “David Lee Roth lights the menorah,” he croons. “So do James Caan, Kirk Douglas, and the late Dinah Shore-ah.”

Hare Krishnas. Popular name for members of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a Hindu devotional movement based on the teachings of the Bengali mystic Caitanya (1486–1533) and brought to the United States in 1965 by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896–1977). The devotional practices of this small group

center on chanting a mantra to Krishna—"Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna; Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare; Hare Rama, Hare Rama; Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare"—whom devotees revere as the one true God. Hare Krishnas brought (and lost) a number of landmark lawsuits that helped to define First Amendment jurisprudence. In *Heffron v. ISKCON* (1981) the Supreme Court ruled that Hare Krishnas were subject to licensing regulations regarding distributing literature and soliciting donations at the Minnesota state fair. In *ISKCON v. Lee* (1992) the Supreme Court held that local regulations banning Hare Krishnas from asking for donations at airports were constitutional.

hijab. This Arabic term refers to any partition separating two things, but most commonly to a veil or head covering worn by some Muslim women. The Quran mandates modesty in female dress but does not say what form this modesty should take. So hijabs vary considerably from country to country and believer to believer, and many Muslim women wear no head coverings at all. Since the 1970s the veil has become a battleground between Muslims and Westerners. Many feminists see the veil as the symbol par excellence of the oppression of women in Islam. But many Muslim women, both in the United States and abroad, see head scarves as symbols of Muslim identity and of resistance to the sexual libertinism of Western societies. In the early twenty-first century American courts adjudicated many contests over whether the First Amendment's free exercise clause offers Muslim women the right to cover their hair when doing so would violate dress codes in public schools, jails, police units, or the armed forces.

Hinduism. Wildly diverse Indian religion manifested in beliefs such as reincarnation, practices such as yoga, and scriptures such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. Hinduism, which has no founder and no standard scripture or commentary, is often described as polytheistic, and it does feature hundreds of divinities—from the good-natured cowherd, Krishna, to the bloodthirsty goddess of cremation grounds, Kali. But many Hindus, especially in America, are monotheists who insist that underlying these diverse manifestations of divinity is one Absolute Reality.

Hinduism is the religion of roughly 80 percent of India's population of one billion. It first came to the United States in the person of Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), a missionary who represented Hinduism at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Hinduism's most

popular manifestation in America today is the contemporary yoga vogue, which began in the 1990s. Important American Hindu groups include the Vedanta Society, founded in New York in 1894 by Vivekananda, and the Self-Realization Fellowship, incorporated in 1935 by Swami Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952), the author of the countercultural hit *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946). Hinduism burst onto the popular scene in the 1960s and 1970s through a series of gurus who came to the United States after the US Congress liberalized immigration from Asia in 1965. Thanks to the popularity of the Maharishi Mahesh Yoga (b. 1911) of Transcendental Meditation fame and A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada of the Hare Krishnas, *Life* magazine declared 1968 the "Year of the Guru." In recent decades American Hinduism has become an immigrant phenomenon focused more on building temples than attracting Caucasians. Indian American Hindus have formed a few pressure groups, such as American Hindus Against Defamation, which combats negative stereotypes of Hinduism fostered by the media, but they have largely kept politics at arm's length. There are currently more than one million Hindus and a few hundred temples in the United States. In 2000, a Hindu priest opened a session of the US Congress with a prayer.

Holocaust. The mass murder of roughly six million Jews by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945, prompted in part by centuries of Christian theology that branded the Jews as Christ killers. Also known as the *Shoah* (Hebrew for "calamity"), this event, which included the murders of millions of homosexuals, Gypsies, Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses, the handicapped, and other non-Jewish minorities, has raised profound theological questions among believers about the existence and goodness of God in a world that is witness to such evil. It has also raised questions about the contributions of Christian theology to this act of genocide. Widespread revulsion at the efforts of the Nazi regime to exterminate the Jews helped to pave the way for creation of the state of Israel in 1948. The story of the Holocaust is told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

Holy Communion. A central act of Christian worship, also referred to as Eucharist, Lord's Supper, and Mass, this communal meal, typically celebrated with bread and wine (or grape juice), recalls the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples on the night before his crucifixion—a rite that is popularly said to be based on the Passover Seder meal of the Jews. Christians differ over how important Holy Communion is, how often to

celebrate it, how old you should be to participate, and to what extent Jesus' presence in the ritual is to be understood symbolically or literally. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation teaches that the bread and the wine are somehow transformed during this liturgy into the body and blood of Jesus. Some liturgically minded Protestant groups, notably Episcopalians and Lutherans, deny transubstantiation yet insist on the "real presence" of Jesus. Less liturgically minded Protestants, such as the Methodists and the Baptists, see the rite simply as a memorial.

imam. To Sunni Muslims, an imam ("leader" in Arabic) is simply the man who leads a congregation in prayer. To Shiite Muslims, an imam is far more important: a descendant of Muhammad chosen by God to lead the community in all areas of belief and practice. Shiites disagree on whether there were five, seven, or twelve imams, but most believe that a "hidden imam" is coming at the last days to restore peace and justice on earth. During the Iranian Revolution of 1979 the Ayatollah Khomeini was referred to as an imam, in keeping with the Shiite practice of referring to jurists by that title. In the United States, *imam* has evolved into a title of respect, akin to *Reverend*, as in Imam Siraj Wahhaj of Brooklyn, who in 1991 became the first Muslim to offer a prayer before the US House of Representatives.

Immaculate Conception. Roman Catholic doctrine, quite distinct from the teaching of the virgin birth, that Jesus' mother, Mary, was sinless from conception. This teaching was promulgated as official church dogma in 1854 by Pope Pius IX and is part of the Islamic tradition too.

inerrancy, biblical. Christian belief, common among fundamentalists, that the Bible is entirely without error, not only in theology and ethics but also in history, geography, and science. A less strict view of the Bible, held by many evangelicals, is that the Bible is simply inspired by God.

infallibility, papal. Roman Catholic doctrine, promulgated at the First Vatican Council (1869–70), that the pope can, under circumscribed circumstances, speak without error on matters of "faith or morals." Catholics, it should be noted, do not believe that this doctrine means that everything the pope says or does is infallible. And the pope can never speak infallibly on other matters, politics included.

intelligent design. See creationism.

Islam. The faith of over one billion people and the world's second largest religion after Christianity. *Islam* literally means "submission." Muslims exhibit their submission to Allah (God) by practicing the Five Pillars of Islam: by praying, fasting during the month of Ramadan, almsgiving, going on pilgrimage to Mecca, and testifying to the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of their founder, Muhammad (570–632). Their holy book, the Quran, speaks of caring for the poor, a day of judgment, and the bodily resurrection. Their holiest cities are Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem (in that order). The religion is divided into two major branches: Sunnis (the majority) and Shiites.

Islam first came to the United States with African slaves. There are records of slaves refusing to eat pork, speaking Arabic, and calling God Allah. But Islam all but vanished in the colonies. Muslims began immigrating to the United States in significant numbers in the early twentieth century and those numbers jumped dramatically after the US Congress liberalized immigration in 1965. Many associate American Islam with the Black Muslims of the Nation of Islam, the controversial and heterodox group founded in Detroit by W. D. Fard, led after Fard's mysterious disappearance in 1934 by Elijah Muhammad, and later embraced by such notables as Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and Louis Farrakhan. But most American Muslims are of either Middle Eastern or Asian descent, and most African American Muslims, including Elijah Muhammad's son Warith Deen Muhammad are affiliated not with the Black Muslims but with more orthodox Sunni groups.

Today Islam is a major presence on the American religious landscape. Muslims have delivered prayers to open sessions of the US Congress, their holidays have appeared on postage stamps, and their leaders meet with US presidents. They are represented by a variety of pressure groups, including the Muslim Public Affairs Council (established 1988), the American Muslim Council (1990), the American Muslim Alliance (1994), and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (1994). After 9/11 Americans vigorously debated the nature of Islam. Was Islam, as President George W. Bush argued, a "religion of peace"? Or was it, as the conservative political activist Paul Weyrich insisted, "a religion of war"?

Estimates of the American Muslim population vary widely, in part because Islam is growing so rapidly here. There are over 1,200 mosques in the United States, and Islam is likely the religion of roughly 1 to 2 percent of the US population, or three to six million people. Worldwide, roughly one in every five people is a Muslim. Although the religion is often identified with the Middle East, the vast majority of the world's

Muslims live elsewhere. The country with the most Muslims is Indonesia, followed by Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

Islamism. Also known as “political Islam,” Islamism refers to ultraconservative Islamic movements that use their religion to advance a political agenda. This term is typically pejorative, used as an epithet by critics of such movements as al-Qaeda and Wahhabism. It should not be confused with the term Islamicist, which is used in academic circles to refer to scholars specializing in Islam. Seizing on the popularity of the term *Islamist*, some critics of the Religious Right began in the early twenty-first century to refer to politically active conservative Christians as Christianists.

Jehovah's Witnesses. A Protestant denomination, officially known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, rooted in the end-of-the-world teachings of Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916). This rapidly growing group claims about a million adherents in the United States but nearly seven million active members worldwide. Witnesses, as members are called, live up to their name. They are aggressive door-to-door evangelizers, and they publish their *Watchtower* magazine, which Russell began in the 1870s, in 152 languages. They became notorious in early twentieth-century America for refusing to salute the flag or serve in the military. Their unorthodox theological views extend to denying the Trinity and refusing blood transfusions. Witnesses have been quite active in the legal arena, taking dozens of cases to the Supreme Court—more than any other religious group. In *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* (1940), the Supreme Court ruled that Witnesses in public schools could be forced to salute the flag (which members understand as a form of idolatry). After that decision was interpreted by vigilantes as a warrant to attack Witnesses and burn down their Kingdom Halls, the Supreme Court quickly reversed itself in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943), upholding Witnesses' right not to salute the flag. The most influential case involving this group was *Cantwell v. Connecticut* (1940), which extended First Amendment protections from the federal to the local and state levels and vastly expanded the range of religious liberty for all minority religions in the United States.

Jerusalem. Known by Muslims as *al-Quds* (“The Holy”) and mentioned more than 600 times in the Hebrew Bible, Jerusalem is a sacred place for Jews, Christians, and Muslims and a magnet for both pilgrimage and

tourism. As much an idea as a reality, it is built on the metaphors of exile and return and on the blood of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim martyrs who fought to control it during the crusades of the Middle Ages. Its many holy places include: for Jews, the remains of the Western Wall of the Second Temple; and for Christians, the Via Dolorosa, along which Jesus walked to his crucifixion, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the site where according to tradition he was buried and resurrected. Muslims consider Jerusalem sacred because it is where the angel Gabriel took Muhammad on his famed “night journey”—from the mosque in Mecca to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and then to the heavens to converse with prior prophets and to learn how to pray.

Conquered by King David, Jerusalem was the site of Solomon's Temple until the Babylonians sacked the city and destroyed that landmark in 586 BCE. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. Since that time control over Jerusalem has passed back and forth between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Today both Israelis and Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital, and this city's status remains a major sticking point in Middle East peace negotiations. Conflicting religious convictions remain a major reason why those negotiations are so difficult and the conflicts they seek to resolve so bitter.

Jesus. The central figure in Christianity and the second person in the Christian Trinity. According to the Christian tradition, Jesus was born to the Virgin Mary and raised as a carpenter by her husband, Joseph. After being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus began his public ministry at roughly the age of thirty. He preached the kingdom of God, healed the sick, cast out demons, and gathered twelve apostles. The Passion—the story of his suffering and death told in all four Gospels—begins with the Last Supper he celebrated with his followers. It includes charges brought by Jewish authorities, a trial before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, and ultimately his scourging and crucifixion. Christians affirm, however, that after three days Jesus rose from the dead, appeared to his followers, and ascended to heaven. Through the centuries Christians developed many competing christologies, or theologies about Jesus. Some emphasized his humanity and others his divinity, but the view that he was both God and human prevailed. According to the Nicene Creed of the fourth century, which is accepted by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians alike, Jesus was “the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God.”

The New Testament describes Jesus as “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), but in the United States he has changed dramatically over time. American Christians have portrayed him as “black and white, male and female, straight and gay, a socialist and a capitalist, a pacifist and a warrior, a Ku Klux Klansman and a civil rights agitator.”²⁶⁸ Non-Christians have embraced Jesus also. Buddhists revere him as a bodhisattva, Hindus as an avatar of God, and Jews as a great rabbi. Muslims do not believe that Jesus was crucified or resurrected, but they regard him as a prophet and affirm both the virgin birth and his ascension into heaven. American popular culture has celebrated Jesus too—in best-selling novels such as *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925), Broadway musicals such as *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), and blockbusters from Cecil B. DeMille’s *King of Kings* (1927) to Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

Today Jesus is a major presence in American politics also, widely invoked by politicians of both parties on a variety of public policy questions. “What would Jesus do?” was first asked over a century ago in the novel *In His Steps* (1897) by Congregationalist minister Charles Sheldon. But it remains a vital question for many Americans today on such matters as environmentalism, poverty, war, immigration, civil rights, and abortion.

jihad. The term *jihad* is derived from an Arabic word that means “to struggle” or “make an effort.” So to participate in a jihad is to struggle on behalf of God. Muslims see two different types of jihads. The greater is the spiritual struggle of each believer against his or her lesser nature. The lesser is the physical struggle against enemies of Islam, a category that has traditionally included polytheists but not Jews or Christians (whom Muslims classically regard as fellow “people of the book”). In these physical struggles Muslims are enjoined to fight in accordance with strict regulations (including prohibitions against harming women, children, the old, the sick, and other noncombatants). Those who participate in such a jihad are called Mujahideen, a term popularized by opponents of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Individuals who die in this sort of battle may be revered as martyrs who go straight to paradise without having to wait (as others must) for the final judgment. Recently some radical Muslims have tried to modify the strict rules governing the “jihad of the sword,” particularly rules against injuring or killing women, children, civilians, and fellow Muslims. Others have tried to expand the Five Pillars to include a sixth: jihad. Still others have tried to break down the long-standing tradi-

tion between “holy wars” in defense of Islam, which have been widely accepted as legitimate, and offensive “holy wars,” which have been seen as more dubious. Few Muslims, however, have accepted these reinterpretations. The only groups that stress jihad as “holy war” are Muslim extremists and extreme critics of Islam.

Joan of Arc (1412?–1431). Fifteenth-century French saint, martyr, and national hero. *Not* Noah’s wife.

Judaism. Of the major world religions, the smallest in terms of adherents but one of the most historically influential. Judaism is a religion more of practice than belief; its adherents are knit together less by a shared worldview than by shared observances. Jews attempt to follow the Torah, or Law. They rest once a week on the Sabbath, which they celebrate from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. They celebrate holidays such as Passover (which commemorates the Exodus of the Israelites from bondage to freedom), Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

There is, however, something of a Jewish creed, called the *Shema*, which begins: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4). As this creed indicates, Judaism is monotheistic. It recognizes one God who is creator, lawgiver, and judge, whose words are recorded in the Torah (“law” or “teaching”). Judaism’s scripture is called the Tanakh, an acrostic for: Torah (understood here as the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); Neviim (prophetic and historical books); and Ketuvim (other writings, including Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and the Song of Songs). In addition to recording God’s commandments, the Tanakh tells the story of God’s relationship with his “chosen people,” the Jews, a relationship marked by covenants made, broken, and remade, and by the rhythms of exile and return.

Although this story goes back millennia, Judaism proper did not emerge until after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE transformed what had been a tradition of priests performing sacrifice in a temple into a more portable tradition of rabbis interpreting texts in synagogues. Today there are only about 15 million Jews worldwide, but Judaism gave birth to the two largest religions in the world—Christianity and Islam—which together with Judaism constitute the “Abrahamic” religions. There are roughly 5 million Jews in the state of Israel and over 5.2 million Jews in the United States. Reform Judaism accounts for 39 percent of the religiously affiliated US Jewish population,

followed by Conservative Judaism (33 percent), Orthodox Judaism (21 percent), and Reconstructionist Judaism (3 percent). Because Judaism is as much a people as a religion, it is also possible to be a secular Jew.

Judas Iscariot. One of Jesus' twelve apostles, notorious for betraying Jesus with a kiss in exchange for thirty pieces of silver. In Dante's *Divine Comedy* Judas is one of the heads of a three-headed Satan, but the noncanonical Gospel of Judas, discovered in Egypt in the 1970s and published in English translation in 2006, tells a different story. According to this Gnostic gospel, Judas is a hero rather than a villain. He gave Jesus up to the authorities because Jesus asked him to assist his Lord in sloughing off "the man that clothes me" (in other words, his body).

Judeo-Christian. Neologism, dating to the 1930s, that describes Judaism and Christianity as sister faiths in a hybrid religious tradition undergirding the American way of life. Initially the term was used to distinguish American Jews and Christians from European Nazis and Fascists, who were appropriating the term *Christian* for themselves and their politics. After World War II Americans began to use this slogan to distinguish their "one nation under God" from the Soviet Union under godless Communism. This "triple melting pot" ideal informed the decision of the Reverend Jerry Falwell to open the doors of the Moral Majority to Catholics and Jews as well as Protestants. After 9/11 some have tried to redefine the United States as a country of Christians, Jews, and Muslims—a "Judeo-Christian-Islamic" nation. Meanwhile, Osama bin Laden drew on the Judeo-Christian tradition to denounce the US military and other "Judeo-Christian crusaders" for attacking Islam.

Judeo-Christian-Islamic. Neologism, dating to the 1980s, that describes Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as sister faiths in a hybrid religious tradition undergirding the American way of life. This model of America can be seen in presidential rhetoric, which since the turn of the twenty-first century has tended to refer when discussing religious congregations to "churches, synagogues, and mosques" rather than simply "churches and synagogues." It was championed by American Muslim groups during the 1990s and moved into broader circulation after 9/11. In 2003 groups such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the American Muslim Council argued that Americans should stop referring to the United States as "Judeo-Christian" and use "Judeo-Christian-Islamic" or "Abrahamic" instead. Liberal Christian groups such as the National Coun-

cil of Churches welcomed this change in nomenclature, but more conservative organizations such as the National Association of Evangelicals dismissed it as political correctness run amok.

just-war theory. Catholic tradition, dating to Thomas Aquinas, describing both what makes a war just (*jus ad bellum*) and what conduct is justifiable during such a war (*jus in bello*). Concerning how to conduct a war, just war theorists often cite such principles as "discrimination" (which says that combatants should direct their aggression against other combatants rather than innocent civilians) and "proportionality" (which says that force cannot be out of proportion to the injury suffered). Just war theory also prohibits torture and mandates proper care for prisoners of war. Many of its tenets were codified in the Geneva Conventions of 1949. In recent years just war theory surfaced, implicitly or explicitly, in debates concerning suicide bombings in Israel, the treatment of prisoners detained at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, and the alleged torture of terrorists overseas. This tradition of moral reasoning is opposed by pacifists, who believe that war can never be morally justifiable, and by "realists," who say that war is inherently immoral and should not therefore be called to the bar of justice.

Kabbalah. Jewish mystical teachings, rooted in the Zohar, a multivolume, thirteenth-century text offering mystical interpretations of Jewish law. Kabbalah (lit. "tradition"), which attends to such spiritual matters as angels and the afterlife, is supposed to be esoteric—that is to say, hidden—but in the early twenty-first century it went public. The Kabbalah Centre of Los Angeles disseminated Kabbalistic beliefs and practices to a wide variety of celebrities, including Demi Moore, Britney Spears, and Madonna, who were seen sporting its trademark red string bracelets. Critics decried the Kabbalah Centre as a "cult" and the teachings of its leader, Rabbi Philip Berg (b. 1929), as "McMysticism." But Berg defended his approach as a way to bring Kabbalah to people of other faiths (and none at all).

Kama Sutra. Hindu scripture popular in the West, originally intended as a sex manual for courtesans. Hindus recognize four goals of life: *kama* (pleasure), *dharma* (duty), *artha* (wealth), and *moksha* (spiritual liberation). The Kama Sutra, written by the Hindu thinker Vatsyayana around 400 CE, is an explicit treatise on sexual pleasure. Widely read and frequently translated, it discusses sixteen different types of kisses and a plethora of

positions for sexual intercourse. The Sanskrit word *kama* should not be confused with the Sanskrit word *karma*, which means action.

karma. In Sanskrit, karma refers both to an action and its consequences, but the term connotes more broadly the ethical law of cause and effect that drives *samsara*, the never-ending cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and other Asian religions. According to this law, which like gravity operates without divine intervention, positive consequences follow from good actions and negative consequences from bad actions—either in this lifetime or in a future incarnation. One troubling corollary of this tradition is that all of us deserve the circumstances into which we are born. Thinkers disagree about whether “good karma” can be transferred from one person to another. Classically, the answer to that question is no. But as more devotional understandings of Asian religions developed, many came to believe that gods, Buddhas, and other supernatural beings can transfer to their devotees portions of the vast storehouses of merit they accrued over lifetimes of good deeds. Now an English word, karma refers in popular parlance to the tendency for “what goes around” to “come around,” as in the bumper sticker: “My Karma Ran Over My Dogma.”

King Jr., Martin Luther (1929–1968). African American Baptist minister and civil rights leader who creatively combined religion and politics. The son of a well-known preacher in Atlanta, Georgia, King rose to national prominence during the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Inspired by the nonviolent direct action of Mohandas Gandhi and the neo-orthodox theology of Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971), King used nonviolent civil disobedience to bring an end to racial segregation. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 and was shot and killed by a white racist in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968. King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” a classic in American literature, cannot be understood without grasping its many religious references—to Jesus, Paul, neo-orthodox theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, the Nation of Islam, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego of the Old Testament. Following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, King turned his attentions to fighting poverty and opposing the Vietnam War. In 1983 President Reagan signed a bill declaring the third Monday of every January Martin Luther King Day. This is the only federal holiday commemorating the life of an African American and the only such day commemorating the life of a clergyman.

kirpan. See 5 Ks.

Koran. See Quran.

Kwanzaa. Year-end festival held annually from December 26 through January 1 to commemorate the African heritage of African Americans. Each of this festival’s seven days centers on a different principle—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—and features the lighting of a candle on a seven-branched candelabrum. An invention of black nationalist Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa was first celebrated in 1966 in San Diego, California.

Lao-tzu. See Taoism.

Last Supper. Final meal (perhaps a Passover Seder) shared by Jesus with his disciples before his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. This event is commemorated each Sunday by Christians who drink wine (symbolizing the blood of Christ) and eat bread (symbolizing his body) in a sacramental reenactment of this last meal. Arguably the most famous scene in Christendom, the Last Supper has inspired legions of artists—from the pop artist Andy Warhol to the surrealist Salvador Dali—to try their hand at depicting Jesus and his twelve followers arrayed around a supper table. The most beloved of these images is Leonardo Da Vinci’s *Last Supper* (1498).

Latter-day Saints, Church of Jesus Christ of. See Mormonism.

Lord’s Prayer. Christianity’s most popular prayer, taught by Jesus to his followers and widely recited by Christians today. Of the two New Testament versions (Matthew 6:9–13 and Luke 11:2–4), Matthew’s is the most popular. It reads (in the King James Bible): “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Luther, Martin (1483–1546). German leader of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation and founder of Lutheranism. Martin Luther is

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best remembered for publishing his Ninety-five Theses on indulgences (1517), a bold action that prompted Pope Leo X to excommunicate him from the Roman Catholic Church. Central to Luther's thought are two key ideas: justification by grace through faith, which he found in the Pauline epistles and the writings of Saint Augustine; and *sola scriptura*, which asserts that the "Bible alone" is authoritative for Christians, not (as Catholics claimed) both the Bible and tradition. Luther's primary institutional legacies in the United States today are Lutheran colleges such as St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and Lutheran denominations such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

Lutheranism. Protestant denomination based on the teachings of the sixteenth-century German religious reformer Martin Luther. Lutherans follow their founder in stressing justification by grace through faith and the authority of the Bible alone (*sola scriptura*). Along with Episcopalianism, Lutheranism is one of the more liturgical Protestant groups. The largest Lutheran body in the United States (and the third largest Protestant denomination after the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church) is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a liberal Protestant group formed when smaller Lutheran groups merged in the late 1980s. It claims 5.1 million members. Far more conservative is the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, which claims 2.5 million members. This group, founded by German immigrants in the 1830s, supports a large network of parochial schools that inculcate a strict interpretation of the Lutheran confessions and a belief in biblical infallibility. Lutheranism is most prominent in the Midwest and among people of Scandinavian and German descent. Although Lutherans are overrepresented in governors' mansions, there has never been a Lutheran president.

Malcolm X. See Black Muslims.

martyr. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, a martyr (from the Greek word *martyrs* or "witness") is someone who dies, typically young and violently, for a sacred cause. According to popular Islam, the Muslim martyr, or *shahid* ("witness" in Arabic), is transported immediately to paradise rather than having to wait for the last judgment. Martyrdom is particularly emphasized among Shiites, whose identity has been profoundly shaped by the suffering and death of Muhammad's grandson Husayn (625–680) during a battle at Karbala on the banks of the Euphrates in

680, an event commemorated annually by Shiites in the festival of Muharram. During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, martyrdom became a terrorist strategy for suicide bombers in Israel, Iraq, and other countries.

Martyrs are made by the circumstances of their lives and deaths, of course, but also and more significantly by the communities who memorialize them. In the United States devotees transformed President Lincoln and the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. into American Christs. Over the last half century, adoring fans have elevated to martyr status James Dean, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Tupac Shakur, and dozens of other celebrities who suffered early and violent deaths. Cassie Bernal, who died in the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999, has also been embraced as a martyr, since according to evangelical admirers she testified to her belief in God just before she was killed.

Mary. Mother of Jesus and, after Jesus himself, the most popular figure in Christian history. In the Bible she figures prominently in stories about Jesus' birth, infancy, childhood, and death. Roman Catholics, among whom Marian devotions are most prominent, give the Blessed Virgin Mary, as they call her, a role in sacred history above the saints. In 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed that she was sinless from conception (the Immaculate Conception), and in 1950 Pope Pius XII promulgated the doctrine that she was assumed bodily into heaven (the Assumption). Among Catholics, Mary is an object of popular devotion on dozens of feast days and at such pilgrimage shrines as Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico and Our Lady of Lourdes in France. The most common act of Marian devotion is praying the rosary, which involves praying both the Lord's Prayer and the "Hail Mary," which reads: "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen." Many Protestants reject such devotions as "Mariolatry."

Mary is also a major figure in Islam, where she is revered as Maryam and mentioned repeatedly in the Quran as the mother of Jesus. A Quranic chapter named after her, where the story of Jesus' miraculous birth is told, may be recited to women in labor. Some of the most bitter Bible translation disputes have concerned one Hebrew word used in Isaiah to describe the woman who will give birth to a son who shall be called Emmanuel. This term, *almah*, which Christians have typically translated as "virgin," has been used for centuries by the church to bolster the claim

that Jesus came into the world via a miraculous virgin birth. Many insist, however, that this term's plain meaning in Hebrew is simply "young girl."

Mary Magdalene. Jesus' most famous female follower, an eyewitness to his death, and the first witness to his resurrection. The popular tradition that she was once a prostitute seems to be based on the identification of her with an unnamed "sinner" who anoints Jesus' feet in the Gospel of Luke. A more controversial tradition is that Mary Magdalene and Jesus married and had children. This view, which has no biblical warrant, informs the Martin Scorsese film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) and is a major premise in Dan Brown's best-selling book, *The DaVinci Code* (2003).

Mass. See Holy Communion.

Mecca. The holiest city in the Islamic world, located in modern-day Saudi Arabia. Mecca is holy to Muslims because Muhammad was born there, because he received his earliest revelations in a cave outside the city, and because upon his triumphant return to Mecca in 630 CE he replaced polytheistic worship around the city's Kaaba shrine with monotheistic worship of the one true God. Muslims face Mecca when they pray, and mosques include a niche in the wall (*mihrab*) to orient them in that direction. Going at least once on the hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca is a sacred obligation for all Muslims who are physically and financially able. To keep Mecca pure, no non-Muslims are allowed in the city.

One of America's great spiritual memoirs, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965), turns on the pilgrimage to Mecca of this African American convert to the Nation of Islam. While on the hajj, Malcolm X comes to see himself not so much in racial as in religious terms—as a Muslim among Muslims. Osama bin Laden has indicated that he and al-Qaeda began their "holy war" against the United States because Americans put troops in the Muslim holy land in Saudi Arabia after the first Gulf War. *Mecca* has also become a generic term in American English, where it connotes the world center of something. For example, Moab, Utah, is described as a mecca for mountain bikers and Colorado Springs, Colorado, as an evangelical Christian mecca.

Medina. After Mecca, Islam's holiest city. Medina, which lies today in Saudi Arabia, is the place where Muhammad fled after leaving Mecca in

622 CE, where he founded the Islamic community (*ummah*), and where he established himself as not only a prophet but also a patriarch, politician, and military leader. It is also the city where he built the first mosque, where he died, and where he is buried. Muhammad's flight in 622 from Mecca to Medina—known as the *hijra*—is so important in Islam that Muslims date their lunar calendar from that moment. (Much of 2007 CE falls for them in 1427 AH—"in the year of the *hijra*.") During the 1990s some American Muslims began speaking of transforming the United States into a Medina, by which they meant it was time to establish an American *ummah*—an Islamic community that was both authentically American and authentically Islamic.

megachurch. A large congregation, typically Protestant and often evangelical, with a weekly worship service attendance measured in the thousands, an authoritative male pastor, and a wide array of social ministries and recreational activities. Few US megachurches are politically active, most are theologically conservative, and, while many are nondenominational, two-thirds carry a denominational affiliation. Worship services put a premium on good music, with live bands and song lyrics projected on large screens.

There are over 1,200 megachurches in the United States—up from only 350 in 1990. They cluster in the suburbs of rapidly growing cities, particularly in the southern "sunbelt," which stretches from Florida to California. The largest is Joel Osteen's Houston-based Lakewood Church, which typically draws thirty thousand to its Sunday services. Another is Rick Warren's Saddleback Valley Church in Lake Forest, California. Both pastors are also best-selling authors. Osteen's *Your Best Life Now* (2004) has sold millions of copies, and Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* (2002) is one of the best-selling nonfiction books in US history.

messiah. The long-awaited king who according to the Jewish tradition will come at the last days, restore the Jews to the Promised Land, rebuild the Temple, and inaugurate the just and peaceful "world to come." Christians believe that Jesus was this messiah (hence the title Christ, from *christos*, Greek for messiah), as do Jews for Jesus and other messianic Jewish groups. But Jews generally reject Jesus' messianic status. Messianism is not a major emphasis among Reform and Conservative Jews, but it is emphasized by the Orthodox. Among the Orthodox, Hasidic Jews are especially drawn to messianic thinking. For many other Jews, Zionism is a form of messianism too.

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Methodism. Mainline Protestant denomination founded in eighteenth-century England by John Wesley (1703–1791) and his brother Charles (1707–1788) and, after the Baptists, the largest Protestant family in the United States. The “Methodist” moniker, like many in religious history, derives from opponents who used the term derisively, but the Wesleys wore it with pride to refer to their methodical pursuit of Christian holiness. One of the Methodists’ distinctive teachings concerns the Christian doctrine of sanctification. According to John Wesley, sanctification culminated in a second work of grace—the first was salvation—which perfected the believer in love. This idea of Christian perfectionism helped to fuel many nineteenth-century social reform movements, including the campaign to abolish slavery.

Methodism spread rapidly in the United States during the Second Great Awakening of the nineteenth century, thanks to the Methodists’ willingness to send unlettered “circuit riders” into the frontier and the determination of these missionaries to preach in the vernacular of ordinary people. By the 1840s Methodism was the largest Christian group in the United States.

The Wesleyan tradition is carried forward in contemporary America by the United Methodist Church, whose 10.4 million members make it the second largest American Protestant denomination after the Southern Baptist Convention. The largest African American Methodist bodies are the African Methodist Episcopal (established 1816) and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (1820), which together number about 5 million. Although Methodists initially believed that an educated clergy produced flaccid faith, they went on to establish seminaries at Boston University, Vanderbilt, Emory, Duke, Drew, and other institutions of higher learning. Additional Methodist legacies include the Holiness movement, which emphasized sanctification and perfectionism even more than the Methodists, and Pentecostalism, which extended Wesley’s two-step formula of salvation and sanctification into a third step: baptism of the Holy Spirit.

millennialism. See dispensational premillennialism.

monotheism. Belief shared by Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others that there is only one god. (By contrast, polytheism affirms the existence of multiple gods and atheism denies them all.) In 1954 the US Congress inserted the phrase “under God” into the Pledge of Allegiance, suggesting that the United States is officially monotheistic—a view reinforced

after 9/11 by repeated public references to the country as a Judeo-Christian-Islamic nation and by the Supreme Court’s refusal to take “under God” out of the pledge in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* (2004). Opponents of monotheism include Buddhists who typically affirm no divinity and Hindus who typically affirm many, though it should be noted that many Hindus call themselves monotheists.

Moral Majority. The most visible and powerful instrument of the Religious Right during the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s. This pressure group was founded in 1979 by the Reverend Jerry Falwell (b. 1933), a fundamentalist Baptist pastor, Liberty University chancellor, and televangelist. The group defined itself not in narrowly Baptist or even Christian terms but as a Judeo-Christian organization open to Protestants, Catholics, and Jews committed to promoting “family values” by opposing pornography, homosexuality, abortion, feminism, and secular humanism. After helping to send California’s governor, Ronald Reagan, to the White House in 1980, the group drew fire from the Secular Left for ostensibly violating the separation of church and state. From the right, *Faith for the Family* magazine of Bob Jones University criticized the Moral Majority for selling Jesus out to politics, blasting the group as “one of Satan’s devices to build the world church of Antichrist.”²⁶⁹ With the Religious Right a fixture on the American political scene, Falwell dissolved the organization in 1989, the same year that another religious broadcaster, Pat Robertson, established a like-minded but more narrowly Christian pressure group called the Christian Coalition. Since that time Falwell has continued to stir the pot of the culture wars, particularly on matters of sexual ethics. On September 13, 2001, Falwell pinned blame for 9/11 on “the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and lesbians ... who have tried to secularize America.”

Mormonism. Religious movement founded in New York in the 1820s by Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–1844). According to Smith, an angel revealed to him the location of gold tablets buried in the fifth century in modern-day upstate New York. Smith found the tablets, used two seer stones to translate their “Reformed Egyptian” into English, and published the resulting Book of Mormon in 1830. In that book, which Mormons view as scripture, Jesus visits the New World after his resurrection and before his ascension, founding his true church among Native Americans.

Widely persecuted for their distinctive beliefs and practices (which came to include polygamy), Mormons moved westward from New York

to Ohio and Missouri before settling in Illinois, where Smith was arrested, jailed, and then killed by a mob in 1844. Mormons later migrated under the direction of Brigham Young (1801–1877) to Utah, where they established something of a theocratic state. After the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the official name of the largest Mormon church) renounced polygamy in 1890, Utah was admitted into the Union as the forty-fifth state.

Mormons recognize four scriptures: the Bible (“as far as it is translated correctly”), the Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, and Doctrine and Covenants. But they also believe in ongoing revelation, investing in their successive presidents the power of prophecy. In 1978 President Spencer Kimball announced a revelation that lifted a prior ban on African American men becoming priests. Today Mormons’ distinctive practices include baptism for the dead and marriage for eternity, and their distinctive beliefs include the corporeality of God and the eternal progression of humans into godhood. Mormons also follow a health code called the Word of Wisdom, which prohibits the ingestion of tobacco, alcohol, and caffeine.

Mormonism was widely discussed in the United States during the 2002 Winter Olympics, held in the shadow of LDS international headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah. Although once seen as un-American, Mormons are now viewed by many as quintessentially American. The LDS Church reports over 4 million members in the United States and 12 million worldwide and is one of the world’s fastest growing religious movements. Some have predicted that Mormonism is well on its way to becoming the first great world religion since Islam. It has already become an American political force. Mormons were overrepresented relative to their total population in the 109th Congress, and in 2006 the governors of both Utah and Massachusetts were LDS members.

Moses. The most important figure in the history of Judaism and, according to Muslims and Christians, a great prophet. Moses is remembered today as the man who received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and led the Israelites on the Exodus out of bondage in Egypt. According to the Pentateuch, the five books of the Hebrew Bible attributed to Moses, he was born in Egypt, hidden in reeds in the Nile River after Pharaoh ordered the slaughter of all male Israelite babies, and discovered by Pharaoh’s daughter, who raised him in luxury as her son. After Moses fled his life as an adopted prince, God spoke to him from a burning bush, commanding him to lead the Israelites out of slavery and into the Prom-

ised Land. Moses then appealed to Pharaoh to “let my people go.” When Pharaoh refused, God sent ten plagues against Egypt. Pharaoh finally relented, but when Moses led his people out of Egypt Pharaoh’s armies pursued them. At the Red Sea God miraculously parted the waters, allowing Moses and the Israelites to cross onto dry land, but as Pharaoh’s armies pursued them God ordered the waters to return and the soldiers drowned. At Mount Sinai God gave Moses the Torah, or Law. For forty years Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness and to the edge of the land promised by God to Abraham’s descendants. But he died at the age of 120 before he could enter into Canaan.

Moses’s afterlife in the United States—where he has figured in films such as *The Ten Commandments* (1956) and *The Prince of Egypt* (1998) and novels such as Zora Neale Hurston’s *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939) and William Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses* (1942)—is almost as extensive as that of Jesus. In the African American tradition, notably in slave spirituals, Jesus is a Black Moses who saves his people from sin and delivers them from bondage. Many have seen the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. as a Moses figure, particularly after he yoked the story of the Exodus to his hope for freedom for all Americans in his 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech.

mosque/masjid. A place where Muslims assemble for congregational prayer on Fridays is called a mosque in English or a *masjid* (“place of prostration”) in Arabic. Classically, mosques have a minaret from which a call to prayer is issued five times a day. They also feature fountains equipped with running water for ritual ablutions, a niche in the wall facing Mecca called a *mibrab*, and, near the *mibrab*, an elevated pulpit from which a sermon is given during Friday worship. Mosques also function as educational centers, where students come for instruction in the Quran, hadith, and Islamic law. The three most important mosques in the Muslim world are in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem.

Muhammad (570–632 CE). The founder and last prophet of Islam, and the vehicle through whom God revealed the Quran. Muhammad was born in Mecca in 570 CE, raised as an orphan, and buried in Medina in 632. He received his first revelation from God at roughly the age of forty, when the angel Gabriel appeared to him in a cave outside Mecca and commanded him to “recite.” The words he subsequently recited were memorized by his followers and eventually written down as the Quran. As a trader, Muhammad was exposed both to indigenous polytheistic

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traditions and to monotheistic Christians and Jews. The revelations he received emphasized the oneness of God (*tawhid*). So did his subsequent preaching, which earned him not only his first followers (including his wife Khadijah) but also opponents in polytheistic Mecca. Hostility to his preaching there prompted Muhammad to flee with his followers to Medina, where they established the Muslim community (*ummah*). This flight (*hijra*) from Mecca happened in 622, which now serves as the first year in the Muslim lunar calendar. In 630 Muhammad and his army conquered Mecca and cleansed the area around the ancient Kaaba shrine of idol worshippers. He died two years later in 632.

During his lifetime Muhammad established himself as not only a prophet but also a patriarch—after Khadijah's death he took multiple wives—and a political, legal, and military leader. He was also a diplomat, embracing Jews and Christians not as mortal enemies but as “people of the book” with legitimate, though corrupted, revelations delivered through prophets by the one true God. Muslims also see Muhammad as a spiritual and moral exemplar. The hadith, a Muslim textual tradition second in importance only to the Quran, records his sayings and actions so that Muslims might imitate both. Although often compared with Jesus in Christianity, he is actually more comparable to the Virgin Mary, since it was through him (by tradition an illiterate man) that God delivered his revelation (the Quran in this case) to the world.

In 1987 a book called *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* tapped Muhammad as the most influential person ever, chiefly because (unlike Jesus) he was both a spiritual and a political man, the founder of a new religion and its first leader. American televangelists have a much lower opinion of Muhammad. After 9/11 televangelist Jerry Falwell called him “a man of war” and “a terrorist.” Pastor Jerry Vines, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, called him “a demon-possessed pedophile.” Muslims, however, continue to recall Muhammad as the final prophet and “a beautiful example,” as he is called in the Quran. In Islamic speech, the phrase “peace be upon him” follows any mention of his name.

Nation of Islam. See Black Muslims.

nativity. The birth of Jesus in a Bethlehem stable. A number of Supreme Court rulings on the First Amendment's establishment clause have concerned the constitutionality of nativity scenes (or crèches) on public property. These cases have not produced particularly clear general guidelines,

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so some legal scholars have read into them a principle called the “Three-Reindeer Rule.” According to this oft-cited (and ridiculed) rule, a nativity scene passes constitutional muster as long as it incorporates sufficient symbols from other religions (Hanukkah menorahs or dreidels, for example) or from secular life (Santas, candy canes, and reindeers) to signal to any “reasonable observer” that the purpose of the display is something other than endorsing Christianity.

New Testament. The second portion of the Christian Bible (after the Old Testament), canonized by Christians in the fourth century. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven different books: four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John); a narrative of the early church (Acts); twenty-one letters, many attributed to Paul; and an apocalyptic text called Revelation. The New Testament has conveyed to the world not only Christianity but also a vast inventory of characters, places, sayings, and stories—from Doubting Thomas to Calvary to “The truth shall make you free” to the Parable of the Mustard Seed—which in turn have supplied artists, novelists, filmmakers, and politicians with an endless supply of inspiration.

nirvana. The ultimate goal of Buddhism, variously described as the extinction of suffering, emancipation from ignorance, and liberation from the cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth (*samsara*). Mahayana Buddhists believe that the apparent distinction between nirvana and *samsara* is illusory; this world of suffering is itself nirvana. Nirvana, which literally means “blowing out,” was also the name of the grunge band headlined by Kurt Cobain (1967–1994) and is a generic term in American English for paradise.

Noah. Righteous man ridiculed for building an ark on dry land but vindicated when a great flood came. According to Genesis 6–9, God decides to destroy the world because it has become so corrupt. But he warns Noah, commanding him to build a great ship for himself and his family and to stock it with a male and a female of all the animals. After many days of rain, Noah sends out birds in search of land. A dove returns with an olive leaf, indicating that the waters are receding. As Noah leaves the ark, God promises never to destroy the world again by water and seals the covenant with a rainbow. This story, which has sparked a series of Bible-believing adventurers to search for the lost ark, is paralleled in flood stories in other cultures, including Mesopotamia's Gilgamesh epic.

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nonviolence. See ahimsa.

Old Testament. The first portion of the Christian Bible, preceding the New Testament. Protestant Bibles divide the twenty-four books of the Hebrew Bible into thirty-nine books. Catholic Bibles include seven additional books regarded by Protestants as noncanonical Apocrypha, for a total of forty-six. Jews, who do not accept the New Testament or Apocrypha as scripture, do not refer to these books as the Old Testament. The Old Testament narrates the adventures of the Israelites, including a series of covenants made by God with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Christians understand the Old Testament to prophesy and foreshadow the birth and death of Jesus. The Old Testament has inspired countless artists, novelists, and filmmakers with characters such as Samson and Delilah, stories such as the Tower of Babel and the Flood, and passages of wisdom and prophecy in books such as Proverbs and Isaiah.

Orthodox Christianity. Along with Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, one of Christianity's three main branches. Orthodoxy split from Roman Catholicism in 1054 over the now arcane matter of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone (the Orthodox position) or from both the Father and Son (as the Catholics claimed). Orthodox Christianity is led today by patriarchs with authority in their own nations yet in communion with one another. (There is no Orthodox pope.) Of all the dimensions of religion, Orthodox piety emphasizes ritual, more specifically the celebration of the Eucharist—the “mystery of mysteries”—which is done in a high style, complete with incense, sacred music, and colorful clerical vestments. When it comes to priests and marriage, the Orthodox split the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism, allowing parish priests to marry but insisting on celibacy for bishops (who are recruited from the monastic ranks). Orthodox Christians practice baptism by immersion and call confirmation chrismation (because of its use of holy oil, or *chrism*). Finally, this tradition makes considerable use of icons, so much so that Orthodoxy can be described as Christianity conveyed through sight.

Orthodox Christians arrived in North America as early as a 1794 Russian mission to Alaska, but their numbers remained small until immigration from Greece, Russia, and other Orthodox countries picked up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There are roughly 100 million Orthodox Christians in the world, with perhaps 5 million in the United States. The largest Orthodox group in the United States is the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Orthodox Judaism. One of three main branches in Judaism—alongside Reform and Conservative—and the most traditional. Although the term *orthodox* refers to “correct doctrine,” what really distinguishes Orthodox Judaism from other forms is orthopraxy, or correct practice, more specifically strict adherence to both oral and written Law, which it regards as divinely inspired. So, for example, Orthodox Jews strictly observe the Sabbath and eat only kosher food. This community is divided into Modern Orthodox Jews and Haredi Jews (including Hasidic Jews). Of these two groups, the Modern Orthodox are more open to secular influences and Haredis most zealous about separating themselves from non-Jewish influences. Orthodox Jews arrived in the New World as early as 1654, and they came in significant numbers from Eastern Europe between the 1880s and the 1920s. Orthodox institutions in the United States include New York's Yeshiva University and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

Paul. First-century church leader, author of many New Testament epistles, and according to some the real founder of Christianity. Born Jewish, Paul (whose given name was Saul) was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians. According to Acts 9:1–19, he saw the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus and converted to Christianity. He then traveled widely, preaching the gospel as he understood it to Jews and Gentiles alike. According to church tradition, he was arrested, tried, and executed under the Roman emperor Nero in roughly 65 CE. Scholars typically regard seven of the letters attributed to Paul as authentically his; the other six are disputed. His authentic letters, which date from the fifties, are earlier than the Gospels, and their theology profoundly shaped both ancient and modern Christianity.

Martin Luther's reading of Paul's Letter to the Romans as a brief for “justification by grace through faith” set the Protestant Reformation in motion, but Paul has long been a contested figure in American life. Many Americans perceive a yawning gap between the ideals of Jesus and the realities of institutional Christianity, and some blame Paul for turning Jesus' faith into “Churchianity.” Some African Americans, noting Paul's insistence that slaves obey their masters, have even refused to read the letters of Paul aloud in their churches. Still, Paul remains a towering figure in Christian history, second in importance only to Jesus.

Pentecostalism. Protestant movement that affirms that the gifts of the Holy Spirit manifested among the apostles on the first day of Pentecost

(in Acts 2) are still available today. Pentecostals emphasize experience and downplay doctrine. Like evangelicals, they affirm the centrality of conversion, but in addition they insist on the importance of a second experience of grace, which they refer to as baptism in the Spirit. This "second baptism" can instill such charismatic gifts as glossolalia (speaking in tongues), prophecy, and healing. Modern Pentecostalism, which grew out of the Methodist and Holiness traditions, dates from the Asuza Street Revival, which saw speaking in tongues and other charismatic gifts break out among a mixed-race group in Los Angeles in 1906. It came into the national spotlight through the ministrations of Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944)—"Sister Aimee" to her fans—whose radio ministry and flamboyant preaching at the five-thousand-seat Angelus Temple in Los Angeles in the 1920s made her the most famous female preacher in American history.

Controversy has followed Pentecostalism almost from the start. In 1926, at the height of her popularity, McPherson disappeared, reportedly the victim of a kidnapping. But many believe that McPherson ran off with a lover and that she died of a drug overdose. In the late 1980s sex scandals involving two Pentecostal preachers—Jim Bakker (b. 1939), the founder of the PTL ("Praise the Lord") television network, and another televangelist, Jimmy Swaggart (b. 1935)—rocked the movement. Still, Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing religious movements in the world.

Though Pentecostalism was originally a movement of the dispossessed, it has increasingly attracted middle-class Americans. Worldwide, however, this "third force in Christianity" continues to appeal to the poor. Because Pentecostalism is fractured into tens of thousands of denominations, membership figures are hard to come by. An estimate of 20 million members in the United States and at least 100 million worldwide seems reasonable, though some sources have fixed the global figure as high as 600 million. The largest white Pentecostal denomination in the United States, the Assemblies of God, claims 2.6 million members. America's largest black Pentecostal group is the Church of God in Christ.

Pharisees. After Democrats in Georgia and Alabama started agitating for Bible classes in the public schools in the early twenty-first century, Republicans denounced them as "modern-day Pharisees" on the grounds that they were exploiting religion for political gain. This term originally referred to Jews around the time of Jesus who were known for their openness to oral traditions and their belief in the bodily resurrection. The

Sadducees, by contrast, were wary of oral traditions and rejected the resurrection of the body. Jesus criticizes the Pharisees in the New Testament for being overly legalistic on such matters as the observation of the Sabbath. The apostle Paul was a Pharisee who joined the early Christian movement and eventually came to believe that God's grace trumps law.

polytheism. Belief in multiple gods. Hinduism is typically described as polytheistic, though many Hindus insist that behind the myriad manifestations of divinity is one Absolute Reality.

pope. This title, which derives from the Greek term for "father," refers to the bishop of Rome, who simultaneously serves as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church and the head of state of Vatican City. Catholics believe that the authority of the pope derives from apostolic succession—an unbroken line of Christian leaders going back to the apostle Peter, whose authority was vested in him by Jesus himself. Since the First Vatican Council of 1870, Catholics have affirmed that the pope can speak infallibly on matters of faith and morals. One long-standing concern in American political life has been that Catholic politicians would take their marching orders not from the people who elected them but from the pope. Responding to this concern, Massachusetts senator John Kennedy pledged during his 1960 presidential campaign that he would neither request nor accept political advice or instructions from any pope. "I am not the Catholic candidate for president," Kennedy said, but a candidate "who happens also to be a Catholic."

predestination. Belief that God has predetermined the eternal destiny of each individual, assigning the elect to heaven and (in the case of "double predestination") the damned to hell. This view, which accents God's sovereignty at the expense of human free will, characterized the theology of the Swiss theologian John Calvin and, through him, Puritanism and other expressions of Reformed theology. The most famous opponent of predestination was the Dutchman Jacob Arminius (1559–1609), whose "Arminian" theology insisted that human beings were free to cooperate with God in their salvation or damnation. Divine sovereignty trounced free will at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) and in the Westminster Confession (1647), both of which affirmed predestination, but Arminianism routed Calvinism during the Second Great Awakening and predominates among American Christians today.

Presbyterianism. Two distinguishing marks, one doctrinal and the other ecclesiastical, distinguish Presbyterianism (from the Greek term *presbyteros*, or elder) from other mainline Protestant denominations. In terms of doctrine, Presbyterians adhere to the Reformed theology of John Calvin as expressed in the Westminster Confession (1646). In terms of church governance, Presbyterians distinguish themselves from both Episcopalian polity (which has bishops) and Congregational governance (where local churches are sovereign) by maintaining a system of congregations, presbyteries (geographical units comprising many congregations), synods (composed of clergy and lay leaders elected by presbyteries), and a general assembly (composed of synods). American Presbyterians split over revivalism, slavery, and fundamentalism but managed to grow into one of the country's leading Protestant families. Their largest denomination, with 3.1 million members, is the Presbyterian Church (USA). Although Presbyterians make up less than 3 percent of the current US population, they held nearly 10 percent of the seats in the 109th Congress and have accounted for nearly one-quarter of all US presidents. This denomination's long-standing commitment to education is evident in many theological schools, including Princeton Theological Seminary (established 1812).

Prodigal Son. Character in one of the most popular parables of Jesus (Luke 15:11–32). This son leaves his home and family with money his father has given him. But he soon squanders it all. Returning home, he begs for his father's forgiveness, and surprisingly his father welcomes him back with a grand celebration. Allusions to this story, which also features a good son convinced that his father's mercy is unjust, recur in the works of Shakespeare and throughout Western art.

Promised Land. In the Hebrew Bible, the land of Canaan promised by God to Abraham and claimed by the people of Israel following their exile. The longing for this "land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8) contributed mightily to Zionism and the creation of the state of Israel, but the Promised Land is also a recurring image in American history. The Pilgrims saw the New World as a Promised Land, African slaves saw the North as their Canaan, and Mormons saw Utah as theirs. Many American spirituals and hymns conflate heaven with the Promised Land. The most famous use of this phrase in American public life occurs in the "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. delivered on April 3, 1968, one day before his assassination. "It really

doesn't matter what happens now," King said. "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place, but I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land."

Protestantism. One of Christianity's three main branches, along with Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, and the dominant form of American Christianity. As the name implies, Protestantism began as a protest. In sixteenth-century Europe, thinkers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin harshly criticized the Roman Catholic Church, and, thanks to advances in literacy and print technology, these criticisms reached a large and ready audience. Whereas Catholics had long argued that salvation results from both faith and works, these reformers insisted on *sola fide* ("faith alone"). Whereas Catholics had based their tradition on the authority of both the Bible and tradition, Protestants insisted on the authority of the Bible alone (*sola scriptura*). Protestants also whittled the Catholics' seven sacraments down to two: baptism and Holy Communion. Other distinctive beliefs of the Reformation included "the priesthood of all believers," an egalitarian posture that elevated the status of the laity at the expense of priests.

As Protestantism broke with the pope and set off on its own, it formed four main branches: Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, and Anabaptism. Lutherans followed the lead of Luther and were particularly strong in Germany and Scandinavian countries. The Calvinist or Reformed tradition looked for leadership to Calvin and the Swiss theologian Ulrich Zwingli. It produced the Puritan impulse as well as three key denominational families: Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists. The Anglican tradition emerged when King Henry VIII set himself up as the head of the Church of England in 1534. It later gave birth to Methodism, which gestated the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. The most radical wing of the Reformation, the Anabaptists (or "rebaptizers"), insisted on adult rather than infant baptism, the strict separation of church and state, and pacifism. Groups such as the Mennonites and the Amish developed out of this Anabaptist branch.

Puritanism. Sixteenth-century Protestant movement to "purify" the Church of England of unscriptural beliefs and practices, particularly lingering vestiges of Roman Catholicism (including the celebration of

Christmas). The most radical Puritans—the Pilgrims among them—separated from the Church of England, which they regarded as apostate; nonseparating Puritans sought to change the Church of England from within. Many immigrants to the British colonies were Puritans, and Puritanism became the dominant theology in New England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Puritans came to the New World in search of religious freedom, but they did not extend that courtesy to others. Separation of church and state was unknown to them; they sought to create “Holy Commonwealths”—in Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven—that dealt strictly, sometimes lethally, with Quakers, Baptists, and other dissenters who did not share their understanding of scripture.

American Puritanism was dominated by Calvinism, or Reformed theology, which originated with the thought of the Swiss theologian John Calvin. Much of the dynamism of Puritan thought derived from two Calvinist emphases: the absolute sovereignty of God and the total depravity of human beings. Given God’s power and human sinfulness, Puritans were convinced that salvation was not a matter of individual free will; God had predestined all human beings either to heaven or to hell. Although Puritans have often been described as priggish and prudish—hence the term *puritanical*—they were not killjoys. Regarding alcohol as the “good creature of God,” they drank liberally at weddings, ordinations, and funerals. Their religion, moreover, was not as pure as many Puritan thinkers would have liked. Few Puritans took their Calvinist theology neat. They told folktales, read the stars for signs and portents, dabbled in magic, and heeded the dreams and visions of “cunning folk.”

Along with evangelicalism, Puritanism is one of the two most influential religious movements in American history. It profoundly influenced the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. It also bequeathed to evangelicalism an emphasis on experience, particularly the experience of conversion, and on *sola scriptura*, or “scripture alone.” But far more than evangelicals, Puritans valued the doctrinal and narrative dimensions of religion, believing that learning was a matter of the head as well as the heart.

Quakers. Pacifist Protestant group founded in England in the 1650s by George Fox (1624–1691). Officially known as the Religious Society of Friends, Quakers believe that individuals should follow their God-given “Inner Light” rather than external authorities. Their name may derive from an exchange between Fox and a British judge; after Fox instructed

the judge to “tremble at the Word of the Lord,” the judge reportedly called him “a quaker.” Friends, as Quakers are also called, are best known for their opposition to war and for their refusal to take oaths. Their distinctive services, which forgo both clergy and sacraments, emphasize silence and spontaneity.

Quakers played an important role in early American history. Quaker William Penn (1644–1718) founded Pennsylvania in 1681 as a safe haven for Quakers and granted liberty of conscience to all but atheists. Quakers also played key roles in nineteenth-century social reform movements, including the campaign for woman’s suffrage. Their belief in the equality of all human beings before God—a belief manifested in their refusal to tip their hats to monarchs—propelled them to the forefront of the abolitionist movement. The American Friends Service Committee, founded by Quakers in 1917, remains a key voice on issues of peace, justice, and human rights. Both President Nixon and President Herbert Hoover were Friends (though of the “fighting Quaker” sort). Today the Religious Society of Friends is a small denomination with roughly one hundred thousand American members.

Quran (lit. “recitation”). The holy book of Islam, the final revelation of Allah, and the ultimate authority for Muslims in law, religion, and ethics. Muslims affirm that this scripture was miraculously revealed by Allah via the angel Gabriel to Muhammad, recited by Muhammad, memorized by his companions, written down by scribes, and later compiled into a codex. The first revelation came in 610 CE, and the official version was canonized (in Arabic) decades after Muhammad’s death in 632. While Muslims affirm that the Hebrew and Christian Bibles were revealed by God, they believe that both scriptures have been corrupted over time. The Quran, by contrast, exists today just as it was originally delivered. It is authoritative only in the Arabic original; translations are understood to be human products.

The Quran, which is about as long as the New Testament, consists of 114 chapters or suras, which vary in length from 3 to 286 ayas (verses), organized largely from longest to shortest. Commentators divide these chapters into recitations received by Muhammad in Mecca (Meccan suras) and those received by him after his flight to Medina (Medinan suras). The Quran’s first sura is the Fatihah (“The Opening”):

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,

The Beneficent, the Merciful.
 Master of the Day of Judgment,
 Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.
 Show us the straight path,
 The path of those whom Thou hast favored; Not the (path) of those
 who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

The best way for newcomers to read the Quran is not from front to back but from back to front. Start with the Fatihah, but then skip to the shorter, more theological suras in the back. Then read the narratives of the prophets (toward the middle) before concluding with the legalistic content of the long suras at the front.

In addition to the unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad, the Quran teaches the bodily resurrection and a coming judgment. It requires prayers and almsgiving and fasting and pilgrimage. It portrays a world in which one God repeatedly reveals his will to human beings through prophets and messengers that stretch from Moses to Jesus to Muhammad. Jesus is mentioned nearly one hundred times in the Quran, where he is hailed as both miracle worker and messiah. Though Muslims affirm the virgin birth of Jesus, they do not believe that he was killed on a cross or raised from the dead. They believe instead that he ascended into paradise.

After 9/11, and particularly after it was learned that one of the hijackers had a Quran in his suitcase, interest in the Quran skyrocketed in the United States. "Anyone concerned with what's happening in our world ought to spend some time reading the Quran," CBS commentator Andy Rooney said, and for months after 9/11 Qurans outsold Bibles in many bookstores. Although awareness of the Quran is new to the United States, controversies about this scripture are not unknown. In 2002 conservative Christian groups protested after the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill assigned a book on the Quran to its incoming students. In 2005 the US military admitted to mishandling the Quran at its prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. And some Muslims testifying in US courts have asked judges to allow them to swear in on the Quran rather than the Bible.

Ramadan. Period of obligatory fasting from dawn to sunset, observed by Muslims during the ninth month of the Islamic year. This month, which ends with Eid al-Fitr, the feast of the breaking of the fast, commemorates the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad. A significant minority of

NBA basketball players are observant Muslims, and the decisions of Hakeem Olajuwon, Shareef Abdur-Rahim, and others to fast during Ramadan have called public attention to the holiday, just as Sandy Koufax's decision, as a Jew, not to pitch in a 1965 World Series game on Yom Kippur focused public attention on that Day of Atonement. It is now traditional for US presidents to send greetings to Muslims and to host fast-breaking dinners at the White House during Ramadan. Travelers, the sick, the elderly, children, and pregnant and nursing women are generally exempt from fasting during Ramadan.

Reform Judaism. One of the three main branches in Judaism—alongside Orthodox and Conservative—and the most liberal. Like liberal Protestantism, Reform Judaism is in part a product of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. It achieved clear expression in the United States in the Pittsburgh Platform (1885), in which Reform rabbis referred to Judaism as "a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason" and accepted as binding only the moral (as opposed to the ritual and dietary) laws of their tradition. Unlike Orthodox Jews, Reform Jews ordain women and worship in vernacular languages. And while Orthodox Jews trace Jewish identity through the mother only, Reform Jews typically view a child as Jewish if either parent was. Reform Judaism is represented in the United States in Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. It is the largest branch of American Judaism, claiming 39 percent of America's religious Jews.

Reformation. Movement in sixteenth-century Europe that intended to reform the Roman Catholic Church but instead gave birth to Protestantism. Sparked in 1517 in Wittenberg, Germany, when Martin Luther published his Ninety-five Theses against indulgences (payments for the remission of sins), the Reformation spread across Europe, producing four types of Protestantism: the Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, and Anabaptist traditions. The key slogans of the Reformation were "justification by grace through faith," "the priesthood of all believers," and *sola scriptura* (Bible alone). Its key impulse was rejection of papal and priestly authority in the name of individual conscience—an impulse that would produce thousands of different Protestant denominations and redraw the map of Europe.

Reformed theology. See Calvinism.

reincarnation. Belief, common among Hindus, that souls take on new bodies after death as part of a never-ending cycle of birth, death, life, and rebirth known as *samsara*. Buddhists also affirm reincarnation, but because they deny the existence of an eternal soul, they typically contend that it is one's consciousness that is reborn. Most of those who affirm reincarnation understand this process to be driven by karma, or the law of actions and their consequences. According to this law, the rebirth you get is the rebirth you deserve. Although reincarnation derives from Asian religions, roughly one-quarter of US Christians believe in it too. However, while Asian religious practitioners typically understand reincarnation to be undesirable—their ultimate goal is to escape from *samsara* (and thus from rebirth)—Americans who affirm reincarnation typically see it as a welcome opportunity to do things in the next life that they could not do in this one.

Religious Right. Religiously inspired political movement, dating from the late 1970s, of conservative Christians groups seeking to revive “family values” and ransom the nation from moral bankruptcy. These groups included the Moral Majority, founded by televangelist Jerry Falwell in 1979, and the Christian Coalition, founded by religious broadcaster Pat Robertson in 1989. The Religious Right's formidable grassroots power derived from widespread antipathy among many evangelicals and fundamentalists to a series of culture shocks delivered in the 1960s and 1970s. These shocks included Supreme Court rulings banning school prayer and devotional Bible reading in the early 1960s, the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion in 1973, and an obscure 1978 IRS ruling that stripped tax-exempt status from Christian schools that discriminated on the basis of race. Together these developments signaled to conservative religious activists that “secular humanism” was becoming America's unofficial religious establishment.

For the most part, the Religious Right focuses its political efforts on bedroom issues such as homosexuality, pornography, and abortion. It works through a vast network of state and local groups, many led by Christian ministers who use their pulpits, membership rolls, and church buses to get out the vote. The Religious Right has been credited with helping to elect presidents from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush. It has also been widely criticized by liberal groups such as Norman Lear's People for the American Way, who contend that its faith-based political activism violates the separation of church and state.

resurrection. Belief that the dead will rise on some future day to stand for final judgment. This doctrine, which foresees the reunion of souls with the bodies lost to them at death, is closely associated with the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic conviction that a person is an indivisible combination of body and soul. Resurrection belief appears in Judaism fairly late—in such apocalyptic texts as 2 Maccabees, written a century before the life of Jesus. It was later adopted and adapted by Christians, for whom the resurrection of Jesus, celebrated on Easter, is a central affirmation. Bodily resurrection is also a Muslim belief. Today Orthodox Jews continue to affirm this doctrine, but many Reform Jews either believe simply in the immortality of the soul or prefer not to speculate about the afterlife. The Apostles' Creed of the Christians affirms “the resurrection of the body,” but Christians disagree about what shape this body will take in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:44 says the “natural body,” which is buried, will become a “spiritual body.”) Belief in the resurrection is closely tied to the tradition of martyrdom, whose logic demands that God mete out rewards and punishments in the afterlife. Like the doctrine of the bodily resurrection, martyrdom is a Jewish development that makes its way into Christianity and Islam.

revivalism. Revivals are Christian worship services that produce mass conversions and intensify the commitments of existing Christians, often through ecstatic sermons and emotional songs. Revivalism, therefore, is the impulse to affirm and produce such revivals. This impulse was most visible in the Great Awakening of the early eighteenth century and the Second Great Awakening of a century later. It also manifested in the great urban revivals of Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham, which drew on many of the “new measures” promoted in the 1830s by the master of American revivalism, Charles Grandison Finney. Although some revivals have proceeded on a Calvinist basis, most have been informed by Arminianism, the view that every human being is free to accept or reject the saving grace offered by Jesus' death upon the cross. Revivals have been most popular among evangelicals and fundamentalists and among Methodist, Baptist, Holiness, and Pentecostal groups. Because revivalism typically appeals to the heart rather than the head, its techniques have drawn fire from Lutherans, Episcopalians, and other confessional Christians who believe that revivals produce believers with little or no real understanding of what they are supposed to believe.

Roman Catholicism. See Catholicism, Roman.

Sabbath. The seventh day of the week, designated by Jews as a day of rest because according to Genesis God worked to create the world for six days and then rested on the seventh. According to the Ten Commandments, work is forbidden on this day, and over time this day of rest also became a day for worship. Jews traditionally observe the Sabbath on Saturday and Christians on Sunday. Seventh-Day Adventists, however, observe a Saturday Sabbath. Blue laws, which restrict activities on Sundays (notably the sale of alcohol), are one example of the enduring force of the Sabbatarian ideal on American culture.

sacraments. See 7 sacraments.

Sadducees. See Pharisees.

Satan. The personification of evil and God's primary antagonist in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Also known as Lucifer and the devil and widely described as a fallen angel, Satan (from the Hebrew word for "adversary") has had a long life in the United States. Witches in seventeenth-century New England were accused of sidling up to him. Rock musicians claimed to have sold their souls to him in exchange for artistic greatness. And he appeared as a character in dozens of feature films and television shows, including *The Exorcist* (1973) and *South Park*. There is even a Church of Satan, founded in San Francisco in 1966 by Anton LaVey (1930–1997), who was also the author of *The Satanic Bible* (1969). Ayatollah Khomeini, the Shiite cleric who led the Iranian Revolution of 1979, famously referred to the United States as "the Great Satan."

Scientology. One of the most successful new religious movements of the twentieth century, founded in 1953 by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard (1911–1986) and outlined in his best seller, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* (1950). Like Buddhism, Scientology seeks to uproot suffering, which is caused according to Scientologists when one's "engrams" (ingrained records of past experiences, including those in past lives) cause one's "reactive mind" to repeat destructive behaviors. Scientologists who are able to accomplish this task are called "Clears." Conservative Christian groups have denounced Scientology as a "cult of greed," but the movement has attracted many prominent celebrities, including actors John Travolta and Tom Cruise.

Scopes Trial. Trial of John Scopes for violating a law forbidding the teaching of evolution in public schools, held in Dayton, Tennessee, in 1925. This "Monkey Trial" featured two famous lawyers: the skeptic Clarence Darrow and the fundamentalist politician William Jennings Bryan. Scopes was convicted, but Darrow trounced Bryan in the court of public opinion, which mercilessly ridiculed fundamentalists as ignorant rubes. Fundamentalists responded to this humiliation by withdrawing from public view for decades, focusing during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s on building their own subculture of Bible schools, seminaries, radio stations, and publishing houses. They reemerged in the late 1970s as a powerful political force, intent on introducing "creationism" to public school students. The Scopes Trial, which served as something of a dress rehearsal for the contemporary culture wars, was fictionalized on Broadway in 1955 and on celluloid in 1960 as *Inherit the Wind*.

Second Coming. Belief that Jesus will return to judge the world at the end of time. Christians have expended considerable efforts calculating just when the Second Coming will occur and reading the signs of the times for evidence of Jesus' impending return. Shakers view their prophetess Ann Lee (1736–1784) as the Second Coming of Jesus, while Bahais attribute this status to Bahau'llah (1817–1892) and Rastafarians to Haile Selassie (1892–1975). In popular parlance the term *second coming* is used to signal both greatness and similitude, as in the oft-repeated claim that the NBA sensation LeBron James is the second coming of Michael Jordan.

Second Great Awakening. A series of revivals that took place throughout the United States during the first few decades of the nineteenth century. The dominant figure here was Charles Grandison Finney, who introduced to American revivalism many controversial "new measures." Whereas Jonathan Edwards, a leader of the Great Awakening of a century earlier, saw a revival as "a surprising work of God," Finney understood it to be a human technique. A "revival is not a miracle," he wrote in his *Lectures on Revivals* (1835), but simply "the right use of the constituted means." In this way Finney and his followers paved the way for contemporary American revivalism.

The effects of the Second Great Awakening are hard to overestimate. It injected ecstasy and emotion into American Protestantism, particularly in frontier camp meetings. It secured the victory of Arminian theology, which accented human free will, over Calvinist theology, which accented

God's sovereignty. It solidified the position of evangelicalism at the center of American religious life. And it motivated Protestants nationwide to work for a wide variety of social reforms in nondenominational organizations such as the American Anti-Slavery Society and the American Temperance Society. Inside these organizations Protestants learned to subordinate their particular theological convictions to the greater moral good of temperance or peace or abolitionism. In this way the Second Great Awakening contributed mightily to the decline of religious literacy in the United States.

Second Vatican Council. The second great council of the Roman Catholic Church (the first was held in 1869–1870), convened in 1962 by Pope John XXIII in an effort to effect an *aggiornamento* (updating) of the church in the modern world. One important outcome of this council, which concluded in 1965 under Pope Paul VI, was a more democratic understanding of the church itself, which was redefined as the entire “people of God” rather than a hierarchy of popes, bishops, and priests. Another outcome was an affirmation of religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Yet another was a greater openness to other forms of Christianity and other religions—an openness that extended to a repudiation of both anti-Semitism and the long-standing dogma that “there is no salvation outside the Church.” In terms of politics, this council condemned the nuclear arms race in the name of peace and supported in the name of justice the right of workers to organize. Its affirmation of “the dignity of the human person” contributed, particularly in Latin America, to the legitimization of liberation theology and its “preferential option for the poor.” Vatican II also called for greater attention to the Bible in private piety, church services, and theology, but there is little evidence that this reorientation made American Catholics more biblically literate. Following this council American Catholics applied the *aggiornamento* dictum to catechesis, by dropping rote memorization of the Baltimore Catechism in CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) classes and introducing more experiential approaches to faith, including an emphasis on social service. In terms of the daily lives of American Catholics, the key outcomes were a lifting of the ban on eating meat on Fridays and the decision to allow Mass to be celebrated in vernacular languages rather than Latin only.

secular humanism. More an epithet of the Religious Right than a self-designation, secular humanism refers to the view that human beings can get along just fine without God. As such, it stands in stark opposition to

the Judeo-Christian tradition, both theologically (because it does not affirm God) and morally (because it denies God-given moral absolutes). In *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1961), Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black referred in a footnote to “Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism” as “religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God.” Pointing to this dictum, some conservative Christians and Jews have argued that secular humanism, which they view as the villain behind America's moral degradation, has replaced Christianity (or Judeo-Christianity) as the de facto religion of America's public schools. In the early 1990s a science teacher in California brought a federal lawsuit claiming that his school district, by insisting that he teach evolution, was unconstitutionally forcing him to teach the “religion” of secular humanism. “We reject this claim,” wrote the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, “because neither the Supreme Court, nor this circuit, has ever held that evolutionism or secular humanism are ‘religions’ for Establishment Clause purposes.” Religion or not, this viewpoint has its supporters, who are represented by the Council for Secular Humanism.

separation of church and state. See First Amendment.

Sermon on the Mount. Christianity's most famous sermon, delivered by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. It begins with the Beatitudes (from the Latin word *beatus*, meaning “blessed”), starting in Matthew 5:3 with “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”—a line that takes on a more socioeconomic cast in Luke 6:20 as “Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” The Sermon on the Mount also includes the most popular Christian prayer, the Lord's Prayer, as well as the Golden Rule, which many believe to be Jesus' central moral teaching. President George W. Bush referred to the Sermon on the Mount in his January 2005 inaugural address, and the *Congressional Record* contains hundreds of distinct references to this sermon over the last two decades.

Serpent. See Garden of Eden.

Seven Deadly Sins. See 7 deadly sins.

seven sacraments. See 7 sacraments.

Seventh-Day Adventism. Protestant group rooted in the teachings of William Miller (1782–1849), who predicted the end of the world and the

Second Coming of Jesus on various dates in 1843 and 1844. When Jesus did not return and the world did not end, many Adventists lost their faith. Those who did not formed a variety of splinter groups. The largest was led by Ellen Gould White (1827–1915), who learned in a vision that Jesus' second advent had been delayed because believers were not keeping the Sabbath. Seventh-Day Adventists, as her followers are now called, distinguish themselves from other Protestants by their belief that the Second Coming is imminent, by their observation of the Sabbath on Saturday instead of Sunday, and by their strict diet (which eschews meat, alcohol, coffee, and tobacco). The group claims just under a million members in the United States and 10 million worldwide.

Like Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists have played a role in First Amendment jurisprudence far out of proportion to their numbers. Their most important legal case, *Sherbert v. Verner* (1963), concerned unemployment benefits for an Adventist dismissed from her job because she refused to work on Saturdays. In this case, which the Adventist won, the Supreme Court promulgated its "Sherbert Test," which governed free exercise cases from 1963 until a much narrower test was promulgated in *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990).

Shahadah. See 5 Pillars of Islam.

Shariah. This term refers in Arabic to a path to water worn by camels. So *Shariah* is the Islamic path—the body of divinely inspired laws for individual and social life rooted in the Quran and the hadith. Muslims distinguish between *Shariah* and *fiqh*. The former term refers to divine law proper. The latter refers to jurisprudence, or human efforts to interpret that law, and is much more open to debate. Different Shiite groups recognize different schools of legal interpretation. Sunnis recognize four: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali. The Hanbali school, which currently predominates in Saudi Arabia and the wider Arabian Peninsula, is often described as the most conservative since it favors literal interpretation of the Quran.

Shiite Islam. Along with Sunni Islam, one of the two main divisions in the Muslim tradition, and the smaller of the two. After the death of Muhammad in 632, the Muslim community split over the question of succession. One party, which became the Sunni majority, determined his successors by election, referring to them as caliphs. Another party insisted that Muhammad's successors be drawn from his family. They followed

Muhammad's son-in-law Ali, referring to him as their imam and calling themselves Shiites or Shias (lit. "partisans" of Ali). Unlike Sunnis, who invest only political authority in their caliphs (leaving spiritual authority in the Muslim community as a whole), Shiites invest both political and spiritual authority in their imams. They view as authoritative not only the Quran and the hadith but also the teachings of their imams, whom they see as intercessors between themselves and Allah. Shiites disagree on how many imams followed Ali, but the largest Shiite faction affirms a line of twelve and believes that the final imam, who went into hiding, will return at the end of time to restore peace and justice on earth. One key moment in Shiite history was the murder at Karbala in 680 of Husayn, Muhammad's grandson and the third Shiite imam. This event, remembered every year by Shiites in the festival of Muharram, has made Shiites more receptive to the tradition of martyrdom than their Sunni counterparts. Shiism is the most popular form of Islam in Iran and Iraq, and there are large Shiite populations in Pakistan, India, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, Syria, and Afghanistan. Roughly 15 percent of the world's Muslims are Shiites.

shirk. See *tawhid*.

Sikhism. Religious tradition founded by Guru Nanak (1469–1538) in the Punjab region of northwestern India. The term *Sikh* means "learner" or "disciple," so Sikhs are disciples of the one God and those who learn from its gurus. Sikhs refer to God as Sat Guru ("True Teacher") and respect ten gurus. They also refer to their scripture, the Adi Granth, as a guru of sorts—Guru Granth Sahib—and view both its language (Punjabi) and its script (Gurmukhi) as sacred. Under Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), their tenth guru, Sikhs established a community of committed believers called the Khalsa ("The Pure"). Men in this group practice the Five Ks, wearing five symbols of Sikh belief.

Sikhism emerged out of a culture steeped in both Hinduism and Islam, and early Sikhs attempted to reconcile the two, in part by focusing on heartfelt devotion to God rather than rites and doctrines. "There is no Hindu and no Muslim, so whose path shall I follow?" asked Guru Nanak. "I shall follow the path of God." Like Muslims, Sikhs are strict monotheists who emphasize divine sovereignty. They reject the view that God incarnates in human form, believing instead in a formless God that can be known through singing and meditation. Sikhs too have a sacred center, in this case the Golden Temple of Amritsar, India. Like Hindus, Sikhs believe in karma and reincarnation.

Although Sikhs have been coming to the United States for roughly a century, they were largely invisible until after 9/11, when many Sikh leaders were invited to participate in interfaith services. Shortly after September 11, 2001, a Sikh man named Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot and killed in Mesa, Arizona, by a bigot who thought the man's turban marked him as a Muslim. Since that time Sikhs have worked to educate Americans about the differences between Sikhism and Islam. Sikhism received more positive recognition after Manmohan Singh was sworn in as the first Sikh prime minister of India in 2004. There are currently roughly 20 million Sikhs worldwide (the vast majority of them in the Punjab in India) and roughly 250,000 in the United States.

Social Gospel. Protestant theological movement that sees sin and salvation as social and seeks to apply Jesus' teachings to socioeconomic problems. Inspired by Old Testament prophets and led by Baptist theologian Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918), the Social Gospel movement emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its goal was to ameliorate the social ills brought on by capitalism, industrialization, and urbanization. Leaders repeatedly asked themselves, "What would Jesus do?"—a query popularized in Charles Sheldon's 1897 novel *In His Steps*. In the early twentieth century the Social Gospel helped to precipitate the fundamentalist/modernist controversy, which pitted those who emphasized helping the poor here and now against those who emphasized helping sinners gain eternal life. This movement also set the stage for the New Deal, which made many of the Social Gospelers' proposals official US government policy. Today many Democrats seeking to rediscover the religious roots of progressive politics look back for inspiration to the writings of Rauschenbusch and other Social Gospel leaders. Meanwhile, the Social Gospel can be found in any contemporary congregation—Christian or otherwise—that uses its resources to feed the poor or shelter the homeless.

Sodom and Gomorrah. Cities destroyed by God for their sinfulness. In Genesis 18 and 19 people from Sodom and Gomorrah demand that Lot give over two angels staying with him so that they might "know" them. After Lot refuses, these people attack his home but are thwarted by God, who strikes them blind and destroys their cities. Many Christians have understood this story as a condemnation of homosexuality; in fact, the term *sodomy* derives from this text. But others argue that the theme here is hospitality to strangers rather than gay sex. This narrative has been

widely invoked in recent debates about homosexuality in general and gay marriage in particular. Ironically, a significant minority of Americans believe that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.

stations of the cross. Fourteen images, found in some Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, depicting the Passion of Jesus, intended as devotional aids for Christians seeking to walk with Jesus through his last hours. These stations are: Jesus is tried and condemned to death; he picks up the cross; he falls; he meets his mother; Simon of Cyrene helps him carry the cross; Veronica wipes his face; he falls again; he speaks to the women of Jerusalem; he falls a third time; he is stripped of his clothes; he is nailed to the cross; he dies; his body is taken off the cross; his corpse is laid in a tomb. Mel Gibson structured his movie *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) on the stations of the cross—a fact lost on Protestants (and Catholics) unfamiliar with this tradition.

Sunni Islam. Along with Shiite Islam, one of two main divisions in the Muslim tradition, and the larger of the two. Sunnis get their name from *sunna* ("custom" or "tradition" in Arabic), which refers to the religious and ethical model set by Muhammad. Sunni Muslims, therefore, are those who adhere strictly to the traditions of the Quran and the exemplary sayings and actions of Muhammad—"the way of the prophet"—as recorded in the hadith. Sunnis split from Shiites after Muhammad's death, when Sunnis said that the prophet's successor should be elected by the *ummah*, or Muslim community, rather than coming (as Shiites insisted) from Muhammad's bloodline. Sunnis invest less authority in their leaders than do Shiites. They view Shiite prayers uttered in the name of Ali or Husayn or other imams as violations of the principle of divine oneness (*tauhid*). Roughly 85 percent of the world's Muslims are Sunnis. Countries where Sunni Islam predominates include Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey.

Taliban. Islamic militants, many of them students—*talib* means "student" in Arabic—who were trained in *madrasas* (Islamic schools) in Pakistani refugee camps during the Russo-Afghan war. Led by Mullah Mohammad Omar (b. 1959), the Taliban took control of much of Afghanistan in 1994, running it as a theocratic state with rigid gender segregation, severe restrictions on female schooling, strict punishments (stoning for adultery and amputations for theft), and bans on television, music, and sports. In 2001 the Taliban destroyed two giant Buddhas carved in

the third century CE into the cliffs in Afghanistan's Bamiyan valley. Because the Taliban had provided shelter to Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network, they were attacked and defeated by American and other forces after 9/11. During the Taliban's short reign only three of the world's fifty-three Muslim-majority countries officially recognized their government.

Tanakh. See Bible.

Tao Te Ching. See Taoism.

Taoism. Alongside Buddhism and Confucianism, one of the three "Great Teachings" of China. Taoism (also spelled "Daoism") began with Lao Tzu (570–490 BCE), the author of the Tao Te Ching ("The Classic of the Way and Its Power"), which has seen more translations in the United States than any scripture other than the Bible. Taoism was later advanced by Chuang Tzu (370–290 BCE), who published a Taoist classic that bears his name. These early Taoists criticized Confucianism as a tradition of meaningless etiquette, empty ritual, and hyperformality. They commended instead a way of self-cultivation that emphasized naturalness, spontaneity, and freedom. Their ideal human being hungered after intuitive wisdom rather than the book learning of the Confucian sage. He acted not so much in keeping with civilization as in accordance with the Tao, which is variously translated as "The Way," "Ultimate Reality," or "The Source." A later form of Taoism, called "religious Taoism" (to distinguish it from the "philosophical Taoism" of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu), seeks health and physical immortality through meditation techniques and dietary practices.

Taoism first came to the United States with Chinese immigrants in the 1840s, and Taoist temples were built in California as early as the 1850s. This tradition owes much of its current popularity, however, to a vast network of martial arts academies, which inculcate in Americans not only the skills of karate or tai chi but also such Taoist concepts as *yin/yang* (complementarity of opposites), *qi* (vital energy), and *wu-wei* (nonaction). Taoism has also been popularized via books such as *The Tao of Pooh* (1983) and television shows such as *The Simpsons*, where the precocious daughter, Lisa, is known to utter Taoist maxims.

tawhid. Arabic for the oneness and uniqueness of God. Expressed in the first half of the Muslim creed the *Shahadah*—"There is no god but

God . . ."—*tawhid* is the central teaching of Islam and of the Quran. This doctrine of radical monotheism denies not only atheism and polytheism but also the Christian Trinity, which Muslims condemn as *shirk*, or ascribing partners to God. *Tawhid* has been used throughout Islamic history as a call for unity among the world's Muslims. It has been particularly stressed by Wahhabis, who denounce popular devotions to saints as violations of *tawhid*.

Ten Commandments. See 10 Commandments.

Torah. This term ("teaching" in Hebrew) refers most broadly to Jewish Law, both oral and written. More narrowly, it refers to the Hebrew Bible, which Jews call the Tanakh. More narrowly still, it refers to the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, and to the synagogue scrolls on which these holy books are written. The most famous effort to distill the Torah down to one simple formulation comes from the famed rabbi Hillel, a rough contemporary of Jesus. When asked to summarize the Torah while standing on one leg, Hillel answered: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. Go and study it."

Tower of Babel. Hebrew Bible story about prideful people who try to build a tower to heaven. The story, which appears in Genesis 11, ends when God thwarts these people's arrogance (and their construction project) by causing them to speak many different languages. Unable to communicate, they abandon their tower and scatter across the globe, carrying their languages with them. The name of the tower derives from two Hebrew words—*Babel* or Babylon and *balal* or confuse—and it contributed to English the word *babble*. Cultural conservatives who insist that English should be the only official language of the United States use this story to argue that a nation divided against itself linguistically cannot stand. If we start singing the national anthem in Spanish, this argument goes, we will soon devolve into a multiculturalist Babel.

Trinity. The Christian doctrine that the one God exists in a community of three divine persons—the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit—who share one divine substance. Although Christians call themselves monotheists, some outsiders see at least a hint of polytheism in this belief. (As one author put it, the persons of the Trinity are "triplets perched on the fence between polytheism and monotheism."²⁷⁰) Unitarianism, which

came to the United States from England in the late eighteenth century, rejects Trinitarianism on the grounds that this doctrine, which was first codified in the Council of Constantinople in 381, cannot be found in the Bible.

Unitarianism. Unitarians get their name from their rejection of the divinity of Jesus and therefore the doctrine of the Trinity—there is one God, not three, they argue—but the most distinctive teaching of this nineteenth-century offshoot from Congregationalism is the belief that human beings are born good. Unitarianism is now institutionalized in the United States in the Unitarian Universalist Association, America's most theologically and politically liberal denomination. Some Muslims refer to Wahhabis as Unitarians because of their emphasis on the unity of God (*tawhid*).

Upanishads. Hindu scriptures, dating to the first millennium BCE, containing philosophical and theological reflections on divinity, the soul, karma, and reincarnation. According to the Upanishads, human beings can achieve *moksha*, or liberation from the cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth, by realizing that Atman (the essence of the human soul) is the same as Brahman (Ultimate Reality).

Vatican II. See Second Vatican Council.

Vedas. The oldest and most authoritative Hindu scriptures, regarded as *shruti* (that which is heard: revelation), as opposed to *smṛti* (that which is remembered: tradition). Most narrowly, the term *Vedas* (from the Sanskrit for "knowledge") refers to four collections of hymns, dating as early as the second millennium BCE and used in ancient Indian sacrificial rituals: the Rig Veda, the Sama Veda, the Yajur Veda, and the Atharva Veda. More broadly, the Vedas refer to four types of sacred literature: the four Vedas just mentioned; the Brahmanas, or priestly commentaries on these hymns; the Aranyakas, meaning "forest books" or esoteric teachings; and the Upanishads, or philosophical and mystical treatises. The first major Hindu organization in the United States, the Vedanta Society, took its name from the Vedas; *Vedanta* means "the end of the Vedas."

virgin birth. Christian teaching that Jesus was conceived by Mary without a human father. The New Testament Gospels refer to Mary becoming pregnant without having sexual intercourse with her husband, Joseph,

and the Apostles' Creed refers to Jesus being "conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit" and "born of the Virgin Mary." In addition to affirming Mary's virginity at Jesus' conception and birth, some Christians believe that Mary was a virgin her entire life. The doctrine of the virgin birth, which is accepted by Muslims as well as Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox Christians, should not be confused with the Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception, which states that Mary herself was born without sin.

Vishnu. The most popular Hindu deity. Vishnu is said to have ten different incarnations, including the Buddha. He appears as Rama and Krishna, respectively, in the Hindu epics the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Images of these incarnations have on occasion become a matter of public controversy in the United States. The album cover for *Axis: Bold as Love* (1967), which depicted Jimi Hendrix as a multiarmed Hindu deity, failed to cause a stir, but when the rock band Aerosmith released a CD in 1997 with a cover image of Krishna with breasts, many Hindus cried foul. American Hindus Against Defamation, a group modeled after the Anti-Defamation League, protested, and Sony/Columbia (Aerosmith's label) responded by publicly apologizing and changing the cover art.

Wahhabism. Ultraconservative Sunni Muslim revitalization movement that aims to reverse the moral decline of the Muslim world by returning to the pure Islam of the Quran and Muhammad. Opponents gave Wahhabis their name, which derives from founder Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), a scholar of the Sunnis' conservative Hanbali school. But Wahhabis often refer to themselves either as *Muwahhidun* (upholders of divine unity) or as Salafis, a broader but closely related school that denounces as apostates Muslims who deviate from the beliefs and practices of the first three generations of Muslims (the righteous "predecessors": *Salaf*). Wahhabism, which has been compared with both Unitarianism and Puritanism, rejects as corruptions of the pure faith virtually all medieval and modern accretions to Islam, including popular devotions to saints and Sufi mysticism. Wahhabis are particularly zealous about strict adherence to Shariah, or Islamic law. They reject the separation of church and state, and they regard Muslims who do not accept their views as heretics. This movement, which dates to the 1740s in Arabia, won the support of the Bedouin chief Muhammad ibn Saud in 1747 and became dominant in modern-day Saudi Arabia (though many Wahhabis criticized the House of Saud when it opened the nation up to Western influences after the discovery of oil in the 1930s). In recent decades

Wahhabism spread to Afghanistan under the Taliban regime and, thanks to an aggressive mosque-building program funded by Saudis, into mosques in Europe and the United States. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda are both influenced by Wahhabism, but the greater influence on each seems to be the thought of the Egyptian radical Sayyid Qutb.

yin/yang. Two opposite yet complementary forces in the cosmos, important in Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese popular religion. These terms originally referred to the shady and sunny sides of a mountain, respectively. Yin is dark, passive, female, cool. Yang is bright, active, male, warm. The ancient Chinese art of feng shui ("the way of wind and water"), popularized in the United States in the late twentieth century, relies on the complementarity of yin and yang to create harmonious spaces for living and working.

yoga. Although *yoga* has in recent years come to refer to India-derived body postures and stretching exercises, this Sanskrit term originally meant "discipline." In Hinduism (from which yoga derives), there are many yogas, including the discipline of knowledge (*jnana* yoga) and the discipline of devotion (*bhakti* yoga). The contemporary craze for yoga as exercise derives from *batha* yoga or the discipline of force, which was itself originally a mode of *raja* yoga (the discipline of royalty). Its key elements, which go back thousands of years in India, are bodily postures (*asana*) and breath control (*pranayama*). Its ultimate aim is nothing less than to "yoke"—the term *yoga* is related to the English word *yoke*—one's true self (Atman) with Ultimate Reality (Brahman). In other words, classic yogis did not separate yogic techniques from Hindu religion and philosophy.

Americans' interest in yoga dates to the arrival of Swami Vivekananda, the first Hindu missionary to the United States, at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. But neither Vivekananda nor the Vedanta Society that he founded one year later emphasized what we now know as yoga. That practice first took off in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, when such teachers as Indra Devi took the Hinduism out of it, stressing physical fitness and mental health instead. Yoga went mainstream in the 1990s, when pop stars such as Sting became associated with it. In 1999 Madonna won a Grammy for her *Ray of Light* CD, which included a Sanskrit track praising Patanjali, the ancient author of the *Yoga Sutras*. In 2001 *Time* magazine put the yoga craze on its cover, as did the *New Yorker* two years later. Today secularized forms of yoga, severed almost entirely from its Hindu roots, are offered in many health clubs,

university gyms, and even churches. A Christian version of yoga, known as PraiseMoves, is popular among evangelicals.

Zen. The Japanese term *Zen* derives from the Sanskrit term *dhyana*, meaning meditation. So Zen is a meditation school of Buddhism. More specifically, it is a Mahayana Buddhist school that uses various techniques to attain *satori* (enlightenment). It was popularized in the United States by the Zen layman D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) and by Jack Kerouac and other members of the Beat generation, who together helped to kick off a Zen vogue in 1950s America. The popularity of Robert Pirsig's best-seller, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) prompted authors to write hundreds of "Zen and" titles—from *Zen and the Art of Poker* to *Zen and the Art of Happiness*.

Zionism. Movement to create a Jewish nation in the land of Zion, namely Israel/Palestine. This movement, rooted in the Jewish hope for a messiah who would fulfill God's promise of a land for Abraham's descendants, dates to the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE and the subsequent scattering of the Jews into the diaspora. It took political form in 1897 when Theodor Herzl convened in Basel, Switzerland, the First Zionist Congress, which aimed to create "for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law." Zionism was initially opposed on the right by Orthodox Jews who thought that this task belonged to God alone and on the left by Reform Jews who did not want to be accused of having mixed loyalties to their homelands. Following the Holocaust, however, a new consensus emerged among Jews and non-Jews alike for a Jewish state, which became a reality in 1948. Today some "Christian Zionists" support the state of Israel because of their belief that the New Testament book of Revelation describes a Jewish state as a prerequisite for the Second Coming of Jesus.