

- words to the point in their Q & A book.
5. After 5 minutes, ask the students to rotate the chart paper clockwise to another group. Each group should have the chart paper from another group in front of them now.
  6. The new group has to make sure that all the key points have been written down around the circle. They will need to refer to the book and read the point the previous group read. Add anything that is missing to the chart. (5 mins)
  7. Rotate the chart paper clockwise again. The job for this next group is to pick out the key ideas and write it neatly, in point form, in the center circle. They should not refer to the book. Give them 5 minutes to do this.
  8. The chart paper rotates clockwise again. It will now be read by the fourth group. This group will read everything that's there, and agree on what's been written in the center. They may add or edit. (5 mins)
  9. Rotate the chart paper to the next group. Each group selects one person to read aloud what is in the circle, then puts the chart paper up on the wall in class.

At the end of the exercise, every group will have read all the 5 points about the reliability and divine authority of the Bible, as well as thought about the key ideas within each point.

## REFLECTION & PRAYER



*In a multicultural society, it is very difficult to insist that we have the truth. Those who proclaim their message in this way are often labeled "religious fundamentalists." The term is used in a negative way. However, we must hold on to the truth that God teaches us through His Holy Spirit. Let us now pray and ask the Holy Spirit to grant us the courage to embrace the truth despite all external pressure within society. Let us pray.*

## Lesson 12

# Buddhism and Scientology

### Listed Scriptures

Mt 15 & 16; Gal 1:1-12, 3-5

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To learn about other faiths and understand the differences between their beliefs and ours.

### Memory Verse

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." (Col 1:15-16)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Josh 24; Jer 2, 10, 18:1-17, 19

## BIBLE BACKGROUND



Buddhism is based on the teachings of Buddha. The term "Buddha" was derived from the Sanskrit language—*budh* means to "awaken." Buddha means "awakened" or "enlightened one."

The Buddha was a name given to Siddhartha Gautama. Scholars agree that he was born in Kapilavastu in Nepal near the Indian border. However, scholars disagree about the date of his birth, which was either around 448-368 or 563-483 BC. Siddhartha was born a prince in the kingdom of the Sakyas. His father, Suddhodana, and his mother, Mahamaya, ruled an area called Magadha. Siddhartha was reported to have married a young princess named Yasodhara at the age of sixteen, and to have had a son called Rahula.

Siddhartha lived a very sheltered life. He was shielded from all knowledge of suffering and death that took place outside the palace walls. However, he became restless and one day managed to take a trip outside his palace. While out there, he saw four things which changed his life: a sick person, an old person, a corpse, and an acetic. When Siddhartha asked his charioteer whether he, a prince, could ever be sick, grow old or die, he was amazed to be told that these were a part of life. Then he found out that the acetic was trying to understand the impermanence and suffering of life.

Siddhartha reflected on what he saw and decided that he wanted a happiness and peace that were not dependent on youth and wealth. One night, he left his sleeping wife and son in the care of his family, said goodbye to his charioteer, cut off his own black hair with his sword, and wandered away to become an acetic. He spent the next few years around the valley of the Ganges. He had two meditation teachers to help him, but he felt that he did not find his goal. He fasted and lived a life of deprivation, yet did not find peace. One day, as he sat under a banyan tree, he resolved to sit in meditation and not leave until he attained enlightenment. During this time, he was apparently tempted and experienced an ordeal with Mara the evil one. Finally, Siddhartha received Enlightenment. He was 35 at the time.

Like Siddhartha Gautama, the believers of Scientology also aim to raise humankind to a higher level of consciousness.

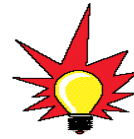
Scientology was founded by Lafayette Ronald Hubbard. Hubbard was born in Tilden, Nebraska, on March 13, 1911. He attended Woodward Preparatory School and George Washington University. At 16, he began to travel extensively, exploring, observing and writing down his ideas. The culmination of these travels and writings is a philosophy and science he called "Dianetics," which means "through thought of mind."

Hubbard published his ideas in a book in 1950, entitled *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. It became a bestseller. In 1951, he published *Science of Survival*, which contained his findings on the spirit of man. This contained the foundation of the religion of Scientology.

The first church of Scientology was founded in 1954 by a zealous group of followers in Los Angeles. In 1955, Hubbard became the executive director of the Founding Church in Washington. A few years later, he moved his base to East Grinstead in England. In 1966 he resigned his position as director and devoted his time to writing and research. He later returned to his first love, the writing of sci-

ence fiction. He published novels such as *Battlefield Earth: A Saga of the Year 3000*, followed by the ten-volume *Mission Earth*. Hubbard died in 1986. In all, he published over 589 works, delivered over 4000 lectures, and spread the science of Dianetics to every continent.

## W A R M U P



We will play a very old children's game—pin the tail! You will need to draw an animal that has a tail: a pig, horse, donkey—anything you fancy!! Draw the animal with its tail. Then draw the tail separately with a pin to stick it to the animal. Put the picture of the animal up on the board.

You need four volunteers and two blindfolds. Ask for one pair of volunteers, and blindfold one partner. The student who is blindfolded will be the one to pin the tail on the picture. The other student (not blindfolded), will guide the blindfolded student by giving directions so the tail gets pinned on to the correct part of the animal.

Ask the other two students and this time, blindfold both of them. One of them will be the guide and the other will pin the tail onto the animal. Give them some time to try and get this right.

After the game, discuss what the volunteers did with the class. It was obviously ridiculous to expect two blindfolded students to try and guide each other. Neither could see. Tell the students that some so-called religious "enlightenment" experiences are like that. When people try to find the truth, whether they call it enlightenment or something else, they need guidance to reach that truth. God provides this guidance through His words and the Holy Spirit. Only God can help us find the way to Him. Without His guidance, we are merely groping about in the dark, just as the second pair of volunteers was. Founders of religions who claim that they arrived at such enlightenment through deep thought and meditation only perceive the truth through human eyes. They can never reach God's enlightenment.



## Part 1 Buddhism

### A. Teachings of the Buddha

When Siddhartha reached enlightenment, or “nirvana,” he adopted a balanced form of discipline called the Middle Path. Both extremes of self-denial and self-indulgence are to be avoided. He became known as the Buddha. His first sermon was at the deer park near Benares. The sermon at Benares was presented as a diagnosis on the impermanence of life, and the unsatisfactory condition of people. It claimed that the cure was a life of morality, meditation and wisdom. This first sermon also included teachings on the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism are:

- a. Duhkha, the universal fact of suffering;
- b. Samudaya, the cause of suffering;
- c. Nirodha, the defeat of suffering; and
- d. Magga, the way of overcoming suffering.

The way of overcoming suffering can be found through the Noble Eightfold Path:

- a. Right understanding (wisdom): This involves seeing life as it is, in all its transient and unsatisfactory nature.
- b. Right thought (wisdom): Here one acknowledges the power of one’s mind, which should be filled with thoughts of loving-kindness and compassion.
- c. Right speech (morality): Such speech ranges from not telling lies to not gossiping.
- d. Right action (morality): Such action is not taking life, stealing or indulging in sexual misconduct.
- e. Right livelihood (morality): One must be careful to have a job that does not involve one in destroying life or hurting people.
- f. Right effort (meditation): This is needed to think about what one says and does.
- g. Right awareness (meditation): One must be wholly alert or awake in life.
- h. Right concentration (meditation): With this one achieves a deeper level of attentiveness, characterized by peace and calm.

Buddhists believe that the practice of this spiritual path will lead to truth or *dharma*, enabling people to achieve nirvana. For Buddhists, not even gods are immortal. They are not the creators, although they are considered higher beings. Only the state of enlightenment and nirvana lasts forever.

While historians see Siddhartha Gautama as the founder of Buddhism, Buddhists see him in a different light. To them, he is merely the one who discovered *dharma*, the truth about the way life is. Life is unsatisfactory as long as people cling on to their self-absorption. When one is able to lose oneself in love, compassion and sympathetic joy, then eternal peace can be found. Hence, Buddhists believe that the truth, or *dharma*, is the foundation of Buddhism, not the person named Gautama.

Siddhartha Gautama died after a long life of teaching. After his death, the Buddhist community consisted of two groups: those who continued to lead ordinary lives with jobs and families, and those who gave up everything to meditate and teach dharma. The latter group consisted of monks and nuns. The word Sangha is used for an assembly of monks and nuns. The householders offer the Sangha food, clothes and somewhere to live. They even thank the monks for this opportunity. This is because the householders hope to be like them in another reincarnation and achieve nirvana. Although it is possible for anyone to reach that state, it is extremely difficult for householders because they are distracted by their jobs and families.



### B. Branches of Buddhism

Within Buddhism there are two main schools of thought and practice. One is the Theravada-Hinayana, or “small vehicle” also known as the “school of the elders (Theras).” This is the original line of teachings. The larger group is called the Mahayana, or “great vehicle.” The Theravada is considered more orthodox, while the Mahayana is a more reformed teaching that developed later.



## Part 2 Scientology

The Church of Scientology was formally established in the United States in 1954. It is considered a religio-scientific movement that has generated controversy and even extreme anger. The core of the movement is based on a system of psychology and the way the mind works. Its aim is for humanity to evolve, indi-

vidually and collectively as a society, to a higher state of being. According to L. Ron Hubbard, the objectives of Scientology are to create a “civilization without insanity, without criminals, and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where Man is free to rise to greater heights.” The faith of the religion lies in man, and the teaching is concerned with showing man how to set himself free. The route to freedom lies in knowledge, in knowing how to know. The purpose in life is to know yourself, and then to find greater meaning in your existence.

The word “engram” is used by Scientologists to mean a memory trace that is supposed to be a permanent change in the brain. It accounts for the existence of a memory that can only be found in the subconscious, but can be brought into consciousness when triggered by new experiences. New experiences are supplied by what is known as an “audit.” The audit is conducted by an auditor in a one-on-one session. The auditor confronts the engram in order to bring it to the surface and clear, or free, the potential convert’s mind to it. The purpose is to free an individual’s mind of engrams and allow the devotees to achieve improved health and outlook.

The movement appoints its own ministers who perform the same duties as ministers of other religions. A sermon may be given at weekly services that address the idea that a person is a spiritual being. Weddings and christenings are celebrated with formal ceremonies, and death is marked by funeral rites. An escalating fee structure for services rendered is strictly applied.

The Church of Scientology and its officers have had many private lawsuits brought against it. Government prosecutions have been laid for fraud, tax evasion, financial mismanagement, and conspiracy to steal government documents. Former members testified that Hubbard was guilty of using a tax-exempt church status to build a thriving, profitable business.

### C H E C K   F O R   U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

Read the following passages: John 4:13; 6:32–35, 51; 11:25–26; 14:6; 15:1–4. What is Jesus Christ telling us about how we can attain the truth and reach eternal life?

2

Consider the teachings of Buddhism and Scientology. What are they teaching that is contrary to what Jesus Christ taught us?



### *The Holy Bible*

Use the Q & A book from last week. This time, use pages 36–41.

Divide the students into groups of 5. Each student should be assigned one of the following sections to read: 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.11. Give them 10 minutes to read their section and summarize the key points. Then each person must share what they have with others in their group.

Now that the students have read most of this chapter in the book regarding the Holy Bible, discuss how they can use this information when they speak to friends from other faiths. They may refer to any of the faiths covered in this text.

### R E F L E C T I O N   &   P R A Y E R



*The two religions we learned about today show us how easily humans can be misled. Even with the best intentions, people cannot achieve spiritual understanding that reaches the truth about God. Only through God can we arrive at true answers. We need to ask God to show us the truth through His Holy Spirit. Let us pray.*