

This week, Pastor Andy continued the series "Christianity and World Religions" with Part 2 on Hinduism. The Hindi faith recognizes one god named Brahman. The followers believe that humanity is born into ignorance, which results in bad decisions and suffering. A person must then try to achieve salvation by doing good deeds, or "Dharma," which will increase their good karma. Salvation results from a perfect life, which is why a person reincarnates until he/she achieves perfection.

The differences between Hinduism and Christianity start with their views of God. In Hinduism, god is in everything and cannot be known personally. A close relationship with god is only possible for a select few. In Christianity, God is distinct from creation and can be known so personally that He is referred to as "Father." In Hinduism, a person's soul is not distinct but rather a part of the greater divine. In Christianity, however, the soul of each person is uniquely distinct from God.

In Hinduism, each person is responsible provides his or her own salvation by living a perfect life. In Christianity, salvation is a gift from God and provided by God's son Jesus. The follower of Hinduism is able to find life's answers within him or herself, but in Christianity, the answer is in Christ's power, which is what the Bible refers to in Romans 8 when it talks about being ruled by Christ's spirit and not your own sinful self.

Good deeds in Hinduism are essential to achieving salvation as the person passes through the reincarnation process. However, in Christianity, although good deeds occur, they are not essential for salvation. An example of this occurs in the story of the two thieves who were crucified along with Jesus. While one thief did not believe in Jesus, the other believed in Him just before he died. That belief was enough to gain the thief access to the Kingdom.

Pastor Andy concluded his message with the call that Vineyard Community Church be the type of church to look for opportunities to build bridges with people of other beliefs. For example, if you look at the following Bible scripture and substitute the words "good karma" for "goodness" or "sinless," and "bad karma" for "sin," you will find bridges from which to share your faith with others. The scripture says, "For God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out...for God took the sinless Christ and poured into Him our sins. Then in exchange, He poured God's goodness into us!" 2 Corinthians 5:19, 21 (LB).

You don't r to travel far to do missionary work. You can be a missionary within your local area. Do you see any bridges that you can build upon to share your faith with others?