


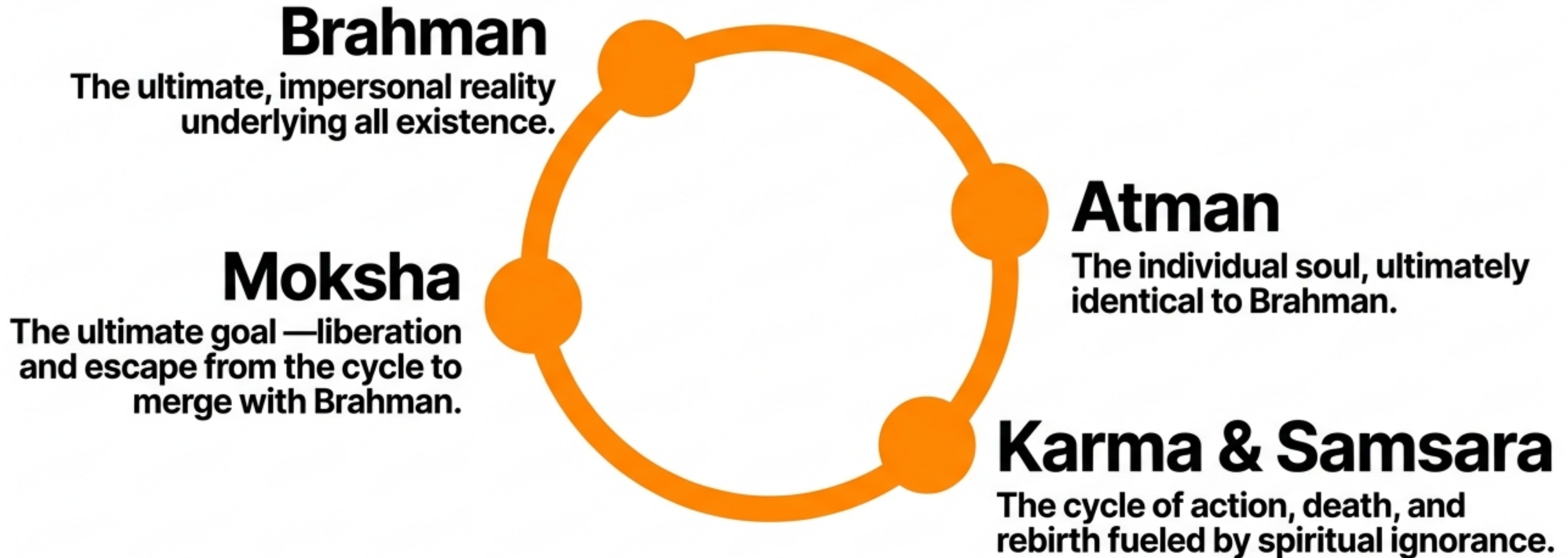
# World Religions: Building Bridges to the Unreached

## Lesson 13 — Hinduism, Buddhism, and Secularism

A decorative graphic consisting of a thick red cross and a grey wavy line that curves around the cross.

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” — 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV)*

# The Search for Liberation: Understanding Hinduism



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**1.2 billion adherents globally, primarily in India and Nepal.**

# The Gospel Contrast: Impersonal Force vs. Personal Creator

 <b>The Hindu Worldview</b>	 <b>The Biblical Worldview</b>
<b>God:</b> An impersonal ultimate reality.	<b>God:</b> A personal Creator who loves, speaks, and acts.
<b>Humanity:</b> Ultimately divine, but trapped by ignorance.	<b>Humanity:</b> Created by God, fallen through sin, needing redemption.
<b>Salvation:</b> Self-realization through various paths (Karma, Jnana, Bhakti).	<b>Salvation:</b> A free gift of grace through Jesus Christ alone.
<b>History:</b> Cyclical existence.	<b>History:</b> Linear, anchored in the historical, bodily resurrection.

# The Witnessing Bridge: Redirecting Devotion

**Bhakti (Devotion to  
personal deities)**

**Devotion to the  
Living Jesus**

**Start with the Personal:** Introduce a God who knows them by name, rather than an impersonal force.

**Emphasize Divine Action:** Highlight a God who enters human history in person to save, rather than demanding human self-realization.

**Redirect the Heart:** Many Hindus already practice deep devotion. This instinct can be lovingly redirected toward the grace, forgiveness, and relationship offered by Jesus Christ.

# The Search for Peace: Understanding Buddhism

**Nirvana** – The ultimate goal: the extinction of craving and individual existence.

**The 8-Fold Path** – The ethical and mental discipline required to achieve peace.

**Cessation** – Stopping craving stops suffering.

**Craving** – Suffering arises from attachment and craving.

**Suffering (Dukkha)** – Life is characterized by suffering.

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500 million adherents, concentrated in East and Southeast Asia

# The Gospel Contrast: Extinction of Self vs. Eternal Life



## The Buddhist Worldview

**The Divine:** Non-theistic (originally teaches no Creator God).

**The Self:** No permanent soul or self exists.

**The Problem:** Attachment to a temporary world.

**The Goal:** Extinction of the self and release from rebirth.



## The Biblical Worldview

**The Divine:** A personal, loving Creator who desires relationship.

**The Self:** Every person is an eternal being made in the Imago Dei (Image of God).

**The Problem:** Sin and separation from a holy God.

**The Goal:** Eternal life, bodily resurrection, and joyful relationship.

# The Witnessing Bridge: Christ's Compassionate Entry

**The Buddhist Path:  
Escaping from  
human suffering.**



**The Gospel Path:  
Jesus entering,  
bearing, and  
conquering  
suffering.**

- **Acknowledge the Pain:** Agree with the Buddhist insight that life involves deep suffering.
- **Present the Cross:** Introduce Jesus as the one whose compassion (karuna) surpasses all others because He suffered for us, and defeated it through the resurrection.

# The Denial of the Spiritual: Understanding Secularism

**The Natural  
World, Science,  
Human Reason**

Nothing  
else  
exists.

**Not a traditional religion, but a rapidly growing worldview.**

**Increasingly dominant among educated, urban African populations.**

**Core Belief:** The material universe is all there is. There is no God, no supernatural realm, and no spiritual reality.

# The Gospel Challenge: A Historical Disruption

The Natural  
World, Science,

**The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

Human Reason

**Christianity is not just a spiritual philosophy; it rests on a historical claim that demands a historical response.**

“But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

# The Witnessing Bridge: Answering the Deepest Questions

**Origin: Why is there something rather than nothing?**

Meaning: Why do we have an innate sense of moral obligation and beauty?

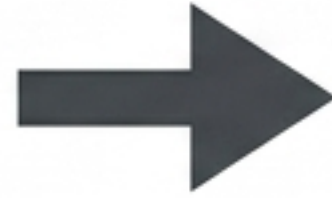
Destiny: Why do we fear death and long for eternal significance?



**Urban secularists are not beyond the Holy Spirit's reach. Intellectual honesty combined with a personal encounter provides a powerful witness to the secular mind.**

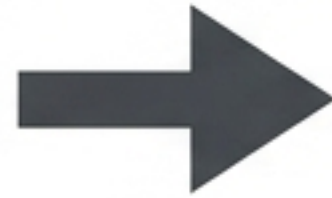
# Pentecostal Application: The Power of Encounter

The Hindu  
seeks union  
with the divine



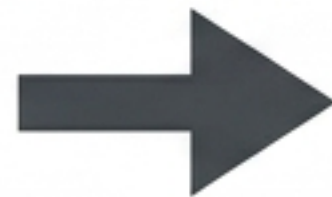
**Encounter the Living,  
Personal God.**

The Buddhist  
seeks peace  
from suffering



**Encounter the  
Prince of Peace.**

The Secularist  
claims God  
does not exist



**Encounter Undeniable  
Supernatural Power.**



**You cannot argue someone into the Kingdom,  
but you can introduce them to the King.**

# Reflection: Processing the Harvest

- 1.** What is the most fundamental difference between the Eastern concept of salvation and the Christian Gospel?
- 2.** How does the resurrection of Jesus Christ challenge both Eastern religious worldviews and secular materialism?
- 3.** Are there growing communities of Hindus, Buddhists, or secular intellectuals in your city? How can your church reach them?
- 4.** How does a Pentecostal emphasis on personal encounter address the deepest spiritual needs of these worldviews?

# Prayer Focus: Targeted Intercession



**The 1.7 Billion:** Pray for the massive populations of Hindus and Buddhists in Asia who have never heard a clear presentation of the Gospel.



**The Urban Shift:** Pray for the growing number of urban Africans who are drifting toward secular materialism and leaving the faith of their parents.



**The Messengers:** Ask God to raise up bold, wise, Spirit-filled witnesses from African churches equipped to reach these specific groups.

# Action Step: Equipping for the Encounter



**Choose one of the three worldviews covered in this lesson (Hinduism, Buddhism, or Secularism).**

**Spend 30 minutes this week reading more about it from a reliable Christian missions perspective.**

**Write a one-page summary of the key “Gospel Bridges” you would use to reach a sincere follower of that worldview.**

***Go. The fire is in you. Take it to the nations.***