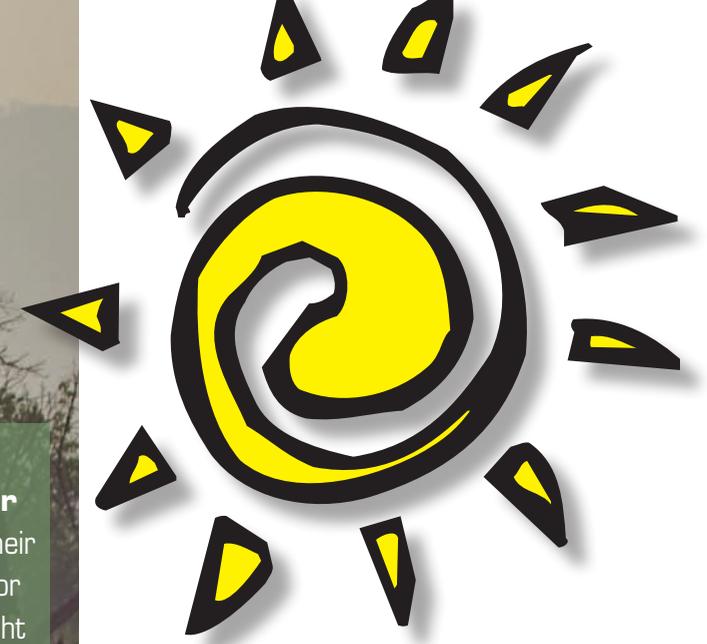


Oh! Buddha Was a Man

by Tal Davis

Jesus came to provide us salvation.



Buddha Wasn't a Savior

Buddhists do not see Buddha as their Savior, like Christians see Jesus. For them, he was just a man who taught a way to enlightenment that may be realized by what he called the "Four Noble Truths." These truths are

1. All life is full of suffering.
2. Suffering is caused by selfish desires.
3. Suffering will end only if we eliminate our desires.
4. This (eliminating desires) can be accomplished by following Buddha's "Eightfold Path" for right living: Right Views; Right Ambition; Right Speech; Right Conduct; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; and Right Thinking.

What the Bible Says

As Christians, we recognize some wisdom in the Eightfold Path; however, the Bible disagrees with the basic ideas Buddha taught. For instance, the Bible teaches that Jesus was more than just an enlightened man. Jesus was God Himself who came to provide us salvation. Salvation is not possible by trying to follow a moral code like the Eightfold Path. It is found only by admitting our sin (our failure to obey God's law) and our need for Jesus as our Savior. He alone died for our sins on the cross and rose again to gain victory over death. As a result, we can go to be with God in heaven forever, not be reborn on earth again and again. We do not need "enlightenment," we only need faith in Jesus Christ. After all, He said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). 

A few years ago my wife, our two sons, and I tried a new Chinese restaurant in our town called The Golden Buddha. As we walked inside, we were greeted by a life-size statue of a man sitting on a cushion. My boys asked who the man was supposed to be. I told them the statue was the "Golden Buddha," a likeness of the founder of Buddhism, one of the world's largest religions.

Nearly 350 million people

around the world are Buddhists, mostly in Asia. As many as one million Buddhists live in Canada and the United States. They believe the Buddha, which means "the enlightened one," was a prince named Siddhartha Gautama who lived in India about 2500 years ago.

My family asked what Buddhists believe and how it compares to Christianity. To start with, Buddhism does not require a belief in

God. Buddha taught that every person must strive to attain what he called "enlightenment," just as he supposedly did. It refers to a "spiritual realization" or turning on an inner light of one's true self. The goal for Buddhists is not to go to heaven when they die. Rather, they seek to cease what they believe is a continuous cycle of deaths and rebirths by reaching a state of non-being.

