



RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

a selection

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Promotions and Publications

From the earliest times man has worshipped and acknowledged powers, spirits and deities in control of the universe and the destiny of the individual. As these beliefs are as diverse as the traditions, cultures and rituals of the population of the earth, information on, in some cases relatively unknown, religious movements provides a valuable insight into the psyche and social history of their followers.

The Central Video Collection boasts a collection of interesting titles on religions of the world, a selection of which is featured here.

Islam

Islam is the answer / director, Rob Hof.

In recent years, the support for Muslim fundamentalism has grown tremendously in various countries in the Middle East. Its adherents believe that neither capitalism nor socialism has improved the lot of the people and that an answer to both social and economic problems lies in a return to the traditional values of Islam. For radical Muslims the ideal is an Islamic state, though their opponents argue that while Islamic moral laws provide commendable guidelines for daily conduct, this code cannot provide solutions to political issues. This documentary focuses on the situation in Egypt, where it is estimated that the Muslim Brotherhood has the support of one-third of the population. It briefly traces the history of the movement and allows both proponents and critics to voice their views.

Buddhism

The Tibetan book of the Dead. A way of life / producers, Atsunori Kawamura, Barrie Angus McLean and David Verrall; directors, Yukari Hayashi and Barrie Angus McLean.

Teachings on death and dying are an integral part of Buddhist culture, a religion that emphasises compassion for everything that lives. The Tibetan Book of the Dead as

written down by the great 8th century Tantric Master Padmasambhava, is a sacred Buddhist text that is read to assist the deceased on the journey of transition between life and death and on to reincarnation. It celebrates the continuity of existence and chronicles the transition of life to death and rebirth. It has guided Buddhists on the path of awakening for many centuries and is still practised today, emphasising the letting go of all the things we cherish in this life and the importance of recognising one's own nature.

This programme visits a village near Ladakh, in northern India, to examine how the ceremonies and rituals are used to guide the spirit of an elderly man through the unknown territory of the afterlife. It discusses the meaning of death in this context and also visits the Living/Dying Project in San Francisco, where the principles are applied in a hospice setting. Included are extracts from an interview with the 14th Dalai Lama and the programme is narrated by Canadian poet/singer Leonard Cohen. The second episode of this two part series is entitled **The great liberation**.

Hare Krishna

Hare Krishnas: hiders or seekers? / producer and director, Michael Murray.

Every large city in Europe and North America has its Hare Krishnas and even in South Africa the movement has its followers. Because of their dress and the men's shaven heads, not to mention the rhythmic chanting, they are easily recognisable, though few people have any idea of the principles governing their lives.

This film takes an in-depth look at this religious movement and starts by tracing the life of its modern founder, AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who came to the United States in 1965 with the specific aim of recruiting disciples in the West with which to re-proselytise his native India. His message of non-materialism had a great impact on young people and he gained some prominent followers. Upon his death

in 1977, the movement started to fall apart, as some of his most senior disciples began to disagree amongst themselves and others were involved in various scandals. While relating this story, the film follows Kim, a young Australian girl who is a devotee, eventually following her to India, where she meets her chosen guru.

Traditional healing

Mariana and the moon / director, Licinio Azavedo.

Bawa, a village in a remote area of Mozambique, is the headquarters of the country's first project in the community management of natural resources. It is also the home of Mariana Mphande, a traditional healer and community leader who is about to visit the United States in order to publicise the Tchuma Tchato project and to share experiences with American native healers.

This film accompanies her on this voyage as she addresses groups of academics at organisations like the Ford Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution, but also shows her visiting projects in small communities that share her concern for the preservation of all natural life. Above all, it is a spiritual journey, as she meets with fellow healers on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation and on the island of Maui, in Hawaii. Her companion throughout is Matias, a game warden for Tchuma Tchato, who makes a journey of his own in order to discover the truth about the death of Luciano, a colleague and friend who, according to Mariana, had two hearts, one of a poacher and the other of a warden.

The programme supports a respect for the traditional cultures that are being revived in different parts of the world. It is a follow-up on one of the director's earlier films, **Tchuma Tchato**.

Ancient Egypt

Ra: the path of the sun god: a vision of Ancient Egypt / producer, Jan Culik; director, Lesley Keen.

Nile: river of gods / producer and director, Michael McKinnon.

This material will promote a better understanding of the cultures featured above and provide an opportunity to reflect on one's own religion and value system.

Note: Reviews by Freddy Ogterop, Film/Video/DVD Selector of the Western Cape Provincial Library Service.

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