

Religion Today  
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*When This Column is Not Enough*  
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This column aims to provide insight and information about religions in the United States and around the world. But its twice-monthly appearance can never hope to satisfy anyone with a serious interest in understanding different religious practices, beliefs or even their role in current events. So today, we suggest three ways to follow that interest in between columns -- all freely accessible on the World Wide Web.

If basic information about major world religions is what you want, then a good first stop is "Exploring Religions" ([www.uwyo.edu/ReligioNet/ER](http://www.uwyo.edu/ReligioNet/ER)). Developed and written by Paul Flesher, University of Wyoming professor, this site provides a wealth of information about five religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. It discusses beliefs about the cosmos, the human condition, religious holidays and observances, sacred books, guidance for life, history, and provides extensive glossaries. In 1999, the "Chronicle of Higher Education" featured Exploring Religions as a "Bookmark" site-of-the-week, and emphasized how it brought out not only the religions' differences but also their broad similarities.

If you ever wondered what a newspaper would look like if it carried only stories, articles and news from religious perspectives, then take a look at BeliefNet ([www.BeliefNet.com](http://www.BeliefNet.com)). This site covers a variety of religions, although Christianity is the most prominent. The site carries many articles that might appear in a newspaper's feature section. This past month it ran essays on Easter and Holy Week, Passover, and the Hindu festival of Holi. The site also provides help (and debate) on more personal matters, such as prayer, meditation, and spirituality as well as childbirth, raising kids,

dating, marriage and death. If you have moral questions, big or little, those are addressed as well.

BeliefNet also has a lighter side, where you can find discussions of angels, columnists of many religious persuasions (look for the "Ask a Lama" column for Buddhist insights on modern American life), a humor section, chat rooms, travel guides, and, of course, an online store. Beliefnet also provides introductory material on many religious groups. If you are seeking a variety of religious information all in one place, this Web site is worth a visit.

Finally, if neither of these Web sites address your religious interests, you can always search the entire Web. After all, religious Web sites are the second most numerous type of site out there, according to "Yahoo Internet Life." The problem, of course, is finding the right one. Any search engine can bring you a list of Web sites, but often a search results in a long list that contains a lot of stuff that is not relevant. My suggestion is to use the search engines that pre-classify Web sites, so you can look down a list and read a short description of each site.

I regularly use Yahoo.com and Google.com. These classify religion sites by religion, denomination, topic, holidays, activities, special interests, and so on. The Web has more information about American and world religions than could be contained in all but the largest or the most specialized libraries, you just have to look for what you want.

So, until next time, happy hunting!