

# Indigenous religions

Religion



Indigenous religion refers to those religions which are native to indigenous peoples around the world. They are “descendants of the original inhabitants of lands now controlled by larger political systems in which they may have little influence.”

In the second chapter of her book, *Living Religions*, Mary Pat Fisher takes the position that indigenous spiritual practices should be called lifeways and not religions. Lifeways are “a particular approach to all of life.” Some of the reasons Mary Fisher believes that indigenous spiritual practices should be called lifeways are that they are not a “separate experience like meditating in the morning or going to church on Sunday.”

She also believes that to be considered a religion there should be a written testament and that a religion should be built around that scripture. In addition, Fisher thinks that the way indigenous practices are passed down, through oral stories that contain “symbols, metaphors, and humor,” is changing the story of these practices causing them to no longer be “fossilized.” However, religion is defined in Fisher’s book as “a particular response to dimensions of life considered sacred, as shaped by traditions.”

In my opinion indigenous spiritual practices should be considered religions because they are traditions and spiritual beliefs, even though they are different than Christianity, Buddhism, and other religions. For example, A Catholic nun is a woman who has taken vows committing her to a spiritual life following God just as West African groups have devoted themselves spiritually to the orisa.

Additionally, Christians have a routine of going to church on Sundays, many Native Americans have a certain time of the year, usually at the Summer Solstice, to perform the Sun Dance which lasts four to eight days. Also, just as indigenous spiritual practices have symbols, religions have symbols, such as the Bible.

Religion to me is what beliefs you have about life, death, and everything in between. It is your faith and purpose. Why are we here? Who created us? Similarly as we have a set of beliefs to answer these questions, indigenous people do too.