***Notes:  Cultural Differences***

Language, Ethnicity, Religion

Cultural Differences

Diversity can be a very good thing

Cultural differences cause problems in some areas of the world

Language

Can unify people of different countries

Can limit communication within an area

            Arab World

o      Most of the Middle East speaks Arabic

o      Sense of identity amongst Arab countries

            Hispanic America

       Areas that speak Spanish

       Most of central America and South America (excluding Brazil), and parts of the United States

            Brazil

       Speaks Portuguese

       Area originally colonized by Portugal in 15th and 16th century

            Canada

       Speaks English and French

       Quebec--French

            Switzerland

       Multiple languages

       Causes difficulties in communication

            English

o      Used as a world language, especially in trade/business

Ethnic Heritage

o      Former Yugoslavia

       Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Albanians

       major problems exist between these groups; recent violence; “ethnic cleansing”

       New countries based on ethnicities

o      Burundi and Rwanda—Hutus and Tutsis

o      United States, Switzerland—Unity in multiple ethnic countries

o      Korea and Japan—Predominantly single ethnicity

o      Cyprus—Greeks and Turks

Religion as a Unifying Force

Hinduism

            --influences lifestyle in India

            --Caste system:  social system based on birth

Buddhism

            --Far East (China, Japan, East and Southeast Asia)

Judaism

            --Israel, North America

Christianity

            --North and South America, Russia, Australia, Europe

Islam

            --Middle East, Indonesia

Religion as a Divisive Force

Conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan

            --violence in Kashmir

Conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland

            --terrorism by IRA:  want independence from Great Britain

Jews, Christians, and Muslims all claim Jerusalem as one of their religious heritage sites

            --Jews:  Western (Wailing) Wall

            --Christians:  Church of the Holy Sepulcher

            --Muslims:  Dome of the Rock