

**CULTS &  
CONTEMPORARY RELIGIONS**

By

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## Know the Original

The American Banking Association has a unique training program each year for its bank tellers. Hundreds of bank tellers are sent to Washington D.C. to be taught how to detect counterfeit money. Counterfeit money has been a great source of loss revenue for the Treasury Department, so for the entire two-week training bank tellers are not given counterfeit money to examine but only original bills. The reason for this approach by the American Banking Association is that if a bank teller thoroughly knows the original then he will not be deceived by the counterfeit bill, no matter how similar the counterfeit is to the original.

## Know the Scripture

### The Inspiration of Scripture:

Divine inspiration refers to the superintendence of God the Spirit over the writers of Scripture in which He communicates His infallible (without deception) and inerrant (without mistakes) message through the writers without any error, deletion, or additions. Though the writers were fallible and prone to error, the process and finish product of Scripture was kept pure by the Holy Spirit (Psalms 19:7-9). This miracle was performed without bypassing the personalities, education, styles, emotions and culture of the writer. The prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit to write Scripture (2 Pet. 1:20-21); the Scriptures are inspired (God-breathed) not the writers (2 Tim. 3:16).

The original autographs or texts of the Old and New Testaments were written directly from the hands of the prophets, or amanuenses (as they dictated the statements of the prophets - Jeremiah 36:4) and are the Word of God. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he described the Scriptures of the OT and NT as being "inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). The word "inspired" (Greek *theopneustos*) literally means "God-breathed," meaning that all the original autographs are the actual words from God. The apostle Paul explicitly writes that "all Scripture is inspired by God" as opposed to all the writers of the OT and NT being inspired. It is only the original manuscripts that are God-breathed. This is what theologians refer to as "verbal inspiration," that every single word is from God (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4). The doctrine of inspiration is derived from the self-witness of Scripture. In other words, the Bible itself claims to be inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Not only is the Bible inspired by God but also in all of its parts. This is what is called "plenary inspiration". In other words, there is no book, section, chapter, paragraph, verse, sentence, or word in the original autographs that is without divine origination. Therefore, since God by nature possesses the attribute of holiness and His glory refers to the perfection of His being, it is only logical that the Scriptures are inerrant and infallible. If you have a Perfect Author (God) then naturally you will have a perfect product (the Bible).

### The Canon of Scripture:

The doctrine of inspiration becomes the standard in determining which books belong in the Bible and which books should be discarded. This standard or rule is referred to as the canon of Scripture. R. Laird Harris commented on the uniqueness of how the Bible was assembled by saying:

Now since it is obvious that the Bible is composed of many ancient books (of various types and ages and lengths), it is clear that any view which holds the Bible to be unique must face the question as to why this particular collection should have been assembled. The usual Protestant answer has been that inspiration determines canonicity. A book is in the canon because it has been recognized as being verbally inspired. The canon is, according to this view, a collection of authoritative books. (Inspiration and Canonicity of Scripture, pp. 125-26)

One of the clearest evidences by which books were regarded as Scripture was the internal endorsement of the prophets and apostles writings amongst one another (Deut. 31:24-26 - Moses considered his writings as God breathed; Josh. 24:26 - Joshua added his writings to the law of Moses, thus considering them as God breathed; 1 Sam. 10:25 - Samuel added his writings to the law of Moses, because he knew his writing were inspired by God; Dan. 9:2 - Daniel recognizes Jeremiah writings as Scripture; 1 Tim. 5:18 - Paul quotes a statement out of the Gospel of Luke, thus recognizing Luke's gospel as Scripture; 2 Pet. 3:15-16 - Peter regarded the writings of Paul as Scripture).

There were 3 questions that needed to be answered correctly to discern if an alleged book was to be considered a part of the canon of Holy Scripture:

- 1) Was the book written by an apostle, prophet or close associate of one of the two?
- 2) Is the book consistent in its teaching with the rest of Holy Scripture or does it contradict it?
- 3) Did the early church accept this book as divinely inspired and therefore authoritative in all matters of faith and practice?

The Bible is complete and therefore the Bible student has all that he needs in the 66 books of the Bible to grow in Christ. To add any suppose revelation to Scripture is to invite God's judgment (Rev. 22:18-19). The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible, therefore, to add to that book is to add to the Bible and thus incur God's wrath. There are no new revelations from God being given today, because the canon of Scripture is closed.

### The Authority of Scripture:

If the Bible is God-breathed or inspired by God, then it is natural to conclude that the Bible alone has inherit authority. Wayne Grudem stated, "The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God" (Systematic Theology, p. 73). In other words, one cannot have a high view of God apart from submission to the authority of Scripture since the Lord Himself "hast magnified His word according to all His name" (Ps. 138:2). Thus, when Scripture speaks,

God speaks (Rom. 9:17 compare with Exod. 9:16; Gal. 3:8 compare with Gen. 12:3); and when Scripture is distorted God is distorted. One of the highest forms of blasphemy or insult to God is to reject or distort the word of God, because the word of God explains the true God, so to distort it is to dishonor God Himself. Therefore since “all Scripture is inspired by God” it is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

### The Sufficiency of Scripture:

The sufficiency of Scripture means that the Bible *alone* is fully reliable and more than adequate in meeting the spiritual needs of those who are seeking to know God in salvation, please Him in obedience, and trust Him in all things (2 Tim. 3:14-17; Ps. 119:1-11, 42). Wayne Grudem gives some practical application to the truth that Scripture alone is sufficient in knowing and doing God’s will:

1. The sufficiency of Scripture should encourage us as we try to discover what God would have us to think (about a particular doctrinal issue) or to do (in a particular situation). We should be encouraged that everything God wants to tell us about that question is to be found in Scripture.
2. The sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that we are to add nothing to Scripture, and that we are to consider no other writings of equal value to Scripture.
3. The sufficiency of Scripture also tells us that God does not require us to believe anything about himself or his redemptive work that is not found in Scripture.
4. The sufficiency of Scripture shows us that no modern revelations from God are to be placed on a level equal to Scripture in authority.
5. With regard to living the Christian life, the sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that nothing is sin that is not forbidden by Scripture either explicitly or by implication.
6. The sufficiency of Scripture also tells us that nothing is required of us by God that is not commanded in Scripture either explicitly or by implication.
7. The sufficiency of Scripture reminds us that in our doctrinal and ethical teaching we should emphasize what Scripture emphasizes and be content with what God has told us in Scripture.

### The Necessity of Scripture:

The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible *alone* is absolutely essential in knowing the plan of salvation (Rom. 10:8-17; Acts 4:12; John 14:6); in maintaining a godly life (Matt. 4:4; Psalm 119:105; 1 Peter 2:2; John 17:17); in discerning sin in one’s life (Jas. 1:21-25; 2 Tim. 3:16); in standing against Satanic attacks (Eph. 6:17; Matt. 4:3-10); in enduring trials (Psalm 119:50, 92); in being kept from stumbling into sin (Psalm 37:31; 119:165) in restoring the soul and growing

in wisdom (Psalm 19:7); in being rewarded for obedience and warned against the dangers of disobedience (Psalm 19:11); in helping to examine if a person is truly a Christian (2 Cor. 13:5; 1 John 2:4-6) in protecting the church against false teachers and false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1-6; Tit. 1:9; 1 John 4:1-6); and in edifying the church (Acts 20:32). Therefore, when Scripture is neglected or rejected in place of human philosophies, opinions, fallen common sense reasoning, false religious doctrine, human logic or legalistic rules then the plan of salvation is unknown or distorted; a person's godly life will suffer; one cannot discern sin in his/her life; one will be defeated in spiritual warfare; one will collapse in trials; one will stumble in sin; one's soul will not be restored nor will he grow in wisdom; there will be no reward for obedience only tragic consequences for disobedience; one will not be able to discern if he is a Christian (Matt. 7:21-23); the church will be led astray by false teachers and their satanic doctrine (Eph. 4:14; Tit. 1:10-12); and the church will not be built up in the truth (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

### **What is the Gospel?**

The Gospel means “good news,” thus the gospel is the good news from God to mankind through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1-4). This good news is explained by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

1) Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, (2) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (4) and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

This gospel was planned by One God: The Bible teaches that there is one God who eternally exist in three distinct persons – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each person is co-eternal (uncreated), co-equal in possessing all the attributes of deity, co-existent (meaning that there is not one person playing three distinct roles but that all three persons exist and commune with each other at the same time) and yet one in essence or being (Deut. 6:4; Is. 6:8; Dan. 7:9-14; Matt. 3:16-17 Matt. 28:19; Jn. 10:30; Acts 8:55; Rev. 5:5-7).

This gospel is about a Person: The OT promised that the coming Savior would come from the seed of the woman (Eve) to destroy Satan (Gen. 3:15); that He would be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14); that He would come as King from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10) through the line of David to reign over Israel and the world (2 Sam. 7:14; Is. 9:6-7; Mic. 5:2; Zech. 14); that He would be sinless and die as a substitute for the sins of mankind (Ps. 22:1, 6-7, 14-18; Is. 52:13-14; 53); and that He would rise from the dead (Ps. 16:10). This promise Messiah (Anointed One of God) would be both God (Is. 9:6; Mic. 5:2) and man (Gen. 3:15). The NT pronounces that the promised Messiah of the OT has come in the person of Jesus Christ (Messiah) (Matt. 1; Jn. 1:1-18; Rom. 1:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:8). Therefore, the NT testifies that Jesus Christ being both God and man (Jn. 1:1 &14; Rev. 1:17-18) has fulfilled the promise of the OT by being born of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit (Lk. 26-38); that He attested to His Messianic claims by performing miracles (Jn. 10:37-38; 12:37); that He died as a substitute for man's sins and rose physically from the grave on the third day in order to appease God's wrath against mankind and satisfy His justice in reconciling man back into a relationship with a Holy God (Rom. 5:8-21; 1 Cor. 15:3-8;

2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18); and that He ascended to heaven to seat at the right hand of the Father waiting until the time of His return to earth to reign over the nation of Israel and the world (Ps. 2: 110:1-2; Zech. 12:7-10; Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 1:9-10; 3:20-21; Heb. 1:3; 9:28).

This gospel is for sinful people: The Bible teaches that man was created in the image of God, possessing a mind, volition (will) and emotions to have a relationship with the living God. Yet due to Adam and Eve's rebellion in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) man was judged by being separated from their chief Source of satisfaction and joy (God Himself) and placed under divine judgment (Rom. 5:12-14). As a result, man has a sin nature because he was viewed as participating in Adam's rebellion (Rom. 5:12), which means that every aspect of his humanness is corrupted - his thoughts, motives, emotions, words and actions (his entire character) (Matt. 15:18-20; Rom. 3:10-20; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19). Man is totally depraved (without the desire or ability to please God) and thus is unable to deliver himself from God's righteous wrath (Rom. 8:6-8). Man in his lost state cannot perform self-conversion to save himself because he is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Prov. 21:10; Eph. 2:1). Therefore, total depravity or inability is being "dead in trespasses and sins" to the point that even a sincere act of worship directed to the true God is an abomination (Prov. 15:8; 21:27) and his good works are regarded as filthy rags (Is. 64:6). Man can do good things, but his good works have no merit towards God nor can it alter his sinful condition (Job 14:4; 15:14-16; Jer. 13:23; 17:9; Matt. 7:11).

This gospel is salvation: Salvation according to the Bible means deliverance from the penalty, power and presence of sin (Rom. 6:11-12; 8:1, 31). This gift of salvation is offered to any person who submits to the command to repent and believe in the gospel (Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-10). At the moment of saving faith, the believing sinner is immediately delivered from the penalty of sin, which is eternal hell (Jn. 3:16; 8:51) and is declared righteous (*justified*) in the sight of God (Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:21). Also, he is delivered from the power of sin, which is spiritual depravity and thus made spiritually alive (*sanctified*) (Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:13). In other words, the believer is no longer enslaved to the power of sin but is now a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18). Though the believer is not under the power of sin, he still has sin present in him which frustrates his desires to glorify God with his life perfectly (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:16-17). Therefore, the believer looks forward to the future when Christ returns to be forever delivered from the presence of sin (*glorified*), his fallen humanness (Rom. 7:24-25; 8:23; 1 Jn. 3:3).

### **Why Defend the Faith?**

The apostle Jude wrote to believers who were being confronted by false teachers. And in the third verse of his epistle, he wrote this:

**[3] Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.**

The apostle Jude understood that if believers did not stand up or defend “the faith” (the gospel message) against false teachers and their doctrines there would not be a “common salvation” to write about anymore. As someone once said, “a man who will not stand for something is quite likely to fall for almost anything”. Therefore, to not defend the faith means that many will be vulnerable to falling away from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-6). False doctrine is like leaven or yeast it permeates or spreads throughout the dough and causes it to rise (Gal. 5:6). So it is with false doctrine, it can spread fast throughout the church and thus ruin believers’ life and conduct (Tit. 1:9-11). Therefore, knowing this danger the Bible commands believers to be discerning, to test all things according to Scripture (Deut. 13:1-3; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:20-21); to not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14); to test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1 Jn. 2:18-27; 4:1-6); and to warn and deliver others who have been taken captive through error (1 Tim. 4:1-6; Col. 2:8; Jude vv. 20-23).

The apostle Peter commanded believers to not back down from those who would challenge them to give a defense of the faith that they have placed their confidence in:

**But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence (1 Pet. 3:15)**

Now defending the faith doesn’t mean being arrogant, condescending, sarcastic or crass when proclaiming the gospel. But speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15) with humble boldness (Eph. 6:19) for the purpose of leading them to salvation in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:24-26). And when it comes to warning fellow believers of the dangers of false teachers and their teachings it is important to name names in order that they may see who we are talking about (Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; 3:8; 4:14-15). This is not being disrespectful but loving.

### **How to discern truth from error?**

The belief system of every major false religion and cult in the world contradicts the truth of Scripture and the gospel message in some way. There are several major tests or questions you are looking to answer when examining false religions or cults - What is their concept of God? Is He one or many; impersonal; a force; nonexistent? What do they believe about the Bible? Is the Bible alone the Word of God, the source of authority, or one of many divine books? What do they believe about the Person and Work of Jesus Christ? Is He God in human flesh or just a good religious person? Did His death on the cross alone provide salvation for anyone who believes, or must one do good works to be saved? What do they believe about the nature of man? Is he created in the image of God, yet a sinner by nature? Or is he: a little god; an evolving creature; a good person who can earn his way to heaven; or in a process of reincarnation?

The believer must know the meaning of essential terms of the Christian faith, so that he will not be misled by unbiblical answers to his questions. Walter Martin, in his book “Kingdom of the Cults” writes, “The cults capitalize on the almost total inability of the average Christian to understand the subtle art of redefinition in the realm of Biblical theology” (p.19). Therefore, Martin gives 5 steps in addressing a cult or false religion:

Whenever a Christian encounters a cultist then, certain primary thoughts must be paramount in his mind: (1) he must strive to direct the conversation to the problem of terminology and maneuver the cult adherent into a position where he must define his usage of terms and his authority, if any, for drastic, un-Biblical redefinitions, which are certain to emerge; (2) the Christian must then compare the “definitions” with the various contexts of the verses upon which the cultist draws for support of his doctrinal interpretations; (3) he must define the words “interpretation,” “historic orthodoxy,” and standard doctrinal phrases, such as “new birth,” “atonement,” “context,” “exegesis,” “eternal judgment,” etc., so that no misunderstanding will exist when these things come under discussion as they inevitably will; (4) the Christian must attempt to lead the cultist to a review of the importance of properly defining terms for all important doctrines involved, particularly the doctrine of personal redemption from sin, which most cult systems define in a markedly un-Biblical manner; (5) it is the responsibility of the Christian to present a clear testimony of his own regenerative experience with Jesus Christ, in terminology which has been carefully clarified regarding the necessity of such regeneration on the part of the cultist in the light of the certain reality of God’s inevitable justice. (Kingdom of the Cults, p. 23)

Typically, cults will have a leader who has replaced the Bible as the source of authority with himself as the source of authority. This is what makes a cult a cult. The leader will claim to have received revelation from God which all who follow him must believe and submit to without question. No one can verify if these revelations are from God or if the person is making them up, because he has placed himself as the source of authority. Yet, when anyone claimed to speak on behalf of God to the people in the Bible, there were *two ways* to discern whether the message was truly from God: **1)** The message (new revelation) could not be in contradiction to the written word of God in any way (Deut. 13:1-5; Acts 17:10-12; 1 Thess. 5:19-20). And if the message was a prediction, it could not fail to come to pass in any of its details (Deut. 18:20-22); **2)** If the message was an elaboration of truth that was not formerly known or understood, the Lord would authenticate the messengers with signs and wonders before the very presence of their hearers. These signs and wonders were even performed before skeptical hearers who could not deny the divine origin of such miracles (Exod. 3:13-4:9; John 10:22-38; 12:37; Acts 4:5-22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:1-4).

### The Difference Between A Religion and A Cult:

Dr. Charles Braden, emeritus professor at Northwestern University defined the difference between a cult and religion:

A cult, as I define it, is any religious group which differs significantly in some one or more respects as to belief or practice from those religious groups which are regarded as the normative expressions of religion in our total culture. (These Also Believe, preface, xii).

Dr. Walter Martin defined a cult “as a group of people gathered about a specific person or person’s mis-interpretation of the Bible” (p. 11). So, a cult is a religious group who has taken the belief system of a major religion and distorted it by the authority of its cult leader.

## **ROMAN CATHOLICISM**

### **Origin/History:**

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time the Roman Catholic Church came into existence, but its history goes as far back as the early fourth century. At that time there were tensions that arose between the Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) styles of theology and governance. These differences reached its highpoint in 1054 A.D. when the Eastern and Western sects of Catholicism split with the Eastern sect declaring itself independent of Rome, because of centuries of disagreement over theological and political issues. The Eastern sect regarded itself as the more Orthodox or “right believing” sect of Christians, thus becoming the Greek Orthodox Church. But the title “Roman Catholic” did not come into common use until after the sixteenth century (1500s) Protestant Reformation.

### **Adherents:**

It is estimated that there are more than one billion members of the Roman Catholic Church in the world today. Out of a population of 285,538,000 in the United States there are 64,621,000 Catholics, exactly 22.63% of the population. The highest percentage of Roman Catholics in a country is found in Saint Pierre and Miquelon regions with 6,000 Roman Catholics, with a population of 6,000, 100% of the population. Italy comes in second with 57,665,000 Catholics out of a population of 59,725,000, 96.55% of the population. These statistics are from [www.Catholic-Hierarchy.org](http://www.Catholic-Hierarchy.org), November 2005 study.

### **Important Definitions:**

*Apocrypha:* in Greek means “hidden things” and is a term applied to the fourteen books of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) that are not a part of the Hebrew Bible. They are not accepted as part of the official canon of Scripture by Protestants or Jews, but some are accepted as deuterocanonical by the Roman Catholic, Russian and Greek Orthodox churches.

*Assumption of Mary:* a Roman Catholic doctrine promulgated in 1950 declared that Mary the Mother of Jesus was taken up into heaven and thus avoided the pangs of death.

*Eucharist:* a term derived from the Greek word meaning “to give thanks,” which is applied to the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, also known as Communion or “the Breaking of Bread”.

*Ex Cathedra:* literally, “from the chair”. Refers to the Pope in his official office as head of the Roman Catholic Church. When the pope speaks ex cathedra his judgments in matters pertaining to faith and practice are assumed by his followers to be infallible.

*Immaculate Conception:* the Roman Catholic dogma, declared in 1854, that the mother of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, was conceived without sin.

*Indulgences*: a practice which emerged in medieval Roman Catholicism, based upon the belief that the Church has the power to forgive sin, whereby Priests had the power to remit the sins of individuals who made appropriate contributions to the church or undertook pilgrimages or other sacred duties.

*Inspiration*: in Roman Catholicism, it is the church that judges what is to be considered inspired.

*Justification*: a technical theological term used in the New Testament writings of Paul to signify that act by which God restores humans to a right relationship with Himself. Protestant reformers and Roman Catholic theologians disagreed as to how justification was to be interpreted. For the Roman Catholic it meant making the sinner just through the infusion of supernatural grace that blots out sin and regenerates the soul, making it worthy of God. For the Reformer, justification was an act of divine forgiveness brought about by faith in the sacrifice of Christ.

*Pope*: the title given to the Bishop of Rome, the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

*Protestant*: a member of any of the Christian denominations that reject (*protest*, added by instructor) papal authority and support the reformation principles of justification by faith, the priesthood of all believers and the authority of Scripture.

*Purgatory*: a Roman Catholic doctrine which teaches that after death souls must be purified before they can enter heaven. This doctrine was the basis for sale of indulgences and the saying of prayers for the dead.

*Mass*: the Roman Catholic term for the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, which is a Christian Ritual commemorating the Death and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

*Council of Trent*: the great Roman Catholic Church council, held intermittently between 1545 and 1563, which provided the definitive definition of Catholicism in reaction to the Protestant Reformation. The council affirmed the equal validity of Tradition and Scripture as sources of religious truth, the sole authority of the church to interpret the Bible, and the institution of the seven sacraments, and it denied the Protestant understanding of justification by faith. Efforts were initiated to reform the church, and Protestant doctrines were condemned as heretical.

*Transubstantiation*: during the Mass the substance of the elements of bread and wine are transformed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ by the words of the priestly consecration, even though their appearance (accidents) remains the same.

*Vatican*: the residence of the Pope in Rome, which has the status of an independent city-state.

*Vatican Councils*: the First Vatican Council, which was highly conservative and emphasized differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, was held in Rome during 1869 and 1870 as the twentieth Ecumenical Council. It ended abruptly with the outbreak of war and the occupation of the city. The Second Vatican Council, lasting from 1962 to 1965, was also held in Rome. It met at the bidding of Pope John XXIII, who attributed the idea to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He defined its task as renewing the religious life of the Roman Catholic Church and modernizing its teaching, discipline and organization as a step toward unifying all Christians.

The far-reaching decisions of the council completely revolutionized the Roman Catholic Church, encouraging both the ministry of the laity and, inadvertently, the Charismatic movement.

(Definitions taken from *Concise Dictionary of Religion*, Irving Hexham, Intervarsity Press)

### **Belief System:**

Out of all the religions in the world Roman Catholicism comes the closest to Biblical Christianity in its belief system. It is for this reason that many people, including those within Protestant denominations (Baptists, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostals, etc...) often regard Roman Catholicism as a Christian religion. This confusion is dangerous even though Roman Catholics affirm the central doctrines of the Christian faith such as - the inspiration and authority of Scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ, the Virgin birth, the sinlessness of Christ, the substitutionary death and resurrection of Christ, and faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Yet, Roman Catholicism redefines crucial doctrines and even adds to these truths teachings that run counter to the Scriptures. Thus, disqualifying itself as a bona fide Christian religion. It can more accurately be defined as a pseudo (false, not real) Christian religion. Here are the reasons:

#### Truth is not revealed through Scripture alone:

Clarifying the source of authority is crucial when witnessing to a Roman Catholic because the legitimacy of any belief system is tested by whether its source for authority is infallible and inerrant. In other words, the belief system of any religion stands or falls if its source of information is truth or false. Therefore, it is important to establish the standard or source of authority by which beliefs will be tested. Now it is a fact that Roman Catholics *do not* hold to the Scriptures *alone* as the only source of authority in all matters of faith and practice. John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Christian Apologist who defend the truth of the gospel from a Protestant perspective, outlined the five sources of Roman Catholic authority:

Roman Catholicism teaches that in addition to the Protestant Bible (*66 inspired books of the OT and NT*, added by instructor), there are five other sources having divine authority. First, there are additional books written between the Old and New Testaments, known to Catholics as the deuterocanonical books (*Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Ben Sirach, also called Ecclesiastus, Baruch, Wisdom, and there are new portions added to the book of Esther and Daniel*, added by the instructor) and to Protestants by the term “apocrypha”. Second, Catholicism maintains that divine authority is to be found in the authorized Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, which is also classified as the “Word of God”. Third, divine authority (infallibility) is given to the Pope when he speaks officially on matters of faith and morals (ex cathedra, this dogma was instituted on July 18, 1870, at the First Vatican Council, *added by instructor*). Fourth, when speaking or teaching in conjunction with the Pope and orthodox Catholic Tradition, Roman Catholic bishops are also held to be infallible, and hence, divinely authoritative. Finally, official Roman Catholic interpretation of the Bible (Catholic teaching) is considered to have divine warrant and authority. In essence, all five of these sources can be summarized by the term “Roman Catholic Tradition”. (The Facts on Roman Catholicism, pp. 8-9)

Now Protestant believers would protest “Roman Catholic Tradition” as a source of authority because of its contradictions with the inspired Word of God, the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17). In fact, the apocrypha contain historical and theological errors. John Ankerberg, in quoting the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol. 1, (207-210), Norman Geisler and William Nix, A General Introduction and the Encyclopedia Britannica states:

Tobit...contains certain historical and geographical errors such as the assumption that Sennacherib was the son of Shamans (1:15) instead of Sargon II, and that Nineveh was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus (14:5) instead of by Nabopolassar and Cyaxares... Judith cannot possibly be historical because of the glaring errors it contains... [In 2 Maccabees] there are also numerous disarrangements and discrepancies in chronological, historical, and numerical matters in the book, reflecting ignorance or confusion... (*This quote can be found in The Facts on Roman Catholicism*, John Ankerberg and John Weldon, pp. 42-43)

In the book of Judith 9:10 & 13, the text clearly endorses immoral acts; 2 Maccabees 12:44, support prayers to the dead; Tobit 12:9; 4:10, teach that alms giving has atoning value which also leads to deliverance from death; Tobit 12:12, supports the worship of angels and 2 Maccabees 12:42 &46 teach the doctrine of purgatory and the salvation of souls after death. But the Bible clearly teaches against these views: 1 Thess. 4:3 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality”. Compare this truth with Judith 9:10 & 13 support of immoral acts. In regards to prayers for the dead, this conflicts with Deut. 18:9-13; the giving of alms in hopes of redeeming a person’s soul from eternal death stands totally against Ps. 49:5-9; Mark 10:23-27 and Acts 8:14-20; the worship of angels contradicts Col. 2:16-19; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9; and the doctrine of purgatory and salvation after death is not compatible with Luke 16:19-31 & Heb. 9:27. But the reason why the Roman Catholic Church holds to the Apocrypha as inspired is because it supports these false doctrinal views. Yet, the Scriptures state clearly that God is not a man that He should lie (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29) and that He is light and in Him there is no darkness (sin & error) at all (1 Jn. 1:5). Therefore, you cannot hold to the inspiration of the Scriptures and Roman Catholic Tradition because they contradict each other. Yet the Roman Catholic Church uses two ways to keep its followers from clearly seeing these contradictions. The first is that the Roman Catholic Church holds to a limited view of inerrancy when it comes to the Scriptures, they claim that the Bible is inerrant but not all of it. And the second way is that they claim that only the Roman Catholic Church can discern what areas of Scripture is inerrant and what areas of Scripture is false. In “The Documents of Vatican II,” under the category “Revelation,” you will find the following statement:

The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on [i.e., Tradition], has been entrusted *exclusively* to the living, teaching office of the Church... (pp. 117-118; quoted from *The Facts on Roman Catholicism*, p. 45)

In commenting on the Roman Catholic Church self-declaration of certain written material as inerrant Ankerberg and Weldon write:

Most Catholic literature contains the *Nihil Obstat* and the *Imprimatur*, Church seals that designate authority. They are defined as a “declaration that a book or pamphlet is considered to be free from doctrinal or moral error”. Yet *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, which contains these seals, teaches the following demonstrable errors:

1. Salvation by works (and other theological errors)
2. Muslims worship the biblical God
3. The book of Daniel was written in 165 BC (instead of 536BC, *added by instructor*)
4. Mormons “believe in the Trinity”
5. Papal infallibility is true
6. The Catholic Church is the only true Church (p. 46)

It is clear from these facts that the source of authority, “The Roman Catholic Tradition” is an errant and fallible source of information on which to base a belief system on matters of salvation and righteous living. Ron Carlson and Ed Decker in their book “Fast Facts on False Teaching” write, “In practical terms, the real rule of faith for a Roman Catholic is not the Bible, or even the Bible and tradition, but rather the Roman Catholic Church itself” (p. 219).

Salvation doesn't come through Christ alone:

The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is through Jesus Christ alone:

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me”.

Acts 4:12 - “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved”.

1 Timothy 2:5 - “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”

Yet the Roman Catholic Church teaches that salvation comes through Jesus Christ plus the Roman Catholic Church, the sacraments, the Mass, the reciting of the rosary, the help of the Mary and through suffering in purgatory after death. In “Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma,” Dr. Ludwig Ott stated, “The Sacraments are the means appointed by God for attainment of eternal salvation. Three of them are in the ordinary way of salvation *so necessary* that without their use *salvation cannot be attained* [i.e., baptism, penance, holy orders] (pp. 340-341, quoted from “The Facts on Roman Catholicism, p. 27). The Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965 declared to the church:

This sacred synod teaches that the Church is necessary for salvation. Whoever, therefore, knowing the Catholic Church was made necessary by God through Jesus Christ, would refuse to enter her, or remain in her, could not be saved. (quoted from Fast Facts on False Teaching, p. 231)

In the Catholic Catechism it cites the Council of Trent's standard view on the Mass, "This sacrifice [the Mass] is truly propitiatory...through the Mass we obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For by this oblation the Lord is appeased...he pardons wrongdoing and sins, even grave ones" (p. 468, quoted from "The Facts on Roman Catholicism" p. 29)

There are seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church that assisted the Catholic in attaining salvation. These sacraments are baptism, confirmation, penance, Holy Eucharist, Marriage, anointing the sick and holy orders. The priest presides over these sacraments as a mediator between God and the Catholic worshiper. Robert Broderick, the editor of the Catholic Encyclopedia summarizes these sacraments:

- Baptism (which is not repeated) cleanses from original sin, removes other sins and consequent punishments, provides spiritual rebirth or regeneration (Jn. 3:3), begins the process of justification, and is "necessary for salvation".
- Confirmation (not repeated) bestows the Holy Spirit in a special sense, leading to "an increasing of sanctifying grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit" as well as other spiritual power and a sealing to the Catholic Church.
- Penance removes the penalty of sins committed after baptism and confirmation. Mortal or "deadly sins" are remitted and the "justification" lost by such sins is restored as a continuing process.
- Holy Eucharist is where Christ is resurfaced, and the benefits of Calvary are continually applied anew to the believer.
- Marriage is where grace is given to remain in the bonds of matrimony in dictates with the requirements of the Catholic Church.
- Anointing the sick (formerly extreme unction) bestows grace on those who are sick, old, or near death and helps in forgiveness of sins and sometimes the physical healing of the body.
- Holy orders (not repeated) confer special grace and spiritual power upon bishops, priests, and deacons for leadership in the Church as representatives of Christ "for all eternity". (quoted from "The Facts on Roman Catholicism" p. 18-19)

Regarding the role of Mary in salvation, The Catholic Encyclopedia states, "Mary was not subject to the law of suffering and death, which are penalties of the sin of human nature, even though she knew these, experienced them, and endured them for our salvation" (p. 412, quoted from same source as before, p. 30)

Ott, in the "Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma" stated in purgatory "the temporal punishments for sins are atoned for in the purifying fire [of purgatory]... by the willing bearing of the expiatory punishments imposed by God". (p. 485, quoted from "The Facts on Roman Catholicism, p. 31)

In adding these means to the work of Christ nullifies His all sufficient and once for all sacrifice on behalf of the whole world. The Hebrew writer makes it clear:

10:10-12, 14 - (10) By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; (12) but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, (14) For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Notice that the Hebrew writer emphasizes that Christ's death on behalf of sinners was "once for all" (v. 10); and "for all time" (v. 12), this speaks against the Mass, which claims that Christ is being sacrificed continually through the offering of the bread and wine (transubstantiation). Also he says that through Christ's one offering for sin He has perfected "for all time" those who are being sanctified, made holy or set apart. In other words, those who trust in Christ *alone* for salvation do not need any assistance outside of Christ to be made fit for heaven (no need for sacraments, Mary, rosary or purgatory). His death made provision for those who would trust in Him to be holy (Rom. 6). It is finished (Jn. 19:30)

Salvation is not received through faith alone:

The Bible teaches that salvation is received by grace alone through faith alone:

Ephesians 2:8-9 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast".

Romans 11:6 - "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace".

Romans 10:9-11 - "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed".

Romans 4:5 - "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness".

Acts 16:30-32 - "and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household'. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house".

The Protestant position on salvation by grace through faith teaches that when a person repents and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord he or she is immediately justified. Now justification is a once and for all act by God by which He pronounces or declares the believing sinner righteous by virtue of his faith in Christ. In other words, God the Father imputes or transfers the righteousness of His Son to the believer's account because of his faith and thus declares him legally righteous in His sight (Romans 3,4 & 5; 2 Cor. 5:21). Yet, the Roman Catholic Church defines justification different than how the Bible describes it. Justification according to the Catholic Church is the infusion of grace by God that enables the person to have supernatural ability or sanctifying grace to do the works that are required of him in order that he may become objectively righteous in the sight of God. Instead of justification being a once and for *act* by God in which He declares the believing sinner righteous by virtue of his faith alone in Christ alone (Protestant position); the Catholic Church defines justification as a process by which God infuses the person with sanctifying power to enable him to measure up to God's righteous standard for salvation. In other words, justification makes it possible for the person to earn his salvation. The Catholic Encyclopedia defines justification by stating, "Primarily and simply justification is the possession of sanctifying grace...We are justified by Christ... and by good works" (p. 319, quoted from "The Facts on Roman Catholicism" p. 38).

This view of justification is held so dogmatically by the Roman Church that at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), in defense of their position of justification against the Reformers, they stated in the section titled “Canons Concerning Justification”:

*Canon 9* - If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification...let him be anathema [cursed by God]

*Canon 24* - If anyone says that the justice received [i.e., justification] is not preserved and not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema. (p. 43 & 45, quoted from “The Facts on Roman Catholicism” p. 40)

Yet, when the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, he was concerned that they were turning away from the gospel by believing that one becomes righteous through keeping the Law (Gal. 3 & 5) instead of by placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul was so adamant about this false teaching of salvation by works that he wrote:

Gal. 1:6-9 - “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we [i.e., the apostles], or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed [anathema]. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed [anathema].

The Roman Catholic Church’s teaching on salvation through works is another gospel, which really is no gospel or good news at all, because one is hopelessly trying to earn his way to heaven, while bypassing the only One who can grant full and complete forgiveness of sins forever, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 10:1-18). The Roman Catholic Church is *not* a Christian religion, but a false Christian religion that teaches a false gospel of works, which according to Galatians 1:6-9, should be considered anathema (accursed of God).

### **For Additional Information:**

*The Facts on Roman Catholicism*, John Ankerberg and John Weldon.

*The Handy Religion Answer Book*, John Renard.

*Fast Facts on False Teachings*, Ron Carlson and Ed Decker.

## **ISLAM**

### **Origin/History:**

The religion Islam was founded by Muhammad in the early seventh century who lived in Arabia. The word “Islam” is derived from the verb “SLM” which means to resign, surrender, or submit oneself, and thus Islam means the act of submission. The one who professes Islam is called a “MuSLiM,” which is also derived from the verb “slm”. It means one who submits or has submitted. Many Muslims consider Islam to be the religion of all the prophets in the Bible from Adam to Jesus, with Muhammad being the last and greatest of all the biblical prophets.

Muhammad was born in a wealthy merchant town called Mecca in 570 or 571 A.D. This town was considered famous for its shrine, the Kaba. This cube like building was the center of the veneration of many sacred stones including the Black Stone, a meteorite, which many claimed to have fallen from heaven. It was believed that as many as 360 deities were worshiped at Kaba. In other words, the Arabs who lived in Mecca were polytheistic (believed and worshiped many gods).

Patrick Sookhdeo, in his book “A Christian’s Pocket Guide to Islam” gives a chronology of Muhammad’s life (Appendix 1 pp. 85-87):

### **LIFE IN MECCA**

Birth	12 <sup>th</sup> Rabi al-awwal (Monday, 22 April, A.D. 571) Father, Abdullah, already dead.
Age 6	Death of mother, Aminah
Age 8	Death of grandfather, Abdul Mutalib
Age 12	First business trip to Syria
Age 25	Marriage to Khadijah (40 yrs. old), (their marriage produced seven children - three boys and four daughters; all of which died young except for their daughter Fatimah who married Ali-ibn-Abu Talib, who Shi’ites consider to be the first caliph after Muhammad’s death - <i>added by instructor</i> )
Age 40	Prophet hood (A.D. 610) (while mediating in a cave on the slopes of Mount Hirah, three miles from Mecca, Muhammad was in a trance when he heard the voice of Allah or was visited by the archangel Gabriel, who gave him messages to preach to mankind - <i>added by instructor</i> )
1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> year	(As a prophet) Secret preaching of Islam
End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> yr	Open call to Islam from Mount Safa, near Mecca
10 <sup>th</sup> year	Year of Sorrow - deaths of uncle, Abu Talib, and first wife, Khadijah (after his wife’s death Muhammad married twelve wives, therefore sanctioning polygamy - <i>added by instructor</i> )

*Miraj* [Muhammad’s night journey to heaven], 27<sup>th</sup> Rajab

13<sup>th</sup> year      Five times daily prayers made obligatory during *miraj*  
 Hijrah to Medina, 27<sup>th</sup> Safar (2<sup>nd</sup> month in Islamic calendar) (A.D. 622);  
 (hijrah is used as the starting point of the Islamic calendar - *added by  
 instructor*)

## LIFE AT MEDINA

- A.H. 1      (first year after the hijrah) Arrival at Medina; Establishment of First Islamic State Treaty with the Jews
- A.H. 2      Jihad ordained, 12<sup>th</sup> Safar; Ramadan fast prescribed; Marriage of Ali and Fatimah
- A.H. 3      First revelation restricting the drinking of wine; First revelation about *riba* (interest); Revelation of laws about orphans; Revelation of laws of inheritance;
- A.H. 4      Revelation of the requirement for *hijab* for women
- A.H. 5      Revelation of laws about adultery and slander
- A.H. 7      Revelations of laws about marriage and divorce
- A.H. 8      Conquest of Mecca, 20<sup>th</sup> Ramadan
- A.H. 9      Revelation of order concerning *jizya* tax for non-Muslims minorities; Hajj prescribed
- A.H. 11     Death, 12 Rabi al-awwal (3<sup>rd</sup> month on Islamic calendar), at age 63 (A.D. 632)

In regard to the revelations that Muhammad received for 22 years up until his death. Sir Norman Anderson, in his book, "The World's Religions," comments on Muhammad's initial thoughts regarding the source of these revelations:

It seems, however, that Muhammad himself was at first doubtful of the source of these revelations, fearing that he was possessed by one of the jinn, or sprites, as was commonly believed to be the case with Arab poets and soothsayers. But Khadijah and others reassured him, and he soon began to propound divine revelations with increasing frequency. (p. 55; quoted from Handbook of Today's Religions p. 380)

## Adherents:

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today with 1.2 billion followers. It is the second largest religion in the world. Islam influences and dominates 50 nations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. There are 35 countries with a population of 87% Muslim.

Ron Carlson and Ed Decker in "Fast Facts on False Teaching" state:

When most people think about Muslims, they immediately think of Middle East or North Africa, but in fact most of them live in other countries. The largest Muslim country is Indonesia, with 196 million Muslims. Bangladesh has 104 million and Pakistan another 125 million. India has about 133 million Muslims ([www.islamicweb.com](http://www.islamicweb.com)).

To the surprise of many people, there is also a large Muslim population in China. In fact, nearly 133 million Muslims live in China. Russia has approximately 26 million Muslims. In Turkey there are about 62 million and in Iran about 65 million. (p. 102)

There are two main divisions within Islam: Sunni and Shiah (Shi'ites). Sunni Muslims make up 90% of the adherents to Islam. Shi'ites are the majority only in Iran. But in other countries they are the minority and have at times been persecuted by the Sunnis. Patrick Sookhdeo explains the origins of Shiah:

The split into Sunni and Shiah originated in a dispute over the leadership succession little more than twenty years after Muhammad's death. Muhammad's successors were known as caliphs, and the first three [Abu Bakr (632), Umar (634) and Uthman (644) - *added by instructor*]. The fourth caliph, who succeeded in 656, was Ali, the husband of Muhammad's daughter Fatima. He was not universally accepted as the rightful successor and Muslims began to fight each other over this issue. Ali was eventually murdered in 661 and the struggle was continued by his two sons, Hassan and Hussain. Hassan was poisoned in about 670 and Hussain died at the Battle of Karbala in 680. Ali's followers, Shiah Ali [the party Ali], became the Shiah Muslims. (p. 65)

### **Important Definitions:**

*Abu Bakr* - (reign: 632-634 A.D.) The first Moslem caliph, according to Sunni Muslims. The Shi'ite Muslims reject this and instead consider the fourth caliph, 'Ali, as the first true successor to Mohammad.

*Allah* - The Supreme Being. The name of God, derived from the Arabic *Al-Ilah*.

*Caliph* - The title given to office of the spiritual and political leadership which took over after Mohammad's death.

*Fatima* - The daughter of Mohammad and of his first wife; and the wife of 'Ali, the fourth Caliph.

*Hadith* - The sacred sayings of Mohammad, handed down by oral tradition, for generations after Mohammad's death until finally transcribed.

*Hajj* - the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, to be performed by the believer once in a lifetime if economically possible.

*Hajji* or *hadji* - one who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

*Hijab* - literally 'partition' or 'curtain'; the institution of the seclusion of women; often used to mean the woman's head covering which conceals, neck, hair and sometimes face.

*Hijrah* or *Hegira* - Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622, which was used as the starting point of the Islamic calendar.

*Iblis* - one of the names of the devil.

*Imam* - A Moslem who is considered by Sunnis to be an authority in Islamic law and theology or the man who leads the prayers. Also refers to each of the founders of the four principal sects of Islam. The Shi'ites accept 12 great Imams.

*Islam* - literally, “submission to the will of Allah”.

*Janna* - literally “garden”; a term used for paradise (heaven).

*Jihad* - literally ‘an effort of striving’; a religious or holy war; sometimes understood as spiritual struggle.

*Jinn* - a spirit created by Allah. There are some good jinn, but many are evil.

*Jumma* - Friday, the Muslim holy day

*Kaba* - A small stone building located in the court of the great mosque at Mecca containing the black stone (a meteorite) supposedly given to Abraham by Gabriel.

*Kabira* - ‘great’ sins

*Koran* (Quran) - said to be the final and complete inspired word of God transmitted to the prophet Mohammad by the angel Gabriel.

*Mahdi* - “the guided one”. A leader who will cause righteousness to fill the earth. The Sunnites are still awaiting his initial appearance while the Shi'ites hold that the last Imam, who disappeared in 874 A.D. will someday reappear as the Mahdi.

*Mecca* - the birthplace of Muhammad. This city, located in Saudi Arabia, is considered the most holy city by the Moslems.

*Medina* - a holy city of Islam named for Mohammad. It was previously named Yathrib. It is the city to which Mohammad fled in 622 A.D.

*Mohammad* or *Muhammad* - The prophet and founder of Islam. Born around 570 A.D., and died 632 A.D.

*Moslem* or *Muslim* - a follower of Mohammad. Literally “one who submits”.

*Mosque* - an Islamic place of worship.

*Muezzlin* - A Moslem crier who announces the hour of prayer.

*Mulla* - a teacher of Islamic laws and doctrines.

*Omar* - according to the Sunnites, the second Moslem caliph and principal advisor to the first caliph, Abu Bakr.

*Purdah* - a veil or covering used by Moslem women to ensure them privacy against public observation, and to indicate their submission.

*Ramadan* - The ninth month of the Moslem year, when Mohammad received the Quran from heaven, and now devoted to fasting.

*Saghira* - 'little' sins.

*Salat* - The Moslem daily prayer ritual. One of the five pillars of Islamic faith.

*Shaytan* - one of the names of the devil.

*Shi'ites* - A Moslem sect which rejects the first three caliphs, insisting that Mohammad's son-in-law 'Ali was Mohammad's rightful initial successor.

*Shirk* - associating anyone with Allah as a co-deity. The worst sin in Islam.

*Sufis* - Iranian (Persian) philosophical mystics who have largely adapted and reinterpreted Islam for themselves.

*Sunnites* - the largest Moslem sect which acknowledges the first four caliphs as Mohammad's rightful successors. Literally 'one of the path'.

*Surahs* - what the chapters of the Quran are called. Literally 'a row or series'.

(Definitions taken from both "A Christian's Pocket Guide to Islam" and "Handbook of Today's Religions")

### **Belief System:**

Islam is not only a religion but a culture which embraces all of life both politically and socially. Therefore, it is important to know a little bit about Islamic culture, how they think, in order to be an effective witness for Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

### **Faith and Works:**

The first demand of Islam upon its followers is what is called 'iman' (first believed and confessed). Islamic theologians define this term as a confession with the tongue and belief with the heart. The full confession required by its adherents goes - "I believe in Allah, his angels, his books, his prophets, in the last day, in the predestination by the Most High Allah of good and evil, and in the resurrection after death". The section titled - 'The Six Articles of Faith' describe in detail iman. The shorter confession, known as *shahada* or *kalima* goes - "I testify that there is no Allah [god] but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah".

The second requirement of Muslims is *din* or religion, which connotes doing good works or practical duties, which are five in number, known as *arkan-ud-din* (the pillars of religion). These five requirements of religious duty are defined and described under 'The Five Pillars of Islam'.

*The Six Articles of Faith:*

Patrick Sookhdeo describes these 'Six Articles of Faith':

1. God [Allah]

The unity of Allah is clearly taught in the Quran. Like the Bible, the Quran does not argue for the existence of God. It assumes that Allah is. The oneness of Allah is the first article of the *kalima*: 'There is no deity but Allah [la ilah ill Allahu]. Similarly, there is the repeated affirmation that *shirk*, the 'giving of partners to Allah' is the worst of sins. Allah is one, having no equals and no partner. Omnipotence and omniscience are ascribed to Allah and are thought to safeguard both his unity and his majesty.

2. Angels [malaikah]

Angels are frequently mentioned in the Quran. They are created beings, made of light, and are referred to as 'messengers of Allah' with specific functions. They watch over humans and some record their deeds, both good and bad... The greatest Jib rail [Gabriel], the revealer of Allah to Muhammad, who is also called Rul ul' Amin, the Holy Spirit. The other archangels include Mikail [Michael] the provider, Israfil the trumpeter of doom, and Izrail the custodian who has the care of the faithful at death.

Contrasted with the angels are the jinn, some good, some evil. They were created by Allah out of smokeless fire before he created Adam out of clay (Q 15:26)... The devil, whose name is Iblis or Shaytan [Satan], is sometimes described as a jinn and sometimes as an angel.

3. Books [kutub]

Muslims believe that Allah has revealed his commands to men through his prophets and through 104 sacred books. Of these books, only four now remain, believed to have been given to Moses (the Taurah I.e. the Pentateuch), David (the Zabur, the Psalms), Jesus (the Injil, the Gospels or the New Testament in general) and Muhammad (the Quran). It is claimed that Jews and Christians, described jointly as *ahl-al-kitab* [the people of the book], changed and distorted their own Scriptures, so Allah sent the Quran as the final revelation to mankind.

4. Prophets [nabi]

A Muslim cannot deny any of the prophets of the Old Testament or John the Baptist and Jesus in the New Testament (Q 2:285). Of the many prophets, only nine are regarded as major prophets. These are Noah, Abraham, David, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Muhammad is the only prophet mentioned in the Quran who is not mentioned in the Old or New Testaments, though Muslims think that some of the references to the coming Holy Spirit were prophecies about Muhammad. As the final messenger, he is often referred to as "the seal of the prophets".

Muslims do not worship Muhammad or any of the prophets but consider them examples and models for mankind. They dislike being called 'Muhammadans' because they are not worshippers of Muhammad but of Allah. None of the prophets are considered divine.

5. Day of judgment [yawm al-akhirah] and resurrection after death [basi bad al-maut]  
 The day of judgment is described vividly in the Quran and is closely connected with the resurrection. The day will be preceded by clear signs and natural catastrophes, the appearance of the Antichrist [Dajjal], tumults and seditions, commotion in heaven and earth (Q 101:1-5; 70:9-10), darkening of the sun and moon (Q 75:8; 81:1) and Christ's second coming, as a Muslim. On the last day:

The trumpet will (just) Be sounded, when all that are in the heavens And on earth will swoon, except such as it will, Please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one, Be sounded, when, behold, They will be standing, And looking on! (Q 39:68)

After the resurrection people will wander about for forty years, during which time the books containing the records of their deeds kept by the recording angels will be given up. Then will follow the weighing of the deeds on the eschatological scales [mizan].

Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy - They will attain salvation. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; In Hell will they abide. (Q 23:102, 103)

Then everybody, believers and unbelievers, has to cross a very narrow bridge [sirat]. Some Muslims will be saved immediately, some will fall off the bridge into hell and afterwards be released. The infidels will all fall into hell and remain there forever.

#### 6. Allah's sovereign decrees - predestination [taqdir]

Muslim devotion attributes to Allah supreme and sovereign power over all things. The Muslim believer must submit to Allah's will. The doctrine of absolute predestination is widespread. Maktub [it is written], maqdur [it is decided] and kismat [it is my lot] are expressions commonly used to express this fatalism.

*(A Christian's Pocket Guide to Islam, pages 15-19)*

#### Shariah - Islamic Law:

Islamic teaching is not only derived from the Quran, but also from a collection of traditions that record the words and deeds of Muhammad called the "hadith". The hadith is considered second only to the Quran and thus provides Muslims with detailed instructions on religious practices and social conduct based on the life of Muhammad. Sookhdeo writes:

Where the Quran and traditions are silent on a particular subject, rules are derived by consensus of the religious leaders [ijma] and by analogous reasoning [qiyas]. The combination of Quran, hadith, ijma and qiyas have been used by Islamic scholars to create the immensely detailed body of rules and regulations known as the Shariah, that is, Islamic law. (p. 19)

Another feature of the Shariah are the draconian punishments for certain crimes, such as amputation for theft, stoning for adultery etc. Of relevance to the Christian evangelist is the death sentence for any Muslim who leaves the faith, which is considered equivalent to treason against the state. (p. 20)

The rule that apostates from Islam should be executed is part of the state law in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Sudan, to name but three. The Shariah's teaching that apostasy from Islam is like treason results in terrible shame being felt by a Muslim family if one of their members converts to Christianity. There will normally be rejection of the convert and sometimes violence, even murder, in accordance with the Shariah's death penalty for an apostate.

The ultimate goal of Muslim radicals is to introduce full Shariah as widely as possible in the world, and thus create an Islamic state similar to that in Medina in Muhammad's time. (p. 21)

*Jesus in Islam:*

Jesus is a prominent person in the Quran. He is referred to as the 'Son of Mary' or 'Jesus, son of Mary,' and four times as 'the Messiah, son of Mary'. But never as the Son of God. Though Jesus is regarded as a prophet sent from Allah, yet He is rejected as God in human flesh. His death for sin and resurrection is rejected, in fact, it is not only rejected but denied. Some interpreters of the Quran believe that Jesus did not die on the cross but rather Allah frustrated the plans of the Jews by having them crucify Judas instead. Many Muslims believe that Allah took Jesus to heaven but He will return to earth in the future as a Muslim, will get married, have children, die and then be buried next to Muhammad.

Here are some statements in the Quran concerning Jesus:

1. The virgin birth

Behold, The angels said: 'O Mary! Allah giveth thee  
Glad tidings of a Word from Him, his name will be Christ Jesus.  
The son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the Hereafter  
And of (the company of) those nearest to Allah.' (Q 3:45)

She said: 'O my Lord! How shall I have a son  
When no man hath touched me?' He said: 'Even so:  
Allah createth  
What He willeth:  
When He hath decreed  
A Plan, He but saith  
To it, "Be," and it is' (Q 3:47)

2. Denial of the Trinity and of the deity of Christ

Christ Jesus the son of Mary  
Was (no more than) A messenger of Allah,  
And His Word,  
Which He bestowed on Mary,  
And a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe

In Allah and His Messengers.  
 Say not ‘Trinity’: desist: It will be better for you:  
 For Allah is One God: (Far exalted is He) above  
 Having a son. (Q 4:171)  
 And behold, Allah will say:  
 ‘O Jesus the son of Mary!  
 Didst thou say unto men,  
 “Worship me and my mother  
 As gods in derogation of Allah”?  
 He will say: “Glory to Thee!  
 Never could I say  
 What I had no right (To say).” (Q 5:116)

If you notice in the above verse the question Allah reportedly asks Jesus, “Didst thou say unto men, ‘Worship me and my mother as gods in derogation (tending to impair the value of; detracting) of Allah?’” Muslims use this verse to reject the Trinity and we as Christians would reject their concept of Trinity based on this verse. Evangelical Christians believe that the Holy Trinity consists of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Not the Father, the Mother (Mary), and the Son. And it is clear from Scripture that Jesus claimed to be God and never rebuked anyone who regarded Him as such (John 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28).

*(All quotes from the Quran come from Sookhdeo’s book, A Christian’s Pocket Guide to Islam, pp. 34-37)*

### The Quran:

The Quran is the chief sacred book for Muslims, they believe that it was revealed to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel during the last twenty-two years of his life. Muslims believe that when the Quran speaks that it speaks with absolute authority. And though Muslims believe that the Old and New Testament are inspired by Allah, yet they also believe that the Jews and Christians have corrupted the Scriptures, thus Muslims must decide which Scriptures are from Allah and the Scriptures that have been corrupted.

The Quran is about the same length as the New Testament and is divided into 114 surahs (chapters), with the longest chapters placed at the beginning and the shortest chapters placed at the end. The only exception to this is surah 1, which is a prayer to Allah, but it is Allah himself who is speaking not the prophet Muhammad. The first surah is the daily prayer of the Muslims, almost like the Lord’s Prayer for Christians. Sookhdeo writes:

The word ‘Quran’ is derived from the Arabic word qara meaning ‘to read’ or ‘to recite’. Its use in connection with the Muslim Scriptures is based on the first word of surah 96, which begins: ‘Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher...’ The first five verses of this surah are generally regarded as the earliest revelation. (p. 26)

### The Five Pillars of Islam:

The Five Pillars of Islam are foundational practices for every Muslim. These duties are absolutely essential in the process of trying to reach paradise [*janna*]. Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, in the book “Handbook of Today’s Religions” gives a brief summary of the five pillars of Islam alongside with quotes from other resources giving further detail:

1. The Creed. (*Kalima*). “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah,” is the bedrock of Muslim belief. One must state this aloud publicly to become a Muslim. It is repeated constantly by the faithful.

2. Prayer (*Salat*). Prayer as ritual is central to a devout Muslim. Boa comments:

The practice of prayer (*salat*) five times a day (upon rising, at noon, in midafternoon, after sunset, and before retiring). The worshipper must recite the prescribed prayers (the first surah and other selections from the Koran) in Arabic while facing the Ka’aba in Mecca. The Hadith (book of tradition) has turned these prayers into a mechanical procedure of standing, kneeling, hands and face on the ground, and so forth. The call to prayer is sounded by the *muezzin* (a Muslim crier) from a tower called a *minaret* which is part of the *mosque* (the place of public worship).

3. Almsgiving (*Zakat*). Muhammad, himself an orphan, had a strong desire to help the needy. The alms originally were voluntary, but all Muslims are legally required to give one-fortieth of their income for the destitute.

Since those to whom alms are given are helping the giver to salvation, they feel no sense of debt to the giver. On the contrary, it is the giver’s responsibility and duty to give and he should consider himself lucky he has someone to give to.

4. Fasting (*Ramadan*). Faithful Muslims fast from sunup to sundown each day during this holy month. The fast develops self-control, devotion to God and identity with the destitute. No food or drink may be consumed during the daylight hours; no smoking or sexual pleasures may be enjoyed, either. Many Muslims eat two meals a day during Ramadan, one before sunrise and one shortly after sunset.

5. The Pilgrimage (*Hajj*). The pilgrimage is expected of all Muslims at least once in their lifetimes. It can be extremely arduous on the old or infirm, so in their cases they may send someone in their places. The trip is an essential part in Muslims’ gaining salvation. It involves a set of ceremonies and rituals, many of which center around the Ka’aba shrine, to which the pilgrimage is directed. Of the Ka’aba, Muhammad M. Pickthall comments in *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*:

The Meccans claimed descent from Abraham through Ishmael, and tradition stated that their temple, the Ka’aba, had been build by Abraham for the worship of the One God. It was still called the House of Allah, but the chief objects of worship there were a number of idols which were called daughters of Allah and intercessors (Pickthall, op. cit., p. ix)

When the pilgrim is about six miles from the holy city, he enters upon the state of *ihram*: he casts off, after prayers, his ordinary clothes and puts on two seamless garments; he walks almost barefooted and neither shaves, cuts his hair nor cuts his nails.

The principle activity consists of a visit to the Sacred mosque (*al-Masjid al-Haram*); the kissing of the Black Stone (*al-Hajar al-Aswad*); seven circumambulations of the Ka'aba three times running and four times slowly; the visit to the sacred stone called Maqam Ibrahim; the ascent of and running between Mt. Safa and Mt. Marwa seven times; the visit to Mt. Arafat; the hearing of a sermon there and spending the night at Muzdalifa; the throwing of stones at the three pillars at Mina and offering sacrifice on the last day of Ihram, which is the 'id of sacrifice ('Id al-Adha) (Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 664).

There is a sixth religious duty associated with the five pillars. This is *Jihad*, the Holy War. This duty requires that when the situation warrants, men are required to go to war to spread Islam or defend it against infidels. One who dies in a *Jihad* is guaranteed eternal life in Paradise (heaven). (pp. 391-92).

### **Sharing the Gospel with Muslims:**

Sookhdeo, at the end of his book gives some important advice in witnessing to Muslims:

- For Christians who would preach the Gospel to Muslims, nothing less than the power of God released by the Holy Spirit is adequate.
- Most Muslims who come to Christ are not won over by intellectual arguments which disprove the validity of Islam.
- The Christian seeking to witness to Muslims should have a thorough knowledge of the Bible, as well as of Islam. Personal testimony is always powerful.
- For the Muslim, Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets. No useful purpose is served by unnecessary criticism of him.
- When challenged as to the life and work of Muhammad and the authority and inspiration of the Quran, it may be wiser to attempt to bring the questioner to consider Christ rather than to counter the Muslims' claim about Muhammad, and to point to the Bible rather than to become involved in argument about the nature of the Quran.
- (When it claims to the godless immorality in western society) The Christian believer must make it clear that true Christians are just as shocked by this as Muslims (1 Pet. 2:11-12). To prove this, the Christian must be very careful about certain aspects of culture. Clothes should be modest and not close fitting, especially for women. The Christian should only seek to talk to those of the same sex. Any conversation with the opposite sex should be at the Muslim's initiative. Never touch anyone of the opposite sex, even to shake hands, unless the other person initiates it. Try also to avoid eye contact with the opposite sex, even if a conversation develops. Treat both the Bible and the Quran with great respect, not placing them on the floor and not writing in them. (pp. 73-75)

**For Additional Information:**

*A Christian's Pocket Guide to Islam*, Patrick Sookhdeo.

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin.

*Handbook of Today's Religions*, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart.

*The Islamic Invasion*, Robert Morey.

*The Facts on Islam*, John Ankerberg and John Weldon.

## **BUDDHISM**

### **Origin/History:**

The religion of Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama who probably lived from 563 to 483 B.C., who was born into a wealthy Hindu family. Siddhartha lived a sheltered life in his earlier years in the hill country that bordered modern day India and Nepal.

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart in the “Handbook of Today’s Religions” gives a good biography of Siddhartha’s early life and how he later became “the Buddha” or “enlightened one:

His family name was Gautama, his given name Siddhartha. Siddhartha was the son of a rajah, or ruler. His mother died when he was just a week old and Siddhartha was cared for by his mother’s sister, who was also the rajah’s second wife. There was supposedly a prophecy given at the time of his birth by a sage at his father’s court.

The prophecy said that the child would be a great king if he stayed at home, but if he decided to leave home, he would become a savior for mankind. This bothered his father, for he wanted his son to succeed him as king. Therefore, to keep him at home, his father surrounded him with wealth and pleasures and kept all painful and ugly things out of his sight.

Siddhartha eventually married and had a son but was still confined to the palace and its pleasures. One day he informed his father that he wished to see the world. This excursion would forever change his life, for it was during this journey that he saw “the four passing sights”.

Although his father ordered the streets to be cleansed and decorated and all elderly or infirmed people to stay inside, there were those who did not get the message. The first troubling sight Siddhartha saw was that of a decrepit old man. When Siddhartha asked what happened to this man, he was told that the man was old, as everyone someday would become.

Later, he met a sick man and was told that all people were liable to be sick and suffer pain like that individual.

He then saw a funeral procession with a corpse on its way to cremation, the followers weeping bitterly. When asked what that meant, the prince was informed that it was the way of life, for sooner or later both prince and pauper would have to die.

The last sight was that of a monk begging for his food. The tranquil look on the beggar’s face convinced Siddhartha that this type of life was for him. Immediately he left the palace and his family in search of enlightenment. The night that he left his home to seek enlightenment became known as the Great Renunciation.

The former prince, now a beggar, spent his time wandering from place to place seeking wisdom. Unsatisfied by the truths taught in the Hindu scriptures, he became discouraged but continued on his quest. He tried asceticism but this gave him no peace. The fateful day in his life came while he was meditating beneath a fig tree.

Deep in meditation, he reached the highest degree of God-consciousness, known as nirvana. He supposedly stayed under the fig tree for seven days, after that, the fig tree was called the bodhi, or the bo tree, the tree of wisdom. The truths he learned he would now impart to the world, no longer as Siddhartha Gautama, but as the Buddha, the enlightened one (p. 305)

After Siddhartha's experience under the fig tree, he met with five monks and began teaching them the way of enlightenment. These monks would become his companions as he would spread his teachings throughout India.

This new teaching created such hope to the people of India who were disillusioned with the religious beliefs of Hinduism, that at the time of Buddha's death at the age of 80, his teachings had received strong support from the populace.

#### Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism:

When the religion of Buddhism began, it was largely confined to India and was referred to as Theravada Buddhism. But as Buddhism became popular outside of India, particularly in China and Japan, it began to distinguish itself in its teachings from Theravada Buddhism and thus became known as Mahayana Buddhism. Theravada means "Little Vehicle" and Mahayana means "Great Vehicle". The term "vehicle" pictures for Buddhists the belief that the teaching of Buddhism is like a vehicle or ship that takes them through this life of suffering to the state of bliss or Nirvana. The Agency of Cultural Affairs in Japanese Religion describes the beginnings of Mahayana Buddhism and how distinct its teachings are from Theravada Buddhism:

By the time of King Asoka (236-232 B.C.), Indian Buddhism had split into a number of groups generally referred to as Theravada schools. Again, around the beginning of the Christian era, Mahayana Buddhism arose, being distinguished from Theravada Buddhism primarily by its enlargement of the bodhisattva ideal, according to which certain compassionate beings or bodhisattvas defer their own emancipation in order to save others, and by its consequent enlargement of the offer of salvation, making it available not only to those who enter monastic orders but to all who trust in a bodhisattva.

For several centuries Buddhism continued to evolve in India, developing in interaction with the various Indian religions and philosophies, but due to the Islamic invasion of the thirteenth century, it ceased to exist in the land of its birth (Agency of Cultural Affairs, Japanese Religion: A Survey, Tokyo, New York and San Francisco: Kodansha International Ltd., 1972, 1981, p. 48; copied from *Handbook on Today's Religions*, p. 308).

The Handbook of Today's Religions gives a good comparative chart distinguishing the teachings of Theravada Buddhism from Mahayana Buddhism:

<i>Theravada</i>	<i>Mahayana</i>
Man as an individual	Man as involved with others
Man on his own in the Universe (emancipation by self effort)	Man not alone (salvation by grace)
Key virtue: wisdom	Key virtue: <i>karuna</i> , compassion
Religion: a full-time job (primarily for monks)	Religion: relevant to life in the world (for laymen as well)

Ideal: the Arhat	Ideal: the Bodhisattva
Buddha: a saint	Buddha: a savior
Eschews metaphysics	Elaborates metaphysics
Eschews ritual	Includes ritual
Confines prayer to	Includes petitionary prayer
Meditation	
Conservative	Liberal
(Huston Smith, <i>The Religions of Man</i> , New York: Harper and Row, 1958, p. 138; <i>copied from Handbook of Today's Religion</i> , p. 308-09)	

### **Adherents:**

Buddhism is the sixth largest religion in the world with 376 million followers, 6% of the world's population ([www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com)). The two main branches of Buddhism: Theravada and Mahayana can be found largely in these countries: Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Laos, and Cambodia (Theravada); Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam (Mahayana).

*Famous Buddhist:* [Ernestine Anderson](#) - jazz singer; [Laurie Anderson](#) - performance artist; [Kate Bosworth](#) - actress; [Orlando Bloom](#) - actor; [Susan Blackmore](#) - parapsychologist, Zen Buddhist, ghost buster, professional skeptic; [Cora L. E. Christian](#) - Black female doctor who was an independent candidate for Governor of U.S. Virgin Islands, 2002; [Leonard Cohen](#) - Canadian poet, novelist; [Rob Cohen](#) - film director; [Dadon Dawadolma](#) - singer, actress; [Diane di Prima](#) - Feminist poet; [Nathaniel Dorsky](#) - filmmaker; [Richard Gere](#) - actor, movie star; [Goldie Hawn](#) - Oscar-winning actress; [Frank Herbert](#) - science fiction writer famous for *Dune* series; [Becky Johnston](#) - author, screenwriter; [Phil Jackson](#) - basketball coach; [Jack Kerouac](#) - poet, writer; [George Lucas](#) - film producer, director ("Star Wars"); [Jennifer Lopez](#) - singer, actress; [Joanna Lumley](#) - actress; [Melissa Mathison](#) - screenwriter; [Tano Maeda](#) - filmmaker; [Me'shell Ndegeocello](#) - musician, songwriter; [Bruce Joel Rubin](#) - screenwriter; [Keanu Reeves](#) - actor; [Michael Stipe](#) - musician; [Oliver Stone](#) - film director; [Patti Smith](#) - rock star; [Steven Seagal](#) - actor; [Renee Tajima-Pena](#) - filmmaker; [Tina Turner](#) - singer; [Uma Thurman](#) - actress; [Babeth VanLoo](#) - filmmaker; [Gene Vincent](#) - rockabilly musician; [Mark Wahlberg](#) - rap singer, actor; [Alice Walker](#) - author, *The Color Purple*; [Ruby Wax](#) - actress, comedienne; [Adam Yauch \(MCA of the Beasties\)](#) - rap singer

### **Important Definitions:**

*An-Atta* - literally, "not self". A concept in Theravada Buddhism denying the permanent existence of self as contained by physical and mental attributes.

*Bhikkhu* – A Buddhist monk who wanders about depending upon others for his basic necessities.

*Bodhi* - A Buddhist term for the wisdom by which one attains for his basic enlightenment.

*Bodhisattva* - In Mahayana Buddhism, one who postpones attaining nirvana to help others achieve this goal. In Theravada Buddhism, it is one who is on the way to becoming a Buddha. Gautama is called a Bodhisattva before he attained enlightenment.

*Buddha* - “The enlightened one.” This title was given to Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, upon his enlightenment. Likewise, a person can attain this position through following the fourfold path to enlightenment.

*Buddhism* - The religion based upon the teachings of the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama). The Buddha’s main teaching revolved around the causes for human suffering and the way to salvation from this suffering could be achieved. The two main branches of Buddhism are called Mahayana and Theravada or Hinayana.

*Dalai Lama* - The title of the head of the hierachal system of Tibetan Buddhism. Worshipped as the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Chenresi.

*Dhamma* or *Dharma* - The teachings of the Buddha. Related to the Sanskrit *Dharma*, or virtuous principles.

*Dukkha* - Suffering, which is rooted in desire and attachment.

*Gohonzon* - A small black wooden box used as an object of religious devotion, an altar, in Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism.

*Heart Sutra* - One of the most important scriptures to Zen Buddhists.

*Koan* - A verbal puzzle in Zen Buddhism which aids the pupil in loosing himself from this world and moving toward enlightenment.

*Mahayana* - The form of Buddhism prevalent in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Literally translated, means “the great vehicle”.

*Maya* - In Buddhism, the mother of Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha).

*Nirvana* - A difficult, if not impossible, word to define. In Buddhism, it is basically a blissful spiritual condition where the heart extinguishes passion, hatred and delusion. It is the highest spiritual plane one person can attain.

*Pitaka* - Literally, “basket”. Refers to the “three baskets” (Tripitaka) of sacred Buddhist writings.

*Pure Land* - Refers to a teaching in the Lotus Sutra which emphasizes faith in the Buddha of immeasurable light (Buddha Amitabha) and the goal of rebirth in his heaven of the pure land. Emphasizes easy attainment of nirvana. There are also Chinese and Japanese Pure Land sects.

*Pure Land Buddhism* - A sect that bases its faith in the Amida Buddha (the Buddha of the infinite light) as its saviour who will lead his followers into a celestial paradise. Salvation is achieved by repeating Amida’s name (the Nembutsu).

*Samsara* - The cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth.

*Sangha* - The Buddhist monastic order literally translated as “group” or “community”. May be the oldest order in Buddhism.

*Satori* - The term for enlightenment in Zen Buddhism.

*Soka Gakkai* - The Creative-Value Study Society. The modern revival of a thirteenth century Buddhist sect, Nichiren Shoshu.

*Stupas* - Originally, burial mounds, now used as relic chambers or memorials, especially of the Buddha.

*Theravada* - Literally the “teachings of the elders”. The form of Buddhism that arose early among Buddha’s disciples. Also called Hinayana Buddhism. Prevails in Southeast Asia.

*Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism)* - A sect of the Buddhism that began in Tibet in the seventh century A.D. It combined Buddhist principles with the occult religion of Tibet, producing Lamaism. The priests are all called Lamas and at the head is the Dalai Lama, a man who is worshipped as the reincarnated Bodhisattva Chenresi (Avalokita).

*True Sect of the Pure Land* - A sect emphasizing the teachings of Pure Land, founded in the thirteenth century by Shinran. Today it is the largest of any Buddhist sect in Japan.

*Vinaya* - The first of the three parts of the Pitaka, or scriptures of Buddhism, containing the rules of discipline of the Buddhist monastic order.

*Zazen* - Zen meditation, concentrating on a problem or koan.

(Definitions taken from “Handbook of Today’s Religions,” pp. 321-323)

### **Belief System:**

When Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) began to disciple the five monks who became his companions in spreading the teachings of Buddhism, he first preached a sermon to them at Benares which describes the basics of Buddhism:

These two extremes, monks, are not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That conjoined with the passions and luxury, which is low, vulgar, common, ignoble, and useless; and conjoined with self-torture, which is painful, ignoble, and useless.

Avoiding these two extremes the Blessed One has gained the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge, and leads to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, nirvana.

And what, monks, is the Middle Path....? It is the noble Eightfold Path: namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration...

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of pain (dukkha): birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short the five components of existence are painful.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of pain, the cessation without a remainder of craving, the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation of pain: this is the noble Eightfold Path (E.A. Burtt, ed., *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*, New York: New American Library, 1955, pp. 29-30; *copied from the Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 306).

From this sermon the “Four Noble Truths” were developed which form the foundation of Buddhism:

- 1) Life is suffering.
- 2) Suffering is caused by desire.
- 3) The cessation of desire eliminates suffering.
- 4) The stopping of desire comes by following “The Middle Path” between the extremes of sensuousness and asceticism (Fast Facts on False Teaching, p. 24).

Now the “Middle Path” that Buddha taught could not be achieved unless the “Eightfold Path,” is followed, which combines the knowledge of the “Four Noble Truths”. The “Eightfold Path” is:

The first step on that path is *Right Views*: You must accept the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

The second step is *Right Resolve*: You must renounce the pleasures of the senses; you must harbor no ill will toward anyone and harm no living creature.

The third step is *Right Speech*: Do not lie; do not slander or abuse anyone. Do not indulge in idle talk.

The fourth is *Right Behavior*: Do not destroy any living creature; take only what is given to you; do not commit any unlawful sexual act.

The fifth is *Right Occupation*: You must earn your livelihood in a way that will harm no one.

The sixth is *Right Effort*: You must revolve and strive heroically to prevent any evil qualities from arising in you and to abandon any evil qualities that you may possess. Strive to acquire good qualities and encourage those you do possess to grow, increase and be perfected.

The seventh is *Right Contemplation*: Be observant, strenuous, alert, contemplative, free of desire and of sorrow.

The eighth is *Right Meditation*: When you have abandoned all sensuous pleasures, all evil qualities, both joy and sorrow, you must then enter the four degrees of meditation, which are produced by concentration (Handbook of Today's Religions, p. 307).

Ron Carlson and Ed Decker describe in more detail the last three steps of the “Eightfold Path”:

The last three steps of the Eightfold Path are more spiritual in their concern. Right Effort is the emptying of the mind, directing your attention toward final liberation from the world of suffering. Right Concentration involves the higher states of mind and body control.

Right Ecstasy is achieved when all the sense experiences cease, and universal knowledge is obtained. This is release or final liberation, where you are no longer reborn through reincarnation.

You become one with the Impersonal, the state of Nirvana. It is often described as the blowing out of a candle. You lose all personality and awareness and merge into “nothingness”. At this point, Buddha said, you will be at peace. But it is always at the loss of your own soul and personality.

The goal of human existence, Buddha taught, was to free oneself from the law of “Karma” (cause and effect of good and bad deeds) and achieve the state of “Nirvana,” where one ceases desiring and thus eliminates suffering (Fast Facts on False Teaching, pp. 24-25).

### Nirvana:

The motivation behind the “Four Noble Truths” and the “Eightfold Path” is the hope of attaining Nirvana. This is the final goal for all Buddhists. Donald K. Swearer gives insight into the concept of nirvana:

Nirvana has been a troublesome idea for students of Buddhism. Just what is it? The term itself does not offer much help. Like not-self (*an-atta*), nirvana is a negative term. Literally, it means the “blowing out” of the flame of desire, the negation of suffering (*dukkha*). This implies that nirvana is not to be thought of as a place but as a total reorientation or state of being realized as a consequence of the extinction of blinding and binding attachment. Thus, at least, nirvana implies that the kind of existence one has achieved is inconceivable in the ordinary terms of the world (Donald K. Swearer, Buddhism, Niles, IL: Argus Communications, 1977, p. 44; copied from *Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 309).

### Sacred Scriptures:

In Theravada Buddhism there are three groups of writing that are considered sacred scripture, they are called “The Three Baskets” (Tripitaka):

The Vinaya Pitaka (discipline basket) contains rules for the higher class of Buddhists; the Sutta Pitaka (teaching basket) contains the discourses of the Buddha; and the Abhidhamma Pitaka (metaphysical basket) contains Buddhist theology. The total volume of these three groups of writings is about 11 times larger than the Bible (The Handbook of Today’s Religions, p. 310).

In Mahayana Buddhism the sacred scriptures are larger than “The Three Baskets” of Theravada Buddhism. Clark B. Offner, in his book “The World’s Religions,” describes these scriptures:

“A Mahayanist is one who reads Mahayana scriptures” is the definition given by one ancient Buddhist scholar. In contrast to the comparatively limited scope of the Pali canon used by Theravada Buddhists, Mahayana scriptures have multiplied to the point where standard editions of the Chinese canon encompass over 5,000 volumes. While the oldest scriptures are based on Sanskrit and contain much that is parallel to the Pali canon, other scriptures which have no Sanskrit prototypes have been written in Nepalese, Tibetan and Chinese.

Since there are no clear limits to the Mahayana “canon,” comparatively recent works by later innovators are often given *de facto* canonical status in the sect which adhere to their teachings. As there are such a number and such a variety of scriptures, most Mahayana sects have chosen certain favourite ones to which they refer exclusively.

The fact is that some such selection is necessary, for this extreme bulk and breadth of the scriptures make it impossible for believers to be acquainted with, let alone understand and practice, the often contradictory teachings found in them (p. 181; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*).

*The Buddhist Creed:*

Colonel H.S. Olcott, one of the founding presidents of the Theosophical Society, proposed a unified creed of beliefs for all Buddhist. The various representatives of Buddhist schools of thought meet and agreed with what Olcott drafted in 1981. This fundamental Buddhist Catechism reads:

1. Buddhists are taught to show the same tolerance, forbearance, and brotherly love to all men, without distinction; and an unswerving kindness towards the members of the animal kingdom.
2. The Universe was evolved, not created; and it functions according to law, not according to the caprice of any God.
3. The truths upon which Buddhism is founded are natural. They have, we believe, been taught in successive kalpas, or world periods, by certain illuminated beings called Buddhas, the name Buddha meaning "enlightened".
4. The fourth teacher in the present kalpa was Sakya Muni, or Gautama Buddha, who was born in a royal family in India about 2,500 years ago. He is an historical personage and his name was Siddhartha Gautama.
5. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance produces desire, unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow, therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire, and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.
6. Ignorance fosters the belief that rebirth is a necessary thing. When ignorance is destroyed the worthlessness of every such rebirth, considered as an end in itself, is perceived, as well as the paramount need of adopting a course of life by which the necessity for such repeated births can be abolished. Ignorance also begets the illusive and illogical idea that there is only one existence for man, and the other illusion that this one life is followed by states of unchangeable pleasure or torment.
7. The dispersion of all this ignorance can be attained by the persevering practice of an all-embracing altruism in conduct, development of intelligence, wisdom in thought, and destruction of desire for the lower personal pleasures.
8. The desire to live being the cause of rebirth, when that is extinguished rebirths cease and the perfected individual attains by meditation that highest state of peace called nirvana.
9. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance can be dispelled and sorrow removed by the knowledge of the four Nobel Truths, viz:

1. The miseries of existence;
  2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire ever renewed of satisfying oneself without being able ever to secure that end;
  3. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging of oneself from it;
  4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire. The means which he pointed out is called the Noble Eightfold Path, viz: Right Belief; Right Thought; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Means of Livelihood; Right Exertion; Right Remembrance; Right Meditation.
10. Right Meditation leads to spiritual enlightenment, or the development of that Buddha-like faculty which is latent in every man.
11. The essence of Buddhism as summed up by the Bathgate (Buddha) himself is:
- To cease from all sin,  
To get virtue,  
To purify the heart
12. The universe is subject to a natural causation known as “karma”. The merits and demerits of a being in past experiences determine his condition in the present one. Each man, therefore, has prepared the causes of the effects which he now experiences.
13. The obstacles to the attainment of good karma may be removed by the observance of the following precepts, which are embraced in the moral code of Buddhism, viz: (1) Kill not; (2) Steal not; (3) Indulge in no forbidden sexual pleasure; (4) Lie not; (5) Take no intoxicating or stupefying drug or liquor. Five other precepts, which need not here be enumerated, should be observed by those who would attain more quickly than the average layman the release from misery and rebirth.
14. Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity. Gautama Buddha taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in science and literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any sage, written in any book, or affirmed by a tradition, unless it accord with reason (Cited by Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism*, London: Penguin Books, 1951, pp. 71-73; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*, pp. 311-13).

#### Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism:

Nichiren Shoshu is a Japanese mystical sect of the branch of Mahayana Buddhism. The founder of this sect, Nichiren, was born the son of a fisherman in Japan in A.D. 1222 (and died in A.D. 1282). McDowell and Stewart explain the worship style of this Buddhist sect:

Central to Nichiren Shoshu belief is the “gohonzon”. The gohonzon is a black wooden box containing the names of important people in the Lotus Sutra and is used as a private altar. The gohonzon supposedly contains universal forces that control the devotee's life. There is, they believe, a direct connection between events in a person's life and the treatment of the gohonzon.

The worship ritual practiced by Nichiren Shoshu members is called “gongyo”. The practice consists of kneeling before the gohonzon, the recitation of passages from the Lotus Sutra, then rubbing of rosary-type beads while chanting the daimoku - “nam-myoho-renge-kyo”.

The chief object of worship in Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism is a shrine known as the Dai-gohonzon located at the base of Mount Fuji in Japan. The individual gohonzons are mystical representations of Dai-gohonzon.

Zen Buddhism:

Zen is a branch of Mahayana Buddhism that is derived from the Japanese “meditation” school of Buddhist philosophy, which was introduced into Japan from China in the seventh century A.D. This form of Buddhist has found wide acceptance in the United States.

Walter Martin, in his book “The Kingdom of the Cults,” shares one of the legends of how Zen came into existence:

Zealous followers of Zen trace their origin to Buddha, who, they claim, imparted to one of his disciples, Mahakasyapa (or Kasyapa), what has become known as “the doctrine of the Buddha mind.” Buddha, as the legend goes, merely picked the flower in silence, and thus communicated the mystical fragment of his mind, hence the emphasis upon the “Buddha mind” in Zen (p. 261).

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart share another legend of how Zen came into existence:

The exact origin of Zen is unknown. Legend has it that Zen’s teaching was derived from Bodhidharma, a wandering Buddhist master living in India 600 years before Christ. Bodhidharma supposedly told a Chinese emperor that the basic tenets of Buddhism are not dependent upon the scriptures; its teachings were directly transmitted from mind to mind and do not need to be explained in words. This sums up Zen’s unorthodox approach to its teaching, for they have no sacred literature which they use for their instruction but employ any writings, Buddhistic or not, they deem necessary to further their religion. Bodhidharma summed up the Zen viewpoint with this famous saying:

A special tradition outside the scriptures,  
No dependence on words,  
A direct pointing at man,  
Seeing into one’s own nature and the attainment of wisdom

One statement attributed to the Buddha has become a frequent reference by Zen teachers: “Look within, you are the Buddha” (Handbook of Today’s Religions, p. 318).

Martin gives an overview of Zen’s teachings:

1. Revelation

Zen is at once the knower and the known. It is also the factor which unites the two in one. It is a way to Truth and not facts about Truth. As Dr. Suzuki puts it, “When we think we know something, there is something we do not know”. For there is still an antithesis, the known and the knower, and Zen seeks that which lies beyond antitheses, however subtle (Christmas Humphreys, Zen Buddhism, London, p. 2; *copied from The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 263-64).

## 2. Authority

Zen has nothing to teach us in the way of intellectual analysis; nor has it any set doctrines which are imposed on its followers for acceptance. In this respect Zen is quite chaotic if you choose to say so. Probably Zen followers may have sets of doctrines, but they have them on their own account, and for their own benefit; they do not owe the fact to Zen. Therefore, there are in Zen no sacred books or dogmatic tenets, nor are there any symbolic formula through which an access might be gained into the signification of Zen. If I am asked, then, what Zen teaches, I would answer, Zen teaches nothing. Whatever teachings there are in Zen, they come out of one's own mind. We teach ourselves; Zen merely points the way. Unless this pointing is teaching, there is certainly nothing in Zen purposely set up as its cardinal doctrines or as its fundamental philosophy (Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, p. 38; *copied from Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 264).

## 3. The Nature of God

Is Zen a religion? It is not a religion in the sense that the term is popularly understood; for Zen has no God to worship, no ceremonial rites to observe, no future abode to which the dead are destined, and last of all, Zen has no soul whose welfare is to be looked after by somebody else and whose immortality is a matter of intense concern with some people. Zen is free from all these dogmatic and "religious" encumbrances.

When I say there is no God in Zen, the pious reader may be shocked, but this does not mean that Zen denies the existence of God; neither denial nor affirmation concerns Zen. When a thing is denied, the very denial involves something not denied. The same can be said of affirmation. This is inevitable in logic. Zen wants to rise above logic, Zen wants to find a higher affirmation where there are no antitheses. Therefore, in Zen, God is neither denied nor insisted upon; only there is in Zen no such God as has been conceived by Jewish and Christian minds. For the same reason Zen is not a philosophy, Zen is not a religion.

## 4. Self-Salvation

In Zen there are no miracles, supernatural interventions, ways nor refuges. We bear the whole responsibility for our actions and no Sage whomsoever he be has the right to encroach on our free will.

We are at the same time responsible for our slavery and our freedom; the chains of our enslavement have been forged by ourselves, and only we can break them....

Nor have we anything to acquire, say the Zen Masters. We have nothing either to receive from the outside, nor anything to build up or "make" in the usual sense of the word. Rather have we to "undo" the complex accumulations of our false views (Robert Linssen, *Living Zen*; *copied from The Kingdom of the Cults*, pp. 265-66).

## 5. Sin and Evil

The opposites (dvandva) of light and darkness, good and evil, pleasure and pain, are the essential elements of the game, for although the Godhead is identified with Truth (sat),

Consciousness (chit), and Bliss (ananda), the dark side of life has its integral part in the game just as every drama must have its villain, to disrupt the status quo, and as the cards must be shuffled, thrown into chaos, in order that there may be a significant development of the play. For Hindu thought there is no Problem of Evil. The conventional, relative world is necessarily a world of opposites. Light is inconceivable apart from darkness; order is meaningless without disorder; and likewise, up without down, sound without silence, pleasure without pain (Watts, pp. 45-46)

From the foregoing, deep-seated philosophical mysticism of Zen school of meditation of Buddhism is accurately reflected, revealing Zen to be a philosophy that negates a personal God. Secondly, it denies the reality of sin due to the absence of an absolute standard of revealed law and holiness. Thirdly, it rejects the necessity of personal redemption from the penalty of sin revealed in the Person and Jesus Christ, who is the Way (Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 266).

### **How the Belief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

- Buddha was an atheist. The religion of Buddhism denies the existence of a Personal God. This denial according to the Bible reveals that they do know He exists but they continue in sin by suppressing this truth (Ps. 14:1-3; 53:1; Rom. 1:18-32). The denial of the existence of God means to the Buddhist that he/she has no moral obligation before God. Yet, they affirm absolutes in their Buddhist Creed, which reveals God's law upon their hearts (Rom. 2:14)
- Buddhism denies that the suffering in this life is the result of man's rebellion against God (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12-21; 8:20-21)
- Buddhism denies the reality of heaven and hell as a conscious state where the soul and body of the believer (heaven) and unbeliever (hell) will dwell forever
- Buddhism teaches rebirth (reincarnation), while the Bible teaches that it is appointed for man to die once (Heb. 9:27)
- Buddhists are their own saviors, salvation for them is through their good works not through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12)
- Buddhism is a religion spawned by demons that deceive its followers into thinking that the "Middle Path" of life will lead them to nirvana, but in fact will lead them to hell (Proverbs 16:25; Matt. 7:13-20; 1 Tim. 4:1-3)

### **For Additional Information:**

*Handbook of Today's Religion*, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart.

*Fast Facts on False Teaching*, Ron Carlson & Ed Decker.

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin.

## **HINDUISM & EASTERN RELIGIONS**

### **Origins/History:**

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world, going as far back as five thousand years to 1400 B.C. The Hinduism that is practiced today is not the same as was practiced five thousand years ago. As a result, Hinduism is a very complex religion, in fact, some refer to it as a family of religions. John Noss comments:

It is not one religion, but rather a family of religions... Hinduism is fluid and changing... Hinduism is the whole complex of beliefs and institutions that have appeared from the time when their ancient (and most sacred) scriptures, the Vedas, were composed until now... Hindus have an extraordinary wide selection of beliefs and practices to choose from: they can (to use Western terms) be pantheists, polytheists, monotheists, agnostics, or even atheists (John Noss, *Man's Religions*; *copied from Handbook on Today's Religions*).

Hinduism merges the varied philosophical and religious thoughts that are taught throughout the Indian subcontinent. Thus representing hundreds of social, cultural and tribal groups. Walter Martin writes, "The term 'Hindu' itself is not indigenous to India. It comes from the Persian designation of the Indus River" (*The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 351). Yogi Ramacharaka, in his book, "The Philosophies and Religions of India," states:

The different Hindu sects, while practically appearing as different religions, in reality regard themselves as but different sects and divisions of the One Eternal Religion of India, of which each, of course, considers itself the best and most favored channel of expression and interpretation (*copied from The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 351).

In seeking to summarize the religion of Hinduism, John Bowker writes:

To summarize the thought of any religion is difficult, but in the case of Hinduism it is impossible. It is the essence of Hinduism that there are many different ways of looking at a single object, none of which will give the whole view, but each of which is entirely valid in its own right. A statue may be viewed from many angles. Each aspect helps to convey what the statue is like, but no single aspect is able to comprehend the statue as a whole, still less does the act of viewing it from one particular angle or another constitute "the statue itself" (*Problems of Suffering in Religions of the World*; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 284).

Since Hinduism holds that truth can be viewed from different angles, even if contradictory, it is easy to understand why this religion can be so tolerant of other religious beliefs, because it believes that at the core of all religious differences there is commonality or oneness. S. Radhakrishnan explains:

The truth, which is the kernel of every religion, is one and the same; doctrines, however, differ considerably since they are the applications of the truth to the human situation... Rites, ceremonies, systems and dogmas lead beyond themselves to a region of utter clarity and so have only relative truth... Every work, every concept is a pointer which points beyond itself.

The sign should not be mistaken for the thing signified. The sign-post is not the destination (East and West, The End of Their Separation; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions, p. 284*)

### **Adherents:**

Hinduism is the fourth largest religion in the world with 900 million followers. But the religion itself is responsible for the birth of three religious factions: Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, not to mention the rise of new age or occult religious groups such as Rajneeshism, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) and Transcendental Meditation (TM). Therefore if one considered adding the adherents of the children of Hinduism the numbers would climb into the billions.

**Top 10 Most Hindu Countries -  
Countries with the Highest Proportion of Hindus**

Country	Percent	Number
Nepal	89%	19,000,000
India	79	780,000,000
Mauritius	52	600,000
Guyana	40	300,000
Fiji	38	300,000
Suriname	30	116,000
Bhutan	25	400,000
Trinidad and Tobago	24	300,000
Sri Lanka	15	2,800,000
Bangladesh	11	12,000,000

(information taken from [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com))

### **Famous Hindus:**

- [Christopher Isherwood](#) - acclaimed American author (convert to Vedanta Society)
- [J.D. Salinger](#) - author of the acclaimed and influential American novel *The Catcher in the Rye*
- [M. Night Shyamalan](#) - acclaimed film director of thriller movies (*The Sixth Sense; Unbreakable; Signs; The Village; etc.*)
- [J. M. DeMatteis](#) - popular and critically acclaimed comic book writer
- [Paramahansa Yogananda](#) - yoga teacher influential in establishing yoga in America, founder of founder of the Self Realization Fellowship
- [John McLaughlin](#) - prominent British guitarist (Sri Chinmoy)
- [Carlos Santana](#) - prominent guitarist (Sri Chinmoy)
- [Sri Chinmoy](#) - influential yoga teacher and founder of the Sri Chinmoy Meditation Centres
- [Ben Kingsley](#) - Academy Award for title role in *Gandhi* (Kingsley's father was Hindu)

- [Yash Aggarwal](#) - earthquake scientist; unsuccessful Democratic candidate for U.S. House of Representatives from New York's 20th District in 1996
- [Joe Misir](#) - lawyer; unsuccessful Republican candidate for U.S. House of Representatives from New York's 6th District in 1996

Famous People Who Practice Transcendental Meditation:

- **Maharishi Mahesh Yogi** - founder of Transcendental Meditation
- [David Lynch](#) - artistic, critically acclaimed filmmaker; *Mulholland Drive, Blue Velvet, Eraserhead, Twin Peaks, The Elephant Man*, etc.
- **The Beatles** - popular rock band from England (Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George Harrison, John Lennon)
- [Mia Farrow](#) - actress
- [Andy Kaufman](#) - comedian

Important Definitions:

*Agni* - The Vedic god of the altar fire who mediates between the gods and men. Mentioned in the Rig Veda.

*Atman* - The real self, the eternal and sometimes universal life principle.

*Bhagavad-Gita* - The “Song of the Lord,” the most well-known of all Hindu scriptures. Contains a philosophical dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the Lord God Krishna.

*Brahma* - The creator god, the first member of the Hindu triad, consisting of Brahma, Shiva, and Vishna.

*Brahman* - Ultimate Reality, the supreme essence of the universe, the all-pervading deity.

*Brahmin* - (or Brahman) a member of the priestly caste, the highest and most noble class.

*Darhma* - The teachings of virtue and principle. A term by which Hindus refer to their own religion.

*Ganesa* - The god of prudence and wisdom represented as being a short red or yellow man with an elephant's head.

*Hanuman* - The monkey god, lord of the winds. He helped Rama in battle.

*Indra* - The Vedic god of rain and thunder, originally the god of light and once considered (during the Vedic period) as a member of the Hindu triad. Not as important today as in the past.

*Karma* - The culminating value of all of one's life actions, good and bad, which together determine one's next rebirth after death.

*Krishna* - The eighth or ninth incarnation of Vishnu, one of the most widely worshipped deities. Krishnaites believe Krishna is the supreme deity, incarnating as Vishnu.

*Lakshma* - Goddess of beauty and wealth, concubine of Krishna (and/or Vishnu). (Also Laksimi)

*Mahabharata* - One of the national epics of India. Contained in the Mahabharata is the famous Bhagavad Gita.

*Maya* - The power that produces the transient phenomena of physical existence.

*Moksha* - The term for liberation from the bondage of finite existence.

*Parvati* - The goddess who is believed to be the daughter of the Himalayas. A consort of Shiva.

*Puranas* - Part of the Hindu scriptures consisting of myths and legends mixed with historical events.

*Ramayana* - One of the national epics of India based upon the story of the good king Rama, who was purported to be an incarnation of the god Vishnu.

*Rishi* - First, an inspired poet or holy sage; later, any wise man.

*Samsara* - The cyclical transmigration or rebirth of souls passing on from one existence to another until release can be achieved. (Also known as reincarnation)

*Sarasvati* - The goddess of learning, music and speech; the consort of Brahma.

*Soma* - The soma plant is a leafless vine from Western India that yields an intoxicating juice. The personification of soma was once worshipped as a god.

*Upanishads* - Part of the Hindu sacred scriptures containing speculative treatises on the nature of ultimate reality and the way to achieve union with the absolute.

*Varuna* - Hindu god, considered as ruler and guardian of the cosmic order.

*Veda* - The oldest of the Hindu scriptures, consisting of four collections of sacred writings.

*Vishnu* - The preserver, second god of the Hindu triad.

*Yoga* - The Hindu path of union with the divine. Any sort of exercise (physical, mental, or spiritual) which promotes one's journey to union with Brahma. (*Yoga* means "yoke or union with God" - "the Hindu concept of God as the Impersonal All - *Fast Facts on False Teaching*, p. 93)

*Yogi* - A devotee of yoga.

## **Belief System:**

By the end of the 1970's, Eastern philosophy which has its origins in Hinduism made strong inroads in American and European society. Since the belief system of Hinduism has similarities to Western humanistic and evolutionary philosophy many people did not have a problem adopting the complex beliefs of Hinduism. Ron Carlson and Ed Decker gives three reasons why Americans could adopt Hinduism:

First, it offered a subjective intuitive experience of so-called "reality". But instead of using chemicals like LSD, man could alter his consciousness through Yoga and Hindu forms of meditation, such as the Transcendental Meditation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Second, Hinduism and Buddhism paralleled evolutionary humanism by offering a continuum of evolution. Man, not only had supposedly evolved from slimy algae but could now continue his evolution through transmigration or cycles of rebirth, known in America and Europe as reincarnation.

Third, the Eastern philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism seemed to give a rationale to many people for the ecology movement. The basic premise of Eastern philosophy is monism. Monism is the Hindu Vedanta philosophy that "all is One". We are One with nature, One with the universe, One with all living things. The cosmos is one intertwined unity with no independent parts. We all share of the same essence or cosmic Oneness.

Thus, saving the environment was more than good stewardship; it was an act of saving ourselves. The humanistic desire of man to be God was at first glance compatible with Eastern philosophy in its basic teaching of pantheism. Pantheism means that "all is God" and is the Siamese twin of monism in Hindu teaching. Not only are we supposed to be One with the universe (monism), but the universe is God (pantheism). Therefore, we are One with God and in fact are God! In Hinduism, though, "God" or "universe" is by definition "impersonal enlightenment (Fast Facts on False Teaching, pp. 91-92).

As mentioned earlier Hinduism is different in its practice today then in its inception 5,000 years ago. Martin gives three classifications into which the different beliefs of Hinduism can be divided today:

There are three basic classifications into which the hundreds of Hindu sects can be divided: (1) the abstract monists, who stress the philosophical oneness of the universe instead of religious or theistic ideas; (2) the Vishnuites, who are devoted to the worship (in many different manners) of the god Vishnu (in many different manifestations) as the supreme form of divinity; and (3) the Shivaites, who are devoted to the worship of the god Shiva as the highest manifestation of divinity. TM, with its philosophical concentration, relates to the monistic classification, while ISKCON believes that Krishna, the supreme God, is also known as Vishnu and so they are identified with the Vishnuites. Rajneesh differs from them both in that he is philosophically agnostic and pragmatically Hindu. He has no inhibitions about subjecting Hinduism to any interpretation that fits his presuppositions, particularly in the realm of morality (Kingdom of the Cults, p. 352).

In view of the three classifications of contemporary Hinduism stated above, we can now explain its belief systems below:

### Hinduism:

The practices and beliefs of Hinduism are contained in sacred writings that were written over a 2,000-year period (1400 B.C. - 500 A.D.). Bruce Nichols explains these sacred scriptures:

The Hindu scriptures are divided into two classes - *sruti* and *smriti*. *Sruti*, or “what is heard,” refers to the eternal truths of religion which the *rishis* or seers saw or heard. They are independent of any god or man to whom they are communicated. They are primary and final authority of religious truth. Using the analogy of the reflection of an image in a mirror or on the surface of a lake, the intellect of the ancient *rishis* was so pure and calm that it perfectly reflected the entirety of eternal truth. Their disciples recorded this truth and the record of it is known as the *Vedas* (which literally means wisdom or knowledge - *added by instructor*). *Smriti*, or “what is remembered,” possess a secondary authority, deriving their authority from the *sruti* whose principles they seek to expand. As recollections they contain all the sacred texts other than the *Vedas*. These are generally understood to include the law books, the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas*, which are largely collections of myths, stories, legends and chronicles of great events. Also included are the *agamas*, which are theological treatises and manuals of worship, and the *sultras* or aphorisms, of the six systems of philosophy. There is also a vast treasury of vernacular literature largely of a *bhakti* or devotional type, which continues to inspire the masses of religious Hindus and which different sects accept as *smriti* (The World’s Religions; *copied from Handbook of Today’s Religions*, pp. 284-85).

In addition to the sacred texts mentioned in the previous quote there are also a collection of speculative treatises that were written during the period of 800 to 600 B.C., in which 108 of them are still in existence. These are called *Upanishads* which means secret teachings. It is stated that the *Upanishads* had a great influence on Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, since there is much similarity between its writings and the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism.

### Doctrinal Views of Hinduism:

The worldview of Hinduism is contained in its doctrinal beliefs. A proper understanding of the belief system of Hinduism will assist in wise evangelism:

#### Brahman

Brahman stands for the ultimate reality in Hinduism; it is difficult concept to define for its meaning has changed throughout the centuries. In the most sacred book in Hinduism, which is the most read of all Indian works in the entire world, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, an account is given which illustrates the concept of Brahman:

“Place this salt in water and come to me tomorrow morning.” Svetaketu did as he was commanded, and in the morning his father said to him: “Bring me the salt you put into the water last night.” Svetaketu looked into the water, but could not find it, for it had dissolved. His father then said: “Taste the water from this side. How is it?” “It is salt.” “Taste it from the middle. How is it?” “It is salt”. “Taste it from that side. How is it?” “It is salt”. “Look for the salt again and come again to me.” The son did so, saying: “I cannot see the salt. I only see water.” His father then said: “In the same way, O my son, you cannot see the spirit. But in truth he is there. An invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is truth. THOU ARE THAT!” (*copied from Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 288)

Brahman or Ultimate Reality seems like the concept of Nirvana in Buddhism. Ron Carlson and Ed Decker writes:

The ultimate goal of Hinduism and Buddhism is to liberate ourselves from this “physical personal existence” and become One with the “Impersonal All.” In Hinduism, this “Impersonal All” is often referred to as the Brahman-Atman or the True Reality.

Hinduism and Buddhism teach that people are suffering in life because they have not liberated themselves from their personal world. It is the physical, personal world, they say, that causes suffering. This is because the physical world is really just an illusion, called “maya”. In order to get rid of suffering, you must rid yourself of this illusion of physical, personal existence. It is not the true Reality.

“True Reality” is supposedly the Impersonal Brahman-Atman. Therefore you must transcend this physical existence and be absorbed into this “true Reality”. This is done by transcending this world of illusion by means of Yoga or Transcendental Meditation. You then become part of the Impersonal One, the Brahman-Atman. This is when you achieve “Enlightenment” or Final Liberation.

This state of “Enlightenment” is called by many names. In Hinduism it is called “Moksha,” “Samadhi,” or “Kaivalya”; in Buddhism it is called “Nirvana”; in Zen it is called “Satori”. In the Western countries, terms like “Cosmic Consciousness,” “Unified Field of Creative Intelligence,” “Absolute Bliss,” or “One with Self” are commonly used to refer to this final state (Fast Facts on False Teaching, pp. 92-93).

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart give good explanations of the other doctrinal beliefs of Hinduism:

#### *Moksha*

Moksha, also known as mukti, is the Hindu term used for the liberation of the soul from the wheel of karma. For the Hindu, the chief aim of his existence is to be freed from *samsara* (the binding life cycle) and the wheel of karma with its endless cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths.

Moksha can be achieved through three paths: (1) knowledge, or *jnana*; (2) devotion, or *bhakti*, or (3) ritual works, or *karma*. One who achieves moksha before death is known as *jivanmukta*.

#### *Atman*

It refers to the soul or true self, the part of each living thing that is eternal. Oftentimes, it is used synonymously with Brahman, the universal soul, seeking mystical union together, or moksha.

#### *Karma*

The word karma literally means action and has reference to a person’s actions and the consequences thereof. In Hinduism, one’s present state of existence is determined by his performance in previous lifetimes. The law of karma is the law of moral consequence, or the effect of any action upon the performer in a past, a present or even a future existence. As one performs righteous acts, he moves towards liberation from the cycle of successive births and deaths.

### *Samsara*

Samsara refers to transmigration or rebirth. It is passing through a succession of lives based upon the direct reward or penalty of one's karma. This continuous chain consists of suffering from the results of acts of ignorance or sin in past lives.

The rebirth may be to a higher form; i.e., a member of a higher caste or god, or down the social ladder to a lower caste or as an animal, since the wheel of karma applies to both man and animals. Accordingly, all creatures, both man and beast, are in their current situations because of the actions (karma) of previous lives.

### *The Caste System*

The caste system is a unique feature of the Hindu religion. The account of its origin is an interesting story. Brahma created Manu, the first man. From Manu came the four different types of people, as the creator Brahma determined. From Manu's head came the Brahmins, the best and most holy people. Out of Manu's hands came the Kshatriyas, the rulers and warriors. The craftsmen came from Manu's feet and are known as Sudras. Therefore, the structure of the caste system is divinely inspired.

The Brahmins are honored by all the people, including the royal family. Their jobs as priests and philosophers are subsidized by the state and involve the study of their sacred books.

The Kshatriyas are the upper middle class involved in the government and professional life, but they are lower in status than the Brahmins.

The Vaisyas are the merchants and farmers below the Brahmins and Kshatriyas but above the rest of the population in their status and religious privileges.

The Sudras are the lowest caste whose duty is to serve the upper castes as laborers and servants. They are excluded from many of the religious rituals and are not allowed to study the Vedas.

### *Salvation*

Salvation, for the Hindu, can be achieved in one of three ways: the way of works, the way of knowledge, or the way of devotion.

1. *The Way of Works.* The way of works, *karma marga*, is the path to salvation through religious duty. It consists of carrying out the prescribed ceremonies, duties and religious rites. The Hindu believes that by doing these things he can add favorable karma to his merit. Moreover, if he does them religiously, he believes it is possible to reborn as a Brahmin on his way toward liberation from the wheel of karma.

2. *The Way of Knowledge.* Another way of achieving salvation - in the Hindu sense - is *jnana marga*, the way of knowledge. The basic premise behind the way of knowledge is the cause of human suffering based upon ignorance. This mental error concerning our own nature is at the root of mankind's problems. The error in man's thinking is this: man sees himself as a separate and real entity. The truth of the matter, Hindus say, is this: the only reality is Brahman, there is no other. Therefore, man, rather than being a separate entity, is part of the whole, Brahman.

3. *The Way of Devotion.* The way of devotion, *bhakti marga*, is chronologically the last of three ways of salvation. It is that devotion to a deity which may be reflected in acts of worship, both public and private. This devotion, based upon love for the deity, will also be carried out in human relationships; i.e., love of family, love of master, etc.

This devotion can lead one to ultimate salvation. The Bhagavad Gita is the work which has devoted special attention to this way of salvation. This path to salvation is characterized by commitment and action.

*The Sacred Cow*

From earlier time the Hindus revered the cow and considered it a possessor of great power. The following verses from the *atharva veda* praise the cow, identifying it with the entire visible universe:

Worship to thee, springing to life, and worship to thee when born! Worship, O Cow, to thy tail-hair, and to thy hooves, and to thy form! Hitherward we invite with prayer the Cow who pours a thousand streams,  
 By whom the heaven, by whom the earth, by whom these waters are preserved...  
 Forth from thy mouth the songs came, from thy neck's nape sprang strength, O Cow.  
 Sacrifice from thy flanks was born, and rays of sunlight from thy teats. From thy fore-quarters and thy thighs motion was generated, Cow! Food from thine entrails was produced, and from thy belly came the plants...  
 They call the Cow immortal life, pay homage to the Cow as Death. She hath become this universe, Fathers, and Rishis, hath become the Gods, and men, and Spirits.  
 The man who hath this knowledge may receive the Cow with welcoming (*All quotes are taken from Handbook of Today's Religions*, pp. 288-291).

*Jainism:*

The religion of Jainism began through a man known as Mahavira, who was born in 599 B.C. The beliefs of this movement were regarded as heretical by Hindus. McDowell and Stewart explain the belief system of Jainism:

Jainism is a religion of asceticism involving rigid self-denial. Salvation or liberation could be achieved only by ascetic practices. These practices for the monks are listed in the "Five Great Vows" and include the renunciation of: (1) killing living things, (2) lying, (3) greed, (4) sexual pleasure, and (5) worldly attachments (*Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 298).

Jainism also rejects the concept of a personal and supreme God. The adherents of this religion are about 3 million Indian followers.

*Sikhism:*

The founder of the religion of Sikhism is a man by the name of Nanak, who was born in the Indian village of Talwandi, which is 30 miles southwest of Lahore, capital of Punjab, in 1469 A.D.

The teachings of Sikhism are syncretistic or merging of the beliefs of Hinduism and Islam. Instead of using the sacred scriptures of Hinduism and the Quran of Islam as its basis for what to believe and how to live. Nanak employed the works of several authors, some of which lived prior to him and had no connection to the beliefs of Sikhism in composing the sacred scriptures known as Granth Sahib.

In explaining the means of salvation in Sikh Robert Hume writes:

The Sikh religion teaches that salvation consists in knowing God, or in obtaining God, or being absorbed into God. The general method of salvation is fairly consistent with the supremacy of an inscrutable God, and with the accompanying doctrines of the worthlessness of the world and the helplessness of man... This method of obtaining salvation by a pantheistic merging of the individual self with the mystical world soul is identical with the method of salvation which had been taught in the Hindu Upanishads (The World's Living Religions; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 402).

Transcendental Meditation:

Walter Martin gives a good overview of the founder and teachings of Transcendental Meditation:

TM is a spiritual practice or yoga which was first introduced to the Western world by its founder, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as a religious exercise or philosophy... In the 1970s, he promoted the movement as a scientifically sound, nonreligious psychological exercise designed to relieve stress, to bring peace to the inner man, thereby having a positive effect on society, and to enable the advanced practitioner to participate in astral projection (his soul leaving his body) and levitation.

*God.* TM concentrates on those Hindu scriptures which present a pantheistic view of God. Therefore, God in TM is pantheistic, and one's goal is to lose his own personality in the oneness of God. This also, of course, takes away from the unique and separate personality of God

*Jesus Christ.* TM ignores Jesus Christ almost totally, although Maharishi teaches that anyone can become as enlightened as Jesus Christ through application of TM techniques. It is clear from his neglect of Jesus Christ and from his world view that he does not consider Jesus Christ to be the unique Son of God, God manifest in the flesh.

*Salvation.* Salvation in TM is accomplished by realizing that one is in union with the Creative Intelligence: "The answer to every problem is that there is no problem. Let a man perceive this truth and then he is without problems". This realization comes through practicing the meditations of TM: "...a huge mountain of sins extending for miles is destroyed by Union brought about through transcendental meditation, without which there is no way out". Salvation is almost a misnomer, since one is not truly a sinner, but just forgetful of his oneness with the divine (*copied from Kingdom of the Cults*, pp. 362-63).

Jacob Needleman, in his book, "The New Religions" comments on the initial reaction to the teachings of Transcendental Meditation and the promises of its methods:

Various authorities on Yoga and Eastern religion quickly lined up against this gentle guru with the thunderous following. They condemned what they called his idea of 'instant Nirvana', his claim that discipline, concentration and long effort were all a waste of time and a misunderstanding of Eastern wisdom. All one had to do, he said, was to sit comfortably for a few minutes every day and silently repeat a special sound or phrase called a *mantra*. Other than this, nothing else was necessary, and one could lead whatever sort of life one pleased; within weeks the change would be apparent. One would begin to feel more energy and less tension; one would become less negative, more efficient, more alive, healthier, happier (p. 130).

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON):

ISKCON is a modern school of Vishnu Hinduism which was developed from the teaching of a man in the 15<sup>th</sup> century named Chaitanya, who instituted the worship of Vishnu as the supreme God over against the worship of Shiva, who was regarded as the supreme God in local worship at that time. ISKCON as a religion really began in the 1960s by the Vishnu yogi His Divine Grace Abhay Charan De Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, born in Calcutta, India, in 1896.

Walter Martin explains the beliefs of ISKCON:

*God.* Since the Bhagavad-Gita, which implies a form of monotheism, is the most sacred scripture to ISKCON, we find that the ISKCON belief in God is essentially monotheistic, and Krishna is said to be the supreme personality of the Godhead. Any incarnation of the one God is an incarnation of Krishna: “ALL the lists of the incarnations of Godhead are either plenary expansions or parts of the plenary expansions of the Lord, but Lord Sri Krsna is the original Personality of Godhead Himself”.

*Christ.* To ISKCON, Jesus Christ is Krishna’s Son, but in a position no more unique to God than any other man could strive to attain. To the Hare Krishna, then, Jesus Christ is not the unique Son of God, God manifest in the flesh. He is not an incarnation of Krishna.

*Salvation.* Salvation in ISKCON is obtained by removing one’s karmic debt through devotion to Krishna and right actions through multiple incarnations: “All these performers who know the meaning of sacrifice become cleansed of sinful reactions, and, having tasted the nectar of the remnants of such sacrifices, they go to the supreme eternal atmosphere”. (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p.362)

Rajneeshism:

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (Rajneeshism) was born in 1931 and had achieved great popularity then any cult leader at his time except for Sun Myung Moon. Martin describes the fame of Rajneesh in the United States:

Rajneesh, bald, bearded and photogenic, first attained major media exposure in the U.S. in early 1978 when Time magazine featured an article on the guru entitled “God Sir at Esalen East”. Time magazine reported that the charismatic guru had come into vogue among certain celebrities and prominent apostles of the Human Potential Movement who were joining thousands of other spiritual seekers in making the pilgrimage to Rajneesh’s ashram in Poona, India. Rajneesh’s appeal stemmed partly from his use of “tantric yoga” (involving nudity and free sex) and partly from his incorporation of the wide variety of popular “psycho spiritual” therapies and techniques.

In the late ‘70s and early ‘80s, Rajneesh’s acclaim continued to spread within the New Age Movement in America, Great Britain, Germany, and nearly every free-world, industrialized nation... Rajneesh’s discourses, which are delivered daily, have been transcribed into over 350 books and diaries which average between \$15 and \$22 in cost. Video tapes of each discourse range in price between \$50 and \$170, while audio tapes cost almost \$10 each... Rajneesh, whose ever-growing fleet of Rolls Royces numbered more than 70 at the time of this writing, believes that “spirituality is the luxury and privilege of the rich” (*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 354).

In several discourses Rajneesh truly reveals that he is one of the antichrists (1 John 2:18):

You can be a Christ: Why be a Christian?

Let me be your death and resurrection.

Nobody is a sinner. Even while you are in the darkest hole of your life, you are still divine; you cannot lose your divinity. I tell you, there is no need for salvation, it is within you.

...disobedience is not a sin, but a part of growth.

God is neither a he nor a she... if you say he is a she, I will say he is a he if you say he is a he, I will say he is a she...whatever your belief is, I'm going to destroy it...

If [Jesus] had a little intelligence and rationality he would not have gone [to Jerusalem and the cross]. But then, there was no need [for Him] to declare [that He was] the Messiah and Son of God... Those messiahs are basically insane. He believed totally that crucifixion is going to prove him right, that's why I believe there was a hidden current of suicidal intent... If anyone is responsible for the crucifixion, he himself is responsible.

He asked for it. And no Jewish source or contemporary source says there was resurrection. Only the New Testament. It is fictitious. There was no resurrection.

The argument the devil gave Eve was that God wants you to remain ignorant... He is jealous. And it makes sense, because the Jewish God is very jealous. He doesn't want them to become equal. This is not a loving father... Knowledge is not a sin... I counsel you to eat of the tree of knowledge...*(the sources for these discourses are footnoted in Kingdom of the Cults pp. 358-59)*

The followers of Rajneesh are called Sannyasins.

### **How the Belief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

- Salvation in Hinduism is an illogical, empty, hopeless and pointless endeavor in seeking to achieve “Ultimate Reality,” because in the theory of karma and samsara how will anyone know where they stand in their quest of “True Reality” if they have no memory of their past life? Coming back as an animal doesn’t help knowing that you are now suffering for sins in a past life since animals do not have the ability to reason (Dan. 4:16, 31-34; 2 Pet. 2:12). Coming back as a human doesn’t help knowing that you are closer to Ultimate Reality or not, because you may return as a person in a different culture with different religious beliefs that deny “Ultimate Reality” and that physical life is an illusion. You may develop strong beliefs that totally deny the beliefs of Hinduism. Therefore, when you die you may be punished for denying Hinduism when you didn’t know it was a sin sense you believe that your beliefs were righteous.
- Salvation in Hinduism suppresses the reality of a Personal God by claiming that good works helps in attaining “the Impersonal All” or “True Reality”. If doing good works determines blessings in the next life and doing bad works determines suffering in the next, then how can an impersonal, amoral, without intelligence, without reason, no absolute force, decide between right and wrong, rewards and penalties? It takes a Personal, Moral, and Rational Creator, who possesses the attributes of holiness, righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, sovereignty and power to make such decisions. This dilemma in Hinduism proves the apostle Paul’s point that all of mankind suppresses the truth of the existence of a Personal God

“because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them” (Rom. 1:19).

**For Additional Information:**

*Handbook of Today's Religions*, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart.

*Fast Facts on False Teachings*, Ron Carlson & Ed Decker.

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin.

*The New Religions*, Jacob Needleman.

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

### Origin/History:

Charles Taze Russell is the founder of what is officially known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Russell was born February 16, 1852, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1870, at the age of eighteen Russell organized a Bible study class which the members of that group considered him their ‘pastor’. This was the early beginnings of what would eventually be called “Jehovah’s Witnesses”. Russell grew up in a Congregationalist church and therefore throughout his early years he began to refute the doctrines of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ and eternal punishment. And as a result, he formulated his own theology by borrowing some doctrinal positions from religious sects such as the Seventh Day Adventism and Christadelphianism, and he merged some of these teachings with his own interpretation of the Scriptures. Russell did not have any formal theological education or training, but considered himself an authority on matters of faith and practice:

In 1879 he founded the magazine Zion’s Watchtower in which he published his own unique interpretation of the Bible, and in 1886, the first volume of seven books (six written by Russell) entitled The Millennial Dawn was published (later retitled Studies in the Scriptures).

By the time of his death in 1916, “Pastor” Russell, according to the Watchtower, traveled more than a million miles, gave more than thirty thousand sermons, and wrote books totaling over fifty thousand pages (Qualified to be Ministers, p. 310; *copied from Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 44).

Walter Martin, in his book “Kingdom of the Cults” recounts a very interesting encounter Russell had with an evangelical pastor in 1912:

In June 1912, the Reverend J.J. Ross, pastor of the James Street Baptist Church, Hamilton, Ontario, published a pamphlet entitled, “Some facts about the Self-Styled ‘Pastor’ Charles T. Russell” which minced no words in its denunciation of Russell, his qualifications as a minister, or his moral example as a “Pastor”. Russell promptly sued Ross for “defamatory libel” in an effort to silence the courageous minister before the pamphlet could gain wide circulation and expose his true character and the errors of his theology. Mr. Ross, however, was unimpressed by Russell’s action and eagerly seized upon the opportunity as a means of exposing Russell for the fraud he was. In his pamphlet, Ross assailed Russell’s teachings as revealed in “Studies in the Scriptures” as “the destructive doctrines of one man who is neither a scholar nor a theologian” (page 7). Mr. Ross scathingly denounced Russell’s whole system as “anti-rational, anti-scientific, anti-Biblical, anti-Christian, and a deplorable perversion of the gospel of God’s Dear Son” (page 7). Continuing his charges in the pamphlet, Ross exposed Russell as a pseudo-scholar and philosopher who “never attended the higher schools of learning; knows comparatively nothing of philosophy, systematic or historical theology, and is totally ignorant of the dead languages” (pages 3, 4). It must be clearly understood at this point by the reader that in a libel suit of the type pursued by Russell, the plaintiff (Russell) had to prove that the charges lodged against him by the defendant (Ross) were not true. It is significant to note that Russell lost his suit against Ross when the High Court of Ontario, in session March 1913, ruled that there were no grounds for libel; and “the case was thrown out of Court by the evidence furnished by ‘Pastor’ Russell himself: (page 15) (*Kingdom of the Cults*, pp. 42-43).

Martin records the transcript of the Russell v. Ross court proceeding detailing how Russell, under cross-examination by Ross' lawyer, Counselor Staunton showed his ignorance of theology, biblical languages and not having a valid ordination by a recognized religious body:

Question: (Attorney Staunton) - "Do you know the Greek alphabet?"

Answer: (Russell) - "Oh yes."

Question: (Staunton) - "Can you tell me the correct letters if you see them?"

Answer: (Russell) - "Some of them, I might make a mistake on some of them."

Question: (Staunton) - "Would you tell me the names of those on top of the page, page 447 I have got here?"

Answer: (Russell) - "Well, I don't know that I would be able to".

Question: (Staunton) - "You can't tell what those letters are, look at them and see if you know?"

Answer: (Russell) - "My way..." [he was interrupted at this point and not allowed to explain]

Question: (Staunton) - "Are you familiar with the Greek language?"

Answer: (Russell) - "No".

(*Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 43-44)

Russell's inability to name the letters of the Greek alphabet, proved Ross' point that he was a fraud and as a result Russell perjured himself in court by claiming he knew the alphabet while in fact he didn't. Not only did Russell claim to be an authority on matters relating to the Bible, but he also claimed to be a mouthpiece for God, declaring that the Lord revealed to him that the end of the world was near. Now according to the Watchtower magazine, which presently has over 14 million copies in circulation, and is published every two weeks in 108 languages, in its March 1, 1975, edition, it stated that, "The Bible itself establishes the rules for testing a prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:20-23 and 13:1-8..." (p. 151). Deuteronomy 18:20-23 reads:

(20) 'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' (21) "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' (22) "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

John Ankerberg and John Weldon in their pamphlet, *The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses*, gives details of how Jehovah's Witnesses apply the truths of Deuteronomy in discerning a false prophet:

The Society's publication *Aid to Bible Understanding* teaches Jehovah's Witnesses that prophecy includes "a declaration of something to come" and that "the source of all true prophecy is Jehovah God". This publication further states that "correct understanding of prophecy would still be made available by God... particularly in the foretold 'time of the end'..." (p. 1346). (In context, "time of the end" here includes the emergence of the Watchtower Society.)

*Aid to the Bible Understanding* further defines a "prophet" as "one through whom the divine will and purpose are made known" (p. 1347). (What's more, the Watchtower Society makes the astonishing claim that it is the true prophetic mouthpiece for God on earth at this time.)

Furthermore, the Watchtower tells all Jehovah's Witnesses that "the three essentials for establishing the credentials of the true prophet" are 1) speaking in Jehovah's name, 2) "the things foretold would come to pass," and 3) these prophecies would promote true worship by being in harmony with God's already revealed Word. The Watchtower claims that the true prophet would "express... God's mind on matters... [and] every prediction [will be] related to God's will, purpose, standards or judgments" (*Aid to the Bible Understanding*, p. 1344).

The Watchtower, September 1, 1979, declared, "For nearly 60 years now the Jeremiah class [the Jehovah's Witnesses] have faithfully spoken forth Jehovah's word" (p. 29).

Though Jehovah's Witnesses would claim that their leaders "have faithfully spoken forth Jehovah's word," yet history proves likewise. Here are several failed predictions by Russell and the subsequent presidents of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society:

In 1877 they said, "THE END OF THIS WORLD ...is nearer than most men suppose..." (N.H. Barbour and C.T. Russell, *Three Worlds and the Harvest of This World*, p. 17)

In 1889 they said, "...we present proofs that the setting up of the kingdom of God has already begun... and that 'the battle of the great day of God almighty' (Revelation 16:14), which will end in AD 1914 with the complete overthrow of the earth's present rulership, is already commenced". (In their 1915 edition of this same book they changed "AD 1914" to "AD 1915") (C.T. Russell, *The Time is at Hand*, p. 101)

On July 15, 1894, they said, "We see no reason for changing the figures - nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the beginning, but for the end of the time of trouble" (p. 1677 of Reprints).

In 1904 they said, "The stress of the great time of trouble will be on us soon, somewhere between 1910 and 1912 culminating with the end of the 'times of the Gentiles,' October 1914. (C.T. Russell, *The New Creation*, p. 579 [WBTS, 1904])

On May 1, 1914, they said, "There is absolutely no ground for Bible students to question that the consummation of this gospel age is now even at the door... The great crisis... that will consume the ecclesiastical heavens and the social earth, is very near" (Watchtower, May 1, 1914, p. 134). (*copied from The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses*, pp. 42-43)

Obviously, these prophecies made by Charles Russell never came true and thus Russell died in 1916 as a false prophet. Yet after his death, Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford, took over the Watchtower Organization 1917. It was under Rutherford's leadership that the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" began to be used. Rutherford soon began to make false prophesies of the return of Jesus Christ:

He believed and stated that 1925 would mark the year of Christ's kingdom (J.F. Rutherford, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* [WBTS, 1920] pp. 97, 105, 140).

In the Watchtower magazine, September 1, 1922, we find, "The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures because it is fixed by the law of God to Israel... [One can see how] even before 1925 the great crisis will be reached and probably passed" (p. 262).

The Watchtower magazine of April 1, 1923, stated, “Our thought is that 1925 is definitely settled by the Scriptures” (p. 106).

These false prophecies are so undeniable that an article in Awake! magazine, October 8, 1968, p. 23, the Watchtower leaders admitted:

True, there have been those in times past who predicted an “end to the world,” even announcing a specific date. The “end” did not come. They were guilty of false prophesying. Why? What was missing? ...Missing for such people were God’s truths and the evidence that He was guiding and using them. But what about today? Today we have the evidence required, all of it, and it is overwhelming!

It is interesting that these leaders would admit that the very founder (Russell) and his successor (Rutherford) were prophesying falsely and yet would still be willing to follow their false doctrines after it has already been proven that they are not true prophets of Jehovah. In fact, they would continue to allow false prophecies to be made by the third president of the Watchtower Organization, Nathan Knorr, who took over after Rutherford died in 1942. Ron Carlson and Ed Decker describe Knorr’s leadership as the third president of the organization:

It was under Knorr’s leadership that it developed its strong missionary outreach all over the world. It was also under his leadership that the Witnesses did their own translation of the Bible, which they call The New World Translation.

The new translation was just part of the problems created by Nathan H. Knorr. You would think he had learned a lesson about false prophets from his predecessors. And in fact, the man did withstand the urge for many years. But finally, in 1966, he could no longer resist, and Knorr also began to prophesy through the Watchtower and Awake magazines (*Then Is Finished the Mystery of God* [WBTS, 1969], pp. 364-71; *True Peace and Safety - From What Source?* [WBTS, 1973], p. 83; *God’s Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached*, [WBTS, 1973], p. 44 - added by instructor). His first major prophecy was that the year 1975 was going to be the end of the age and that Armageddon would occur at that time. Obviously 1975 has come and gone and Armageddon did not occur. It was just too big a lie to weave a new tale around (*Fast Facts on False Teaching*, pp. 119-120).

### **Adherents:**

There are an estimated 16.5 million Jehovah’s Witnesses in over 200 countries and territories. Carlson and Decker give some impressive statistics on how aggressive Jehovah’s Witnesses are in recruiting people into their organization:

The Watchtower Organization is best known by its mass publications. In fact, it is the largest publisher in the Free World. In one recent year it printed over 44 million books and over 550 million magazines... The organization also publishes over 12 million copies of Awake magazine in about 62 languages every two weeks.

The Jehovah’s Witnesses have mapped out the entire United States so that every residence will be contacted at least once or twice a year by a team of door-to-door workers. They claimed recently that in one year over 3.6 million members spent over 835 million hours of door-to-door witnessing for the Watchtower. (*Fast Facts on False Teaching*, p. 117)

*Famous Jehovah's Witnesses:*

Politics:

- [\*\*Dwight D. Eisenhower\*\*](#) - U.S. President (raised JW)
- [\*\*Evelyn Mandela\*\*](#) - first wife of South African president Nelson Mandela (convert to JWs)
- [\*\*Lieby Piliso\*\*](#) - Nelson Mandela's younger sister

Sports:

- [\*\*Venus Williams and Serena Williams\*\*](#) - world champion/Olympic gold medalist tennis players

Music:

- [\*\*Prince\*\*](#) - pop singer (convert to JWs)
- [\*\*Selena\*\*](#) - Tejano singer (Selena Quintanilla)
- [\*\*George Benson\*\*](#) - singer, guitarist
- [\*\*Larry Graham\*\*](#) - singer; member of Sly And The Family Stone between 1967 and 1972, founder of Graham Central Station
- [\*\*Michael Jackson\*\*](#) - singer, pop superstar
- [\*\*Janet Jackson\*\*](#) - singer
- [\*\*Ja Rule\*\*](#) - rap singer, film actor (raised)
- [\*\*Geri Halliwell\*\*](#) - singer (Spice Girls)
- [\*\*Jill Scott\*\*](#) - R&B/neo-soul singer-poet

Actors and Actresses:

- [\*\*Terrence Howard\*\*](#) - actor; *Ray*, *Hustle & Flow*, etc.
- [\*\*Lark Voorhies\*\*](#) - TV/movie actress
- [\*\*Wayans Brothers\*\*](#) - and sisters: Damon Wayans, Dwayne Wayans, Keenen Ivory Wayans, Kim Wayans, Nadia Wayans, Marlon Wayans, Shawn Wayans; comedians, actors, filmmakers
- [\*\*Naomi Campbell\*\*](#) - supermodel

Literature:

- [\*\*Gloria Naylor\*\*](#) - novelist, author of *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982, American Book Award) (information taken from [www.adherents.com](http://www.adherents.com))

**Important Definitions:**

*Annihilation* - According to Jehovah's Witnesses, unbelievers will not receive punishment but rather will be annihilated or cease to exist.

*Arius* - A heretic who lived in the fourth century A.D. who argued against Jesus Christ not being eternal God. His arguments against the deity of Christ have been repeated by such groups as Jehovah's Witnesses, the Way International and the Unitarians.

*Chrisadelphians* - Cult founded in 1848 by John Thomas. It teaches among other unbiblical doctrines that Jesus Christ is not God and that the Holy Spirit is only a power, a forerunner of Jehovah's Witnesses.

*Don Adams* - Sixth and current president of the Watchtower Bible and Society (2000-present).

*Franz, Frederick W.* - Fourth president of the Watchtower Bible and Society (1977-1992).

*Little Flock* - Another designation for the 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses who live in heaven after their death. All other Jehovah's Witnesses are barred from heaven and live instead on Paradise Earth.

*Michael the Archangel* - According to the Watchtower, Jehovah's first creation, the archangel who later became the man Jesus.

*Milton G. Herschel* - Fifth president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (1992-2000).

*Nathan Knorr* - Third president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. During his leadership (1942-1977) the Society increased from 115,000 to over two million members.

*New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* - The official translation of the Bible by the Jehovah's Witnesses, characterized by their own biased interpretations.

*Russell, Charles Taze* - The founder of what is the present-day Jehovah's Witness (Watchtower and Tract Society). Russell wrote voluminously including the six-volume work, *Studies in the Scriptures*, where he expounded his aberrational doctrines (1872-1916).

*Rutherford, Joseph* - Second president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. He gave group the name Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931. Rutherford centralized the authority of the Witnesses during his reign to its present-day headquarters in Brooklyn, New York (1917-1942).

*Studies in the Scriptures* - Seven-volume work, six of which were written by Charles Taze Russell, founder of Jehovah's Witnesses, that expounds the basic teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

*The Awake* - Watchtower periodical designed to evangelize the public.

*The Harp of God* - A book by Judge Joseph Rutherford, second president of Jehovah's Witnesses, explaining Watchtower theology.

*The Truth That Leads to Everlasting Life* - Watchtower study book designed to introduce one to the Watchtower teachings.

*The Watchtower* - One of the official publications of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

(information taken from *Handbook of Today's Religions* and *The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses*)

## **Belief System:**

Carlson and Decker give a good overview of the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses:

### *Five Important Facts*

1. They have accepted the Organization as the prophet of God.
2. They have accepted the Organization as God's sole channel for His truth.
3. They believe that to reject the Organization is to reject God.
4. They believe that only the Organization can interpret the Bible; as individuals they are unable to do so.
5. They believe that the Watchtower magazine contains God's truth, directed by Him, through the Organization.

### *Conflict with Christianity*

1. That Jesus is a created being - a creature.
2. That Jesus is actually Michael the Archangel.
3. That Jesus was not resurrected bodily, but as a spirit being.
4. That Jesus returned invisibly in 1914 (secretly to the Organization).
5. That Jesus was only a man when on earth, not "the Word become flesh".
6. That the Holy Spirit is only an active force, not the Person of God.
7. That hell is simply the grave.
8. That heaven's doors are open to only 144,000 people.
9. That the majority of Witnesses must remain on earth.
10. That salvation is found only through the Organization.
11. That salvation can be maintained only by energetic works (*one of such is door-to-door witnessing - added by instructor*) for the Organization until the end, when one may then merit eternal life on a paradise earth.
12. That Satan is the author of the doctrine of the trinity.
13. That Jesus cannot be given worship, but only honor as Jehovah's first creation.

### *Denial of the Essentials*

1. The trinity
2. The deity of Christ
3. The bodily resurrection of Christ
4. The visible return of Christ.
5. The Person of God the Holy Spirit
6. The promise of heaven to all believers
7. The necessity of the new birth for all believers
8. The Lord's Supper for all believers (not only for the 144,000)
9. The eternal security of the believer
10. The conscious eternal punishment of the lost.

*(Fast Facts on False Teaching, pp. 121-122)*

Ankerberg and Weldon give additional information of the belief system of Jehovah's Witnesses:

Military service, patriotism, and celebrating holidays are all part of the devil's scheme to lead men away from God. Thus, the Society asks, "Do you want to be part of Satan's world or are you for God's new system? ... getting out of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion... also means having nothing to do with the religious celebrations of the world" (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* [WBTS, 1982] p. 212).

Other practices are prohibited because they are wrongly thought to be prohibited by Scripture. Although the Bible only forbids eating blood (something associated with pagan rituals), the Society has wrongly interpreted this as a ban on blood transfusions, something entirely different. The Witnesses teach that accepting a blood transfusion may "cost... [one his] eternal life..." (*Blood, Medicine and the Law of God* [WBTS, 1961], p. 55) (p. 14 of The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses).

Jehovah's Witnesses see God as a single person, not as a single Being in whom are united three Persons, as Christians view God. They also deny that God is present everywhere and limit His omniscience (*Aid to Bible Understanding* [WBTS, 1971], p. 665) (p. 18 of The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses).

According to the Witnesses, the fundamental identity of Jesus has been altered. They believe that the angel Michael was changed into the moral man Jesus, thus ceasing to be an angel. Later the man Jesus was changed into an improved and immortal version of the angel Michael. This happened when God re-created the man Jesus after His death. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the physical resurrection of Christ, teaching instead that when God 're-created' Jesus, He made Him an immortal angel. Jesus no longer existed, and Michael had no access to Jesus' earthly body. As Russell wrote, "the man Jesus is dead, forever dead" (*C.T. Russell, Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 5: The Atonement Between God and Man*, p. 454 - copied from The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses, pp. 22-23).

#### *Everlasting Punishment:*

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart summarize what Jehovah's Witnesses believe regarding eternal punishment:

The Watchtower denies the existence of hell as a place of everlasting punishment for the wicked. They argue, "The doctrine of a burning hell where the wicked are tortured eternally after death cannot be true mainly for four reasons: (1) It is wholly unscriptural; (2) it is unreasonable; (3) it is contrary to God's love; and (4) it is repugnant to justice" (*Let God be True*, p. 9; copied from *Handbook on Today's Religions*, p. 57).

#### *The New World Translation:*

McDowell and Stewart quote the reasons the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society gave for publishing the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures:

But honestly compels us to remark that, while each of them (other translations) has its points of merit, they have fallen victim to the power of human traditionalism in varying degrees, consequently, religious traditions, hoary with age, have been taken for granted and gone unchallenged and uninvestigated.

These have been interwoven into the translations to color the thought. In support of a preferred religious view, an inconsistency and unreasonableness have been insinuated into the teachings of the inspired writings.

The Son of God taught that the traditions of creed-bound men made the commandments and teachings of God of no power and effect. The endeavor of the New World Bible Translation committee has been to avoid this snare of religious traditionalism (Foreword to New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scripture, 1961; *copied from Handbook on Today's Religions*, p. 58-59)

Yet, the late Dr. Julius Mantey, one of the world's leading scholars in New Testament Greek, wrote a letter to Watchtower Bible and Tract Society stating his disapproval of them using quotes from his Greek grammar book in support of the New World Translation:

The above are only a few examples of Watchtower mistranslations and perversions of God's Word.

In view of the preceding facts, especially because you have been quoting me out of context, I herewith request you not to quote the Manuel Grammar of the Greek New Testament again, which you have been doing for 24 years. Also, that you do not quote it or me in any of your publications from this time on (*Letter dated July 11, 1974; copied from The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses*, p.57)

Dr. Mantey gave this statement regarding the New World Translation:

I haven't read any translation that is as diabolical and as damnable as the JW so-called translation... They (Society) hate Jesus Christ." ("Distortions of the New Testament" Tape "T-2"; *copied from The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 56).

### **How the Belief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

#### *Titles that Prove that Jesus is God:*

1. **Son of God** – Jn. 5:17-23 (the fact that Jesus calls God His own Father communicated to the Jews that He was making Himself equal with God the Father. This is the best way to understand the title Son of God [look also at Jn. 19:7 & Phil. 2:5-6]. Son of God does not mean that Jesus was created by the Father and thus His Son. The context of the N.T. makes it clear that that was not the way the title was to be interpreted. Son of God means God the Son.)
2. **The Lord of Glory** – compare Ps. 24:7, 10 & 1 Cor. 2:8; Jn. 17:5 (Jesus prays that the Father would return the recognition of His glory that He had with the Father before the world was created) God gives His glory to no one (Is. 42:8; 48:11). Jesus' glory was veiled in His humanity, but through the resurrection God the Father would return the recognition of the Son's glory by highly exalting His name above every name (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:18; Rev. 5:7-14)
3. **I AM** (the Self-Existent One) – compare Ex. 3:14 & Jn. 8:58
4. **The First & The Last** (The Eternal One) – Is. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev. 22:13; 2:8; 1:17-18

5. **Son of Man** – Dan. 7:13-14 (most would say that this title refers to Jesus' humanity and that would be true, but the title also suggests His divinity. The word “serve,” in v. 14 of Dan. 7 is used in the O.T. 10 times, each time it is used it speaks of worship of a deity, whether false or true. In this context it is worship of the second person within the Godhead, Jesus Christ.) Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; 14:62; Lk. 21:27; Rev. 1:7, 13; 14:14
6. **God** – God the Father calls Jesus God (Heb. 1:8-12); the apostle Thomas called Him God (Jn. 20:28); John the apostle calls Him God (Jn. 1:1, 14); the apostle Paul calls Him God (Acts 20:28; Phil. 2:5-6; Col. 2:9; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13); Peter the apostle calls Him God (2 Pet. 1:1)
7. **Lord** – God the Holy Spirit calls Him Lord (1 Cor. 12:3). In the Greek translation of the O.T. (the Septuagint), a translation that every Jew read from during the time of Christ, the word for Lord in the Greek (*kyrios*) is used in that translation in place of Yahweh or Jehovah. So, the title Lord, when used in reference to God and Jesus is equivalent to the divine name. The apostle Paul draws this connection (Rom. 10:9-13, with v. 13 quoting Joel 2:32, which in that context clearly speaks of Jehovah God. Thus, Paul says, “Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved” is speaking directly about calling upon Jesus Christ as LORD [v. 9]). Jesus called Himself the Lord of the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3; Matt. 12:8); Jesus is called the Lord of all (Acts. 10:36; Rom. 10:11-13); the Lord of Lords (Dan. 10:17 compare with Rev. 1:5; 17:14).
8. **Creator of all things** – Jehovah Witnesses say that God the Father created everything through Jesus Christ. In other words, the Father gave Jesus the power to create all things, but this interpretation of key verses in the Bible is faulty because if Jesus was created, He could not have created *all things*. The Father calls Him Creator (Heb. 1:10); Is. 40:28; Jn. 1:13; Col. 1:16
9. **Jehovah/Yahweh of Hosts** – Isaiah saw and heard the Seraphim call Jesus Yahweh (Is.6:1-3 compare with Jn. 12:37-41).
10. **Mighty God** – Is. 9:6 (this verse proves the incarnation [God in human flesh])

*Bible References of the Doctrine of the Trinity:*

**Trinity** – (means) One God who eternally exists in 3 distinct, co-equal, co-existing persons – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It is clear from Scripture that the Father is God, and it was proven with the titles of Jesus Christ that He is God, but the Scripture also teach that the Holy Spirit is not a force, influence or thing but God also.

**The Holy Spirit is God** – the apostle Peter calls Him God (Acts 5:3-4); He is called Lord or Yahweh (2 Cor. 3:16-18); He is eternal (Heb. 9:14); He is omniscient/all knowing (Is. 40:13-14; 1 Cor. 2:11); He is the Author of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:20-21); He is Creator (Job 33:4) He is called the Almighty (Job. 33:4); He is omnipresent/everywhere at once (Ps. 139:7-10); He is sovereign (Is. 40:13-17; Jn. 3:6-8)

**All 3 Persons Co-Exist** – This is an important point because Oneness Pentecostals deny the Trinity. They believe that God is one person who manifests Himself in 3 persons, that He changes roles – one moment He is the Father then He changes to the Son and then the Holy Spirit. This heresy is called Modalism (God is one person who manifests Himself in 3 different modes).

The Bible is clear that there are 3 distinct personalities yet one in essence (Jn. 10:25-30). John the Baptist witnessed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being present at the same time (Matt. 3:16-17); Stephen saw the Father and the Son as the result of the Holy Spirit's power (Acts 8:55); John the apostle saw both the Father and the Son together (Rev. 5:5-7); Daniel the prophet saw both the Father and the Son (Dan. 7:9-14 [the Father is the Ancient of Days and Jesus is the Son of Man]); All 3 Persons are conversant among One Another (Gen. 1:26; Is. 6:8; Ps. 110:1); Jesus prayed to the Father (Matt. 27:46; Lk. 23:34, 46; Jn. 17); Believers are to be baptized in “the name (singular) of the Father (one person), and the Son (one person) and the Holy Spirit (one person)” (Matt. 28:19); The Gospel reveals the Triune God (Jn. 1:18; 1 Jn. 2:23; 2 Jn. 9), therefore when one denies the Trinity he/she is denying the Gospel, because in order for Jesus to atone or take away sin (Jn. 1:29), He had to be judged in place of sinners (substitutionary atonement) (Is. 53:8-10); the LORD God the Father was prophesied to be the executioner (Is. 53:10); Jesus prays for the cup of the Father’s wrath to be taken away from Him (Lk. 22:42); if there are no 3 distinct persons who co-exist then there can be no forgiveness of sins because the question remains, who judged Jesus for our sins? He had to be forsaken or judged by the Father (Matt. 27:46) to appease God’s wrath and satisfy His justice so that sinners can be saved. That’s why John the apostle says that Christ was “the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn. 2:2), propitiation means satisfaction, what had to be satisfied? God’s wrath and justice toward those who rebelled against Him.

### **For Additional Information:**

*The Facts on Jehovah’s Witnesses*, John Ankerberg & John Weldon.

*Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Jehovah’s Witnesses*, Ron Rhodes.

*Handbook of Today’s Religions*, Josh McDowell & Don Stewart.

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin.

*Crisis of Conscience*, Raymond Franz.

*Thus Saith Jehovah’s Witnesses: 120 Years of Revealing Documents from the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society*, Randall Watters.

*Answering Jehovah’s Witnesses: Subject by Subject*, David Reed.

*Approaching Jehovah’s Witnesses in Love: How to Witness Effectively Without Arguing*, Wilbur Lingle.

## **MORMONISM**

### **Origin/History:**

Mormonism is a religion founded by Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844). Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont on December 23, 1805, to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith. Smith was the fourth out of ten children born to Mr. and Mrs. Smith. In 1817, the family moved to Palmyra, New York, which is near present day Rochester. Josh McDowell and Don Stewart record the religious life of the Smith family:

Most of the members of the Smith family soon joined the Presbyterian church, but young Joseph remained undecided. His argument was that all the strife and tension among the various denominations made him question which denomination was right. It was this conflict that set the stage for Joseph's alleged first vision (*Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 64).

In 1820, at the age of fifteen, Joseph Smith Jr., claimed to have had his first vision after seeking the Lord in response to reading James 1:5. Smith explains his experience after reading this passage:

Never did any passage of scripture come home with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine... [Smith then retired to a secluded place in the woods to seek God's counsel]... I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me... just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared when I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound.

When the light rested upon me, I saw two Personages whose brightness and glory defy all description standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other - "*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the [religious] sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, then I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right - and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the Personage who addressed me [presumably Jesus Christ] said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight: that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say..." (*copied from The Facts on The Mormon Church*, pp. 7-8).

On September 23, 1823, Joseph Smith Jr. claimed to have received a second vision. This is his account:

...a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor... Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description... [He] said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; Also, that there were two stones in silver bows - and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim - deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted "seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book... While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place when I visited it... Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, lay the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger... I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates... on the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, of through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected (*The Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith, 2:50-54; copied from The Handbook of Today's Religions, p. 65*).

Between the years of 1831 to 1844, Smith claimed that he received 135 direct revelations from God. He believed that many of his revelations were given to him through messengers such as Jesus, angels, and the dead spirits of Peter, James, John the Baptist, and others. The first vision that Smith received at the age of 15 wasn't recounted and recorded until 1838 and then published in 1842 in the book "Times and Seasons". And yet this "direct revelation" has three different versions of the same event. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, leading authorities in Mormonism, state in their book "The Changing World of Mormonism":

We have now examined three different handwritten manuscripts of the first vision. They were all written by Joseph Smith or his scribes and yet every one of them is different. The first account says there was only one personage. The second account says there were many, and the third says there were two. The church, of course, accepts the version which accepts two personages... At any rate... it becomes very difficult to believe that Joseph Smith ever had a vision in the grove (*copied from The Facts on The Mormon Church, p. 36*).

The Bible does state that Satan and his demons can transform themselves into “an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). So, if this version is true and Smith simply forgot some important details, then Satan and one of his demons really appeared to him in a heavenly form. But if this first vision was made up by Smith to mislead many, then this is an example of the warning that the apostle Paul gives to the church at Colossae:

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind (Col. 2:18)

After the death of Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844, Brigham Young, the President of the Twelve Apostles, selected himself as rightful successor. It is under Young’s leadership that the name of the organization was changed from “The Church of Christ” to “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints”. Also, he moved the organization west to Salt Lake City, Utah, where the Mormon church is officially headquartered. By the time of Young’s death in 1877, the membership had grown to 150,000.

### **Adherents:**

John Ankerberg and John Weldon give a good synopsis of Mormonism’s membership and influence:

The subject of Mormonism is important because of the Church’s influence, power, and evangelistic operations. For example, it maintains over 60,000 missionaries who actively engage in proselytizing activities throughout the world. Further, boasting a membership of 12 million worldwide, Mormonism is also the fourth largest religion in the U.S. (more than 6 million adherents). Indeed, *The New Mormon Challenge*, a scholarly critique of recent LDS apologetics, extrapolates current growth rates to 580 million by the end of this century. Although the LDS Church doesn’t release financial records, the leadership granted *Time* magazine unusual cooperation. In the August 4, 1997, issue, the LDS assets were valued at a minimum of \$30 billion. The same article estimated an annual gross income of \$5.9 billion (*copied from the Facts on the Mormon Church, p. 6*).

The Mormon church is divided into two major groups: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Salt Lake City, Utah) and The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Independence, Missouri).

### **Important Definitions:**

*Aaronic Priesthood:* One of the two Mormon priesthoods into which Mormon leadership is divided. Includes the Presiding Bishopric, priests, teachers and deacons.

*Adam - God:* Said to be the God of this earth. Taught by second president, Brigham Young, now denied by LDS church.

*Apostles:* In Mormonism there are twelve apostles in the Melchizedek Priesthood, who are subordinate to the President of the Mormon Church.

*Atonement:* Jesus' atonement is not sufficient to cleanse all sins. Some sins must be atoned for by the individual. Early LDS teachings said one's own blood was to be spilt for such atonement.

*Baptism for the Dead:* Since LDS believes baptism is necessary for salvation, even the dead must be baptized by proxy, performed by living relatives.

*Book of Abraham:* Part of the Mormon sacred work *The Pearl of Great Price*, which contains the Mormon teachings that the black race is cursed.

*Book of Mormon:* One of the four sacred books of the Mormons containing a supposed history of the former inhabitants of America. It was supposedly translated from the golden plates.

*Celestial Heaven:* The highest of the three heavens in Mormon teaching.

*Cumorah:* The hill near Palmyra, New York where Joseph Smith, Jr. allegedly found the golden plates from which he translated the *Book of Mormon*.

*Doctrine and Covenants:* One of the four sacred books of the Mormons containing many revelations given allegedly by God to Joseph Smith, Jr.

*High Priests:* In Mormonism, the fourth level of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Consists of the Mormon stake presidents.

*Lamanites:* According to the *Book of Mormon*, the ancestors of the American Indian and their spiritual activities.

*Living Prophets:* In Mormonism, the current president of the Mormon church supposedly can receive divine revelations and is considered a "living prophet". His revelations are considered superior to all past revelations.

*Lucifer:* According to Mormonism, the spirit-brother of Jesus. In Mormon theology Lucifer is the second-born creature of God after Jesus.

*Manuscript Found:* A novel (1812-1814) by Solomon Spaulding which many believe was later plagiarized by Joseph Smith to form the *Book of Mormon*.

*Melchizedek Priesthood:* The most important of the two Mormon priesthoods consisting of the presidency, apostles, patriarch, high priest, seventies, and elders.

*Moroni:* The angel who supposedly revealed the location of the golden plates to Joseph Smith, Jr. Smith translated them into the *Book of Mormon*.

*Nephites:* One of the groups of people who, according to the *Book of Mormon*, came to America from the Middle East.

*Patriarch:* The nominal head of Mormon hierarchy. It is an honorific title initially given to the father of the prophet.

*Pearl of Great Price*: One of the four sacred books of the Mormons containing, among other things, the *Book of Abraham* which teaches that the black race is cursed.

*Presiding Bishopric*: In Mormonism, the first division of the Aaronic Priesthood designated. The bishopric administers the local congregations, called wards.

*Smith, Joseph Jr. (1805-1844)*: Founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). Supposedly received a vision from God the Father informing him of certain golden plates which gave an account of the former inhabitants of America. Smith translated these plates which became the *Book of Mormon*.

*Telestial Kingdom*: Lowest division of glory (heaven) in Mormonism, reserved for those having no belief in Christ or the gospel.

*Terrestrial Kingdom*: a secondary degree of glory (heaven) reserved for those who, though honorable, failed to comply with the requirements of exaltation to Godhood.

*Young, Brigham*: Second president and successor to Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon). Led the Mormons westwards to Salt Lake City, Utah, where church is still headquartered.

(Definitions taken from *Handbook of Today's Religions*, pp. 78-79)

Below are some redefinitions of Biblical terms that the theology of Mormonism holds to according to the book "*The Changing World of Mormonism*" by Jerald and Sandra Tanner:

*Christianity*: sectarianism; a false and damnable apostate religion.

*God*: "Elohim"; one of innumerable self-progressing bodily deities; formerly a man, a finite creature. In early Mormon theology, Adam (of the Garden of Eden) was considered by many Mormons as the true earth deity.

*Jesus Christ*: a self-progressing deity ("Jehovah" of the Old Testament) and the first spirit child of "Elohim" and his wife.

*Holy Ghost*: a man with a spiritual body of matter.

*Trinity*: ditheistic; coordinated under general Mormon polytheism; thus, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are separate deities.

*The Gospel*: Mormon salvation by works leading to exaltation or godhood.

*Born-again*: water baptism into Mormonism.

*Immortality*: salvation by grace (the universal resurrection of all men).

*Atonement*: the provision God has supplied for people to earn their own salvation “by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel”.

*The Fall*: a spiritual step upward; a blessing permitting the production of physical bodies for preexistent spirits to inhabit and thus have the possibility of attaining their own “exaltation” or godhood.

*True salvation/eternal life/redemption*: exaltation to godhood in the highest part of the celestial kingdom based upon individual good works and personal merit; exaltation incorporates ruling a new world and sexual procreation to produce spirit children who will eventually be embodied and inhabit that world, each then having the opportunity to be exalted or deified.

*Death*: generally, a step upward; death represents the possibility of a form of salvation (if not exaltation) for those who have never heard of Mormonism.

*Heaven*: three “kingdoms of glory” comprising various spiritual gradations.

*Hell*: generally purgatorial; possibly eternal for a very few (primarily apostate Mormons).

*Virgin birth*: the birth of Christ through a physical sex act between God the Father (the Mormon earth god “Elohim”) and Mary (hence, not a virgin birth).

*Man*: a preexistent spirit with the potential to earn godhood by obedience to Mormon dictates.

*Creation*: the reorganization of eternal matter.

*The Scriptures*: the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, The Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible “as far as it is translated correctly” (Articles of Faith, 8).

*The Bible*: an erring and often unreliable inspired record, properly interpreted only by Mormons and only in context of Mormon theology.

(Definitions taken from *The Facts on the Mormon Church*, pp. 12-13)

### **Belief System:**

#### The Source of Authority:

The Mormon church has four sacred books that they regard as their source of authority: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price. Also, the president of the Mormon church claims to still receive direct revelation from God today and his revelations has enough weight to supersede prior revelations given by earlier presidents.

The Bible: According to the Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Article 8, the Mormon Church claims, “We believe the Bible to be the Word of God in so far as it is translated correctly...”. (copied from the *Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 67).

The church also claims that a correct translation of the Bible is impossible to recover since the Roman Catholic has tampered with the word of God. “...many parts which are plain and most precious; and also, many covenants of the Lord have they taken away. And all this have they taken away. And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord” (1 Nephi 13:26b, 27). As a result of this tampering of the Scriptures the Mormon Church relies more on the other sacred works than on the Bible.

**The Book of Mormon:** The Mormon Church believes that The Book of Mormon is inspired by God: “We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God” (*Articles of Faith, Section 8; copied from Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 68). The Book of Mormon claims to give an accurate historical account of the original inhabitants of America that Jesus Christ visited after His resurrection. That’s why the Book of Mormon claims to be “Another Testament of Jesus Christ”. The Mormon Church misinterprets John 10:16 to prove that the other sheep mentioned in that passage refers to the early inhabitants of America, as opposed to the Gentiles, which is the correct interpretation of the text.

**Doctrines and Covenants:** McDowell and Stewart give an overall of this sacred work: “Doctrine and Covenants is a record of 138 revelations revealing some of Mormonism’s distinctive doctrines such as baptism for the dead and celestial marriage” (*Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 68).

**The Pearl of Great Price:** McDowell and Stewart write:

*The Pearl of Great Price* contains the *Book of Moses*, which is roughly equivalent to the first six chapters of Genesis, and *The Book of Abraham*, a translation of an Egyptian Papyrus that later proved to be fraudulent. It also contains an extract from Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible; extracts from the *History of Joseph Smith*, which is his autobiography; and the *Articles of Faith* (*Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 68).

**The Prophets:** The prophet/president (head of the church) claims to receive direct revelation from God and thus what he says must be believed and obeyed without challenge. In 1945 a speech was given to the ward teachers, who are equivalent to Christian Education adult teachers, which stated:

Any Latter-day Saint who denounces or opposes, whether actively or otherwise, any plan or doctrine advocated by the prophets, seers, and revelations of the Church is cultivating the spirit of apostasy...Lucifer...wins a great victory when he can get members of the Church to speak against their leaders and to do their own thinking...

“When our leaders speak, the thinking has been done. When they propose a plan - it is God’s plan. When they point the way, there is no other which is safe. When they give directions, it should mark the end of the controversy (*Improvement Era*, June 1945, p. 354; copied from *Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 68).

The Nature of God:

Mormons claim that God (Elohim) once a man, and through the process of doing good works and living righteously, he attained godhood. The chart below, which was taken from “The Facts on the Mormon Church,” gives the contrast between the God of Mormonism and the God of the Bible:

<u>The Mormon God</u>	<u>The Biblical God</u>
Many (polytheistic)	One (monotheistic)
Evolving (changing)	Immutable (unchanging)
Material (physical)	Immaterial (spirit)
Sexual	Asexual & Self Existant (eternal)
Polygamist	Celibate
Morally imperfect (e.g. requiring salvation)	Eternally holy

(p. 19)

Ankerberg and Weldon record some quotes from the leaders of Mormonism regarding their understanding of the nature of God:

*Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, stated, “I wish to declare I have always and in all congregations where I have preached on the subject of deity, it has [been on] the plurality of Gods” (Teachings of the Prophet, p. 370).*

*In Mormon Doctrine, Bruce McConkie writes, “There are three Gods - the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” (p. 317). Then he states further:*

*...to us speaking in the proper finite sense, these three are the only Gods we worship. But, in addition, there is an infinite number of holy personages, drawn from worlds without number, who have passed on to exaltation and are thus Gods... This doctrine of plurality of Gods is so comprehensive and glorious that it reaches out and embraces every exalted personage. Those who attain exaltation are Gods (Mormon Doctrine, p.576-77).*

McConkie openly claims, “God is a Holy Man” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, Vol. 2, p. 78)

Joseph Smith said:

*God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret... If you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form... I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see... He was once a man like us.... Here, then, is eternal life - to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves. (Teachings of the Prophet, pp. 345-46).*

*Doctrine and Covenants 130:22 teaches, “The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s”*

McConkie taught:

*We are the offspring of God. He is our eternal father; we have also an eternal mother. There is no such thing as a father without a mother, nor can there be children without parents. We were born as the spirit children of celestial parents long before the foundations of this world were laid (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 78).*

*Brigham Young wrote, “The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself... We are created...to become Gods like unto our Father in Heaven” (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 3, p. 93).*

*Milton R. Hunter, a member of the First Council of Seventy, taught, “God the Eternal Father was once a mortal man...He became God...He grew in experience and continued to grow until he attained the status of Godhood” (The Gospel Through the Ages, pp. 104, 114-115)*

(copied from The Facts on The Mormon Church, pp. 20-22)

The classic statement of Mormonism is, “As man is God once was, as God is man will become”.

*The Person and Work of Jesus Christ:*

Mormons teach that Jesus Christ is the firstborn child of God the Father and God the Mother. Since Jesus is the first spiritually born child of the Father and Mother, he is therefore given preeminence among the other spirit born children of God. Lucifer is the second born spiritual child of God the Father and thus is the Jesus’ spirit brother.

Mormons reject Jesus Christ atoning death upon the cross as sufficient to take away sins alone. Jesus’ death has made it possible for people to earn their way to heaven, but everyone must do good works to make it to heaven. Christ’s death and resurrection only made provision for everyone to be raised from the dead, but again, He did not completely take away sin as the Scriptures teach (John 1:29).

<b><u>The Mormon Jesus Christ</u></b>	<b><u>The Biblical Jesus Christ</u></b>
A created being; the brother of Lucifer	Uncreated God
Earned his own salvation (exaltation)	As God, Christ required no salvation
Common (one of many gods)	Unique (the Second Person of the one Godhead) and of supreme importance in eternity and creation
Conceived by the physical sex act of the Father (Adam or Elohim) and Mary	Conceived by the Holy Spirit who overshadowed Mary, a true virgin
A married polygamist?	An unmarried monogamist

(The Facts on The Mormon Church, p. 24)

#### The Nature of Man:

Mormons teach that man preexisted as a spiritual being prior to becoming human through procreation on earth. Therefore, the origin of man was really before the foundation of the earth as little gods who were born through celestial sex among gods. Man's quest in a fallen world is to achieve godhood through good works in hopes of one day ruling over a planet and thus populating that plant through having celestial sex with a female god. So, Mormons view the fallen of man as a blessing instead of a tragedy, because life becomes a test to pass in order to attain godhood.

#### Salvation and Life After Death:

Ankerberg and Weldon describe salvation and life after death in Mormonism:

First, there is a general salvation, which Mormons call "salvation by grace". Mormonism affirms this occurs to all men. But this general salvation is restricted to resurrection from the dead and immortality; it does not decide a person's specific residence or degree of glory in the next life. This is decided by the second category of Mormon salvation, *individual salvation*. Individual salvation determines which one of the three "heavens" one goes to, and whether or not one earns true "eternal life" godhood.

A person's good works and personal merit determine which "kingdom of glory" he or she inherits after death. The lowest kingdom of glory is called the *celestial kingdom*. It is the place of the wicked, where most of humanity will reside... The kingdom above this is called the *terrestrial kingdom* of glory. This is where lukewarm Mormons, good non-Mormons, and those who accept Mormonism after death go.

The highest kingdom of glory is the *celestial kingdom*, and this is gained by "complete obedience" to gospel law. This kingdom has three parts, but it is only in the highest part of the celestial kingdom that salvation in its fullest sense is found. Salvation in its truest sense is attaining absolute godhood and eternal sexual increase (*McConkie, Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 176-77, 234, 670; *McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, Vol. 3, pp. 284-85; copied from *The Facts on The Mormon Church*, pp. 27-28).

### **How the Brief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

<b><u>Mormonism</u></b>	<b><u>Christianity</u></b>
<u>Bible</u>	<u>Bible</u>
Unreliable	Reliable (Ps. 19:7-9)
Incomplete as it is	Complete as it is (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
Adds new revelations to God's Word	Rejects new revelation (Rev. 22:18-19)
Unbiblical theological presuppositions utilized in interpretation	Accepted hermeneutical rules utilized in interpretation
<u>God</u>	<u>God</u>
Tritheism/polytheistic	Trinity/monotheistic (Isa. 43:10)
Physical (evolved man)	Spirit (John 4:24)
Finite	Infinite
Morally questionable	Holy (Isa. 6:1-3)
Organizer of eternal matter	Creator of matter from nothing (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3)
Sexual polygamist	Asexual
<u>Jesus</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
A god	God (John 1:1, 14)
Created	Eternal (Heb. 1:8-12)
Earned salvation (exaltation to godhood)	As eternal God neither salvation nor exaltation required
Not virgin born	Virgin born (Matt. 1:18-25)
Polygamist	Unmarried

<u>Salvation</u>	<u>Salvation</u>
By works Denies biblical atonement Possible after death	By grace (Eph. 2:8-9) Affirms atonement (1 Cor. 15:1-4) Impossible after death (Heb. 9:27)
<u>Death</u>	<u>Death</u>
"Purgatorial"; three celestial kingdoms; almost universalistic	Eternal heaven or hell; no purgatory; not universalistic (Matt. 25:31-46)

(copied from *The Facts on The Mormon Church*, pp. 16-17)

**For Additional Information:**

*The Facts on the Mormon Church*, John Ankerberg and John Weldon.

*Handbook of Today's Religions*, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart.

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin.

*Utah Lighthouse Ministry* ([www.utlm.org](http://www.utlm.org)), Jerald and Sandra Tanner (former Mormons).

## **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE & UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY**

### **Origin/History:**

#### **Christian Science:**

The founder of Christian Science was Mary Ann Morse Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, who was born in Bow, New Hampshire in 1821. Her parents were Mark and Abigail Baker. Mrs. Eddy was raised in a Congregational church that taught orthodox Christian doctrine and particularly the doctrine of predestination that Mrs. Eddy as a little girl did not like. She stated, “The doctrine of unconditional election or predestination, greatly troubled me: for I was unwilling to be saved, if my brothers and sisters were to be numbered among those who were doomed to perpetual banishment from God” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Retrospection and Introspection*, 13:5-9; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 123). Not only did Mrs. Eddy reject the doctrine of predestination, but also the central doctrines of the Christian faith.

In 1845, Mrs. Eddy reportedly discovered the principle of Christian Science after she suffered a serious fall that she claimed brought her close to death. Though her physician discounted the severity of her fall Mrs. Eddy used the experience to develop the basic principles of Christian Science. In 1875, Mrs. Eddy published *Science and Health* and later added *Key to the Scriptures* in 1883. In these works, she claimed divine revelation:

I should blush to write of *Science and Health* with *Key to the Scriptures* as I have, were it of human origin and I apart from God its author, but as I was only a scribe echoing the harmonies of Heaven in divine metaphysics, I cannot be super-modest of the Christian Science Textbook” (Christian Science Journal, Jan. 1901; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 123).

Although Mrs. Eddy denied the reality of death “an illusion, the life of life,” (*Science and Health*, 584:9) she passed away December 3, 1910.

#### **Unity School of Christianity:**

The founders of the Unity School of Christianity was Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in 1886. Josh McDowell and Don Stewart record how this religion began:

The early years of their marriage recorded many financial ups and downs until they finally established a modest real estate office in Kansas City, Missouri. Myrtle's family had a history of tuberculosis and she herself was eventually stricken ill with the dreaded disease. She also contracted malaria and was given, by her doctor, only six months to live.

In 1886, the Fillmores went to a lecture which was to change their lives dramatically. The speaker, E.B. Weeks, said to the crowd that night, “I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness”. Myrtle believed the statement and continued to recite it over and over again. Eventually she was healed.

At first, Charles refused to accept his wife's new technique, but he was willing to investigate it,

along with other religions. After an extensive study of the science of mind and Eastern religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, he decided to try his wife's meditation technique. After continued meditation, his withered leg was healed, and he joined Myrtle in founding a new religious system, later called the Unity School of Christianity.

Borrowing heavily from Christian Science and New Thought, (a 19<sup>th</sup> century metaphysical healing movement developed from the system of mental healer Phineas Quimby), the Fillmores added their own interpretations, including the Eastern concept of reincarnation, and presented their teachings first to the people of Missouri and then to the world. Under pressure from Christian Science founder, Mary Baker Eddy, the Fillmores stopped using terms common to Christian Science (*Handbook of Today's Religion*, p. 131).

Myrtle Fillmore died in 1931, and her husband Charles died in 1948. After their death the leadership of the organization was taken over by their two sons, Lowell and Rickert. Today the organization is headquartered in Lee Summit, Missouri, which is a suburb of Kansas City.

### **Adherents:**

#### **Christian Science:**

The religion of Christian Science doesn't keep a record of the number of members in its organization. According to the Christian Science Church Manual, "Christian Scientists shall not report for publication the number of the members of the Mother Church, nor that of the branch churches" (Article VIII, p. 48; *copied from Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 124).

#### **Unity School of Christianity:**

The estimated membership is 31,000 in 664 churches in America.

### **Important Definitions:**

#### **Christian Science:**

*Animal Magnetism:* According to Christian Science, animal magnetism, which is wrong thinking, causes an individual to experience the illusion of evil. Malicious animal magnetism can kill those it is practiced against.

*At-one-ment:* In Christian Science and other gnostic cults, it is the unity between the mind of God and the mind of man as demonstrated by Christ.

*Christian Science Journal:* Periodical of Christian Science, used for recruitment of new members.

*Christian Science Monitor:* Newspaper published by Christian Science, highly regarded in the secular world, with little religious propaganda.

*Christian Science Sentinel:* Periodical of Christian Science, used for recruitment of new

members.

*Eddy, Mary Baker*: Founder of Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy (her third married name) said she discovered Christian Science because of a miraculous healing she supposedly received after a fall. She authored the text *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* that Christian Scientist revere above the Bible.

*Immortal Mind*: God in Christian Science theology.

*Mortal Mind*: According to Christian Science, it is the source of the illusions of evil, sickness, sin and death.

*Quimby, P.P.*: Early 19<sup>th</sup> century mesmerist and psychic healer from whom Mary Baker Eddy learned the principles she later claimed were revealed from God as Christian Science.

*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: Contains the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science. The book is regarded as a revelation with more authority than the Bible.

(copied from *Handbook of Today's Religions*, pp. 129-130)

Unity School of Christianity:

*Daily Word*: a false daily devotion book with a title like the Christian devotional booklet “Daily Bread”.

**Belief System:**

Christian Science

The Source of Authority:

Mrs. Eddy claims that the Bible is her source of authority: “The Bible has been my only authority. I have no other guide in ‘The straight and narrow way’ of Truth” (*Science and Health*, 126:29-31; copied from *Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 125). Yet, in practice she exalts her doctrine above the Scriptures: “No human pen nor tongue taught me the Science contained in this book, SCIENCE AND HEALTH; and neither tongue nor pen can overthrow it” (*Science and Health*, 110:16-19; copied from *Handbook of Today Religions*, p. 125). Elsewhere she wrote, “The material record of the Bible, ...is no more important to our well-being than the history of Europe and America” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 1833-1896, p. 170:19-21). The divine revelation that Mrs. Eddy “claimed” to receive from God is regarded by her to be superior to the Bible. Yet, it has been documented that Mrs. Eddy’s revelations were actually borrowed from a man named Phineas Quimby. McDowell and Stewart write:

In a sermon delivered in June of 1890, Mrs. Eddy again made the claim to divine revelation:

“Christian Science is irrevocable - unpierced by bold conjecture’s sharp point, by bald philosophy, or by man’s inventions. It is divinely true, and every hour in time and in eternity will witness more steadfastly to its practical truth” (Mark Baker Eddy, *Seven Messages to the Mother Church*, pp. 20-21). There is strong evidence to the contrary; that Mrs. Eddy’s “divine revelation” is not original to her, but is a plagiarism of Phineas Quimby’s writings and ideas.

Phineas Quimby was a self-professed healer who applied hypnosis and the power of suggestion in affecting his cures. He called his word, “The science of Christ” and “Christian Science”. Mrs. Eddy became an enthusiastic follower of Quimby in 1862 after her back injury was healed by him. She wrote letters to the Portland (Maine) Evening Courier praising Quimby and comparing him to Jesus Christ.

In 1921, Horatio Dresser published *The Quimby Manuscripts*, which when compared with Mrs. Eddy’s writings, revealed many parallels leading some to comment, “...as far as thought is concerned, *Science and Health* is practically all Quimby” (Ernest Sutherland Bates and John V. Dittermore, *Mary Baker Eddy: The Truth and The Tradition*, 1932, p. 156; p. 126)

#### The Nature of God:

There are apparent contradictions made by Mrs. Eddy in regard to the nature of God. One minute she claims that God is a Being and a Principle, “The great I Am; the all-knowing, all-seeing, all acting, all-wise, all-loving, and eternal; Principle; Mind Soul; Spirit; Life; Truth; Love; all Substance; Intelligence (*Science and Health*, 587:5-8; *Handbook of Today’s Religions*, p. 126-27). The next minute she defines God as pantheistic (everything in existence is God), “God is a divine Whole, and All, an all-pervading intelligence and love, a divine, infinite principle” (Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 16:21, 22; p. 127).

#### The Person and Work of Jesus Christ:

Mrs. Eddy defines the person of Christ:

Christ is the ideal truth that comes to heal sickness and sin through Christian Science, and attributes all power to God. Jesus is the name of the man, who, more than all other men, has presented Christ, the true idea of God... Jesus is the human man, and Christ is the divine idea; hence the duality of Jesus the Christ (*Science and Health*, 473:9-16; p. 127).

Mrs. Eddy, “...the Christian believes that Christ is God...Jesus Christ is not God...” (*Science and Health*, 361:1, 2, 12; p. 127).

In *Science and Health*, the atoning death of Jesus Christ is rejected: “The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon “the accursed tree” than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father’s business” (25:6-8).

### Salvation:

Mrs. Eddy defined salvation as, “Life, Truth, and Love understood and demonstrated as supreme over all; sin, sickness and death destroyed” (Science and Health, p. 593:20-22; p. 128). In other words, Mrs. Eddy denied the reality of sin and death, so if sin and death don’t exist or is just an illusion, than there is no need for salvation. Salvation in the mind of Mrs. Eddy is to destroy the notion in one’s mind that sin and death are real.

### The Problem of Evil:

Since sin and death don’t exist then evil doesn’t exist: “Here also is found the path of the basal statement, the cardinal point in Christian Science, that matter and evil (including all inharmony, sin, disease, death) are unreal” (Miscellaneous Writings, 27:9-12). The purpose of Christ’s coming according to Christian Science was “to destroy the belief of sin” (Science and Health, 473:6, 7). This denial of the existence of evil is further emphasized in Christian Science writings, “...evil is but an illusion, and it has no real basis. Evil is a false belief, God is not its author” (Science and Health, 480:23, 24; p. 128).

### Unity School of Christianity:

The Worldview of Unity School of Christianity: McDowell and Stewart gives an overview of the beliefs of the Unity School of Christianity:

The basic world view of Unity is that of gnosticism. Gnosticism is a theological term referring to a system of belief that qualitatively separates the spirit from the material. It also believes knowledge is secret and only obtainable by a select few. Gnostics generally believe that what is spiritual is good and what is material is bad. Christian Science, another gnostic cult, goes so far as to say that the material world doesn’t even exist!

According to gnosticism, God is impersonal and one’s eventual goal is to reach oneness with this impersonal God. Gnostics view Jesus Christ as a human being who possessed, in some great way, the expression or presence of God. To them, Jesus refers to the man and Christ refers to the divine influence. Rather than agreeing with the Bible by declaring that Jesus is the Christ (1 John 5:1), gnostics, including Unity, separate Jesus from the Christ.

Unity is not as interested in theology as it is in prosperity and happiness. A survey of the literature of Unity will clearly show that the stress is on material and worldly happiness, not spiritual happiness (p. 132)

The Source of Authority: In the Unity’s Statement of Faith, part 27, they state:

We believe that the Word of God is the thought of God expressed in creative ideas and that these ideas are the primal attributes of all enduring entities in the universe, visible and invisible. The Logos of the first chapter of the Gospel of John is the God idea of Christ that produced Jesus, the perfect man. We believe the Scriptures are the testimonials of men who have in a measure apprehended the divine Logos but that their writings should not be taken as final (*copied from Handbook of Today’s Religions, p. 132-33*).

The Nature of God: The Unity School of Christianity holds to the same view of God as Christian Science: “Though personal to each one of us, God is it, neither male nor female, but principle” (Myrtle Fillmore, *How to Let God Help You*, 1956, p. 25; *p. 133*).

In the Metaphysical Dictionary, which was written by Charles Fillmore, he writes:

“The Father is Principle, the Son is that Principle revealed in creative plan, the Holy Spirit is the executive power of both Father and Son carrying out the creative plan” (*p. 629*).

In the book “Jesus Christ Heals, Unity School of Christianity, 1944, pp. 31-32, reads:

“God is not loving... God does not love anybody or anything. God is the love in everybody and everything. God is love... God exercises none of His attributes except through the inner consciousness of the universe and man”.

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ: Unity holds the same view of Jesus Christ as Christian Science:

The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, but the Bible does not here refer to Jesus of Nazareth, the outer man; it refers to the Christ, the spiritual identity of Jesus, whom he acknowledged in all his ways, and brought forth into his outer self, until even the flesh of his body was lifted up, purified, spiritualized, and redeemed, thus he became Jesus Christ, the word made flesh.

And we are to follow into this perfect state and become like Him, for in each of us is the Christ, the only begotten Son. We can, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and example, bring forth the Christ within us, the true self of all is perfect, as Jesus Christ commanded his followers to be” (Unity, Vol. 57, no. 5, 464, and Vol. 72, no. 2, *p. 8*; *copied p. 133*)

Salvation: Unity hold the same view of salvation as Christian Science: “There is no sin, sickness or death” (Unity, Vol. 47, No. 5, *p. 403*; *p. 134*).

The Afterlife: When it comes to the afterlife the Unity School of Christianity holds to the theory of reincarnation:

We believe that the dissolution of spirit, soul, and body caused by death, is annulled by rebirth of the same spirit and soul in another body here on earth. We believe the repeated incarnations of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to attain immortality through regeneration, as did Jesus. This corruptible must put on incorruption (Unity’s Statement of Faith, Article 22; *p. 134*).

Life on Earth: Unity teaches that no one should be poor in this life. In his book, “Prosperity,” Charles Fillmore purposely distorts the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm in order to mislead people into thinking that the Bible supports greed and self-centeredness:

The Lord is my banker, my credit is good.  
 He maketh me to lie down in the consciousness of omnipresent abundance;  
 He giveth me the key to His strongbox. He restoreth my faith in His riches;  
 He guideth me in the paths of prosperity for His name’s sake.  
 Yea though I walk in the very shadow of debt, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me:

Thy silver and Thy Gold, they secure me.  
 Thou prepares a way for me in the presence of the collector;  
 Thou fillest my wallet with plenty; my measure runneth over.  
 Surely goodness and plenty will follow me all the days of my life;  
 And I shall do business in the name of the Lord forever (p. 69)

### **How the Belief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

The Bible teaches that God is a personal being not a principle (Gen. 1:26; Isa. 40:12-29). The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is eternal God. Christ is the title of Jesus, which means “Anointed” not a divine presence (John 1:1, 14).

The Bible teaches the reality of sin, sickness and death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Phil. 2:25-27)

The Bible teaches that salvation is a gift of forgiveness and reconciliation to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 5:10)

The self-testimony of the Bible is that it is God’s inspired and final revelation to man (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Jude 3)

### **For Additional Information:**

*Handbook of Today’s Religions*, Josh McDowell and Don Stewart

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin

*Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, Frank Mead & Samuel Hill

## **WORD FAITH MOVEMENT**

### **Origin/History:**

The history of the Word Faith Movement can be best explained in D. (Daniel) R. (Ray) McConnell's book "A Different Gospel". McConnell did graduate work at Oral Roberts University and thus has firsthand information on the history and theology of the Word Faith Movement:

The founding father of the Faith movement is commonly held to be Kenneth Erwin Hagin, the man termed by *Charisma* magazine as "the granddaddy of the Faith teachers," and "the father of the Faith movement".... Even the other heavyweights of the Faith movement readily admit that Hagin's teaching and leadership were the key to both their own success and that of the movement.

Frederick K.C. Price, a prominent Faith preacher and founder of the 14-thousand-member Crenshaw Christian Center of Inglewood, California, can make the incredible claim that "Kenneth Hagin has had the greatest influence upon my life of any living man".

Many other ministers of the Faith movement also acknowledge Hagin as their spiritual father. Charles Capps, who bills himself as "a Spirit-filled farmer from England, Arkansas," and who speaks at many national and local Faith conferences, states that "most of my teaching came from Brother Kenneth Hagin" and that Hagin was "the greatest influence of my life". Even so prominent a preacher of charismatic renewal as John Osteen, pastor of the Lakewood Outreach Center, Houston, Texas, gratefully acknowledges Hagin as his introduction to the Faith movement and proclaims, "I think Brother Hagin is chosen of God and stands in the forefront of the message of faith".

Not everyone in the Faith movement, however, is willing to concede to Hagin the role of patriarch and founder. Ruth Kenyon Houseworth, president of the Kenyon Gospel Publishing Society, Lynwood, Washington, contends that her father, E.W. Kenyon, who died in 1948, is the man who really deserves the title, "father of the Faith movement." Mrs. Houseworth charges that the 18 books written by her father and published by her society have been pilfered, in both idea and word, by the other preachers of the movement.

Hagin may have the reputation of being "the granddaddy of the Faith teachers," but in the eyes of Mrs. Houseworth, he is just another young preacher who has "borrowed" her deceased father's writings.

Hagin, of course, would deny any plagiarism of Kenyon. He maintains that it was not until *after* his discovery of the truths of the Faith gospel that he was introduced to Kenyon's writings. There is reason to believe, however, that he was acquainted with Kenyon earlier than 1950, perhaps much earlier. For example, Hagin remembers reading a book in 1949 with the following quotation: "It seems that God is limited by our prayer life, that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him to do it. Why this is, I do not know". This quotation comes from E.W. Kenyon's book, *The Two Kinds of Faith*. Even the "revelation" supposedly given to Hagin on his deathbed is described by him with an undocumented and plagiarized quotation from *The Two Kinds of Faith* (A Different Gospel, pp. 3-7).

At the end of his analysis of the history of the Word Faith Movement, McConnell gives a summary of E. (Essek) W. (William) Kenyon's (1860-1948) borrowing of cultic doctrine in his formulation of what would later be called "Word Faith":

We began this book with the charge that the Faith movement believes and practices a "different gospel." So far, we have presented the historical evidence for this charge, which may be summarized as follows. (1) Kenneth Hagin did not author the teachings which bear his name and, thus, is not, as is claimed by both himself and his followers, the founding father of the Faith movement. (2) This title belongs to E. W. Kenyon, who authored most of the teachings on which the movement is based. (3) Kenyon freely admitted to close associates that he drew upon cultic, metaphysical sources in the formulation of his teaching. (4) During his time in Boston, and especially at Emerson College, Kenyon exposed himself both to Unitarianism and New Thought metaphysics. (5) Kenyon believed that the church of his day was based on "Sense Knowledge" rather than "Revelation Knowledge," and, as a result, it was impotent and ignorant in the areas of divine healing and supernatural manifestations. (6) Because of the rapid growth of the metaphysical cults, which both preached and practiced divine healing and supernatural manifestations, Kenyon attempted to formulate "a new type of Christianity," one that would include these practices, thereby enabling the church to compete with the New Thought cults. (7) As a result, Kenyon's Faith movement is a syncretism of New Thought metaphysics and radical fundamentalism; it is, in fact, a "different gospel." (8) Because of its cultic origins, the different gospel of the Faith movement has been responsible for much controversy, as its opponents have denounced its dangerous stance on healing and its materialistic obsession with prosperity (A Different Gospel, pp. 91-92).

To get an understanding of how the Faith movement has its origins in New Thought cultism as opposed to Pentecostalism, McConnell quotes a scholar who describes the belief system of New Thought theology:

This purpose and these principles emphasized the immanence of God, the divine nature of man, the immediate availability of God's power to man, the spiritual character of the universe, and the fact that sin, human disorders, and human disease are basically matters of incorrect thinking... Many New Thought groups emphasize Jesus as teacher and healer and proclaim his kingdom as being within a person... New Thought leaders have increasingly stressed material prosperity as one result of New Thought. New Thought implies a kind of monism, or view of the oneness of the world, but it also has strong Gnostic (i.e., dualistic, matter being opposed to spirit) undertones; that is, though New Thought is open to all, spiritual healing and strength of mind and body are available only to those who have the insights and who have been initiated into the movements at some point ("New Thought," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (15<sup>th</sup> ed., 1983), vol. 13, p. 15; A Different Gospel, p. 39).

### **Word Faith Teachers:**

Kenneth Hagin Sr.; Kenneth Hagin Jr.; Kenneth and Gloria Copeland; Charles Capps, Creflo Dollar, Frederick K.C. Price; Paul and Jan Crouch; Casey Treat, Marilyn Hickey; Jesse Duplantis; Earl Paulk; Joyce Meyer; Joel Osteen; John Bevere; Markus Bishop; Juanita Bynum; Morris Cerullo; Benny Hinn; Rodney Howard-Browne; Larry Huch; T.D. Jakes; Bishop Eddie L.

Long; Clarence McClendon; Myles Munroe; Steve Munsey; Mike Murdock; Rod Parsley; Peter Popoff; Oral Roberts; R.W. Shambach; Robert Schuller; Robert Tilton; Paula White

### **Important Definitions:**

*Faith is a Force:* As is implied by the title “Word-Faith,” the supporters of this movement believe that faith works like a mighty power or force. Through faith, we can obtain anything we want -- health, wealth, success, whatever. However, this force is only released through the spoken word. As we speak the words of faith, power is discharged to accomplish our desires (The Word-Faith Movement, Gary E. Gilley; [www.rapidnet.com](http://www.rapidnet.com))

*Gospel of Health:* Word Faith teachers claim that the atoning death of Jesus Christ not only made provision for our sins to be forgiven but also guaranteed that every believer will receive healing from any sickness or disease in this life. You will often hear them misinterpret such passages as 1 Pet. 2:24 - “by His wounds you were healed,” which is a quote out of Isa. 53:5. And Matt. 8:17 - “He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases,” a quote out of Isa. 53:4. If a believer is sick, he or she is in sin or does not have the faith to believe God for a miracle. “... it is the plan of our Father God in His great love and His great mercy that no believer should ever be sick, that every believer should live his life full span down here on earth and that every believer should finally just fall asleep in Jesus” (Hagin, *Seven Things You Should Know About Divine Healing*, p. 21). For forty-five years Hagin denied having a headache, claiming it as “simply symptoms rather than any indication of a headache” (In the Name of Jesus, p. 44).

*Gospel of Wealth:* God wills for all believers be financially prosperous. If a believer is living in poverty, he/she is living outside of God’s will. “*You must realize that it is God’s will for you to prosper*” (Copeland, *Laws of Prosperity*, p. 51).

*Hagin, Kenneth* (1917-2003): Recognized by many in the Word-Faith Movement, as one of its founders, he was widely known as Dad Hagin. He founded the Rhema Bible Church and the Rhema Bible Training Center, which has trained many Word-Faith pastors/teachers serving in Word-Faith churches throughout the world. He was succeeded by his son, Kenneth Hagin, Jr. ([www.rhema.org](http://www.rhema.org)). (James Walker, *The Concise Guide to Today’s Religions and Spirituality*, p. 169).

*Positive Confession* (Name-in-Claim-it; Confess it Possess it): this is thought actualization which stresses the inherent power of words and thoughts. In other words, man has the power to decide his own future physically and financially based on what he says verbally and how well he uses the spiritual laws. Some Word Faith teachers misapply Proverbs 18:21 to prove their point - “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And those who love it will eat its fruit”.

*Seed-faith theology:* to receive anything from God the person must be willing to first “sow a seed of faith” or donate a certain amount of money to the ministry of the Word Faith teacher. The giving of money is an outward expression that one truly believes God will answer he/her requests. The larger the donation, the bigger expression of faith. This is known as “seed-faith offering”.

*Word-Faith Movement:* frequently called Word of Faith or name-it-and-claim-it; is the belief that Christians have within themselves the supernatural power to create reality by speaking the word. This movement is often presented as an answer to the lack of life and miracles in some Christian churches... While not all Word-Faith teachers believe exactly alike on all issues, there are some common elements found among many of them, especially among the popular Word-Faith tele-preachers/ evangelists. These include: 1) The believer's faith itself (independent of God's direct action or will) contains the power to bring desired results - usually pertaining to health and financial prosperity. 2) Believers are little gods or divine beings who possess all or some of the distinctive attributes of God. 3) As little gods, believers can therefore emulate God, who spoke all things into existence. This means words are containers of power. Whatever one speaks will occur, be it negative or positive.... Those who believe this tend to also believe it is a spiritual law that applies to both the believer and the nonbeliever. 4) In taking man's sins upon Himself, Jesus died as a sinner in need of redemption and had to obtain His own redemption in hell (James Walker, *The Concise Guide to Today's Religions and Spirituality*, pp. 347-48).

There are other terms that are used that have Christian Science overtones and anti-gospel meanings: the God-kind of faith; the force of faith; the Anointing; spirit-man; spiritual death of Christ; born-again Jesus; authority of the believer. The other names of this movement are Word-of-Faith; Positive Confession; Faith-formula; Health and Wealth Gospel.

### **Brief System:**

Dr. John MacArthur, in his book Charismatic Chaos, details the many heresies and cultic beliefs that make-up the Word-Faith Movement:

Also known as "Name-in-Claim-it," "Health and Wealth Gospel," "Positive Confession," "Word of Faith," etc... Word-Faith teachers owe their ancestry to groups like Christian Science, Swedenborgianism, Theosophy, Science of Mind, and New Thought--not to classical Pentecostalism. It reveals that at their very core, Word-Faith teachings are corrupt. Their undeniable derivation is cultish, not Christian. The sad truth is that the gospel proclaimed by the Word-Faith movement is not the gospel of the New Testament. Word-Faith doctrine is a mongrel system, a blend of mysticism, dualism, and gnosticism that borrows generously from the teachings of the metaphysical cults. The Word-Faith movement may be the most dangerous false system that has grown out of the charismatic movement so far, because so many charismatics are unsure of the finality of Scripture  
(John MacArthur, Charismatic Chaos, p. 290).

In an internet article titled "The Word-Faith Movement," Clete Hux of the Watchman Fellowship ministry gives a good overview of the belief system:

#### **God**

Word-Faith teachers claim that God operates by spiritual law and is obliged to obey the faith-filled commands and desires of believers. He not only reveals prosperity teaching supernaturally to the Word-Faith teachers, but personally and verbally confirms their unique interpretations of Scripture (Copeland, *Laws of Prosperity*, pp. 60-62).

They say the Abrahamic Covenant is the basis for commanding God to do His part in the covenant. Robert Tilton says, "we make our own promises to do our part, then we can tell God,

on the authority of His word, what we would like Him to do. That's right, you can actually tell God what you would like His part in the Covenant to be" (*God's Miracle Plan for Man*, p. 36). Kenneth Copeland says, "as a believer, you have a right to make commands in the name of Jesus. Each time you stand on the Word, you are commanding God to a certain extent, because it is His Word" (*Our Covenant with God*, p. 32). Copeland goes so far as to say that "God was the lesser party and Abraham was the greater" in the covenant between them (Copeland, *Legal and Vital Aspects of Redemption*, 1985, Audio Tape #01-0403).

The Faith teachers also make God into a big man. Copeland says, "God is...a being that stands somewhere around 6'-2," 6'-3," that weighs somewhere in the neighborhood of a couple of hundred pounds, little better, and has a hand span of nine inches across" (*Spirit, Soul, and Body*, 1985, Tape #01-0601). Morris Cerillo, in an alleged out-of-body experience, describes God: "Suddenly, in front of this tremendous multitude of people, the glory of God appeared. The form that I saw was about the height of a man 6 feet tall, maybe taller, and twice as broad as a human body, with no distinguishing features such as eyes, nose, or mouth" (*The Miracle Book*, pp. x-xi).

### **Man**

Word-Faith teachers say that not only is God a big man, but man is a little god. Kenneth Hagin has asserted, "man...was created on terms of equality with God, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority.... He made us the same class of being that He is Himself.... He lived on terms equal with God.... The believer is called Christ, that's who we are; we're Christ" (*Zoe: The God Kind of Life*, pp. 35-36, 41). "God's reason for creating Adam was His desire to reproduce Himself...He was not a little like God. He was not almost like God. He was not subordinate to God even" (Copeland, *Following the Faith of Abraham*, 1989, Tape #01-3001). He also proclaims, "You don't have a God in you < you are one!" (Copeland, *The Force of Love*, 1987, Tape #02-0028). Morris Cerillo says "the whole purpose of God was to reproduce Himself. ...you're not looking at Morris Cerillo, you're looking at God, you're looking at Jesus" (*The End Time Manifestation of the Sons of God*, Audio Tape 1, Sides 1 & 2).

### **Christ**

The deity of Christ is compromised. Kenneth Copeland, in relating what Christ supposedly told him, says, "don't be disturbed when people accuse you of thinking you are God...the more you get to be like Me, the more they are going to think that way of you. They crucified Me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim I was God. I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was with Me" (Copeland, "Take Time to Pray," *Believer's Voice of Victory*, #15, 2 February 1987, p. 9). "Jesus was on the earth just a man, not the son of God" (Frederick K.C. Price, Tape #RP 19, May 1993). And Kenneth Hagin says, "You are as much the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ was" (*The Word of Faith*, December 1980, p. 14).

### **Atonement**

The very important doctrine of the atonement of Christ is distorted. Frequently Word-Faith teachers unduly over-emphasize the spiritual death instead of the physical death of Christ. "Physical death will not remove sins" (Hagin, *The Name of Jesus*, p. 29). In other words, it took the spiritual death of Jesus to atone for sins. "Do you think that the punishment of our sins was to die on the cross? If that was the case, the two thieves could have paid our price. No, the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God" (K. C. Price, *Ever Increasing Faith Messenger*, June 1990, p. 7).

According to Word-Faith teachers, when Adam rebelled, or "committed high treason," he not only betrayed God by turning over to Satan what God had given him, he also took on the nature of Satan. So, to redeem mankind and creation from Satan's legal control, Jesus, as the second Adam, had to die not only physically but spiritually. This may be acceptable among some evangelicals. But where it has led Word-Faith teachers is not. They say Jesus not only bore our sins on Calvary but also took on the actual nature of Satan himself. "Just as Adam died spiritually, Jesus died spiritually. The spiritual death He suffered caused His physical body to die.... When *Jesus accepted the sin nature of Satan* into His Spirit He cried 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' He was separated from God... He was ushered into the bowels of hell" (Kenneth Copeland, *Classic Redemption*, p. 13; emphasis added). "Spiritual death means having Satan's nature" (Hagin, *The Name of Jesus*, p. 31).

Just a man on earth and taking on the nature of Satan at the cross, Jesus becomes just a sinner in need of redemption. At the resurrection Jesus is a *born-again man from the pit of hell*. "Jesus was born again in the pit of Hell...The Church started when Jesus was born again in the gates of Hell" (Charles Capps, *Authority In Three Worlds*, pp. 212 13).

(Quote taken from [www.watchman.org/profile/wordpro.htm](http://www.watchman.org/profile/wordpro.htm))

### **How the Belief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

Hux give a good biblical response to the theology of the Word-Faith Movement:

- 1) God is the unique, Sovereign of the Universe** (1 Timothy 6:15). God is pure spirit (John 4:24). There is no biblical basis for teaching that God has His own body, as an essential part of His nature or being. This would be more in line with Mormonism than orthodox Christianity.
- 2) Man is unique from the rest of Creation but is not Divine.** He was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27; 9:6), but bearing God's image does not make him a "little god." By definition, God is an "uncreated" or self-existent Being. Obviously, humans were created and therefore are not self-existent or divine; only God has a divine nature (Galatians 4:8; Isaiah 1:6-11, 43:10, 44:6; Ezekiel 28:2; Psalms 8:6-8).
- 3) Christ is Eternal, the Only Begotten Son, and the Only Incarnation of God** (John 1:1, 2, 15; 1:14, 18; 3:16; 1 John 4:1). In Him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). By receiving the limitations of humanity (Philippians 2:6-7) Jesus forwent the exercise of some of His prerogatives as God. But He did not cease to be God. It is also impossible for the natures of God or man (Christ was both on earth) to cease being what they are.
- 4) The nature of the atonement had to do with Jesus' physical death on the cross being the payment for sins** (Hebrews 9:22). Christ said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), which translates *telelistai* meaning "paid for in full." Payment for our sins took place on the cross (Matt. 26:28; 1 Pet. 2:24; Col. 1:20-22; Heb. 10:10, 12, 14, 19 20). There was nothing more to pay beyond the cross (Heb. 10:18).
- 5) God is the only One who ever created reality by the power of His Word** (Genesis 1:3). He does not have or need "faith." Faith is depending on something outside ourselves. If God depends upon something outside Himself, He is not Supreme and therefore not God. Man, not God, is in need of faith. The faith referenced in Mark 11:22 and Hebrews 11:3 is clearly "the faith which has God as its object," not "the kind of faith that God has."

**6) The use of words for Positive Confession** ↪ One may help or hurt another by words of encouragement or condemnation, by telling the truth or misleading, etc. But to treat words as if they were some "star wars" type weapon by which reality is manipulated or altered is not biblical, but occultic.

(Quote taken from [www.watchman.org/profile/wordpro.htm](http://www.watchman.org/profile/wordpro.htm))

### **For Additional Information:**

- Atonement and the Word-Faith Movement ↗ Article from Watchman Fellowship
- Atonement Where? ↗ A Biblical analysis and refutation of the disturbing claims put forward by the Faith Movement, which include the inefficiency of Christ's blood, alone, to atone for the sins of man; the need for Christ's spiritual death, and that the redemption of mankind was completed in hell. By Moreno Dal Bello
- An Examination of the Word-Faith Movement ↗ A good overview.
- Faith in Faith or Faith in God? ↗ by Hank Hanegraaff, president of CRI
- The 'Faith' Movement May Be Prospering, But Is It Healthy? ↗ By Stuart StJohn.
- Heresies of the Word Faith Movement ↗ in chart form.
- Heresies of the Word-Faith Movement ↗ Documented with quotes (.wav files available)
- Misplaced Faith ↗ "By saying the right formulas, can people control God?"
- My Word-of-Faith Testimony ↗ by Tricia Tillin
- Pentecost or Plotinus? ↗ A discussion of the origins of word-faith teaching being Plotinus not the Pentecostal movement. By Oliver Hammond.
- Positive Confession ↗ Article from Watchman Fellowship
- Profile of the Word-Faith Movement ↗ by Watchman Fellowship
- Ten Reasons To Reject Word of Faith Teachings ↗ By Tricia Tillin
- What's Wrong With The Faith Movement? ↗ and part two ↗ By Hank Hanegraaff.
- Word-Faith Theology ↗ by Watchman Fellowship
- Word-Faith Theology and Mormonism ↗ a Watchman Fellowship article
- **The Word-Faith Controversy : Understanding the Health and Wealth Gospel** ↗ by Robert Bowman.

- Charismatic Chaos*, John MacArthur
- A Different Gospel*, Daniel Ray McConnell
- Christianity In Crisis*, Hank Hanegraaff

[www.watchman.org](http://www.watchman.org)

[www.deceptioninthechurch.com](http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com)

[www.gospeloutreach.net](http://www.gospeloutreach.net)

## L. Ron Hubbard and SCIENTOLOGY

### Origin/History:

Scientology was founded by L. (Lafayette) Ron Hubbard, who was born in Nebraska, March 13, 1911. Hubbard became a famous science fiction writer in the 1930s. The concepts of Scientology came out of his science fiction works; one was the 1938 manuscript titled "Excalibur". Walter Martin, in "Kingdom of the Cults" shares how this cult officially came into existence:

In May of 1950, Hubbard collected and published many of these ideas in an article in *Astounding Science Fiction*. During the same year, the systematic presentation of his quasi-psychotherapeutic and religious ideas was published as the non-fiction *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. The book has now sold millions of copies, and Hubbard has written prolifically about his revolutionary new way to promote mental, emotional, and spiritual perfection in literally dozens of Scientology books.

Hubbard's movement was known as Dianetics until, in 1952, Hubbard reorganized it, renamed it Scientology and declared it a religious system and its centers of instruction, churches. Counselors are now called ministers and have even adopted clerical clothing. While the sales of *Dianetics* and the growth of the Scientology centers were extremely impressive, the claims of Scientology often sounded more like science fiction than religion. Ralph Smith recounts,

One preclear [student of Scientology] said that this thetan [somewhat like "soul" or "spirit"] had inhabited the body of a doll on the planet Mars, 469,476,600 years ago. Martians seized the doll and took it to a temple, where it was zapped by a bishop's gun while the congregation chanted "God is Love". The thetan was then put into an ice cube, placed aboard a flying saucer, and dropped off at Planet ZX 432, where it was given a robot body, then put to work unloading flying saucers. Being a bit unruly, it zapped another robot to death and was shipped off in a flying saucer to be punished. But the flying saucer exploded, and the thetan fell into space ("Scientology - Menace to Mental Health" in Today's Health, Dec. 1968, p.38; *copied from Kingdom of the Cults pp. 345-46*).

The history of Scientology is fraught with controversy, lies and illegal activity. Martin accounts:

Scientology publications long claimed that Hubbard graduated in civil engineering from George Washington University as a nuclear physicist, although the university records show that he attended for two short years, during the second of which he was on academic probation, and failed physics. Hubbard's Ph.D. was said to be from a Sequoia University in California, although there is no proof of the existence of any accredited institution in California by that name that grants doctorates.

National governments of several countries (including the United States, Australia, Great Britain, and France) have investigated the Scientology organization and have issued warnings about the veracity of its claims. Scientology's troubles with the United States government have included a raid by the Food and Drug Administration in 1963; Internal Revenue Service audits, rulings, and judgments concerning the collection and taxation of the millions of dollars of annual church income; an FBI raid of church offices in Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles in 1977; and indictments and/or convictions in federal court of leading Scientologists (including Hubbard's

wife, Mary Sue) for “burglary, obstruction of justice, wiretapping, harboring a fugitive, and conspiracy”. The alleged extent of Scientology’s operations against the government was described by *Time* magazine:

...bugging and burglarizing the Washington offices of the IRS, the Federal Trade Commission, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Justice, Treasury and Labor departments. These break-ins were part of a vast spying operation, created by Hubbard and directed by his wife, to gather information on “enemies” of the church. One Scientology document so identifies 136 governmental agencies at home and abroad. At its height, the espionage system, called “Operation Snow White” by Hubbard, included up to 5,000 covert agents who are placed in government offices, foreign embassies and consulates, as well as in private organizations critical of Scientology. Hubbard even assembled a dossier on President Richard Nixon and individuals ranging from U.S. Senators to members of the Rockefeller family (*Time*, Jan. 31, 1983, p. 64; *copied from Kingdom of the Cults*, pp. 345-47).

Scientology has also been known to intimidate those who criticize their organization and belief system. Walter writes:

A stinging indictment of Hubbard and Scientology and their tactics in silencing critics was delivered by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Paul G. Breckenridge J. in his legal opinion on a case involving a Scientology critic and ex-Scientologist, Gerald Armstrong, who was at one time commissioned by Scientology to write Hubbard’s authorized biography. The judge’s opinion reads, in part:

In addition to violating and abusing its own members’ civil rights, the organization over the years with its “Fair Game” doctrine has harassed and abused those persons not in the church whom it perceives as enemies. The organization clearly is schizophrenic and paranoid, and this bizarre combination seems to be a reflection of its founder... The evidence portrays a man who has been virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements. The writings and documents in evidence additionally reflect his egoism, greed, avarice, lust for power and vindictiveness and aggressiveness against persons perceived by him to be disloyal or hostile (quoted by Myrna Oliver, “Ex-Scientology Aide Absolved by Ruling,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1984, p. 20; *copied from Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 346-47).

Today, it is believed by many that Hubbard may have died in the early 1980s. *Time* magazine in 1983 described Hubbard’s life as:

A reclusive multimillionaire who preferred to work all night. A man terrified of germs who fought his growing array of ailments with a variety of drugs and massive vitamin injections. A brilliant and dominating figure who built an empire and who was both revered and feared. And now, to make the comparison [to the late Howard Hughes] more compelling still, the question of his fate. Even longtime intimates have not seen him in more than two years. They do not know whether he is living in seclusion by his own choice, or whether he is mentally incompetent and a captive of former underlings. Some of his old aides think he may even be dead (*Time* p. 64; *copied from Kingdom of Cults*, p. 346)

The headquarters of Scientology is in Clearwater, Florida.

## Adherents:

Of the top twenty religions in America in 2001, Scientology was ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in the number of adherents at 55,000. It is estimated as of 2004 that the membership of Scientology has reached 77,621. Many of the followers of Scientology are entertainers. Therefore, it has been dubbed the "Stars' cult".

### Famous Adherents:

- **L. Ron Hubbard** - best-selling science fiction author; founder of Scientology
- [John Travolta](#) - actor; [Chick Corea](#) - influential American jazz pianist and composer
- [Brandy](#) (Norwood) - R&B singer, actress;
- [Tom Cruise](#) - actor, movie star
- [Nancy Cartwright](#) - voiceover artist best known as voice of "Bart Simpson" on *The Simpsons* ; [Jason Beghe](#) - actor; [Xavier Deluc](#) - actor; [Jason Dohring](#) - actor
- [Michael Fairman](#) - actor; [Geoffrey Lewis](#) - actor; [Christopher Masterson](#) - actor
- [Danny Masterson](#) - actor; [Haywood Nelson](#) - actor; [Eduardo Palomo](#) - actor
- [Kirstie Alley](#) - actress; [Mimi Rogers](#) - actress (2nd generation)
- [Anne Archer](#) - actress; [Jennifer Aspen](#) - actress; [Catherine Bell](#) - actress
- [Erika Christensen](#) - actress; [Jenna Elfman](#) - actress; [Katie Holmes](#) - actress
- [Kimberley Kates](#) - actress; [Juliette Lewis](#) - actress; [Priscilla Presley](#) - actress
- [Leah Remini](#) - actress; [Marissa Ribisi](#) - actress; [Michelle Stafford](#) - actress
- [Karen Black](#) - actress; [Kelly Preston](#) - actress; [Kate Ceberano](#) - actress and musician
- [Judy Norton-Taylor](#) - actress and musician
- [Lisa Marie Presley](#) - singer; daughter of Elvis Presley
- [Isaac Hayes](#) - musician; [Nicky Hopkins](#) - musician
- [Mark Isham](#) - musician; [David Pomeranz](#) - musician; [Rob Thomas](#) - musician
- [Patrick Warren](#) - musician; [Edgar Winter](#) - musician; [Beck](#) - singer (a.k.a. Beck Hansen)
- [Megan Shields](#) - physician and author of health books, incl. *Arthritis: The Doctor's Cure*, etc.
- [Chaka Khan](#) - singer; [Sonny Bono](#) - singer ("Sonny and Cher"), U.S. Representative; [Mary Bono](#) - widow of Sonny Bono; U.S. Representative
- [Heber Jentzsch](#) - President of the Church of Scientology
- [Ernest Lehman](#) - screenwriter of *The Sound of Music*
- [Greta Van Susteren](#) - host of *On the Record with Greta Van Susteren* new show on FOX TV; [Werner Erhard](#) - former Scientologist who founded est
- [David Miscavige](#) - important Church of Scientology religious leader; chairman of the board for Religious Technology Center
- [Milton Ketselas](#) - one of Hollywood's most successful acting teachers, who heads the Beverly Hills Playhouse
- [Jim Rogers](#) - celebrity producer, manager (ex-husband of Mimi Rogers)
- [Linda Blair](#) - actress best known for *The Exorcist*
- [Charles Lakes](#) - Olympic gymnast; [Laura Prepon](#) - actress
- [Helga Wagner](#) - jewelry designer; dated Prince Charles and Sen. Ted Kennedy
- [Deborah Rennard](#) - actress; [Sofia Milos](#) - actress

- **Michelle Stafford** - actress ("The Young and the Restless")
- **Denice Duff** - actress ("The Young and the Restless")
- **Ludwig Fisher** - actor and artist

### **Important Definitions:**

*Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health:* A systematic presentation of Hubbard's quasi-psychotherapeutic and religious positions.

*Narconon:* Scientology's nonprofit rehab center which started in 2001.

*Preclear:* a student of Scientology

*The Way to Happiness:* A 64-page self-described book written by Hubbard that claims to be a commonsense guide to better living.

*Thetan:* immortal spiritual beings

### **Belief System:**

#### The Nature of God:

Scientology believes, "There are gods above all other gods, and gods beyond the gods of the universes" (*Scientology 8-8008*, p. 73)

#### The Person and Work of Jesus Christ:

Scientology teaches: "You will find the cross as a symbol all over the universe, and the CHRIST LEGEND as an implant in preclears a million years ago" (*Professional Auditor's Bulletin #31, one page flier*); "Neither Lord Buddha nor Jesus Christ were OTs [Operating Thetans, the highest Scientology level] according to evidence. They were just a shade above clear" (*Certainty Magazine, vol. 5, no. 10*).

#### Sin and Salvation:

When it comes to the doctrine of sin and salvation Scientology believes: "It is despicable and utterly beneath contempt to tell a man he must repent, that he is evil" (*Professional Auditor's Bulletin*).

"... personal salvation in one lifetime [is] freedom from the cycle of birth and death [reincarnation] ... Religious practice of all Faiths is the universal way to Wisdom, Understanding and/or salvation" (*Scientology: A World Religion*, pp. 16, 35)

*Eternal Punishment (Hell):*

If Scientology believes it is contemptible to teach man that he is evil, then it is obvious they would reject eternal retribution for evil, hell: "...hell is a total myth, an invention just to make people very unhappy and is a vicious lie" (*Professional Auditor's Bulletin*).

(All quotes were taken from *Kingdom of Cults*, pp.348-349)

**For Additional Information:**

*The Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin.

[www.apologeticsindex.org](http://www.apologeticsindex.org)

**Scientology vs. Christianity:**

1. Scientology is a false religion of fiction, with no history and scientific evidence. While the Christian faith has historical, archaeological, geographical and testimonial evidence that it is not a fictional religion.
2. The founder of Scientology was a compulsive liar. The Lord of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ, is the truth.
3. Scientology denies the existence of sin and hell. The Christian faith declares the reality of sin and hell.
4. Scientology and Christianity are incompatible belief systems: 1) Scientology has a dead founder. The Christian faith has a risen Savior; 2) Scientology is science fiction. Christianity is sound doctrine; 3) Scientology is quasi-psychotherapeutic. Christianity is soul salvation. 4) Scientology surpasses the reality of the true God who judges sin and will send unrepentant sinners to hell. Christianity affirms the true God, sin and judgment, and gives hope of forgiveness and eternal life.

## FREEMASONRY AND THE MASONIC LODGE

### Origin/History:

There are several quotes below that give the origin, history and purpose of Freemasonry:

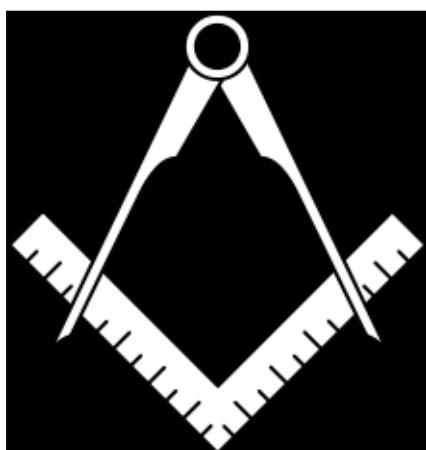
**Freemasonry.** The common designation of secret fraternal orders and related groups descended from medieval guilds of stonemasons. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries these guilds were joined by persons who were not 'operating' masons... The movement was stimulated by the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Crim, Keith (ed.). *The Perennial Dictionary of World Religions*. San Francisco: Harper Collins (1989). Reprint; originally pub. as *Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions*, 1981; pg. 266.

**Purpose:** The uniting of men in fellowship under the principal themes of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the immortality of the soul. For many Masons Masonry is a religious quest for spiritual enlightenment; however, ultimately, in the higher degrees the purpose is to conform the world to Masonic beliefs.

**Founder:** No single individual. Masonry gradually evolved into its present form, known as "speculative" Masonry. This distinguishes it from the "operative" or "working" Masonry of the medieval stone masons. Operative Masonry slowly assimilated the mysticism and occultism of numerous religions and philosophies of the Middle Ages to become what is known as modern speculative Masonry. Most scholars trace modern Masonry to the time when four lodges merge in London in 1717 to form the first Grand Lodge.

Source: John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions ↗ Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Or. 1999, P. 214-215

**Freemasonry** is a fraternal organization that arose from obscure origins (theorized to be anywhere from the time of the building of King Solomon's Temple to the mid-1600s. Freemasonry uses the metaphors of operative stonemasons' tools and implements, against the allegorical backdrop of the building of King Solomon's Temple, to convey what is most generally defined as "*a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.*" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemasonry>)



The Masonic Square and Compasses.  
(*Found with or without the letter G*)

Speculative Freemasonry was a British development of the early 1700s. Operative Masons continued into the 17th century, as survivors of the medieval guild system, with its complex traditions and practices in which mutual aid was a prominent feature. Then late in that century men who were not professionally connected with guild began to join the so-called Lodges of the Operative Masons... a notable event occurred in the year 1717 when the members of four London Lodges met at a tavern near Covent Garden and constituted themselves 'A Grand Lodge pro Tempore... in Due Form and... resolved to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast... All Freemasonry in existence today can be traced, through one channel or another, to the Grand Lodge of England thus constituted in 1717.

In North America Speculative Freemasonry had already taken root by 1730, on lines approved by the Grand Lodge in London. Benjamin Franklin, who was hostile to the Craft in the early days, nevertheless became a Mason in 1731 and remained devoted to the cause until his death in 1790. George Washington was Master of his Lodge when he became the first President of the United States in 1789.

[Freemasonry], which is banned in all Communist countries, in Roman Catholic Spain and Portugal, although not in Italy, continues to attract members on a worldwide scale. Its appeal clearly operates on two different levels. For some the attraction is obviously social... For others, however, Freemasonry's rituals, teachings and symbolism have a deeper and more spiritual current... Freemasonry is neither a religion nor a substitute for religion. It embraces all forms of religious belief which conceive of a Supreme Being and in a Lodge men of all creeds meet in complete amity. Its rituals, which in some respects resemble short Morality Plays or moral charades, simply reflect in symbolic terms concepts of idealism, humanity, charity and fraternity. Cavendish, Richard (ed.). *Man, Myth & Magic: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Supernatural* (vol. 8). New York: Marshall Cavendish Corp. (1970); pg. 1035-38

**Adherents:**

There are reportedly 6 million Masons in the world. According to Ron Carlson and Ed Decker, "There are about 33,700 lodges, the meeting places for the Masons. In the United States we have approximately four million members and 15,300 lodges" (Fast Facts on False Teaching, p. 75).

"The fraternal order of Free and Accepted Masons, or the Freemasons, is a secret society, yet its influence and effect on Western society have been great. Many of the Founding Fathers of the U.S.--George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, Benjamin Franklin, and Paul Revere--were Masons. Simon Bolivar, the great freedom fighter of South America, and Giuseppe Garibaldi, Italy's distinguished patriot, were also members, as were the great writers Voltaire and Goethe, and the composers Franz Joseph Haydn and Amadeus Mozart. "Mackey, Albert Gallatin. *The History of Freemasonry*. New York: Gramercy Books (1996); pg. ix.

Famous Adherents:

**Abbott, William "Bud"** - Famous half of the Abbott & Costello comedy team.

**Acuff, Roy** - "King of Country Music"

**Adams, Sherman** - Governor of New Hampshire and US Congressman

**Aldrich, Nelson Wilmarth** - U. S. Senator, known for his extensive impact on banking reform. He also served as Treasurer of the Grand Lodge of Rhode Island.

**Aldrin, Edwin E.** - Known as "Buzz" - American astronaut who as a crew member of Apollo 11 became the second human being to walk on the moon (July 20, 1969).

**Ames, Ezra** - Portrait painter who painted portraits of Washington, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Martin Van Buren, George Clinton, DeWitt Clinton.

**Anderson, Brad** - Cartoonist and creator of the popular 'Marmaduke' comic strip

**André, Major John** - British soldier who attempted to assist Benedict Arnold in his treasonous betrayal of West Point. He was sentenced to death and hanged in 1780.

**Annanc, Louis** - Chief of the Saint Francis Tribe of Indians. (D: 1876 after having been a Mason for over 40 years)

**Cole, Nat 'King'** - Great pianist and ballad singer

**Coleman, Frank** - Founder of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

**Collodi, Carlo** - Writer of 'Pinocchio'

**Colt, Samuel** - Firearms inventor and manufacturer. He invented the first revolver.

**Conner, W. T.** - Taught theology at Southwestern Seminary 1910--1949.

**Conz, Brian** - NASCAR driver, he'll pilot the car being sponsored by the 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Masons during 2007

**Dempsey, (William Harrison) Jack** - Became a professional boxer in 1912 and fought in more than 100 semi-pro and professional bouts before winning the heavyweight championship in 1919.

**Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan** - British physician and writer, creator of the famous "Sherlock Holmes".

**DuBois, W.E.B.** - Educator/Scholar and co-founder of the NAACP

**Dunant, Jean Henri** - Philanthropist who inspired the founding of the Red Cross

**Ellington, Duke** - American jazz composer, orchestrator, bandleader, and pianist, considered the greatest composer in the history of jazz music and one of the greatest musicians of the 20th Century

**Ford, Gerald R.** - 25-year Congressman and Minority Leader of the US House of Representatives, he was appointed Vice President of the U.S. in the wake of the Spiro Agnew scandal. When President Richard Nixon resigned, he became the 38th President of the United States.

**Ford, Henry** - Invented the first gasoline powered automobile in 1893, founded Ford Motor Company in 1903 and mass-produced the first widely available and affordable car.

**Franklin, Benjamin** - American printer (he published the first book to come off the press in the colonies - Anderson's Constitutions of 1723), author, diplomat, philosopher, and scientist, whose contributions to the American Revolution (1775-1783), and the newly formed federal government that followed, rank him among the country's greatest statesmen. He held the Masonic title of Grand Master of Pennsylvania and was one of the 13 Masonic signers of the Constitution of the United States.

**Jackson, Reverend Jesse** - Baptist Minister, American civil rights leader and politician. His concerns for the oppressed and his dramatic oratory have attracted a large grassroots constituency called the Rainbow Coalition

**MacArthur, General Douglas** - A former US Chief of Staff, he commanded the Allied Forces in the South Pacific during World War II. He promised the Filipino people "I shall return" to save them from the occupying Japanese Forces. He was ultimately removed from military leadership by another Mason, President Harry S. Truman

**Marshall, Thurgood** - The first Black to be appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States

**Maytag, Fredrick** - Headed the company which produced farm equipment, the now little-known Maytag car and the first washing machine capable of being operated by an outside power source

**Mfume, Kweisi** - U. S. Congressman and President and CEO of the NAACP

**Robinson, "Sugar Ray"** - American prizefighter and six-time world champion (once as a welterweight and five times as a middleweight)

**Roosevelt, Franklin D.** - Governor of New York and 32nd President of the United States, he was the only US president to be reelected four times. He brought his country out of the Great Depression, guided them through World War II and died in office. He was succeeded by another Mason, Harry S. Truman.

**Roosevelt, Theodore** - Hero of the Spanish-American War, Governor of New York, Vice President and when President (and Mason) William McKinley was assassinated, he became the 26th President of the United States. Winner of the Nobel peace prize.

**Smith, Joseph** - Founder of the Mormon Church

**Taft, William Howard** - Civil governor of the Philippines, Secretary of War, Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court and twenty-seventh President of the U.S.

**Teets, John W.** - Chairman and President of Dial Corporation

**Temple, Lewis** - Noted Black Abolitionist whose basement served as a way station on the 'Underground Railroad'.

**Thayer, Sylvanus** - Father of the U. S. Military Academy - West Point

**Thomas, Dave** - Founder of the very popular Wendy's Restaurants, publicly he was the grandfatherly star of commercials. Both privately and publicly, however, he did extensive work promoting the cause of orphans, something he had been in his own youth. The hamburgers at Wendy's are square as a reminder of Dave's motto: "Never cut corners." Dave was active in the Scottish Rite Philanthropies including their Children's Hospital program. His mentor in the restaurant business was another Mason, Col. Harland Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame.

**Washington, Booker T** - Educator and author

**Washington, George** - As General of the Armies of the colonies, he led the revolution which created American independence. As the first President of the United States, his leadership was crucial to establishing the 'tone' for the United States. His love of Freemasonry is documented by his close reliance upon other Masons in the execution of his duties. Following his death, his widow sent locks of his hair (a common practice of the time) to Masons throughout the country and such revered treasures were the object of great appreciation. To this day, a lock of his hair sent to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts is carried in a golden urn preceding the entry of the Grand Master at the Annual Meeting of the Grand Lodge.

**Watson, Thomas J.** - American inventor and businessman who was President and Chairman of International Business Machines (IBM) from 1914-1956.

**Wayne, John** – the actor

**Wilder, Lawrence Douglass** - First elected Black Governor in the US from the State of Virginia

**Young, Brigham** - Led the pioneers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) to Utah.

**Young, Cy** - American baseball player, he pitched for 22 seasons and was, perhaps, the greatest pitcher in the history of the sport. He pitched the first 'perfect game' in modern baseball (this list along with more famous Masons are at [www.masonicinfo.com](http://www.masonicinfo.com))

### **Important Definitions:**

*Albert Pike* - The most accepted and respected authority in the study of Freemasonry. He wrote the comprehensive manual which has been nicknamed the “Bible of Masonry,” titled *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Rite*.

*Apron Lecture* - upon the completion of the initiation, each candidate is given a white lambskin apron which is to represent “purity of life and rectitude of conduct”.

*Blue Lodge* - is the foundation of all Freemasonry. It is a local lodge placed across the country. “When a man goes into it [Freemasonry], he is initiated into the Blue Lodge through three degrees: the first, or ‘Entered Apprentice Degree,’ the second, or ‘Fellowcraft Degree,’ and the third, or ‘Master Mason Degree’ (p. 75).

*C. Fred Kleinknecht* - the current Sovereign Grand Commander

*Cable Tow* - When a person is initiated into the Masonic Lodge he is blindfolded and has a noose placed around his neck.

*Chaplain* - appointed to lead a non-denominational prayer at the convocation of meetings or activities—often, but not necessarily, a clergyman.

*DeMolay* - a youth group for boys in the Masonic Lodge.

*Eastern Star* - While women cannot join regular lodges, there are (mainly within the borders of the United States) many female orders associated with regular Freemasonry and its appendant bodies, such as the Order of the Eastern Star, the Order of the Amaranth, the White Shrine of Jerusalem, the Social Order of Beauceant and the Daughters of the Nile. These have their own rituals and traditions but are founded on the Masonic model.

*Entered Apprentice* or 1<sup>st</sup> level of the Blue Lodge (oath) - “Binding myself under no less a penalty than having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out of its roots, and buried in the rough sands of the sea...” (p. 77)

*Fellowcraft Degree of Masonry* or 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the Blue Lodge (oath) - “Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart plucked out and given as prey to the wild beasts of the fields and the fowls of the air...” (p. 77)

*Freemasonry* - an international organization whose principles are embodied in symbols and allegories connected with the art of building and involving an oath of secrecy. The origins of the movement probably lie in twelfth-century Europe. There are two major divisions: the Old Charges, which date from 1390 and 1400, and the Masonic Word, which is a Scottish institution of obscure origin. From the eighteenth century there developed "Speculative Masonry" or modern Freemasonry. The Grand Lodge was formed in 1717 to coordinate other Lodges. The origins of most Masonic ceremonies are obscure and probably date to the seventeenth century. The movement places considerable emphasis on social welfare activities and claims to be based on the fundamentals of all religions. In the eighteenth century it was closely associated with DEISM (the philosophy in which reason is the sole instrument in deducing God and nature from the orderly workings of the universe) and even today a general deistic ethos generally prevails, modified by the incorporation of religious symbols derived from Assyrian and Egyptian beliefs (Concise Dictionary of Religion, by Irving Hexham, pp. 86-87).

*Grand Lodges and Grand Orients* - independent and sovereign bodies that govern Masonry in each country, state, or geographical area (termed a *jurisdiction*). There is no single overarching governing body that presides over world-wide Freemasonry; connections between different jurisdictions depend solely on mutual recognition.

*Job's Daughters International* - is a Masonic sponsored youth organization for girls aged 10 to 20. The organization is commonly referred to as simply Job's Daughters and is sometimes abbreviated and referred to as JDI (or IOJD).

*Joseph Ford Newton* - wrote an influential book among Masons titled "The Builders".

*The Lost Word* - the name of God that was supposedly lost when architect Hiram Abiff was murdered during the building of Solomon's temple.

*Masonic Monitors* - the Craft ritual manual.

*Master Mason's Degree*, or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree of the Blue Lodge (oath) - "Binding myself under no less a penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burned in ashes..." (p. 77)

*Secret and Sacred Password* - "In the seventeenth degree of the Scottish Rite, or the Knights of the East and West Degree, after the candidates have completed the initiation, they are given the secret password, 'Jubulum,' and the sacred word, 'Abaddon'. Here is the clue to the identity of the Masonic deity.

*Scottish Rite and York Rite* - two divisions within Freemasonry where the Mason to seek advanced degrees. Many Masons choose to go through both. The Scottish Rite has 4 through 32 degrees with the 33<sup>rd</sup> degree as the honorary degree. The York Rite has 13 degrees.

*Senior and Junior Wardens* - Vice Presidents of the Lodge.

*Shriners* - these are Masons “who have achieved the highest degrees of the Blue Lodge, and Scottish or York Rites Masonry, who enter what is known as ‘The Ancient and Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine’” (p. 76)

*Tyler, or Tiler* - who guards the door to the lodge room while the lodge is in session, sometimes elected and sometimes appointed by the Master.

*The Worshipful Master* - He is the elected president of the Lodge.

(Sources of information came from Fast Facts on False Teaching and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemasonry>)

### **Brief System:**

Though Masons would claim that they are not a religion, yet their briefs say otherwise. Albert Pike, in his book, *Morals and Dogma* states that Freemasonry is:

the universal, eternal, immutable religion, such as God planted it in the heart of universal humanity. No creed has ever been long-lived that was not built upon this foundation... The ministers of this religion are all Masons... Its sacrifices to God are good works...and perpetual efforts to attain to all the moral perfection of which man is capable (p. 219).

We belong to no one creed or school. In all religions, there is a basis of truth, in all there is pure morality... All teachers and reformers of mankind we admire and revere. Masonry has her mission to perform... She invites all men of all religions to enlist under her banner (p. 311).

It [Masonry] reverences all the great reformers. It sees in Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, in Confucius and Zoroaster, in Jesus of Nazareth, and in the Arabian iconoclast, great teachers of morality, and eminent reformers, if no more, and allows every brother of the Order to assign to each such higher and even divine character as his creed and truth require... Masonry is a worship, but one in which all civilized men can unite... (pp. 525, 526).

The first Masonic teacher was Buddha (p. 277).

The Blue Degrees are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them, but it is intended that he shall imagine that he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry... It is well enough for the mass of those called Masons to imagine that all is contained in the Blue Degrees (p. 819).

Masonry, like all the religions, all the mysteries, hermeticism and alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the adepts and sages, or the elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the truth, which it calls light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy or unable to receive it or would pervert it (pp. 104-105).

Manly P. Hall, a 33<sup>rd</sup> degree, in his book “The Lost Keys of Freemasonry” writes:

The true Mason is not creed-bound. He realizes with the divine illumination of his Lodge that as a Mason his religion must be universal: Christ, Buddha, or Mohammed, the name means little, for he recognizes only the light and not the bearer. He worships at every shrine, bows before every altar, whether in temple, mosque or cathedral, realizing with his truer understanding the oneness of all spiritual truth (p. 65; Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co., Richmond, VA, 1976).

Carlson and Decker explain the God that Masons really worship:

It is here that the secret name of the deity of Masonry is revealed. That name is “Jahbulon”.

“Jah” is the short form of the Hebrew name of God, “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”. “Bul” is a rendering of the name “Baal”. “On” is the term used in the Babylonian mysteries to call upon the deity Osiris. The secret ritual book of the Craft prints the letters J.B.O. It states: ‘We three do meet and agree - in peace, love and unity - the Sacred Word to keep - and never to divulge the same - until we three, or three such as we - do meet and agree (p. 88).

After each candidate completes his initiation into Freemasonry, he is given the Apron Lecture (a lambskin apron), which symbolizes:

an ever-present reminder of purity of life and rectitude of conduct, and when at last, after a life of faithful service your weary feet shall have come to the end of life’s toilsome journey and from your nerveless grasp shall have dropped forever the working tools of life, may the record of your life be as pure and spotless as this fair emblem which I place in your hands tonight, and when your trembling soul shall stand, naked and alone, before the Great White Throne, there to receive judgment for the deeds done while here in the body, may it be your portion to hear from Him who sitteth as the Judge Supreme, the welcome words: Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee rule over many things! Enter into the joy of thy Lord (Fast Facts on False Teaching p. 87).

Joseph Ford Newton, in his book, “The Builders” makes it clear that Freemasonry is a religion with a message to the world:

Why does Masonry seek to change the world? Because Masonry teaches that all non-Masons are living in spiritual darkness. The ritual of Masonry for the first degree, the Entered Apprentice, teaches a candidate that he is long been in darkness and now wishes to be brought to the light of Masonry. The Lodge teaches that only true Masons are enlightened and live in the truth.

## **How this Brief System Contradicts the Christian Faith:**

**By taking the Masonic oaths**, the Mason is swearing to uphold Masonry and its teachings. Swearing to uphold Masonic oaths is sinful, unscriptural and should not be part of the Christian's life for the following reasons.

1. They make a Christian man swear by God to doctrines which God has pronounced false and sinful. For example, Masonry teaches a universalistic doctrine of "the Fatherhood of God" ([John 8:42](#))
2. The Christian man is made to swear his acceptance to the lie that [salvation](#), the reward of Heaven, can be gained by man's good works ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#))
3. The Christian man swears to accept and promote the Masonic lie that [Jesus](#) is just one of many equally revered prophets in the world. He does this when agreeing that all religions can lead a man to God ([Acts 4:12](#); [Philippians 2:9-11](#); [Colossians 1:16-18](#))
4. The Christian man swears he will remain silent in the Lodge and not talk of Christ when God commands every Christian to be a witness ([Matthew 28:19](#))
5. The Christian man swears that he is approaching the Lodge while he is in spiritual ignorance and moral darkness, when the Bible says that Christians are children of light and are indwelt by the Light of the world ([John 8:12](#); [Ephesians 5:8](#))
6. By taking the Masonic oath, the Christian is guilty of taking the name of the Lord in vain, because he has sworn unlawfully to things God has forbidden him to swear to. God says He will not leave such a person unpunished ([Exodus 20:7](#))
7. The Christian falsely swears that the God of the Bible is equally present in all religions ([1 Timothy 2:5-6](#))
8. The Christian falsely swears to the teaching that true worship can be offered in the Lodge to God without the mediator Jesus ([Hebrews 9:14](#))
9. By swearing the Masonic oath, Christians are perpetuating a false gospel to other Lodge members who look only to the gospel of Masonry to get them to Heaven ([Galatians 1:6-8](#))
10. The Christian's spirit, mind and body are the temple of the [Holy Spirit](#), "bought with a price" ([1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)). By taking the Masonic obligations he is agreeing to allow the pollution of his mind and spirit to [pagan](#) religion and even [occult](#) practices.

Source: [John Ankerberg](#) and [John Weldon](#), [Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions](#) ↗ Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Or. 1999, P. 255-256

The apostle Paul commands that believers should not get involved in spiritual enterprises with unbelievers:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God (2 Cor. 6:14-16)

**For Additional Information:**

[Freemasonry and Christianity](#) by Alva J. McClain, Th.m., D.D., LL.D. Founder and First President, Grace Theological Seminary

[Freemasonry and the Christian Church](#) by Russ Wise, of [Probe Ministries](#)

[The Masonic Lodge and the Christian Conscience](#) by [John Weldon](#)

[Is Masonry a cult?](#) by [John Ankerberg](#) and [John Weldon](#)

[Masonry, My Savior, And Me: The Personal Testimony of Duane Washum](#)

[Is Masonry Occultic?](#) Statement by [CRI](#)

[Should A Christian Become A Mason?](#) Masonic Doctrine verses Christian Doctrine.

The Brotherhood: The Explosive Expose of the Secret World of the Freemasons by Stephen Knight

Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions by John Ankerberg and John Weldon.

The Secret Teachings of the Masonic Lodge: A Christian Perspective by John Ankerberg and John Weldon

## **BLACK HEBREW ISRAELITES**

### **Origin/History:**

In the words of the late Dr. Walter Martin, a cult is “a group of people gathered about a specific person or person’s mis-interpretation of the Bible” [Kingdom of the Cults, p. 11]. However, the cult of Black Hebrew Israelites [BHI] is centered around the misinterpretation of Black identity in the Bible. It is a cult connected to the Black Religious Identity Culture [BRIC].

Dr. Eric Mason, general editor of the book “Urban Apologetics” quoted a study done by Lifeway Research on African American views on Israel, here’s what they discovered:

“Many African Americans said they think more positively about the nation of Israel because of the historic connections between the journey of their ethnicity and the journey of the Jews. Around a quarter said their opinion of Israel has been positively influenced due to the historic parallels between the enslavement of Jews in ancient Egypt and blacks in America [27%] and due to the similarities between the two groups overcoming oppression: Jewish people in pursuing the promised land and African Americans pursuing civil rights [26%].

Interestingly, most respondents to the survey [62%] said they were not familiar with the teachings of Black Hebrew Israelites, a group that contends that black Americans are the physical descendants of the ancient Israelites. Very few [4%] considered themselves to be a Black Hebrew Israelite.” [Lifeway Research, Nov. 5, 2019]

When there is confusion concerning one’s ethnic origins there is vulnerability to being deceived by misinformation and false beliefs. Particularly if the desire is to have a noble history. As it pertains to Black Hebrew Israelites, they are open to claiming multiple leaders and their stories as their founders:

“One such narrative centers on an illiterate blacksmith named Gabriel Prosser, who planned a slave rebellion in Virginia. According to Israel United in Christ [IUC] and other Hebrew Israelite groups, in around 1800, Gabriel Prosser began teaching that Blacks were the people of God.” [Urban Apologetics p. 94]

“Yet another influential figure in the Hebrew Israelite movement is Rabbi Arnold Josiah Ford, an immigrant from Barbados who asserted that he was an Ethiopian Hebrew. He taught hundreds of people in Harlem that they were Ethiopian Hebrews. He influenced and ordained Wentworth Arthur Matthew, who went on to found the Commandment Keepers Ethiopian Congregation in Harlem in the 1920s.” [p. 94]

“Although many people in the broader Hebrew Israelite community would disagree with this claim, William Crowdy is widely documented as the first to promote the idea that Blacks in America and the Caribbean are, in fact, related to the biblical Israelites. [p. 96]

William Saunders Crowdy lived in the late 1800s. In 1892, he claimed to have received revelation from God that African Americans were the ten lost tribes of Israel. His teaching was embraced by several blacks seeking answers to their identity and hope in God’s promises.

Jacob Dorman, in his book “Chosen People,” explains the vision Crowdny claimed to have received from God:

“In the final part of the vision, Crowdny was given a book, which he ate, in reference to Revelation 10:10. The book contained the “Seven Keys,” or revelations of the Holy Bible, which included a ban on wine, ritual foot washing, and a version of the Eucharist [or Lord’s Supper], a “holy kiss” greeting, and strict adherence to the Ten Commandments. At its start, the Church of God and Saints of Christ adopted practices that had gained favor among Holiness churches of the Great Plains. Adopting Hebraic practices did not mean rejecting the language of Christianity, at least initially. The Seven Keys were the plan of salvation, “and if they searched the scriptures according to its direction they would not go astray and their blinding eyes would be opened to the marvelous light of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” Crowdny taught. [p. 39, quoted in Urban Apologetics, p. 97]

The most noted and revered name about BHI is a man known as Abba Bivens or sometimes called Eber ben Yamin, Yamyam, or “Pop Bivens”. However, when Abba Bivens would sign his name on official correspondence, he wrote Rabbi E. Bibbins. Bivens was born on July 31, 1896, in Philadelphia.

As many leaders that are claimed within the movement so are several camps within the movement: 1 West camp, stands for the address where the Hebrew Israelites first originated: 1 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street, Harlem, NY. Also known as The Israeli School, or The Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge [UPK]; Israel United in Christ [IUIC]; Gathering of Christ Church [GOCC], Great Milestone [GMS], and Sicarii. Several of these camps have been labeled as hate groups.

### **Belief System:**

There are two basic beliefs of BHI: 1] Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans are really the original Israelites spoken of in the Bible; 2] The Old Testament Law must be kept (work’s righteousness). How does BHI prove that Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans are the ancient Israelites? By proof texting and nationalizing the Bible. Proof-texting is putting together a string of Bible verses that are not connected in meaning or the same in context to prove your theology. To avoid this mistake, we must first understand the context of a passage before we cross-reference to other passages. Nationalizing is reading into the text one’s country or ethnicity in replacement of the promises made to Israel.

#### *Black Hebrew Israelites & the True Israelites of the Bible:*

Imagine walking down the street and you approach a group of black men wearing purple shirts which are written on them in gold “Israel United in Christ.” And they ask you, “What’s your nationality?” You respond, “African American.” Or if you are Latino, “Mexican American.” But they correct you by saying, “That’s not a nationality! What if I can show you in the Bible that the so-called Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are the Jews of the Bible?” Then they will take you to Numbers 1:2, the census the nation of Israel was commanded to take of their families, by their fathers’ household. The purpose of citing this verse is to prove that your nationality is not determined by the country you are a citizen of but by the genealogical record of your father’s side of the family.

From this they will proof text verses out of the Bible to prove that the true nationality of Blacks is Israelites. First, by stating Jesus was black: **Scrip. Ref:** Rev. 1:14-15 – “His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; [15] and His feet were like burnished bronze.” Here are their two conclusions from John’s vision of the Risen and Exalted Christ: Jesus’ hair was like wool, which means His hair was kinky. And His feet were like bronze, which means He was brown skinned. But this vision is not meant to interpret Jesus as black but as God. For when it comes to Jesus’ glorious features John uses the word “like” as a comparison not to be taken literally. In verse 16, John describes His face “like the sun shining in its strength.” The sun is not brown but bright yellow. Each of these features describe Jesus’ deity: His hair white like white wool [eternal wisdom]; His feet like burnished bronze [judgment].

Once BHI tries to convince you that Jesus was black, they will read the trans-Atlantic slave trade of 1500s and 1800s back into the Bible. However, to do this they must use the King James Bible. In Deuteronomy 28:68 reads, “And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” Now they will interpret “Egypt” as figurative for America. And ships as the slave ships that transported 12.5 million African men, women, and children across the Atlantic to America. But there are two key statements that are conveniently overlooked: “bring back thee into Egypt again”. When was the first time the Israelites were brought into Egypt? When the seventy members of Jacob’s family moved to Egypt to stay with Joseph [Exodus 1:1-8]. But if Jacob and his family moved to the country of Egypt on the continent of Africa, how can bringing them back again to Egypt be America? African slaves were only brought to America once. Secondly, the statement, “there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.” How can this apply to Blacks in America when in fact they were sold into slavery? Now historically some Bible scholars believe this prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. The Roman general Titus sent 17,000 adult Jews to Egypt to perform hard labor.

But the question is how did Blacks lose their identity? BHI will cite several passages to proof text how Blacks loss their identity. First, by being exiled from the land of Canaan for their disobedience to God’s Law they loss their identity among the heathen nations: **Scrip. Ref:** Deut. 28:64 – “Moreover, the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.” Therefore, the Christianity that is practiced here in America, is not the religion of “your fathers.” Or any other religious system. Secondly, they believe the Bible teaches that their identity was loss by Israelites being equated with Gentiles after they were scattered. In other words, the Israelites in the Bible became Gentiles after God dismissed them as His people from the land. **Scrip. Ref:** Hos. 1:9 – And the LORD said, “Name him (A child Hosea’s wife Gomer bore that wasn’t his child) Lo-ammi for you are not My people and I am not your God.” Therefore, instead of interpreting this statement as God divorcing His people due to their violation of the covenant. BHI interpret this verse as Israel lost her ethnicity due to their disobedience. But Israel had never lost her identity due to her disobedience, only the blessings of the covenant. They always remained ethnic Israel when they failed to live as spiritual Israel according to the covenant promises [Rom. 2:28-29; 9:3-8].

Who are the true Israelites? We must trace their ancestry from their father's side. So, we start with the genealogical record from Adam, Seth, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah [Gen. 5]. Due to the disobedience of man God flooded the world, but delivered Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives [Gen. 6-9].

After the flood, God blessed Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply. Later, Noah's son Ham, the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father in some perverted or shameful way and told his brothers, Shem and Japheth. Noah found out about it and cursed not Ham, for God had already blessed him, but Canaan – “Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants.” [Gen. 9:25]. **[Note:** The Bible doesn't teach the lie that the curse of Ham was black skin]. The curse of Canaan is that he would be a servant to the descendants of Shem and Japheth. Who are the descendants of Shem? The Israelites [Gen. 11:10-26 – Shem to Abram, Abram to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, Jacob to his twelve sons, his twelve sons to the nation of Israel]. But where did blacks come from? From the line of Ham, from his first son Cush and his sons [Kuwsh (koosh) Cush or Ethiopia or more precisely Nubia]; What is the skin complexion of a Cushite or Ethiopian? Black. **Scrip. Ref:** Jer. 13:23 – “Can the Ethiopian change his skin?” The answer is no. Unlike other ethnicities who have lighter skin complexions that can change from pale to brown. Black skin color doesn't change naturally. There is an account in the Bible where the skin color of a Cushite woman may have been the source of controversy between Moses and his sister Miriam and his brother Aaron: **Scrip. Ref:** Num. 12:1-10.

#### Black Hebrew Israelites and the Law:

Like other cults that seek to proselytize or convert unsuspecting people into their beliefs. BHI have been trained to capitalize on some Christians' inability to articulate of the relationship between the Law and the Gospel. Here's how BHI will seek to trap you:

**BHI:** “Do you keep the laws, statues, and commandments?” **Christian:** “No. As a Christian, I believe I am under God's grace.” **BHI:** “Have you read Romans 6:1-2? ‘What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?’ Now let me ask you this: What is sin?” **Christian:** “Sin is missing the mark.” **BHI:** “NO! Haven't you read 1 John 3:4: ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law?’”

BHI believe it is important to keep the Law for salvation. They are considered “hypernomian” [overly law-keepers]. Let's rewind and start the conversation over: **BHI:** “Do you keep the laws, statues, and commandments?” **Christian:** “Not as a means of earning my salvation, but as an expression of my love to Christ for His grace in forgiving me of all my sins. Therefore, I am not under the condemnation of the Law of the O.T. but under the grace of God in the N.T. For Christ fulfilled the O.T. Law on my behalf through His death on the cross, burial and resurrection. And by faith alone in Jesus Christ, I am declared righteous, because God imparts Christ's righteousness fulfillment of the Law to my account: **Scrip. Ref:** Rom. 8:3 – “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh [human effort], God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, [4] in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” In fact, I don't even put my confidence in the flesh [human effort] because I cannot be saved through the Law. The apostle Paul put it this way:

**Scrip. Ref:** Phil. 3:3-9 – “for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, [4] although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: [5] circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. [7] But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, [9] and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

## **WRONG WAYS TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE**

1. **PROOFTEXTING**: Putting together an inappropriate or inadequate series of Bible verses to prove your theology (Ex. Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; compared with 2 Pet. 3:8 on defining days). We must first understand the context of a passage before we cross-reference to other passages. (I have made this mistake in the past)
2. **ISOLATIONISM**: failing to interpret a single Scripture in light of its context. Isolating the passage, verse or word from its immediate literary surroundings. (Ex. Is. 54:17; Jer. 30:17; 1 Chr. 16:22 – “Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm”)
3. **SPIRITUALIZING**: reading a spiritual or historical truth into a text rather than extracting truth from it. Arbitrarily reading what you want or think the passage should say by replacing the simple and obvious reading with a hidden reading (Ex. 1 Sam. 17:40 – the five stones David used in his battle with Goliath. The Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Angels and Believers. Song of Solomon describes Christ and the Church. The walls in Nehemiah represent building the church. Gideons fleece in Judges). Dr. Mayhue wrote, “Instead of reading a historical or theological fact into the text, spiritualizing is reading a wrong application into the text”(How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself, p. 95).
4. **NATIONALIZING**: reading into the text our country in regards to promises of blessing instead of Israel (Ex. 2 Chr. 7:14 – “And My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and heal their land”)
5. **EMBELLISHING**: reading current thinking into the Bible. Making the Bible seem more contemporary by garnishing Scripture’s truth with the latest in modern thought. Read Mayhue’s example pp. 107-108.
6. **ACCOMMODATION**: interpreting Scripture based on human reasons and perceptions. Human reason stands as the authority over Scripture. It’s subtle in how we try to make the Scripture conform to our sinful pleasures. (Ex. 1 Sam. 15:1-23). Agreeing that the bible condemns adultery but not if you love someone or divorce is acceptable if you are no longer in love.
7. **CULTURALIZING**: wants to limit a text to a specific time in history or culture, when the text demands a wider application in time (Ex. Husbands in leadership – Eph. 5:22-24; Qualified Male leadership in the church as opposed to women pastors – 1 Tim. 2:11-12). Translating the bible to conform to the cultural concepts of God – Inclusive Bible translates Matt. 6:9 – “Our Father – Mother”.

8. **REDEFINING**: means giving historically accepted biblical words new definitions to support a person's theology (Ex. Rev. 20:2-7 – 1,000 yrs [literal or indefinite?]; Matt. 4:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:24). Read Dr. Mayhue's comments on how to avoid this mistake – p. 133.
9. **ANGLICIZING**: inaccurate conclusions are reached by drawing theology from the English text alone as opposed to consulting the original languages. We look up words in the Webster's dictionary instead of a Hebrew or Greek lexicon. Read Dr. Mayhue's comments on how to avoid this mistake – p. 135.
10. **MYSTICIZING**: to find hidden meanings in Scripture that can be understood only by the one who knows the 'secret code'. Mayhue writes, "It involves verbal meanings extracted from the words and sentences that are not to be understood in a normal, literary sense" (p. 136). This is closely related to spiritualizing. Bible Codes. Such statements as the Bible is not the Word of God but it contains the Words of God.
11. **LETTERISM**: this ignores figures of speech and drawing woodenly literal conclusions can lead to serious error (Ex. Jn. 6:53 – "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves"; When Scriptures attribute human features to God (anthropomorphism), instead of seeing it figuratively someone interprets it literally. Read p. 145 on how to avoid this mistake.
12. **GENERALIZING**: assumes that any specific historical experience recorded in Scripture is a valid, general experience for today. Common verses used to prove point – Mal. 3:6 "For I, the LORD, do not change" or Heb. 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever". If miracles were done in the past, then God is still working miracles today.
13. **EXPERIENTIALIZING**: it reasons that if any experience has occurred in Scripture, and I have the same experience, then it must be from God. This reasoning uses experience to validate Scripture or substitute experience for Scripture. Instead of letting Scripture verify if my experience is from God, I impose my experience upon Scripture. If my experience contradicts Scripture I hold to my experience regardless of what the Bible says. I don't question whether someone had a profound experience, but I can question whether it is consistent with Biblical truth. Hearing voices, speaking in tongues, witnessing miracles, prophesies coming truth doesn't necessarily mean that God was involved (Matt. 7:22; Deut. 13:1-3).
14. **DOGMATIZING**: Dr. Mayhue writes, "We've heard a doctrine proclaimed so many times or we have taught it so frequently that we are unwilling or see no need to go back and re-examine what we believe in light of the entire Bible" (p. 162). "Instead of starting with individual pieces of evidence and then reaching a conclusion, one starts with a conclusion, which is then used to interpret the evidence, thereby assuring that the desired conclusion will be affirmed" (p. 163). If we have been raised in church to believe tithing, altar calls, losing salvation, speaking in tongues is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or women preachers, then we might become defensive when challenged to examine these teachings more closely from Scripture. [Taken from Dr. Richard Mayhue's book, "How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself"]; Prov. 30:6 – "Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar" (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18)

### **For Additional Information:**

*Urban Apologetics: Restoring Black Dignity with the Gospel*, Dr. Eric Mason.

