

# Cults and Religions

## A Comparison of the True Christian Faith with Various Cults and Religions of the World

- Introduction

- Why study Cults and Religions?

- ✦ A very large number of people have been taken in by the deceptions of these cults and religions.
- ✦ If we understand the beliefs of these cults and religions, we will be better prepared to evangelize these people and help them become disciples for Christ.
- ✦ We always need to keep in mind that Jesus died for the sins of everyone including people who have been deceived by cults or religions and He desires that none should perish.

- What is a cult?

- ✦ Charles S. Braden defines a cult as any religious group that differs significantly as to belief or practice from those that are of the norm.
- ✦ Walter Martin defines a cult as a group of people gathered around a specific person or person's misinterpretation of the Bible...
  - Mormons – Joseph Smith and Brigham Young
  - Jehovah's Witnesses – Charles T. Russell and J.F. Rutherford
  - Christian Science – Mary Baker Eddy
  - etc.
- ✦ The theology of these cults contains significant deviations from historical Christianity, yet they typically desire to be classified as Christians.
- ✦ A common theme within the cults is an extremely strong resistance to anyone who might want to depart.

- What is a religion?

- ✦ A religion is a system of beliefs that supposes to gain the favor of God through human effort.
- ✦ There are many religions in the world and most of them have various requirements for adherence to ritualistic observances as part of their worship.
- ✦ The world incorrectly categorizes Christianity as one of the many religions, but Biblical Christianity is about a relationship with God on the basis of grace, so it is not a religion.
- ✦ Some of the religions we will study, such as Judaism and Islam, can resemble the cults in their treatment of anyone from within their ranks who turns to Jesus Christ as Savior.

- There is only one truth to be found among many lies, so we will begin by examining the truth of Biblical Christianity to be used as a basis for comparison with the myriad of deceptions found within the various cults and religions.
- **Biblical Christianity**
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - The Bible which is comprised of...
      - The Old Testament - Hebrew and Aramaic
      - The New Testament – Koine Greek
  - Who does the Bible say God is?
    - ✦ God is a spirit being [John 4:24].
    - ✦ He created the universe ex nihilo (out of nothing) [Gen 1:1].
    - ✦ God is Triune (one God in three Persons): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [Matt 28:19].
    - ✦ God is perfect in all of His attributes: eternal, immutable, sovereign, righteous, just, loving, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and true [Ps 90:2; Jas 1:17; Isa 14:24...].
    - ✦ God is personal and involved with people [Phil 2:13; 1 Pet 5:7].
    - ✦ God loves us and provided for our salvation [Rom 5:8].
  - Who does the Bible say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus is God, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity, and is coequal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
    - ✦ As God the Son, Jesus has always existed and was never created [John 17:5].
    - ✦ Jesus is fully God and fully human (His two natures are joined in hypostatic union, not mixed together) [John 1:1, 14].
    - ✦ In becoming human, Jesus was begotten of God [Psalm 2:7].
    - ✦ Jesus came in the flesh when He was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary [Matt 1:18-25].
    - ✦ Jesus died on a cross as full payment for the penalty of our sins in accordance with God's perfect plan of salvation [Jn 19:30].
    - ✦ Jesus rose from the dead on the third day [1 Cor 15:4].
    - ✦ During the following 40 days He was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses [1 Cor 15:6], His resurrection body was touched [John 20:24-28] and He ate food [Luke 24:38-43].
    - ✦ Jesus then physically ascended to heaven [Acts 1:9-11].

- ✦ Jesus is the only way to the Father and eternal life [John 14:6].
- ✦ Jesus will return to meet His Church in the air [1 Th 4:16-17].
- ✦ A few years later, Jesus will come down to the earth to establish God's kingdom on earth [Matt 25:31].
- Who does the Bible say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is God, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the Trinity [Ac 5:3-4].
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not the Father, nor is He the Son [Mt 28:19].
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is a person, not an energy field or force.
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit comforts, reproves, convicts, guides, and teaches Christians [Acts 9:31; John 14:26; 16:13].
- What does the Bible say about salvation?
  - ✦ Salvation is by grace through faith, not by works [Eph 2:8-9].
  - ✦ To be saved one must believe in the person of Jesus who died for our sins and physically rose again [John 3:16; 11:25-26].
- What does the Bible say happens after death?
  - ✦ After death all people await Judgment [Heb 9:27].
  - ✦ Both saved and unsaved people will be resurrected.
    - Those who are saved live on forever with Jesus in heaven.
    - Those who are lost live on forever in torment in the Lake of Fire.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Jesus is the Jewish Messiah promised in the Old Testament.
  - ✦ The Church has no secret rites.
  - ✦ Ordinances of the Church: Baptism and Communion
  - ✦ Missionary efforts, giving, etc. are all voluntary.
- Mormonism
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Joseph Smith and Brigham Young
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *The Book of Mormon*
      - *Doctrines and Covenants*
      - *The Pearl of Great Price*
      - The Bible (Smith's "inspired version")
      - Teachings of Mormon prophets
  - Who does Mormonism say God is?
    - ✦ God the Father was once a man, but "progressed" to godhood.

- ✦ God the Father has a physical body, as does his wife (generally called “Heavenly Mother”).
- ✦ He (Elohim) was born of a god and is one of many gods.
- ✦ No Trinity: Father, Son, and “Holy Ghost” are separate gods.
- Who does Mormonism say Jesus is?
  - ✦ The Mormon Jesus is a separate god from the Father (Elohim).
  - ✦ Jesus was created as a spirit child by the Father and Mother in Heaven and is Lucifer’s brother.
  - ✦ Jesus’ body was created through sexual union between the Father (Elohim) and Mary.
  - ✦ Jesus was married.
  - ✦ His death on the cross does not provide full atonement for all sin, but does provide everyone with resurrection.
- Who does Mormonism say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ In Mormonism, the “holy spirit” is different from the “Holy Ghost”.
  - ✦ The “holy spirit” is not God, but is instead an influence or electricity-like emanation from God – the light of Christ.
- What does Mormonism say about salvation?
  - ✦ No eternal life without Mormon church membership.
  - ✦ People are resurrected by grace, but saved (exalted to godhood and eternal life) by works, which include...
    - faithfulness to church leaders
    - Mormon baptism
    - tithing
    - ordination
    - marriage
    - secret temple rituals
- What does Mormonism say happens after death?
  - ✦ Eventually nearly everyone goes to one of three separate heavenly “kingdoms”, with some achieving godhood.
  - ✦ Apostates and murderers go to “outer darkness”.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ No alcohol, tobacco, coffee, or tea.
  - ✦ Joseph Smith is considered to be a greater prophet than Jesus.
  - ✦ Two-year missionary commitment strongly encouraged.
  - ✦ Secret temple rituals available only to members in good standing.

- Jehovah's Witnesses
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Charles Taze Russell and Joseph F. Rutherford
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - The Bible (New World Translation only)
      - *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*
      - *Reasoning from the Scriptures*
      - *Watchtower* magazine
      - *Awake!* magazine
  - Who do Jehovah's Witnesses say God is?
    - ✦ No Trinity.
    - ✦ One-person God called Jehovah.
  - Who do Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus is?
    - ✦ The Jehovah's Witnesses' Jesus is not God.
    - ✦ Jesus is the first thing Jehovah created.
    - ✦ Before he lived on earth, Jesus was Michael the archangel.
    - ✦ Jehovah made the universe through him.
    - ✦ On earth Jesus was a man who lived a perfect life.
    - ✦ After dying on a stake (not a cross), he was resurrected as a spirit.
    - ✦ Jesus is not coming again; he already "returned" invisibly in 1914 in spirit.
    - ✦ Very soon, Jesus and the angels will destroy all non-Jehovah's Witnesses.
  - Who do Jehovah's Witnesses say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The impersonal "holy spirit" is not God.
    - ✦ Instead, the "holy spirit" is an invisible, active force from Jehovah.
  - What do Jehovah's Witnesses say about salvation?
    - ✦ Must be baptized as a Jehovah's Witness.
    - ✦ Most followers must earn everlasting life on earth by doing "door-to-door work".
    - ✦ Salvation in heaven is limited to 144,000 "anointed ones" (This number has already been reached.).
  - What do Jehovah's Witnesses say happens after death?
    - ✦ The 144,000 "anointed ones" live as spirits in heaven.
    - ✦ The rest of the righteous ("the great crowd") live on earth and must obey God perfectly for 1,000 years or be annihilated.
  - Additional Information

- ✦ Meet in “Kingdom Halls” instead of churches.
- ✦ Active members are strongly encouraged to distribute literature door-to-door.
- ✦ Once a year, members observe “Lord’s Evening Meal” (like communion); only “anointed ones” may actually partake.
- ✦ Members believe Armageddon will occur soon.
- ✦ Members are not allowed to...
  - observe holidays or birthdays
  - vote
  - salute the flag
  - work in the military
  - accept blood transfusions
- Christian Science
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: Mary Eddy Baker
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures*
      - *Manual of the Mother Church*
      - The Bible (not reliable)
      - *Christian Science Journal*
      - *Christian Science Sentinel*
  - Who does Christian Science say God is?
    - ✦ God is an impersonal principle.
    - ✦ This principle involves life, truth, love, intelligence and spirit.
    - ✦ God is all that exists – matter is an illusion.
  - Who does Christian Science say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus was not the Christ, but displayed the Christ idea.
    - ✦ He was not God (God can never become man or flesh).
    - ✦ Jesus did not suffer for sins.
      - He could not suffer for sins.
      - He did not die on the cross
    - ✦ Jesus was not physically resurrected.
    - ✦ He will not literally come back.
  - Who does Christian Science say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The “Holy Spirit” is “divine science” (the teachings of Christian Science).
    - ✦ It is an impersonal power.

- What does Christian Science say about salvation?
  - ✦ Sin, evil, sickness and death do not exist.
  - ✦ Humanity is inherently eternally saved.
- What does Christian Science say happens after death?
  - ✦ Death does not exist.
  - ✦ Heaven and hell are merely states of mind.
  - ✦ The only way to heaven is by attaining to harmony (a oneness with God).
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Christian Science “practitioners” heal members by helping them realize that the body cannot be ill, suffer pain or die.
  - ✦ This “miraculous healing” is used to attract new members.
  - ✦ Publisher of *Christian Science Monitor* newspaper.
- Traditional Armstrongism
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: Herbert W. Armstrong
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *Malachi’s Message*
      - *Mystery of the Ages*
      - *The Philadelphia Trumpet* magazine
  - Who does Traditional Armstrongism say God is?
    - ✦ One infinite, eternal God.
    - ✦ No Trinity – God is a “family of individuals”.
  - Who does Traditional Armstrongism say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus is God incarnate.
    - ✦ He was not physically resurrected.
    - ✦ Jesus was predicted to return to the earth in 1975.
    - ✦ He is the only one who has been born again.
  - Who does Traditional Armstrongism say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The Holy Spirit is an impersonal force.
  - What does Traditional Armstrongism say about salvation?
    - ✦ Salvation is by grace (the unmerited favor of God).
  - What does Traditional Armstrongism say happens after death?
    - ✦ Resurrected believers will live on the new earth.
    - ✦ The unsaved will face judgment.

○ Additional Information

- ✦ Followers recognize Old Testament Sabbath days, feast days, and dietary prohibitions (such as no pork or shellfish).
- ✦ The soul is not immortal.
- ✦ Hell does not literally exist.
- ✦ Medical treatment is prohibited.
- ✦ The Anglo-Saxon people are descendants of the house of David and are the “true Israel”.
- ✦ The leaders of the Worldwide Church of God (which was founded in Traditional Armstrongism) adopted much more biblical beliefs in 1995.
  - They now accept the Trinity.
  - They now accept that Jesus was physically resurrected.
  - They no longer enforce legalistic requirements on members.

● Unification Church

○ Background

- ✦ Key Figure: Sun Myung Moon
- ✦ Key Writings
  - *Divine Principle*
    - Written by Sun Myung Moon
    - Considered the “Completed Testament”
  - *Outline of the Principle Level 4*
  - The Bible (not the truth itself, but a textbook teaching the truth)

○ Who does the Unification Church say God is?

- ✦ God is both positive and negative.
- ✦ He created the universe out of himself; the universe is God’s “body”.
- ✦ God does not know the future.
- ✦ God is suffering and needs man to make him happy.
- ✦ No Trinity.

○ Who does the Unification Church say Jesus is?

- ✦ Jesus was a perfect man, but not God.
- ✦ Jesus is the son of Zechariah, not born of a virgin.
- ✦ Jesus’ mission was to unite the Jews behind him, find a perfect bride, and begin a perfect family – Jesus failed.
- ✦ He was not resurrected physically.



- ✦ The 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ is fulfilled in Moon, who....
  - was superior to Jesus (who worships Moon)
  - would finish Jesus' mission
- Who does the Unification Church say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is a feminine spirit who works with Jesus in the spirit world to lead people to Sun Myung Moon.
- What does the Unification Church say about salvation?
  - ✦ Members are required to obey and accept the “True Parents” (Moon and his wife) to eliminate sin and achieve perfection.
  - ✦ Everyone will eventually be saved, even Satan.
- What does the Unification Church say happens after death?
  - ✦ After death the soul goes to the spirit world.
  - ✦ There is no resurrection.
  - ✦ Members advance by convincing others to follow Sun Myung Moon.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Mass marriages, including people of all different racial backgrounds, were arranged and performed by Moon.
  - ✦ Those married by Moon and his wife drank a special holy wine containing 21 ingredients (including the True Parents' blood).
  - ✦ Members believe that Jesus bows down to Sun Myung Moon and that Moon was the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and the Lamb of God.
  - ✦ Contact with spirits of the dead is acceptable.
- Unity School of Christianity
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Charles and Myrtle Fillmore
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *Unity* magazine
      - *Lessons in Truth*
      - *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*
      - *Daily Word*
      - The Bible (not reliable – “hidden” meanings)
  - Who does the Unity School of Christianity say God is?
    - ✦ God is an invisible, impersonal power.
    - ✦ God is just another word for “Principle”, “Law”, “Being”, “Mind” or “Spirit”.
    - ✦ God is in everything.

- ✦ No Trinity.
- ✦ The spirit is real, but matter is not.
- Who does the Unity School of Christianity say Jesus is?
  - ✦ Jesus was a man, but not the Christ.
  - ✦ Instead, he had “Christ Consciousness”.
  - ✦ The “Christ” is a state of perfection in every person.
  - ✦ Jesus lived many times and was searching for his salvation.
  - ✦ He did not die as a sacrifice for anyone’s sins.
  - ✦ Jesus was not resurrected physically and will never return to earth in physical form.
- Who does the Unity School of Christianity say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is the Law of God in action.
  - ✦ Also deemed to be “definite” thoughts in the mind of man.
- What does the Unity School of Christianity say about salvation?
  - ✦ Recognition that each person is as much the Son of God as Jesus is.
  - ✦ There is no evil, no devil, no sin, no poverty, and no old age.
- What does the Unity School of Christianity say happens after death?
  - ✦ Death is the result of improper thinking – reincarnation occurs until a person learns these “truths” and becomes “perfect”.
  - ✦ There is no literal heaven or hell.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Worship takes place in Unity churches.
  - ✦ Counseling and prayer ministry (millions of requests each year) conducted by phone and mail.
  - ✦ Millions of pieces of literature printed each year.
  - ✦ Daily Word devotionals used by members of other religious groups.
- Church of Scientology
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: L. Ron Hubbard
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*
      - *The Way to Happiness*
  - Who does the Church of Scientology say God is?
    - ✦ Scientology does not define God or a Supreme Being.
    - ✦ The God of the Bible is specifically rejected.

- ✦ Everyone is a “thetan” – an immortal spirit with unlimited powers over its own universe (not everyone is aware of this).
- Who does the Church of Scientology say Jesus is?
  - ✦ Jesus is rarely mentioned in Scientology.
  - ✦ He was not the Creator.
  - ✦ He did not die for sins.
  - ✦ He did not reach the level of “operating thetan” (in control of supernatural powers and cleared from mental defects).
- Who does the Church of Scientology say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of Scientology.
- What does the Church of Scientology say about salvation?
  - ✦ There is no sin and, thus, no need for repentance.
  - ✦ Salvation means being freed from reincarnation.
  - ✦ One must work on his “engrams” (hang-ups in the form of “mental image pictures”) with an “auditor” to achieve the state of “clear” then progress up the “bridge to total freedom”.
- What does the Church of Scientology say happens after death?
  - ✦ People who get clear of engrams become “operating thetans” (having a state of “complete spiritual freedom”).
  - ✦ Hell is nothing but a myth.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Members celebrate the birth of Hubbard and the anniversary of the publication of Dianetics.
  - ✦ Scientology has been steeped in controversy worldwide.
- Hinduism
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Many Different Sects
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - The Vedas
      - The Upanishads
      - The *Bhagavad-Gita*
  - Who does Hinduism say God is?
    - ✦ God is a universal spirit.
    - ✦ Everyone is part of God, but most people are unaware.
    - ✦ People worship manifestations of God (gods and goddesses).

- Who does Hinduism say Jesus is?
  - ✦ Jesus is a son of God as are many others.
  - ✦ He is a teacher and guru.
  - ✦ His death does not atone for sins.
  - ✦ Jesus did not rise from the dead.
- Who does Hinduism say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of Hinduism.
- What does Hinduism say about salvation?
  - ✦ Salvation means to be released from the cycle of reincarnation.
  - ✦ May be achieved through yoga and meditation.
  - ✦ Likely takes many lifetimes to achieve.
  - ✦ Final salvation involves absorption into God.
- What does Hinduism say happens after death?
  - ✦ Bad karma results in a rebirth into suffering.
  - ✦ Good karma results in an improved rebirth status.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Worship of stone and wooden idols.
  - ✦ Spiritual gurus can demand complete obedience.
  - ✦ Some disciples wear orange robes and shave their heads.
  - ✦ Disciples meditate on a word, phrase or even a picture.
  - ✦ Yoga involves meditation, chanting, specialized postures and controlled breathing.
  - ✦ Hinduism is one of the foundations of the New Age Movement (and Transcendental Meditation).
- Buddhism
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: Gautama Siddhartha (the Buddha)
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - The *MahaVastu* (story of Buddha's life)
      - The *Jataka Tales* (story of Buddha's former lives)
      - The *Tripitaka* (Buddhist scriptures)
      - The *Tantras* (Buddhist practices)
  - Who does Buddhism say God is?
    - ✦ The Buddha did not believe in the existence of God.
    - ✦ Followers view Buddha as a god.

- Who does Buddhism say Jesus is?
  - ✦ Jesus is not part of historic Buddhist teaching.
  - ✦ In the West, Buddhists view Jesus as an enlightened teacher.
  - ✦ In Asia, Buddhist view Jesus as a *Bodhisattva*, but not God.
- Who does Buddhism say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of Buddhism.
- What does Buddhism say about salvation?
  - ✦ The goal of life is to achieve *nirvana* – eliminating all desires or cravings and, in this way, suffering is avoided.
  - ✦ The “Eightfold Path” is a system to free Buddhists from desiring anything.
- What does Buddhism say happens after death?
  - ✦ Reincarnation.
  - ✦ People do not have their own individual souls or spirits.
  - ✦ However, a person’s desires, cravings and feelings may be “reincarnated” in another person.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Eightfold Path recommends...
    - Right knowledge
    - Right intentions
    - Right speech
    - Right conduct
    - Right livelihood
    - Right effort
    - Right mindfulness
    - Right meditation
  - ✦ Some Buddhists believe in an “eternal Buddha” (life-force).
  - ✦ Through “Assimilation” the beliefs of other religions are blended into Buddhism.
  - ✦ Buddhists make offerings to spirits and some practice deity yoga and invite spirit possession.
- New Age Movement
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Influences: Hinduism, Eastern Mysticism, Paganism
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *I Ching*
      - Hindu, Buddhist and Taoist writings

- Writings on astrology, mysticism and magic
  - Select Bible passages
- Who does the New Age Movement say God is?
- ✦ God is in everything and everyone.
  - ✦ God is an impersonal force, not a person.
  - ✦ God is the unlimited power within us that needs to be discovered.
- Who does the New Age Movement say Jesus is?
- ✦ Jesus is not God.
  - ✦ He is not a savior.
  - ✦ Jesus is a spiritual model and guru.
  - ✦ He tapped into the divine power as anyone can.
  - ✦ Jesus went to India (or Tibet) to learn mystical truths.
  - ✦ He did not rise physically, but elevated into a higher spiritual realm.
- Who does the New Age Movement say the Holy Spirit is?
- ✦ The Holy Spirit is a physical force.
  - ✦ Man is divine and can access that force to contact unearthly beings.
- What does the New Age Movement say about salvation?
- ✦ People must offset bad karma with good karma.
  - ✦ Man can be “reborn” through a higher self-awareness.
  - ✦ This self-awareness comes by tapping into supernatural power through meditation with the help of “spirit guides”.
- What does the New Age Movement say happens after death?
- ✦ Reincarnation occurs until a person truly achieves oneness with God (discovers the divine power within).
  - ✦ There is no literal heaven or hell.
- Additional Information
- ✦ Crystals are used to get in harmony with the divine energy, for healing, for contacting spirits and for higher consciousness.
  - ✦ Common practices include...
    - Yoga/Meditation
    - Visualization
    - Astrology
    - Channeling
    - Hypnosis/Trances
    - Tarot card readings

- ✦ Followers strive for world unity and peace.
- ✦ There is an emphasis on holistic health.
- Hare Krishna
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - Prabhupada's translations of and commentaries on Hindu writings, especially *Bhagavad-Gita as It Is*
      - *Back to Godhead* magazine
  - Who does Hare Krishna say God is?
    - ✦ God is Lord Krishna, a personal creator.
    - ✦ The souls of all living things are part of Krishna.
    - ✦ Krishna does whatever he wants for his own pleasure (intoxication, sex outside of marriage, etc.).
  - Who does Hare Krishna say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus is not important to Hare Krishna.
    - ✦ He is considered an enlightened vegetarian teacher who taught meditation.
    - ✦ He is not God incarnate.
  - Who does Hare Krishna say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of Hare Krishna.
  - What does Hare Krishna say about salvation?
    - ✦ Bad karma can be escaped through devotion to Krishna.
    - ✦ This includes chanting Krishna's name constantly.
    - ✦ Worshiping images may also overcome bad karma.
  - What does Hare Krishna say happens after death?
    - ✦ Unenlightened people continue in endless reincarnation because of their sinful acts.
  - Additional Information
    - ✦ The Hare Krishna mantra is chanted in public.
    - ✦ A vegetarian diet is to be followed.
    - ✦ Yoga/meditation is encouraged.
    - ✦ Followers cannot partake in pleasures that Krishna enjoys...
      - No intoxicants
      - No gambling
      - No sex other than for the purpose of procreation

- ✦ Followers get new names and cut themselves off from family.
- ✦ Attract new members through Indian feasts/culture programs.
- Islam
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: Muhammad
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - The *Qu'ran*
      - The *Hadith* (Muhammed's words and deeds)
      - The book of *Shariah Law*
      - Old Testament Law and Psalms (Muslim scholars teach that Christians and Jews have corrupted these texts)
  - Who does Islam say God is?
    - ✦ God (Allah) is one: no Trinity (Trinitarian view = three gods).
    - ✦ Allah is deceptive and unknowable.
    - ✦ Human attributes, such as fatherhood, cannot be associated with Allah.
  - Who does Islam say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus is one of the most respected prophets sent by Allah.
    - ✦ Jesus was sinless, but is not God.
    - ✦ He was a miracle worker, but not the Son of God.
    - ✦ Jesus was not crucified.
    - ✦ Jesus ascended to heaven without dying.
    - ✦ Jesus is not the Messiah, but will return before judgment day to tell Christians that they are wrong and must turn to Islam.
  - Who does Islam say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ Allah is a spirit, but the Holy Spirit is not part of Islam.
  - What does Islam say about salvation?
    - ✦ Humans are basically good, but fallible and need guidance.
    - ✦ The scales measure good and bad deeds to determine eternal destiny in paradise or hell.
    - ✦ Allah may tip the scales to heaven, as his will is supreme.
  - What does Islam say happens after death?
    - ✦ Bodies are resurrected.
    - ✦ Eternal torment is a prevalent theme of the teachings of Islam.
    - ✦ Paradise includes a garden populated with maidens who provide sexual pleasures to righteous men.



## ○ Additional Information

- ✦ Allah forces followers to worship him.
- ✦ Jesus is an inferior prophet to Muhammad.
- ✦ It is a holy effort to spread Islam (including through Jihad).
- ✦ Five Pillars of Islam...
  - Confessing that Allah is the one true God and that Muhammad is his prophet
  - Praying five times daily facing Mecca
  - Giving alms
  - Fasting during Ramadan
  - Pilgrimage to Mecca (once in a lifetime)
- ✦ The two houses of Islam...
  - Lower house (no Islamic majority/power)
  - Upper house (Islam has power/control)

## ● Nation of Islam

### ○ Background

- ✦ Key Figures: Wallace D. Fard, Elijah Muhammad and Louis Farrakhan
- ✦ Key Writings
  - The *Qu'ran*
  - The Bible (selected texts)
  - *Message to the Blackman in America*
  - Other books by Elijah Muhammad
  - Writings of Louis Farrakhan

### ○ Who does Nation of Islam say God is?

- ✦ God (Allah) is one.
- ✦ Collectively, the black race is Allah.
- ✦ Many Allahs have lived and died since creation.
- ✦ Master Fard is the Supreme Allah (and savior).

### ○ Who does Nation of Islam say Jesus is?

- ✦ Jesus is a sinless prophet of Allah.
- ✦ Jesus was born of an adulterous relationship between Mary and Joseph who was already married to another woman.
- ✦ Jesus was not crucified.
- ✦ Jesus was stabbed in the heart by a police officer.
- ✦ He is buried in Jerusalem.

- ✦ Prophecies of Jesus' return refer to Master Fard, Elijah Muhammad or Louis Farrakhan.
- Who does Nation of Islam say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of Nation of Islam.
  - ✦ Gabriel was a "holy spirit" who spoke to Muhammad.
- What does Nation of Islam say about salvation?
  - ✦ People do sin, but are not born sinful.
  - ✦ Salvation is by works through submission to Allah.
  - ✦ Elijah Muhammad taught that...
    - Master Fard is the savior
    - Salvation comes through knowledge of self and understanding that the white race is evil and displaced the black race
- What does Nation of Islam say happens after death?
  - ✦ There is no life after death.
  - ✦ Heaven and hell are merely symbols.
  - ✦ Resurrection refers to awakening "mentally dead" people by introducing them to true teachings.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Farrakhan's messages are as important as earlier doctrines.
  - ✦ Elijah Muhammad's views (Allah as the black race, Master Fard as Allah incarnate, white people are devils, etc.) are still distributed, but have been begun to be supplanted by more standard Islamic teachings.
- Baha'I World Faith
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figure: Mirza Husayn (Baha'u'llah)
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - Writings of Baha'u'llah
        - *Kitab-i-Aqdas* (Most Holy Book)
        - *Kitab-i-Iqan* (Book of Certitude)
      - The Bible (as interpreted "spiritually" to conform to Baha'I theology)
  - Who does Baha'I World Faith say God is?
    - ✦ God is unknowable.
    - ✦ God has revealed himself through "manifestations"...
      - Moses
      - Buddha

- Jesus
- Muhammad
- Baha'u'llah (Glory of Allah)
- ✦ No Trinity.
- Who does Baha'I World Faith say Jesus is?
  - ✦ Jesus is one of many manifestations of God.
  - ✦ Jesus was superseded by Muhammad who was superseded by the greatest prophet of all, Baha'u'llah.
  - ✦ Jesus is not God.
  - ✦ He did not rise from the dead.
  - ✦ Jesus is not the only way to God.
  - ✦ He has returned to earth as Baha'u'llah.
- Who does Baha'I World Faith say the Holy Spirit is?
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is divine energy from God that empowers each manifestation of God.
  - ✦ The phrase "Spirit of Truth" refers to Baha'u'llah.
- What does Baha'I World Faith say about salvation?
  - ✦ Faith in God's manifestation (currently Baha'u'llah).
  - ✦ In addition, knowing and living according to the teaching and principles of Baha'u'llah.
- What does Baha'I World Faith say happens after death?
  - ✦ Immortality based upon good works.
  - ✦ There are rewards for the faithful.
  - ✦ Heaven and hell are conditions, not actual places.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ Baha'I faith is discredited and severely persecuted in Iran.
  - ✦ Currently headquartered in Haifa, Israel.
  - ✦ Baha'I faith teaches that all religions have the same source, principles and aims.
  - ✦ Baha'I faith stresses oneness and world unity.
- Judaism
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Abraham, Moses, the Pharisees and Sadducees
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - The *Tanakh* (Old Testament), especially the *Torah* (the first five books of the Old Testament)

- The *Talmud* (the “Oral Law” which is made up of Rabbinical discussions of the *Tanakh*)
  - The *Midrash* (exegetical commentaries on the *Torah* and *Talmud*)
- Who does Judaism say God is?
- ✦ God is spirit.
  - ✦ No Trinity.
  - ✦ Orthodox: God is personal, all powerful and compassionate.
  - ✦ Non-orthodox: God is impersonal and unknowable.
- Who does Judaism say Jesus is?
- ✦ Jesus is viewed as either a good, but martyred Jewish Rabbi or an heretic who claimed to be the Messiah.
  - ✦ Jesus was not the Messiah.
  - ✦ He was not the Son of God.
  - ✦ Jesus did not rise from the dead.
  - ✦ The Messiah (not Jesus) will restore Israel and rule over all the earth.
- Who does Judaism say the Holy Spirit is?
- ✦ The Holy Spirit is a name for God’s working on the earth.
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit is God’s love and/or power.
- What does Judaism say about salvation?
- ✦ Some believe prayer, repentance and obedience to the Law are necessary for salvation.
  - ✦ Others see salvation as improving society.
- What does Judaism say happens after death?
- ✦ Some believe in resurrection: obedient people live forever with God while the unrighteous suffer eternally.
  - ✦ A few believe that there is no conscious life after death.
- Additional Information
- ✦ Followers gather in synagogues for prayer and sermons.
  - ✦ They meet on the Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday evening).
  - ✦ Males are circumcised per the Law of Moses.
  - ✦ Jerusalem is considered to be their holy city.
  - ✦ Holy days and festivals...
    - Passover
    - Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)
    - Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah)
    - New Year (Rosh Hashanah)

- Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
- Rescue from Haman (Purim)
- Rite of passage (Bar/Bat Mitzvah)
- **Spiritualism**
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Kate, Leah, and Margaret Fox
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *Spiritualist Manual*
      - *Aquarium Gospel of Jesus the Christ*
      - *Oahspe* (a “new Bible” with revelations from angels)
      - The Bible (only selected parts)
  - Who does Spiritualism say God is?
    - ✦ God is infinite intelligence.
    - ✦ God is an impersonal power controlling the universe.
  - Who does Spiritualism say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus was a man, but not God.
    - ✦ He was a prophet (advanced medium) who was able to communicate with the spirit world.
    - ✦ He is now a spirit and we can communicate with him via the spirit world.
  - Who does Spiritualism say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of Spiritualism.
    - ✦ Some use the term “holy spirit” to refer to a holy person who once lived.
  - What does Spiritualism say about salvation?
    - ✦ Knowledge and good works will enhance a person’s status in the afterlife.
  - What does Spiritualism say happens after death?
    - ✦ After one’s time on this earthly plane, life continues in the spirit world.
    - ✦ In the afterlife a person’s spirit may progress from one level to the next.
    - ✦ Heaven and hell are states of mind.
    - ✦ Some hold to a belief in reincarnation.
  - Additional Information
    - ✦ Séances are used to contact the dead.
    - ✦ Ouija™ boards are employed.
    - ✦ Attracts grieving people who hope for contact with a deceased loved one.
    - ✦ "Church" includes singing, music and messages from the dead.

- WICCA
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Margaret Murray and Gerald Gardner
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *The Book of Shadows*
      - *A Witches' Bible*
      - *The Spiritual Dance*
  - Who does WICCA say God is?
    - ✦ The Supreme Being is called...
      - The Goddess
      - The Goddess and God
      - Goddess and horned god (Lady and Lord)
    - ✦ The Goddess can be an impersonal force or personal being.
    - ✦ Wiccans can be pantheists, polytheists or both.
  - Who does WICCA say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus is either rejected altogether or considered a spiritual teacher who taught love and compassion.
  - Who does WICCA say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The Holy Spirit is not part of WICCA.
    - ✦ Some Wiccans refer to “spirit” as a kind of divine energy.
  - What does WICCA say about salvation?
    - ✦ Humanity is not sinful and does not need to be saved.
    - ✦ Nature (which they equate with the Goddess) must be saved.
  - What does WICCA say happens after death?
    - ✦ The body decomposes and replenishes the earth.
    - ✦ Some Wiccans are not sure about life after death while others believe in reincarnation.
    - ✦ Still other Wiccans hold to a belief in a wonderful place called Summerland.
  - Additional Information
    - ✦ WICCA: Witches International Coven Counsel Association
    - ✦ Wiccans practice divination and spell-casting.
      - Most rituals performed in a circle.
      - Divination is seeking to foretell the future.
      - Spell-casting is channeling positive energy to help reach goals.

- ✦ Some Wiccans are part of a “coven” while others operate alone.
- ✦ WICCA is a nature religion, not Satanism.
- Seventh Day Adventists
  - Orthodox positions
    - ✦ Infallibility of the Bible
    - ✦ Doctrine of the Trinity
    - ✦ The Deity of Christ
    - ✦ Christ’s death on the cross for our sins
    - ✦ Christ's incarnation and resurrection
    - ✦ The necessity of regeneration
    - ✦ Sanctification by the work of the Holy Spirit
    - ✦ Christ's literal return
  - The Sabbath and the Lord’s Day
    - ✦ SDAs keep the Jewish Sabbath.
    - ✦ They equate the Sabbath with the Lord's Day based upon a misinterpretation linking Mark 2:28 with Rev 1:10.
    - ✦ Some SDAs believe that those who worship on Sunday have received the Mark of the Beast, but this is not the official position of the SDA.
  - The Sanctuary, Investigative Judgment and Scapegoat
    - ✦ The SDAs interpreted the 2300 days in Daniel 8:14 as years and predicted that Jesus would return in 1843.
    - ✦ When He did not return to the earth, a vision from God revealed that Jesus had actually gone to a “second apartment” of the heavenly sanctuary of Heb 8:1-2.
    - ✦ This began the second phase of His ministry wherein He began the “Investigative Judgment”.
      - This involves His evaluation of the sins of those who have died in Christ and believers still alive on the earth to see who among them are deemed worthy of eternal life.
      - This is based upon a false doctrine that asserts that the death of Christ does not take away sins, but instead allows them to be transferred to the heavenly sanctuary for evaluation.
      - Thus, eternal life is available only to those who have believed in Jesus and whose lives are deemed to be righteous.
      - When this “Investigative Judgment” is complete, the sins of those who have been deemed righteous will be blotted out as Jesus returns in the Second Advent and sends away the scapegoat.
    - ✦ The SDSs believe the scapegoat of Lev 16 is Satan who bears guilt for bringing sin into the world.

- Satan is not our sin-bearer, only Jesus bears our sins.
  - Satan must bear the guilt of his own sin of bringing sin into the world and inflicting sin upon humanity.
  - When Satan is sent away as the scapegoat, he is annihilated.
- Soul Sleep and the Destruction of the Wicked
- ✦ The soul cannot exist apart from the body.
  - ✦ People rest in the grave until the resurrection.
  - ✦ Eternal life is the result of salvation, therefore, the wicked do not live eternally.
  - ✦ At the first resurrection (Rev 20:4-5) or the resurrection of the just (Acts 24:15), the righteous are raised to eternal life.
  - ✦ The SDAs understand “destruction” in 2 Thess 1:8-9 to mean the reduction to a state of non-existence for the wicked after their resurrection.
- Branch Davidians
- Background
- ✦ A splinter branch of the SDA was established in 1929 by Victor Houteff.
  - ✦ Houteff wrote a publication called *The Shepherd’s Rod* that called for reform and reinterpretation of SDA eschatology.
  - ✦ The SDA condemned the new teaching and disassociated themselves from Houteff.
  - ✦ Houteff and his followers moved to a rural community near Waco, Texas, where they established the Mount Carmel Center.
  - ✦ In 1942 they became known as the General Association of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists - the term “Davidian” was used in reference to their belief they were part of the restoration of the Davidic kingdom of Israel.
  - ✦ After Houteff’s death in 1955, a group broke away and formed the Branch Davidians, alluding to the anointed “Branch” mentioned in Zech 3:8; 6:12.
- David Koresh
- ✦ David Koresh (born Vernon Wayne Howell) moved to the Mount Carmel compound in 1981.
  - ✦ While Koresh was there a man named George Roden became the heir apparent to the group.
  - ✦ Koresh led an “opposition movement” and gained a couple of dozen followers.
  - ✦ In 1985 they were forced to leave Mount Carmel by Roden and moved to a camp in East Texas.
    - Koresh attracted more followers.
    - His followers were known as “Koreshians.”



- ✦ Roden, threatened by Koresh's growing popularity, proposed a contest to see which of the two men could raise the dead.
  - ✦ Roden exhumed a corpse for the contest, so Koresh went to authorities to file charges of desecration of a corpse.
  - ✦ The authorities told Koresh he needed proof of the crime.
  - ✦ Koresh and some of his followers went back to Mount Carmel to try to find incriminating evidence against Roden and ended up in a gunfight wherein Roden was shot.
  - ✦ Koresh and his followers went on trial for attempted murder.
  - ✦ They were acquitted and, with his opposition gone, Koresh and his followers ended up back at Mount Carmel.
- The Deception
- ✦ Koresh had sex with a number of the women at the compound under the ruse that such an act would make the woman part of the "House of David".
  - ✦ Koresh fathered at least 12 children in this way.
  - ✦ Koresh claimed that he was the Lamb who would break the seven seals of Revelation ushering in the apocalypse.
    - This motivated the group to start stockpiling large numbers of weapons.
    - This caught the attention of U.S. authorities.
- The Siege
- ✦ In 1993 the ATF attempted to execute a search warrant, but a firefight broke out during which four ATF agents were killed and 16 others were wounded.
  - ✦ This led to a 51 day siege which ended when FBI agents tried to use tear gas to force the Davidians to leave the compound.
  - ✦ After several hours a fire broke out which only a few of the Davidians escaped.
  - ✦ Upon forensic examination of the bodies it became clear that many of the Davidians were dead (gunshot/stabbing) prior to the fire which is why the tear gas had not been effective.
- Oneness Pentecostalism
- No Trinity
- ✦ The singular "name" in Matt 28:19 points to one name of God, this name is Jesus. Therefore, God is only one person, Jesus.
  - ✦ The Trinity is a heretical doctrine.
  - ✦ The Father, Son and Holy Spirit only represent roles of the one Person of God.
    - The Son is the human body and nature.
    - The Father is the Spirit of God that indwelt this body.

- The distinction between the Father and Son is between the divine and human nature of Christ.
  - The Holy Spirit is the impersonal activity of God.
- Water baptism
- ✦ Water baptism is to be done in the name of Jesus Christ, not the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as per Matt 28:19.
  - ✦ The exact phrase "in the name of Jesus Christ" must be verbally invoked.
  - ✦ Water baptism is efficacious for the remission of sins – the washing away of sins is the result of Jesus' name being invoked.
  - ✦ A person is not saved unless baptized by this formula.
  - ✦ Immersion is the only legitimate form of water baptism.
- Requirements for Salvation
- ✦ Faith in Jesus (repentance of sins).
    - True faith in Jesus Christ will be demonstrated by obedience to God's commands and a determination to submit to his will in every aspect of one's life.
    - Oneness adherents reject the notion that one may be saved through what they call "mental faith": mere belief in Christ, without life-changing repentance/obedience.
  - ✦ Water baptism in the name of Jesus.
  - ✦ Spirit baptism which is evident when someone speaks in tongues.
- “Holiness” Standards
- ✦ Some Oneness organizations, considering current social trends in fashion and dress to be immoral, have established "dress codes" for their members.
    - Women are expected not to wear pants, make-up, form fitting clothing, jewelry, or to cut their hair.
    - Men are expected to be clean-shaven, short-haired, and are expected to wear long sleeve shirts and long-legged pants (as opposed to shorts).
  - ✦ Many Oneness organizations strongly admonish their members not to watch secular movies or television.
- The Way International
- Emerged in 1950s and became the Jesus movement of the late 1960s.
- Doctrinal Positions
- ✦ Denies the deity of Christ.
  - ✦ Denies the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit.
  - ✦ Denies the existence of hell.
  - ✦ Denies the existence of the soul.
  - ✦ Admittedly Antinomian - practice free sex.

- Anti-Semitic - they use two books:
  - ✦ *The Myth of the Six Million*
  - ✦ *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*
  - ✦ Both say that the Nazi Holocaust never happened.
- All members are required to take the "Power for Abundant Living" course.
- Target audience: weak Christians and college students.
- Creciendo en Gracia
  - Founded by José Luis de Jesús Miranda
    - ✦ Miranda claimed that, in 1973 in Puerto Rico, he had a vision in which he maintains that he was visited by a pair of angels.
    - ✦ According to Miranda, the angels told him that the same spirit that was in Jesus of Nazareth had integrated with his person.
    - ✦ He moved his family to Florida and began preaching from the four gospels.
    - ✦ It was not long before Miranda started preaching his own ideals and teachings and he gained millions of followers in the U.S. as well as worldwide.
  - The Shift
    - ✦ In 1998, Miranda claimed that he was the reincarnation of Paul the Apostle and changed his focus into reading and preaching about Paul's gospel.
    - ✦ It was at this point that Miranda said that he was the Antichrist, but that Antichrist means "No longer following the Jewish teachings of Jesus as He lived in the days of His flesh."
    - ✦ Instead, individuals were supposed to follow the teachings of the Apostle Paul as taught through Miranda.
    - ✦ As part of this teaching, Miranda claimed that the Apostles Peter, John and James conspired to kill the Apostle Paul, so they could establish the "false Jesus" religion that required the following of Old Testament Law.
    - ✦ He began wearing the number 666 claiming that it was not the sign of the devil (and that the devil was already dead).
    - ✦ Even after this radical shift, Miranda still had millions of followers worldwide.
    - ✦ Devoted followers showed their support for Miranda by getting "[666](#)" tattooed on their bodies.
  - Miranda's Death
    - ✦ Miranda's ex-wife, Josefina Torres, claimed that Miranda had died in Texas on August 8, 2013.
    - ✦ However, on September 11 Miranda reappeared in public, proclaiming himself in good health.

- ✦ On November 15 of 2013, Miranda actually died in Florida.
  - ✦ Following his death, many of his followers abandoned the cult.
  - ✦ The remaining followers split into four factions with various positions and social agendas.
- Peoples Temple
  - Founded by Jim Jones
    - ✦ Jones started the Peoples Temple in Indiana during the 1950s.
    - ✦ He moved the Temple to California in the mid-1960s and began to gain many followers.
  - Socialist Shift
    - ✦ Began with fairly traditional Christian beliefs, but then Jones shifted the focus to living according to “apostolic socialism”.
    - ✦ As a result, in the 1970s Jones founded the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project, a socialist agricultural mission (commune) near Jonestown, Guyana.
  - In the summer of 1977, Jones and several hundred Temple members moved to Jonestown.
    - ✦ The members worked long hours at the commune and signed over most (if not all) of their money to Jones.
    - ✦ Harsh punishments were given to members who had disciplinary issues and members who attempted to escape were drugged.
    - ✦ Armed guards patrolled the area to enforce Jones’ rules.
    - ✦ Children rarely saw their parents and were taught to call Jones “Dad” (as did some adults as well).
  - Unraveling and Mass Suicide
    - ✦ In January of 1978 reports of these human rights abuses became public which raised concern among government leaders in the U.S.
    - ✦ In November of 1978 Congressman Leo Ryan (along with relatives of Temple members and members of the news media) visited Jonestown to investigate these claims.
    - ✦ Jones welcomed Congressman Ryan and his delegation.
    - ✦ However, when the group attempted to leave they were gunned down on an airstrip by Jones’ armed guards.
    - ✦ Later that same day over 900 inhabitants of Jonestown, 304 of them children, died of apparent cyanide poisoning, mostly in and around the settlement's main pavilion.

- A tape of the suicide was found in which Jones told Temple members that the Soviet Union (with whom the Temple had been negotiating a potential exodus) would no longer take them after the airstrip murders.
- Jones also told members to that intelligence organizations would "parachute in here on us", "shoot some of our innocent babies" and "they'll torture our children, they'll torture some of our people here, they'll torture our seniors".
- Using that reasoning, Jones and several Temple members argued that the group should commit "revolutionary suicide" by drinking a cyanide-laced grape-flavored drink.
- Some Temple members balked at the idea, so Jones told them "don't be afraid to die" and that death is "just stepping over into another plane".
- ✦ Some members escaped and reported that children were given the drink first and families were told to lie down together.
- ✦ Jones himself was found to have died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.
- **Freemasonry**
  - History
    - ✦ Began in 1717 with four small lodges in London, England.
    - ✦ Quickly spread throughout Britain, Eastern Europe, and the United States.
  - Degrees (each degree requires an oath)
    - ✦ Entered Apprentice (initiation or first degree)
      - Oath: "Binding myself under no less a penalty that having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots, and buried in the rough sands of the sea".
    - ✦ Fellow Craft (second degree)
      - 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".
    - ✦ Master Mason (third degree)
      - 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".
    - ✦ Advanced Degrees
      - Scottish Rite: 4th - 32nd degrees and the honorary 33rd degree
      - York Rite: consists of 13 degrees
  - Shriners
    - ✦ Once a mason has attained the 32nd degree he has the option of petitioning to join the Shriners.
    - ✦ Known as "The Ancient and Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine".
    - ✦ Shriners wear a hat called the "Red Fez".
      - The "Red Fez" was worn by Muslims in the early 18th century after they had overrun the city of Fez, Morocco.
      - The red color comes from the Muslims dipping these hats in the blood of the Moroccan Christians they had slaughtered.

- ✦ Must take a blood oath and confess Allah as God.

## ○ Doctrines and Beliefs

- ✦ The "bible" of Freemasonry is Dr. Albert Pike's *Orals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Rite*.
- ✦ The goal of Freemasonry is to do away with religions, their creeds and doctrines and to establish a one-world, universal religion.
- ✦ To become a member one must be...
  - An adult male who believes in the existence of a supreme being and immortality of the soul.
  - Obedient to this being and worship him as the creator and ruler of the universe.
- ✦ Freemasonry holds itself to be the only true light and those outside are "lost and in darkness and need of the light of Freemasonry".
- ✦ Who is God?
  - Embraces all religious, philosophic, and scientific truth as found in all religious/philosophic sources.
  - Belief in a composite deity named "Jahbulon":
    - Jah = short form Yahweh (Jehovah)
    - Bul = Baal
    - On = term used in the Babylonian mystery religions to call upon the god Osiris
- ✦ Who is Jesus?
  - None of the 28 Masonic prayers are in Christ's name.
  - Christ is not the only way to salvation.
  - They do not confess Him as Lord and Savior.
- ✦ What about the Bible?
  - Not the Word of God, only a light among many lights.
  - Equal with the Koran and other religious writings.
  - Not inspired revelation, but the symbolic will of God.
- ✦ What about salvation?
  - Salvation is by works.
  - The term "Lamb of God" refers to a lambskin apron.
    - Upon completion of initiation each candidate is given a white lambskin apron.
    - This apron is to represent the works of the flesh, which will supposedly merit the Mason's salvation, when he stands before the Great White Throne judgment.

## ○ General Information

- ✦ Approximately 15,300 lodges in U.S., 33,700 worldwide.
- ✦ Approximately 5 million members worldwide, 4 million in the U.S.
- ✦ The "Eastern Star" is a parallel women's organization.

- Word of Faith
  - Background
    - ✦ Key Figures: Kenneth Hagin Sr. and Kenneth Copeland
    - ✦ Key Writings
      - *A New Type of Christianity*
      - *Claiming Our Rights*
      - *Right and Wrong Thinking*
  - Who does Word of Faith say God is?
    - ✦ Faith is a force that man can harness and use to his own ends.
    - ✦ God must respond to that faith.
    - ✦ God will grant man whatever he asks for if asked properly.
  - Who does Word of Faith say Jesus is?
    - ✦ Jesus is the first born again man.
    - ✦ Some teach that Jesus was defeated on the cross and took on the nature of Satan to become born again in hell.
    - ✦ Jesus is powerless to act apart from man exercising his authority in Jesus' name.
    - ✦ Jesus is subordinate to the Holy Spirit.
  - Who does Word of Faith say the Holy Spirit is?
    - ✦ The Holy Spirit is the most important member of the Trinity in our daily lives.
    - ✦ Being filled with the Spirit is equated with being born again.
    - ✦ Through water baptism the believer receives the Holy Spirit which is a necessary event in order for the believer to obtain power.
    - ✦ Speaking in tongues (think gibberish, not actual languages) is evidence that someone has received the Spirit.
    - ✦ Some teach that unless someone speaks in tongues he is not saved.
  - What does Word of Faith say about salvation?
    - ✦ Salvation is through faith in Jesus (but not the Jesus of the Bible).
    - ✦ Some teach salvation can be lost through disobedience.
    - ✦ The real purpose of salvation (even the Cross) is to produce temporal benefits for those of faith.
    - ✦ Personal sins are simply seen as mistakes.
    - ✦ The Word of Faith “technique” – the proper faith formula – works for both saved and unsaved people, so salvation is not really emphasized.

- What does Word of Faith say happens after death?
  - ✦ Temporal prosperity (health, wealth, etc.) is emphasized, so this issue is not often addressed.
  - ✦ Everyone who “claims Christ” is assumed to go to heaven.
- Additional Information
  - ✦ The occult teachings of New Thought and “positive confession” heavily influenced Word of Faith theology.
  - ✦ Words are seen to have inherent power, so we must be very careful to only use positive words in conjunction with faith.
  - ✦ Our words evoke positive or negative responses from God.
  - ✦ The Book of Acts and select verses from the gospels are used to support their theology.
  - ✦ Old Testament verses are interpreted out of context – blessings that are for Israel are claimed for the Church.
  - ✦ Jesus knew how to wield His faith, so He was not a poor wanderer, but a wealthy man who never needed to work for a living during the time of His earthly ministries.
  - ✦ Physical illness is believed to be the result of people allowing Satan to have authority over their lives.
  - ✦ Therefore, physical wellness is viewed as a sign of God being pleased with us, so healings are commonplace.