



RELIGIONS

New religious movements

Development of new inter-religious tools

"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

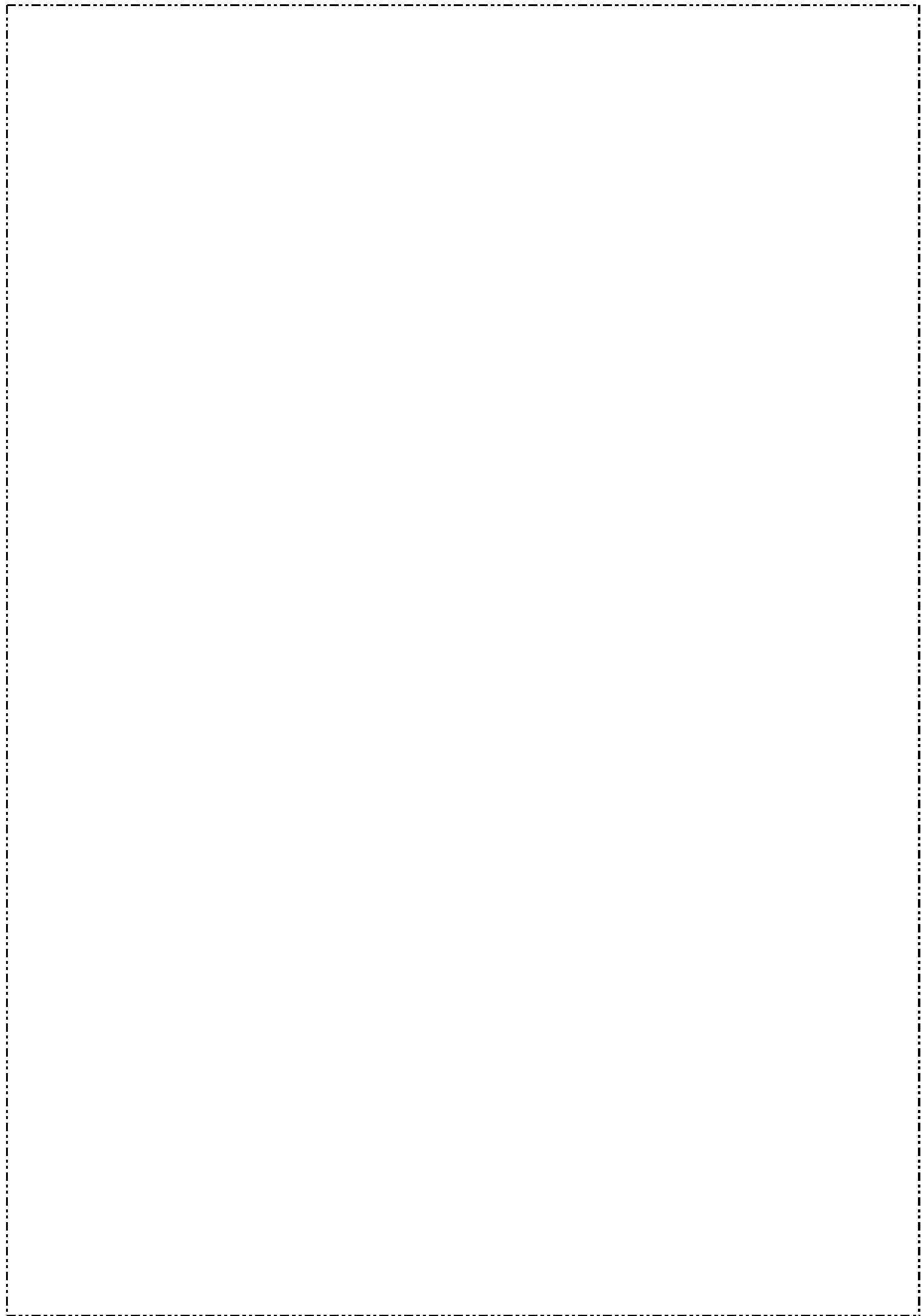


TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS	5
➤ ECKANKAR.....	5
➤ HUNA	6
➤ OMNISM.....	6
➤ RAËLISM	6
➤ SCIENTOLOGY	7
➤ UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM.....	8
RACE – BASED.....	9
BLACK	9
➤ ASUAR AUSET SOCIETY	9
➤ BLACK HEBREW ISRAELIES	10
➤ DINI YA MSAMBWA	11
➤ MUMBOISM	11
➤ NATION OF GODS AND EARTHS.....	11
➤ NATION OF ISLAM	12
➤ NUWAUBIAN NATION	13
➤ MOORISH ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA	13
➤ MOORISH SCIENCE TEMPLE OF AMERICA	14
➤ RASTAFARI.....	14
WHITE	16
➤ ARIOSOPHY	16
➤ BLACK ORDER (Satanist group).....	16
➤ CHRISTIAN IDENTITY.....	16
➤ CREATIVITY	17
➤ ORDER OF NINE ANGELS	17
➤ THULE SOCIETY	19
➤ WOTANSVOLK	19
NATIVE AMERICAN	19
➤ GHOST DANCE.....	19
➤ INDIAN SHAKER CHURCH.....	20
➤ NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH	21
NEW THOUGHT	21
➤ CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.....	21
➤ CHURCH OF DIVINE SCIENCE	22
➤ CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND TRIUMPHANT	23
➤ JEVISH SCIENCE.....	23
➤ RELIGIOUS SCIENCE.....	24

➤ SEICHO-NO-LE	24
➤ UNITY CHURCH	25
SHINSHUKYO	25
➤ CHURCH OF WORLD MESSIANITY	26
➤ HAPPY SCIENCE	26
➤ KONKOKYO.....	27
➤ OOMOTO	27
➤ PL KYODAN	28
➤ SEICHO-NO-LE	28
➤ TENRIKYO	29

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

New religious movement (NRM), the generally accepted term for what is sometimes called, often with pejorative connotations, a “cult.” The term new religious movement has been applied to all new faiths that have arisen worldwide over the past several centuries. NRMs are characterized by a number of shared traits. These religions are, by definition, “new”; they offer innovative religious responses to the conditions of the modern world, despite the fact that most NRMs represent themselves as rooted in ancient traditions. NRMs are also usually regarded as “countercultural”; that is, they are perceived (by others and by themselves) to be alternatives to the mainstream religions of Western society, especially Christianity in its normative forms. These movements are often highly eclectic, pluralistic, and syncretistic; they freely combine doctrines and practices from diverse sources within their belief systems. The new movement is usually founded by a charismatic and sometimes highly authoritarian leader who is thought to have extraordinary powers or insights. Many NRMs are tightly organized. In light of their often self-proclaimed “alternative” or “outsider” status, these groups often make great demands on the loyalty and commitment of their followers and sometimes establish themselves as substitutes for the family and other conventional social groupings. NRMs have arisen to address specific needs that many people cannot satisfy through more traditional religious organizations or through modern secularism. They are also products of and responses to modernity, pluralism, and the scientific worldview.

Many NRMs claim to be not religions at all but rather “scientific truth” that has not yet been acknowledged or discovered by the official scientific community. In the search for authority for new teachings, certain NRMs have thus tapped into what is arguably the most powerful form of legitimizing discourse in the modern world: science. Some groups have claimed scientific “proof” for Yoga and meditation, and other NRMs have developed in the West under the umbrella of self-proclaimed scientific validity.

NRMs, in all their diversity, represent various responses to the challenges of modernity: religious and cultural pluralism, the influence of science and technology, and the secularization of much of modern life. They are also attempts to find new spiritual alternatives to the mainstream religious traditions. While some NRMs have led their adherents to tragic ends and others faded away as quickly as they had arisen, many have provided religious solace to those who feel they cannot obtain it elsewhere, and some show signs of enduring and becoming institutionalized. Some of them will undoubtedly become, over time, part of tomorrow’s “mainstream religions.”

UFO groups, sometimes called collectively the “contact movement,” represent one manifestation of a “scientific” NRM.

A UFO religion is any religion in which the existence of extraterrestrial (ET) entities operating unidentified flying objects (UFOs) is an element of belief. Typically, adherents of such religions believe the ETs to be interested in the welfare of humanity which either already is, or eventually will become, part of a pre-existing ET civilization. Others may incorporate ETs into a more supernatural worldview in which the UFO occupants are more akin to angels than physical aliens; this distinction may be just a tad bit blurred within the overall subculture. These religions have their roots in the tropes of early science fiction (especially space opera) and weird fiction writings, in ufology, and in the subculture of UFO sightings and alien abduction stories.

Drawing on time-honoured religious stories of the descent of supernatural beings from the heavens, UFO groups developed what has been called a “technological myth” of the arrival—whether imminent or actual and ongoing—on Earth of space aliens, who will bring advanced knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

UFO groups sometimes couch traditional religious themes such as apocalypticism and heavenly intervention in the language of modern technology and biological evolutionary theory. Other groups, including the Church of Scientology, fashion spiritual teachings and mythology in the language of modern psychology.

➤ ECKANKAR



The Eckankar "EK" symbol

Eckankar (meaning Co-worker with God), called "the Path of Spiritual Freedom", is a new religious movement founded by Paul Twitchell in 1965. It is a non-profit religious group with members in over one hundred countries. The spiritual home is the Temple of Eck in Chanhassen, Minnesota.

Eckankar is not affiliated with any other religious group. Followers believe its purpose is to help individuals find their way back to God through direct personal spiritual experiences. The movement teaches simple spiritual exercises, such as singing "Hu", called "a love song to God", to experience the Light and Sound of God and recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Shariyat-Ki-Sugmad, which means "Way of the Eternal", is the holy scripture of Eckankar. It comprises two books that tell of spiritual meaning and purpose as written by the Mahanta.

Worship - Eckankar emphasizes personal spiritual experiences as the most natural way back to God. These are attained via the Spiritual Exercises of ECK. Eckankar offers a Spiritual Exercise of the Week on its website.

There are few personal requirements to be an ECKist; however, certain spiritual practices are recommended. Chief among these is daily practice of the "Spiritual Exercises of ECK" for 15–20 minutes.

The most basic ECK spiritual exercise is singing the word Hu. A wide variety of spiritual exercises are offered, and members are encouraged to create their own.

There are no dietary requirements, taboos, or enforced ascetic practices.

Eckankar does not require potential members to leave their current faith to join.

There are a number of ceremonies an ECKist can experience as part of the teaching, including a Consecration ceremony for initiating the young and infants, a Rite of Passage into adulthood (around age 13), a Wedding ceremony, and a Memorial service.

ECKists celebrate a spiritual new year on October 22. There is no organizational celebration of personal anniversaries, such as birthdays of the leaders.

➤ HUNA

Huna is part of the New Age movement.

Huna may be called a philosophy or a system of psychology because it contains elements of philosophy, science, and religion.

The New Age practice of Huna emphasizes practical living and harmony with three levels of consciousness or selves.

Huna is reconstructionist religion inspired by the rich shamanistic spirituality, theology, and the magical and healing arts of the indigenous religion of the Hawaiian Island. There is a major resurgence of the old traditions and practice as they are understood today. Regrettably, as the Christian missionaries were very effective in destroying much of the old knowledge there is no way to know what is truly ancient. The basic concept of Huna is to live "the harmless, helpful life."

Generally speaking, Huna is a transformational system that includes meditation and breathing techniques, as well as visualization and dream exercises, chanting, and magical energy work. It is a religion oriented toward spiritual growth and personal development. It is a tradition that nurturs the Earth and enables a feeling of connection to all of life. The practitioner learns to direct energy back to Earth in return for his support.

Huna means "the secret", kahuna means "keeper of the spirit" or "priest" but is commonly used today to indicate an expert in a field. A teacher today is correctly called a "kumu".

➤ OMNISM

Omnism is the recognition and respect of all religions; those who hold this belief are called omnists (or Omnists).

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) quotes as the term's earliest usage by English poet Philip J. Bailey: in 1839 "I am an Omnist, and believe in all religions".

Contemporary usage has modified "belief in all religions" to refer more to an acceptance of the legitimacy of all religions.

Omnism does not appear to be a form of theology, as it neither espouses nor opposes particular beliefs about God. Instead, it affirms the necessity of one arriving at an understanding of reality based on personal experience, engagement, and inquiry, and an acceptance of the validity and legitimacy of the differing understandings of others. In this, there is, however, an implied system of values or ethics.

For the most part, omnism does not imply literal acceptance of every single religious claim as true. Rather, omnists generally perceive some level of truth or specific truths in all religious faiths. Omnism would assert that all religions share a common goal and a common ability to achieve those shared ends. Logically and biblically, however, omnism fails to survive tests for truth.

Like all other isms, monism is a position; not a religion in itself. There are no specific teachings, no rituals and no particular sets of beliefs that omnists follow. It's more of a way of thinking and a way of approaching religious teachings. Omnists beliefs generally fall under two main trains of thought.

The first is that all religions and belief systems have some truth-- like life, the universe and everything (even God) is part of some grand cosmic puzzle, and each religion has a few of its own pieces. When people focus too intently on their few pieces, they're missing the bigger picture-- the grand scheme of things.

The other train of thought is that omnism is the complete opposite of dogmatism. Dogmatic religions have virtually ruled the planet for centuries now, laying down principles and beliefs from holy scriptures that were held up as unquestionable and inerrant truths. In this day and age, it gets harder and harder for people to force themselves to stick to the writings in ancient texts as literal and infallible-- we want to respect their wisdom but many people can no longer take them as incontrovertible fact.

The Omnist, being the opposite of dogmatic, holds an open mind when it comes to spirituality and religion. They're open to that wisdom, to the truths found within the different systems, without holding one as more valuable or superior.

➤ RAËLISM



Raelism - symbols



The alternative version of the Raëlian symbol

Raëlism (also known as Raëlianism or the Raëlian movement) is a UFO religion that was founded in 1974 by Claude Vorilhon (b. 1946), now known as Raël.

The Raëlian Movement teaches that life on Earth was scientifically created by a species of extraterrestrials, which they call the Elohim. Raëlians believe that messengers, or prophets, of the Elohim include Buddha, Jesus, and others who informed humans of each era. The founder of Raëlism received the final message of the Elohim and that its purpose is to inform the world about Elohim and that if humans become aware and peaceful enough, they wish to be welcomed by them.

The Raëlian Church has a quasi-clerical structure of seven levels (from level 0 to level 6). Members of the Raëlian structure begin as level 0 "trainees" during annual seminars.

Joining the movement requires an official apostasy from other religions.

Raëlian ethics include striving for world peace, sharing, democracy and nonviolence.

The Raëlians frequently use the swastika as a symbol of peace, which halted Raëlian requests for territory in Israel, and later Lebanon, for establishing an embassy for extraterrestrials. The religion also uses the swastika embedded on the Star of David. Between 1991 and 2007, this symbol was often replaced by a variant star and swirl symbol in an attempt to improve public relations, particularly with Israel.

Women make up only a third of the membership in the Raëlian Church. There are two major groups of women in the Raëlian Church. The major initiation rite in the Raëlian Church is the "baptism" or "transmission of the cellular plan" and is performed by upper-level members in the Raëlian clergy known as guides. In 1979, Raël introduced the "Act of Apostasy" as an obligation for those preparing for their Raëlian baptism.

Baptisms can only be performed on four special days in the year. The dates mark anniversaries in the Raëlian calendar. The dates are 6 August, which marks the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, 13 December, marking the day that Raël in 1973 says he had his first personal encounter with one of the extraterrestrial Elohim, 7 October in which the Elohim, Raël says, took him up in a spacecraft in 1975 and the following day had meals with Jesus, Buddha, and other past religious figures and the first Sunday in April, which Raëlians believe is the date when dark-skinned extraterrestrials created Adam and Eve.

The Raelian movement defends the rights and freedoms of gays and lesbians, recognises gay marriage and ordains gay clergy. Some Raelian leaders have performed licensed same-sex marriages.

➤ SCIENTOLOGY



Scientology – Cross



Scientology - Symbol logo

Scientology is a body of religious beliefs and practices developed in 1954 by American author L. Ron Hubbard (1911–86).

Scientology focuses on psychological technologies that people can use to make their lives better, calling itself an "applied religious philosophy." It does not have formal doctrines and creeds like many other Western religions. As such, Scientology has very little to say about God, the afterlife or other religious ideas.

According to Scientology, its beliefs and practices are based on rigorous research, and its doctrines are accorded a significance equivalent to scientific laws. Scientology cosmology is, however, at odds with modern science, with claims of memories going back "76 trillion years": much longer than the age of the universe. Blind belief is held to be of lesser significance than the practical application of Scientologist methods. Adherents are encouraged to validate the practices through their personal experience.

Just as Scientology is focused on humanity, so are its beliefs. Its applications emphasize the present life, as opposed to past lives like in many Eastern religions, or the next life, as in many Western religions.

Nevertheless, the Church of Scientology considers itself a religion because of its focus on the soul and spiritual awareness and does include some beliefs on other traditionally religious subjects.

Scientology includes belief in God, but offers no details or doctrine about God.

Holidays

There are several holidays celebrated by Scientologists, notably L. Ron Hubbard's birthday on 13. March, the Anniversary of the first publication of Dianetics at 9. May, Sea Org Day in August, Auditor's Day on the second Sunday in September and the International Association of Scientologists (IAS) Anniversary on 7. October. Most official celebrations are scheduled on weekends as a convenience to members. Scientologists also celebrate holidays such as Christmas, Easter and New Year's Eve, as well as other local celebrations. Scientologists also celebrate religious holidays depending on other religious beliefs, as Scientologists very often retain their original affiliations with faiths in which they were raised.

The church's rituals can be categorized four ways: 1. rituals performed for spiritual transformation; 2. collective ceremonies usually called events, including Hubbard's birthday; 3. rites of passage including weddings, namings and funerals; 4. those that mimic Christian rituals, such as Sunday services. Events include the anniversary of Dianetics, the anniversary of Freewinds and Auditor's Day.

In Scientology, ceremonies for events such as weddings, child naming, and funerals are observed. Service

Formal services are held on Sundays, though Scientology does not emphasize that Scientologists attend them. The formal services typically include a sermon, a reading of the Creed of Scientology and a reading of the Creed of Total Freedom. All Sunday Services include the Prayer for Total Freedom, which expresses what Scientology seeks to achieve and asks God to let this be so. Another ritual for followers is the naming ceremony at the church, in which a child is welcomed to the congregation.

Symbol

The Scientology cross is a major symbol in the religion. It is similar to the Christian cross, but has an additional 4 diagonal rays between the horizontal and vertical arms. The eight points of the cross symbolize the 8 dynamics in Scientology: 1) The Self, 2) Creativity, sex, and procreation (family), 3) groups, 4) humankind, 5) all life forms, 6) physical universe, 7) spirituality, and 8) God, infinity, or the Supreme Being.

Afterlife

Scientology does not include an official belief about the afterlife. Yet, it reports that during auditing, a person often recalls memories of past lives and Scientology ascribes to the idea of being born again into another body.

Scientology's ethical system is based on reason, not divine revelation.

Diet

Scientology has no rules for diet and does not prohibit smoking or drinking. However, drinking alcohol is not allowed within 24 hours of an auditing session, which would make it impossible to benefit from the service.

Developed by L. Ron Hubbard, auditing is an important ritual for followers of Scientology. Auditing is the process in which a Scientologist verbally confers with a trained auditor to delete "life's painful experiences" and increase "spiritual abilities," according to the Church of Scientology's newsroom. Auditors ask specific sets of questions to the person, or "pre-clear," aiming to help the person root out sources of spiritual distress.

Birth Rituals

One of the most highly publicized rituals for Scientologists is the idea of the silent birth.

Death Rituals

For Scientologists, funerals are not meant to be a gloomy occasion, as adherents believe in reincarnation. Scientologists believe that when a person dies, they leave the earthly body they had been inhabiting and go find a new body to inhabit. Therefore, a ceremony is meant to celebrate the person's life and prepare their spirit for the next phase of its existence.

Sacred text

Scientology does not have a sacred text comparable to the Bible or the Quran. It is built on the many writings of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard.

Funerals

A Scientology funeral is led by a Scientology minister who may lead with any number of different

Scientology funeral ceremonies which typically include special readings from founder Ron. L. Hubbard. The funeral service might be said over the remains of the deceased or at a memorial without the physical remains present. The service is usually held in a Scientology chapel.

Treatment And Disposal of The Body

Scientology doctrine does not dictate any required or forbidden treatment of the body after death. Scientologists may have the corpse either buried or cremated according to their wishes or those of their family. Ceremonies may or may not involve a viewing of the body, and grave markers may or may not be used. The casket, urn or photo of the deceased is usually present at the service.

L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, was cremated. He requested that no memorial be created in remembrance and no ceremony was performed other than the depositing of his ashes at sea.

Organ Donation

Scientologists are allowed to make their own decisions about organ donation.

Divorce

The Church of Scientology treats divorce as a dissolution of a legal commitment and doesn't make it into a big deal. If a spouse discovers they are married to a suppressive person (SP), the church expects the spouse to divorce the SP as a part of disconnection.

➤ UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM



Unitarian Universalism (UU) is a liberal religion characterized by a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning". Unitarian Universalists assert no creed, but instead are unified by their shared search for spiritual growth. As such, their congregations include many atheists, agnostics, and theists within their membership. The roots of Unitarian Universalism lie in liberal Christianity, specifically Unitarianism and Universalism. Unitarian Universalists state that from these traditions comes a deep regard for intellectual freedom and inclusive love. Congregations and members seek inspiration and derive insight from all major world religions.

The beliefs of individual Unitarian Universalists range widely, including atheism, agnosticism, pantheism, deism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, neopaganism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Humanism, and many more.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) was formed in 1961 through the consolidation of the American Unitarian Association, established in 1825, and the Universalist Church of America,[10] established in 1793. The UUA is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, and serves churches mostly in the United States. A group of thirty Philippine congregations is represented as a sole member within the UUA. The Canadian Unitarian Council (CUC) became an independent body in 2002. The UUA and CUC are, in turn, two of the seventeen members of the International Council of

Unitarians and Universalists.

Unitarian Universalists practice a non-creedal religion. Consequently, their individual beliefs are diverse, and their attitude toward each other's beliefs and traditions is one of tolerance and acceptance. Rather than a focus on doctrine or belief, Unitarian Universalists

find primary significance in their shared agreement, or covenant: member congregations agree to "affirm and promote" the Seven Principles. Rather than honoring a narrow religious tradition, Unitarian Universalists embrace a "living tradition" drawn from a multitude of sources, including the Six Sources.

Unitarian Universalism does not hold one particular religious text to be the most sacred or authoritative. Members use sacred texts from a variety of traditions or none at all, but the Bible is the most commonly used sacred text.

Unitarian Universalism has no set beliefs, and that is its defining characteristic.

Unitarian Universalists may identify with Christianity, Buddhism, humanism, atheism, or any tradition that is meaningful to them. Unitarian Universalists commonly draw their beliefs from more than one religious or philosophical tradition.

Although Unitarian Universalism has no formal creed or standards of belief, the Unitarian Universalist Association has adopted a set of "Principles, Purposes and Sources" that express values shared by most Unitarian Universalists.

Unitarian Universalist (UU) practices are a combination of Protestant Christian forms and content from a variety of religious traditions.

Religious services are usually held on Sundays and generally resemble Protestant services in outward forms. The service usually includes a sermon (by either a minister or lay leader), singing of hymns, a time of sharing "joys and concerns," and prayer/meditation/silence. UU publishes its own hymnals and songbooks; most songs are original compositions, while others are derived from Christian, Native American, Buddhist or other traditions.

Life events such as child dedication, coming of age, marriage and death are marked with special ceremonies which vary in their content.

Baptism is not generally practiced. Coming of age ceremonies often involve the young person developing his or own belief statement. Holidays from various religions may be celebrated at a Unitarian Universalist church.

Communion (or Eucharist) is also not often found in Unitarian Universalist congregations. Replacing the traditional Christian communion of bread and wine are two original Unitarian Universalist rituals: Flower Communion and Water Communion, each of which is celebrated annually.

Flower Communion is usually held in the spring. Each member of the congregation is asked to bring a fresh flower to the service, which they place it in a large vase upon arriving. The flowers are consecrated by the minister during the service. Upon leaving the church, each person takes a flower other than the one they had brought.

The UU Association was the first large religious organization in North America to welcome homosexuals and bisexuals as full members, eligible to become clergy. They were also the first major religious group to open an office to in support of equal civil rights for (and social acceptance of) gays and lesbians. This has expanded in recent years to include both bisexual and transgender people.

RACE – BASED

In religious studies, an ethnic religion (or indigenous religion) is a religion associated with a particular ethnic group. Ethnic religions are often distinguished from religions which claim to not be limited in ethnic or national scope, such as Christianity or Islam. Ethnic religions are not only independent religions. Some localised denominations of global religions are practised solely by certain ethnic groups. For example, the Assyrians have a unique denominational structure of Christianity known as the Assyrian Church of the East.

BLACK

➤ ASUAR AUSET SOCIETY

The Ausar Auset Society is a Pan-African religious organization founded in 1973 by Ra Un Nefer Amen. The organization provides afrocentric-based spiritual training to the African American community in particular and to the African diaspora in general.

Each Ausar Auset Society branch or study group replicates the society's structure established by Ra Un Nefer Amen in New York and falls under the leadership of either a Paramount King, Paramount Queen Mother, or Chief(tess) who has his/her own hierarchy of officials and autonomy over their respective region.

Central to the Ausarian religious system are the 11 Divine Laws. An important theme of this book is that the essence of these 11 Laws must be programmed into the Spirit of the individual through specific meditation techniques. Impressing these Laws upon the spirit will ensure that an individual's identity is with his or her true Self when he or she is confronted with a challenging situation rather than with the false self-image that gives control over to the emotions.

Another important concept that is integral to the teachings of Ausar Auset Society is that Man's entire Being is a composite made up of the Self and the Not-Self, as both are required in order to exist in the physical world. An individual's true identity, however, is the Self which consists of Consciousness and Will (Not-Self consists of Energy and Matter) as there is no energy or matter in Man's true Self. Since Spirit is considered Not-Self, Man's true Self cannot be Spirit. Also, every thought, emotion and sensation belongs to the Not-Self and generally represents a manifestation of the Animal Spirit in Man. The Animal Spirit, along with the Mental Spirit and the Divine Spirit, represents a triune view of Man's Being. The Divine Spirit, which is pre-programmed with Divine Law, corresponds to Man's true Self while both the Mental Spirit (Man's intellect and reasoning ability) and the Animal Spirit correspond to the Not-Self. Therefore, failure to control one's emotions, for example, represents a submission to the animal part of Being as well as a waste of one's Life Force.

Founded in 1973 by Ra Un Nefer Amen

Established for Africans living in Diasporas; a society that promotes spiritual mental and physical development, and excellence. Consists of Kemet centered education.

Spirituality over religion.

Spiritual events and founding's based on ancient Egyptian concepts and ideas, consist of oracles, cosmology, philosophy, and mediation. Humans are divine qualities of good.

Promotes veganism

For members of the Ausar Auset Society the purpose of marriage is for two individuals to contribute to one another's spiritual growth. Much like some the Ausar Auset Society includes the community/oracles in the decision to marry.

Courting

-Shekhem introduces and approves of couples;

-individuals approaching one another

Gender equality is emphasized, jobs may be different but that is not cause to degrade or put down another's contributions to the family and community.

Division in labor is to protect women and children from harm.

Polygyny is an aspect of the society but not stated as mandatory

-Not used as a way to be misogynistic, but the ratio of men to women in the society is off so polygyny gives everyone chance to be married and participate in family life.

Uses oracle to communicate with God, seek guidance, resolve issues and consider possible wives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XWVgJCSGLM>

➤ BLACK HEBREW ISRAELITES

Black Hebrew Israelites (also called Black Hebrews, African Hebrew Israelites, and Hebrew Israelites) are groups of Black Americans who believe that they are descendants of the ancient Israelites. Black Hebrews adhere in varying degrees to the religious beliefs and practices of both Christianity and Judaism. With the exception of a small number of individuals who have formally converted to Judaism, they are not recognized as Jews by the greater Jewish community. Many choose to identify themselves as Hebrew Israelites or Black Hebrews rather than Jews in order to indicate their claimed historic connections.

Many Black Hebrew groups were founded in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, from Kansas to New York City, by both African Americans and West Indian immigrants.

Practices:

1. Some groups stand on the street corners of major cities and condemn people for their allegedly false beliefs while using vulgar language. The Hebrew Israelites are very combative and generally do not want to listen when their views are challenged.
2. They frequently use Hebrew words such as Yah (the name of God, Yahweh, shortened as Yah), Yahoshua (Jesus), Shabbat (Sabbath), etc.
3. They keep the Jewish Sabbath and many other Jewish customs including circumcision, dietary laws, and the observance of certain Jewish holidays and festivals like Yom Kippur and Passover.
4. They use the Old and New Testament to support their teachings, especially the five books of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy).
5. They do not consider themselves to be Jews in the modern sense of the term as associated with Orthodox, Reformed, Conservative, or Hasidic Judaism.

Source of Authority:

It is difficult to determine where Hebrew Israelites get their ultimate source of authority since they do not have any official writings. They apparently view the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments), preferably the King James Version, as an authoritative source, but they just argue that there have been a number of mistranslations. Nevertheless, some hint that the canon of the Bible is not fixed. They apparently use other writings outside of the Bible to support their ideas, such as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (meaning literally "false writings").

Teachings:

Generally, the Black Hebrew Israelites teach that certain groups of black are the descendants of ancient Israelites and that white people (especially those in Israel today) are not true descendants.

Most Black Hebrew Israelites are peaceable and oppose racism.

No Official Canon of Scripture.

Black Hebrew Israelites hold religious beliefs that differ from those of modern Jewish communities in Israel.

Black Hebrew Israelites permit polygamy and forbid birth control. Leaders decide who will marry and whether marriage annulments will be permitted, and they perform wedding ceremonies.

Black Hebrew Israelites are vegans, avoiding the consumption of meat, dairy, eggs, and sugar.

Members adopt Hebrew names to replace names they believe could be derived from slavery.

➤ DINI YA MSAMBWA

The Dini ya Misambwa (Religion of the Ancestor) is an African traditional religions which was termed an anti-colonial religion practiced among the Luhya people of western Kenya.

Dini ya Misambwa a African traditional religions stood against colonialism, the undermining of elder authority and the undermining of the cultural values that had held the African people together for ages.

Dini Ya Misambwa is a monotheistic religion, it's followers worshiping in Nyasaye/Were Through ancestral spirits(Misambwa) in cave shrines.

This religious movement which arose in western Kenya and Uganda, accused Christianity of being a 'white man's religion', and proposed a return to veneration of ancestors. It is a neo-primal movement. The founder was Elijah Masinde (1910-87) who was educated in a mission school and gained distinction playing for the national football team. He separated from the mission staff saying 'he believed in one God but not in one bible'.

Masinde embarked on a career both as independent preacher and as an agitator against colonialism.

His position was that the white people had brought some good things but that it was time for them to go. He also criticized the authority given to chiefs. After independence, he was still an agitator against Kenyatta's policy of building a multi-racial society. Consequently, he spent many years in prison or detained in a mental institution. But by the end of his life he was revered by many as a prophet. There was a large attendance at his funeral.

The practice of this new religion centred on pilgrimages to Mount Elgon which was equated with Mount Zion ('Sayoni' in local speech). Here traditional sacrifices were offered. Masinde, however, was selective in his use of traditional religion. While rejecting Christianity (as the white man's religion) he maintained that the ancestral tradition in several respects resembled Christian practice and teaching. For instance, there was less emphasis on praying to ancestors and more to Were the High God. His close followers, in the early stages, saw his call as parallel to that of Moses, Jesus and Mohammed; for some of them, he was a messianic figure.

The movement continues to be active politically.

➤ MUMBOISM

Mumboism, also known as the Mumbo cult, was a new religious movement founded by Onyango Dunde in the early 20th century. Followers of the religion, known as Mumboites, were most active in the Nyanza region of Kenya near Lake Victoria. The movement had anti-imperial teachings and was suppressed by the colonial government of Kenya.

➤ NATION OF GODS AND EARTHS



The Five-Percent Nation, sometimes referred to as NGE or NOGE, the Nation of Gods and Earths, or the Five Percenters, is a movement founded in 1964 in the Harlem section of the borough of Manhattan, New York City, by a former member of the Nation of Islam (NOI), Clarence 13X, who was named Clarence Edward Smith at birth, and who ultimately came to be known as Allah the Father.

Allah the Father, a former student of Malcolm X, left the NOI after a dispute with Elijah Muhammad over Elijah's teaching that the white man was the devil, yet not teaching that the black man was God. Allah the Father also rejected the assertion that Nation's biracial founder, Wallace Fard Muhammad, was Allah and instead taught that the black man was himself God personified. Members of the group call themselves Allah's Five Percenters, which reflects the concept that ten percent of the people in the world know the truth of existence, and those elites and agents opt to keep eighty-five percent of the world in ignorance and under their controlling thumb; the remaining five percent are those who know the truth and are determined to enlighten the rest.

The Nation of Gods and Earths teaches that black people are the original people of the planet Earth, and therefore they are the fathers ("Gods") and mothers ("Earths") of civilization.

The Nation teaches that Supreme Mathematics and Supreme Alphabet, a set of principles created by Allah the Father, is the key to understanding humankind's relationship to the universe. The Nation does not believe in a mystery God but instead teaches that the Asiatic Blackman is God and his proper name is Allah, the Arabic word for "God".

Gods and Earths sometimes refer to themselves as scientists, implying their search for knowledge and proof.

The teachings of the Nation of Gods and Earths are passed on through a modern oral tradition. The advancement of a God or Earth is based on his or her memorization, recitation, comprehension, and practical application of the Supreme Mathematics and the Supreme Alphabet and also the 120 Lessons, sometimes referred to as degrees, a revised version of the Supreme Wisdom lessons of the NOI, originally written by Wallace Fard Muhammad and Elijah Muhammad.

The Five Percent is not a monolithic entity with a rigid ideology. Consequently, it is not possible to posit that Five Percenters all believe or espouse a particular thing. Each member is considered divine in his or her own right and, thus, establishes a way of life, philosophy, ontology, epistemology to fit one's existence based on one's study and personal and community analysis of particular

laws, lessons, and sciences. The Gods' personal and communal intellectual development occurs through personal study of lessons, "builds" in local ciphers, and "Educational Show and Prove" sessions at Universal Parliaments.

The Five-Percent Nation holds events known as Universal Parliaments in various cities—usually once a month—to build on their interpretation of the Supreme Mathematics, lessons, and to discuss business concerning the NGE. These meetings usually take place in public areas and can be held anywhere.

The Show and Prove is an annual event that takes place in the Harlem section of Manhattan every second weekend in June. Gods and Earths converge from all over the world at Harriet Tubman Elementary School for this gathering, which includes a marketplace, performances, and speeches in the school's auditorium and a science fair in which children participate.

The Nation generally does not recognize traditional holidays, most notably those associated with religion such as Christmas or Easter. Instead, they change the meaning and celebrate how they want to. However, some regions where the Nation is active may hold events close to dates in honor of Allah the Father's birthday (February 22) or the official founding of the Nation (October 10).

Dietary laws of the Five Percent dictate that adherents are forbidden to eat pork or any pork-based by-products as well as all other scavengers (shrimp, crab, lobster, etc.). Many take further steps and eschew meat altogether, often opting for veganism or a raw food diet.

➤ NATION OF ISLAM



The Nation of Islam, abbreviated as NOI, is an African American political and religious movement, founded in Detroit, Michigan, United States, by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad on July 4, 1930. Its stated goals are to improve the spiritual, mental, social, and economic condition of African Americans in the United States and all of humanity. Critics have described the organization as being black supremacist and antisemitic.

The main belief of The Nation of Islam and its followers is that there is no god but Allah. Their most important worship is praying five times a day. The official beliefs as stated by the Nation of Islam have been outlined in books, documents, and articles published by the organization as well as speeches by Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Louis Farrakhan, and other ministers.

The NOI teaches that Black people constitute a nation and that through the institution of the Atlantic slave trade they were systematically denied knowledge of their history, language, culture, and religion and, in effect, lost control of their lives. Central to this doctrine, NOI theology asserts that Black people's experience of slavery was the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and therefore, black people are the seed of Abraham referred to in the Bible.

The Nation of Islam teaches that black people are the aboriginal people and that all other people come from them.

Principles and Practices.

The Nation of Islam advocates a strict code of behavior, predicated on Islamic principles, that excludes the consumption of pork, coffee, tobacco and alcohol. It asserts high moral standards, and values education, modesty and manners, according to the sect's official website. It also espouses a traditional definition of family and family roles. The Nation of Islam ascribes to the five pillars of Islam - belief in God's oneness, prayer, charity, fasting and pilgrimage -- and has built a number of mosques throughout North America.

Religious practices

Required Daily Observances - For Nation of Islam (NOI) members, personal prayer is required five times a day. Ritual washing is required, as well as a clean place where the prayer can be made. Nation of Islam members face Mecca on a clean surface (e.g., prayer rug, towel, mat, carpet, or any other material that is kept clean and used only for this purpose), and prostrate themselves before Allah as prescribed in religious law. Prayers can be made individually.

Required Weekly Observances

- Jumah Prayer.

- A time for study (preferably 2 study meetings per week).

Required Occasional Observances - In his letter of December 1, 1998, Louis Farrakhan stated that the Nation of Islam would begin to observe the fast during Ramadan, a month in the Arabic lunar calendar and the month in which Muslims throughout the world fast. The fast begins at dawn and ends at sunset. Depending on the sighting of the moon, the fast may be 29 or 30 days long. Eating and drinking stops at dawn. During the day no eating, drinking, or sexual activity can take place. At sunset, the fast is broken by eating fruits and drinking water or juice. The evening prayer is made, followed by a complete vegetarian meal.

Religious Holy Days

Savior's Day, February 26. The Nation of Islam celebrates the birthday of W. Fard Muhammad, who brought salvation, restoration, redemption, and reconciliation to them. This is a day free from work for NOI inmates.

Savior's Day, October 7. On October 7, the Nation of Islam celebrates the birthday of Elijah Muhammad. This began in 1985, since most current members have not met W. Fard Muhammad. Since most members have had their lives transformed through the work of Elijah Muhammad, this day is also celebrated. This is a day free from work for NOI inmates.

Holy Day of Atonement/Reconciliation, October 16. Undergirding the concept of atonement is perfect union with Allah.

Sacred writings

- Holy Qu'ran – Preferred translations are those of Maulana Muhammad Ali and Yusef Muhammad.

- Holy Bible.

- All revealed scriptures.

Dress code

Members of the NOI, the Black Muslims, are required to adhere to a strict moral, disciplinary and dress code. The typical dress code of male members is to suits and ties, and women members are required to wear modest clothing, typically long white gowns or saris.

➤ NUWAUBIAN NATION

The Nuwaubian Nation or Nuwaubian movement is a religious organization founded and led by Dwight York. York began founding Black Muslim groups in New York in 1967. He changed his teachings and the names of his groups many times, incorporating concepts from Judaism, Christianity, and many esoteric beliefs.

In the late 1980s, he abandoned the Muslim theology of his movement in favor of Kemetism and UFO religion. In 1991 he took his community to settle in upstate New York; then they moved near the county seat of Putnam County, in Eatonton, Georgia, United States. His followers built an ancient Egypt-themed compound called Tama-Re and changed their name to the "United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors."

The Tama-Re compound was sold under government forfeiture and demolished in 2005.

The group has taken numerous names, including Ansaru Allah Community, Holy Tabernacle Ministries, United Nuwaubian Nation of Moors (after the move to Georgia), Yamassee Native American Moors of the Creek Nation (also used in Georgia when York claimed indigenous ancestry via Egyptian migration and intermarriage with the ancient Olmec) and Nuwaubian Nation of Moors.

Nuwaubians refer to their belief system – which mixes black supremacist ideas with worship of the Egyptians and their pyramids, a belief in UFOs and various conspiracies related to the Illuminati and the Bilderbergers, as "Nuwaubianism" – not as theology, but as "factology," "Right Knowledge," or a slew of other names. The group's founder and leader, Dwight York, took extreme advantage of its adherents, sexually abusing their children and conning the adults out of their possessions. In April 2004, he was sentenced to 135 years in prison for molesting children, among other crimes.

➤ MOORISH ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA



The generally-accepted flag of the Moorish Orthodox Church of America

The Moorish Orthodox Church of America is a syncretic, non-exclusive, and religious anarchist movement espousing a vast array of liturgical and devotional traditions laid over a theology that includes teachings gleaned from Moorish Science, Five Percenters, Theosophical mysticism, Hermeticism, Oriental Orthodoxy, the Episcopi vagantes movement, the League for Spiritual Discovery, Western esotericism, Discordianism, the teachings of Noel Ignatiev, Neotantra, Nizari Islam, Zoroastrianism, Sufism (particularly from the Sufi Order Ināyati, Chishti, Bektashi and Uwaisi traditions), Taoism, and Vedanta teachings.

The Moorish Orthodox Church was founded in New York City in 1962 primarily by Warren Tartaglia, beatniks, spiritual seekers, anarchists and members of the Noble Order of Moorish Sufis (a group that grew out of the Moorish Science Temple #13 in Baltimore on July 7, 1957).

Moorish Orthodoxy was founded to explore the more esoteric dimensions of Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science teachings, but quickly developed into a movement of spiritual exploration beyond its intended purpose, though it maintains Moorish Science as its core. After a long period of quiescence, the Moorish Orthodox Church of America experienced a small renaissance in the mid-1980s owing to the involvement of former members of the beat/beatnik movement, the counter-cultural hippie community, and the gay liberation movement, along with the continued involvement of Sultan Rafi Sharif Bey (who founded the Moorish League) and the prolific writings of Hakim Bey.

Moorish Orthodoxy embraces an anarchist model of organization, believing strongly in the concept that "you are, each one, a priest, just for yourself" as proclaimed in the Circle 7 Koran. As such, temples are mostly self-declared and/or choose to affiliate themselves and derive their "authority" through another temple and/or an autonomous charter-granting body. These temples also range in size (from one person to near a hundred), focus (Judaism, Christianity, Moorish Science, Zoroastrianism, Islam, etc.), membership credentials (the most popular being the "spiritual passport"), and name (lodge, temple, ashram, church, chapel, etc.) The most "organized" portions of Moorish Orthodoxy tend to be its Adept Chamber, in which bodies are established for the formal study and exploration of both the core and fringes of various spiritual systems. The current bodies of the Adept Chamber are the Order of the Paraclete (Christian), the Fatamid Order (Islam), the Order of Jerusalem (Judaism), the Sabian Order (Paganism and Western Esotericism), with their own initiation rites and rituals.

The M.O.C.A. is an inter-faith syncretic religion which teaches and combines the teachings of different faith as One faith often focusing on what most people would call heretical.

Most members of the Moorish church and the Moorish sufis will say that they are Monotheists but when they say this they mean the One-connection of everything. Some members are deeply religious while some are non-religious but what is and what isn't is only defined by that single person.

➤ MOORISH SCIENCE TEMPLE OF AMERICA

Moorish Science Temple of America, U.S. religious movement founded in Newark, N.J., in 1913 by Timothy Drew (1886–1929), known to followers as Noble Drew Ali and also as the Prophet. Drew Ali taught that all blacks were of Moorish origins but had their Muslim identity taken away from them through slavery and racial segregation. He advocated that they should “return” to the Islam of their Moorish forefathers, redeeming themselves from racial oppression by reclaiming their historical spiritual heritage. He also encouraged use of the term “Moor” rather than “black” in self-identification. Many of the group’s formal practices were derived from Muslim observances. Rigorous obedience to the Prophet’s regulations was required, and certain foods were forbidden.

Noble Drew Ali believed that African Americans had lost their true religious identity as a result of slavery. An important component of the belief system was the idea of casting off oppressive identities. As a result, members of the Moorish Science Temple often changed their names.

The group’s sacred text was the Holy Koran, which was distinct from the Qur’ān of orthodox Islam and which members considered to have been divinely revealed by Allah to Drew Ali. The work begins with a long narrative spanning from the Fall of Man to the Resurrection of Jesus; it includes moral instructions by Drew Ali and closes with a prophecy of the imminent “uplift of fallen humanity.”

Some traditional teachings of Islam were incorporated by Ali and his followers, such as reverence for Allah and the Islamic understanding of free will. Ali wrote his own version of the Qu’ran, called the Circle Seven Koran. According to scholars, this text was used for daily guidance, and unlike traditional Islam, there was no reference to the hadith. The group created their own flag, a red flag with a green star. Each point of the star was representative of one of the community’s ideals: love, truth, peace, freedom, and justice.

Drew Ali moved his organization several times and ultimately settled in the mid-1920s in Chicago, where he found success. He died under mysterious circumstances during a period of internal strife, and the Moorish Science Temple of America split into several factions. The Nation of Islam grew out of the contested succession to Drew Ali and became a separate organization in Detroit in 1932. Several men claimed to carry on the spiritual lineage of Noble Drew Ali and founded similar organizations. In the early 21st century the largest of those—the Moorish Science Temple of America, Inc.—operated a prison ministry and a theological seminary, the University of the Moorish Science Temple of America.

➤ RASTAFARI



Rastafari - The Jewish Star of David



Rastafari - The Lion of Judah

Rastafari, sometimes termed Rastafarianism, is an Abrahamic religion. Classified as both a new religious movement and social movement. Rastafarianism was formulated amongst the dispossessed black population in Jamaica in the early 20th century. A variety of movements grew that sought to emphasise the dignity and pride of black inheritance and promised the possibility of African political and economic independence. Rastafarianism is thus a movement of people who are struggling to reclaim their African ancestry by identifying with African cultures and traditions including elements of the Shango religion of West Africa.

Marcus Garvey was a prominent figure within Rastafariansim who prophesied the crowning of a black king in Africa. Rastafarians believe this prophecy was fulfilled when Haile Selassie was crowned first of all King, and later Emperor, of Ethiopia in 1930. Haile Selassie was known as Ras (Prince) Tafari, hence the name of his followers. He is seen as being the direct descendant of kings David and Solomon, and is called ‘Jah’, or the living manifestation of God.

Rastafarianism is a way of life rather than an organised religion, and is guided by the concept of peace and love. Distrusting official hierarchy, the majority of Rastas are not affiliated to a particular group. However, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is seen as their home.

The Bible is seen as the divine Word. It is interpreted by Rastafarians through collective reading, study and debate, which is known amongst Rastafarians as ‘reasoning’. Rastafarians particularly emphasise the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation.

Rastas prefer the term ‘principles’, rather than ‘beliefs’, holding that the latter implies doubt. Central principles are that God, Jesus, the Israelites and early Christians were black and that Christians misrepresent Jesus as a blue-eyed European; Rastafarians are true Jews; the Bible is authoritative and was written by and for black people; black people will only be free when they are back in Africa.

It is important to recognise the diversity within the faith, which is open to all members of society, black or white. Therefore the individual must be consulted, especially before medical treatment, as some may follow Old Testament laws more strictly than others.

BIRTH

Most Rastafarians oppose contraception. Abortion is not usually considered acceptable. African traditions connected with the disposal of the placenta and umbilical cord may need to be observed. After giving birth the woman is considered unclean. Whilst in aftercare, Rastafarian Sisters need to have free flowing water close at hand.

CLEANLINESS

During her menstrual period a woman is considered unclean and requires free flowing water. The same applies to men who are being treated for venereal diseases, or have a discharge.

Hair has much significance to Rastafarians. Uncut, matted hair in locks, known as dreadlocks, are common, especially amongst male Rastafarians. Dreadlocks are seen as a symbol of strength, representing breaking away from the ‘Babylonian’ system of western society. The uncut locks also represent the mane of the lion, the symbol of African strength and emancipation. Therefore, a Rasta’s

hair should be treated with respect, and all cutting of it should be avoided. Dreadlocks are often cleaned with olive or coconut oil. Frequently, beards are also left uncut.

CLOTHING AND MODESTY

Some Rastafarians will wish to cover their hair, often with a hat (called a tam) bearing the four colours of especial importance to their faith. These colours are black, red, green and gold/ yellow, which stand respectively for: the black race; the blood of slavery; the promised land; and a golden future. Rastafarians often have other items with these colours too. All items bearing these four colours should be treated with respect.

Women are encouraged to dress modestly, and to refrain from wearing trousers or make-up. Sometimes Rastafarians, particularly women, will be unwilling to wear garments that have been worn by non-Rastafarian people. Disposable theatre gowns may therefore be preferred in hospital.

DEATH

'Dead' and 'death' are words considered negative and are rarely used by Rastafarians, who follow the more positive concept of 'ever-living'. 'Passed' or 'passing' are terms often used, reinforcing the Rastafarian belief that life is eternal through the spirit. Some Rastas believe in reincarnation.

There are no religious rituals. No priest is required. If he is available the local head of the 'Twelve Tribes' may be sent for. Rastafarians have no objection to cremation but prefer burial. The 'Nazarite Vow', a principle adhered to by Rastas, enjoins the shunning of dead bodies, which may be prepared for burial by family members, or preferably an undertaker. Attendance at funerals is not emphasised, as Rastafarianism celebrates life, rather than death.

DIET

Rastafarians often have a strong emphasis on living in harmony with the natural world, and accordingly most are vegetarians and some are vegans. Pork and pork products are banned. Fish must have fins and scales. The term used as a model for the ideal diet is 'Ital', meaning a saltless, vegetarian diet. 'Ital' also means natural food. Sometimes this is extended to include all canned or chemical food. Many Rastafarians abstain from alcohol and tobacco, although the use of cannabis is seen as being sanctioned by the Bible. This may need to be taken into consideration by health professionals when administering medicine.

FASTS AND FESTIVALS

Rastafarians are required to fast and may choose to do this on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. It is important to consult the individual to assess their fasting habits. July 23 is the birthday of Haile Selassie, which has the importance of Christmas. November 2 is Haile Selassie's Coronation celebration. During October the Organisation of African Unity celebrates African Culture. The year's highlight is 7th January which is the Ethiopian Christmas. It is popularly known as Rasmus. Birthdays are not widely celebrated.

IN A RASTAFARIAN HOME

You might well see a picture of Haile Selassie, along with a copy of the Bible. The lion is also a Rastafarian symbol. There are often items in black, red, green and yellow. There may also be a flag, usually Jamaican or Ethiopian. Visitors may be asked to remove their shoes.

MARRIAGE

Because of their distrust of formal procedures, there is no formal system of marriage within Rastafarianism. Marriage is looked upon as part of the establishment and is not, therefore, encouraged, but commitment to a partner is encouraged and sexual permissiveness is banned. A man and woman who cohabit are automatically viewed as husband and wife. A couple need stay together only for as long as both desire it.

MEDICAL TREATMENT

Generally speaking, Rastas are distrustful towards western medicines and would often prefer alternative treatments such as herbalism, homeopathy and acupuncture.

Rastafarians are completely against any pig product, which includes transgenic hearts, kidneys and heart valves. It is permissible to accept transfusions and blood from family members. However, some will not accept blood transfusion, and some will. It is important to consult individuals. Rastafarians do not carry donor cards and are against any scientific use of the body after death. Prolonging life is considered unacceptable when the person remains in a vegetative state after every attempt has been made to help. Medicines that have damaging side effects should not be used. The use of marijuana to relieve pain would be preferred.

FOOD LAWS

Rastafarians eat strictly I-tal which means natural and clean

Early Rastafarians are unlikely to eat meat, scavengers or shellfish

Rastafarians do not eat pork

Rastafarians regularly eat fish, but will not eat fish more than twelve inches long

Rastafarians eat copious amounts of vegetables, as they are of the earth, and therefore good

Food is prepared without salt, and coconut oil is the most likely form of oil to be utilised

Rastafarians do not drink alcohol

They do not drink milk or coffee, but will drink anything herbal, grown from natural roots, e.g. herbal tea

Rastafarians consume plentiful amounts of fruit and fruit juice

rites of passage

Birth

When a child is born into the Rastafari tradition he or she is blessed by elders in the community, during a Nyabingi session of drumming, chanting and prayer.

Marriage

In Rastafari there is no formal marriage structure. A Rastafari man and woman who live together are regarded as husband and wife (unless, of course, they are related in some other way, such as mother and son).

If marriage does take place it is regarded as a social occasion rather than a religious event.

Death

In Rastafari there is no funeral ceremony to mark the end of life.

Rastafarians believe that reincarnation follows death, and that life is eternal.

WORSHIP

As Rastafarianism is not an organised religion, there does not tend to be a specific place of worship. Some communities will hold weekly meetings in a community centre or in a private house. These meetings include worship, the discussion of community matters and music. Women must cover their heads at these meetings.

WHITE

➤ ARIOSOPHY

Ariosophy (aka Theozology or Ario-Christianity) and Armanism (aka Wotanism) are ideological systems of an esoteric nature pioneered, by Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels and Guido von List respectively, in Austria between 1890 and 1930. They were part of a general occult revival in Austria and Germany in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, loosely inspired by historical Germanic Paganism and traditional concepts of occultism, and related to German romanticism.

Important elements of their ideology included the pre-eminence of the Aryan race (in the sense of Indo-Europeans, though with Germanic peoples being viewed as their purest representatives), the magical powers of the old runic symbols (including the swastika), and occultism. Its influence on later German Nazism is debatable, and has probably been exaggerated.

Guido von List elaborated a racial religion premised on the concept of renouncing the imposed foreign creed of Christianity and returning to the pagan religions of the ancient Indo-Europeans.

Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels claimed that "Aryan" peoples originated from interstellar deities (or Theozoa) who bred by electricity, while "lower" races were a result of interbreeding between humans and ape-men (or Anthropozoa). The effects of racial crossing caused the atrophy of paranormal powers inherited from the gods, but these could be restored by the selective breeding of pure Aryan lineages. He therefore advocated mass castration of racially "apelike" or otherwise "inferior" males. In 1907, he founded the Order of the New Templars, a mystical association with its headquarters at Burg Werfenstein, a castle in Upper Austria. Its aim was to harmonize science, art and religion on a basis of racial consciousness, and the Order was the first to use the swastika in an "Aryan" context.

Other related völkisch secret societies in early 20th century Germany include the Germanenorden (Germanic or Teutonic Order), the Thule Society and the Edda Society.

The belief in the divine nature of the Aryan race.

➤ BLACK ORDER (Satanist group)



The Black Order or The Black Order of Pan Europa are a Satanist group formerly based in New Zealand.

The Black Order was founded by Kerry Bolton as a successor to his Order of the Left Hand Path.

Bolton had connections to other Neo-Nazi Satanist groups, being the international distributor for the English-based Order of Nine Angles.

➤ CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

Christian Identity (also known as Identity Christianity) is a racist and white supremacist interpretation of Christianity which advocates the belief that only Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, Nordic, Aryan people and those of kindred blood are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and hence the descendants of the ancient Israelites (primarily as a result of the Assyrian captivity) can achieve paradise.

Christian Identity is not an organized religion, and is not connected with specific Christian denominations; instead, it is independently practiced by individuals, churches and some prison gangs. Its theology promotes a racial interpretation of Christianity. Christian Identity beliefs were primarily developed and promoted by two authors who regarded Europeans as the "chosen people" and Jews as the cursed offspring of Cain, the "serpent hybrid" or serpent seed (a belief known as the two-seedline doctrine). White supremacist sects and gangs later adopted many of these teachings.

Christian Identity holds that all non-whites (people not of wholly European descent) on the planet will either be exterminated or enslaved in order to serve the White race in the new Heavenly Kingdom on Earth under the reign of Jesus Christ. Its doctrine states that only "Adamic" (white people) can achieve salvation and paradise. Many adherents are Millennialist.

Adherents of Christian Identity refer to non-whites as "mamzers" or "tares".

➤ CREATIVITY



Flag



Logo

Creativity is a pantheistic white separatist new religious movement and has been classified as a "hate group" by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It was founded in Lighthouse Point, Florida by Ben Klassen as the Church of the Creator in 1973. The church's worldview is based on the veneration of the white race and the supposed safeguarding of its survival.

Creativity is promoted by two organizations: the Creativity Alliance (CA - also known as the Church of Creativity) and the skinhead oriented (The) Creativity Movement (TCM). The groups have common origins.

The movement, as formulated by Ben Klassen, exists for the "survival, expansion and advancement of the White Race."

Creativity has sixteen commandments which primarily address conduct and five fundamental beliefs, which deal with race. These include the belief that "race is their Religion", Creativity is based on the "external laws of nature, the experience of history, on logic and common sense", that the white race is "nature's finest", and that which helps the biological continuance of the white race on Earth is the "highest good". They believe that American culture is becoming "more decadent," as evidenced by "black crimes, the growing acceptance of homosexuality, interracial marriage, increasing drug use, and the lack of racial identity among white people".

Creators are encouraged to recite the "five fundamentals" daily.

Creativity promotes a religious diet and health doctrine, 14 Points of Salubrious Living (a form of raw-food veganism), although it is not a religious requirement.

Creators refer to Black people as "niggers" and they also refer to Creativity as a "natural religion", endeavor to convert other white people to Creativity and avoid social interaction with non-whites.

Creators are taught to hate their enemies and non-whites (according to Klassen, "Jews, niggers and mud races"), to avoid being gullible or superstitious, to shun "sexual deviation" (including homosexuality), miscegenation, whining or complaining, and social interaction with non-whites.

Creativity is a non-supernatural religion which rejects the supernatural while affirming a pantheist view of nature, asserting that "everything is in nature" and defining it as "the whole cosmos, the total universe, including its millions of natural laws through space and time."

Creativity advocates proselytism.

According to the Creator Membership Manual, "Any member of the Church who either commits crimes (other than unconstitutional violations of our right to freedom of speech, assembly, etc.) or encourages others to do so, will be subject to expulsion from the Church."

Creators view Rahowa as a religious war of racial self-defense within the rule of law, rather than a call for violence.

A Creator's primary missions should be to convert other white people to Creativity and practice racial loyalty.

The religion has several holidays. Creators are encouraged to observe them, spending time with their families and friends of the religion:

- South Victory Day (January 26): Commemorates the initial British landings on the Australian continent in 1788
- Klassen Day (February 20): Anniversary of its founder's birth in 1918
- Founding Day (February 21): Anniversary of the publication of Nature's Eternal Religion in 1973
- Foundation Day, Rahowa Day (March 20): Anniversary of the foundation of the World Center in 1982 and a reminder of racial war
- Kozel Day, Martyr's Day (September 15): Commemorates Brian Kozel, who died on this date in 1992.
- Festum Album (December 26 – January 1): Week-long celebration of white racial pride, commemorating the Wounded Knee Massacre.

Creativity has four sacraments: marriage, pledging for children, confirmation, and eulogizing the dead. All ceremonies are performed by church ministers. At a wedding, the bride and groom exchange vows before Nature. The pledging ceremony is ideally conducted a week after a child's birth, with both parents pledging to raise their child as a "loyal member of the White Race and faithful to the church." The confirmation ceremony may be performed on or after a child's 13th birthday.

➤ ORDER OF NINE ANGELS



Order of Nine Angels - one of main symbol

The Order of Nine Angles (ONA; O9A) is a Satanic and Left-Hand Path occult group based in the United Kingdom, but with affiliated groups in various other parts of the world. Claiming to have been established in the 1960s, it arose to public recognition in the early 1980s, attracting attention for its espousal of Neo-Nazi ideologies and activism. Describing its approach as "Traditional Satanism", it has been identified by academic researchers as also exhibiting Hermetic and Neo-Pagan elements in its beliefs and has been described as one of the most extreme and dangerous Satanist groups in the world.

The ONA promotes the idea that human history can be divided into a series of Aeons, each of which contain a corresponding human civilization. It expresses the view that the current Aeon civilization is that of the Western, but claims that the evolution of this society is threatened by the "Magian/Nazarene" influence of Judeo-Christian religion, which the Order seeks to combat in order to establish a militaristic new social order, termed the "Imperium". According to Order teachings, this is necessary in order for a Galactic civilization to form, in which "Aryan" society will colonise the Milky Way. It advocates a spiritual path in which the practitioner is required to break societal taboos by isolating themselves from society, committing crimes, embracing political extremism and violence, and carrying out an act of human sacrifice. ONA members practice magick, believing that they are able to do so through channeling energies into our own "causal" realm from an "acausal" realm where the laws of physics do not apply, with such magical actions designed to aid in the ultimate establishment of the Imperium.

The ONA lacks any central authority or structure, instead operating as a broad network of associates – termed the "kollektive" – who are inspired by the texts originally authored by Long and other members of the "Inner ONA". The group comprises largely of clandestine cells, termed "nexions", as well as gangs known as Dreccs, artists known as Balobians, and folk mystics known as Rounwytha. With the first nexion based in Shropshire, Western England, the majority of groups have been established in the British Isles and Germany, although others have been formed elsewhere in Europe, Russia, South Africa, Australia, and North America.

The ONA describes its beliefs as belonging to "a sinisterly- numinous mystic tradition", adding that "it is not now and never was either strictly satanist or strictly Left Hand Path, but uses "satanism" and the LHP as "causal forms"; that is, as techniques/experiences/ordeals/challenges" to aid the practitioner's spiritual advancement.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE O.N.A.

Order of the Nine Angles has five fundamental principles, being:

1. The Way of Practical Deeds - This refers to the conviction that the ONA is a collective of action, not merely reflection. Initiates are expected to live an "exeatic" life, meaning a life that defies social conventions (and indeed laws). A initiate of the ONA may, for example, decide to become (e.g.) a vigilante, soldier, or criminal in their quest to understand life through action.
2. The Way of Culling - The most controversial of the ONA's principles, this tenet has two sides. On one hand, it refers to the ONA's conviction that some human 'scum' have no place in society, and that they deserve to be removed. Thus a member of the ONA may decide to join a police force to obtain combat training, and then use their position of authority to kill criminals, rather than arrest them. On the other hand, this tenet also refer to blood sacrifice to the dark gods, in a manner similar to that described in pre-Christian Europe among the Celts and Germanic tribes, or among some rare Shaivite sects in classical India, or as the early modern Thuggee society.
3. The Way of Kindred Honour - This principle emphasizes the need for solidarity and mutual trust, honor, and respect between the various nexions and members of the ONA. The Order sees its members as an extended family, and in the rare cases of dispute, has very clear guidelines as to how these disputes are allowed to be conducted. In simple language, the ONA protects its own.
4. The Way of Defiance of and Practical Opposition to Magian Abstractions - This principle refer to the ONA's opposition to what it perceives as illegitimate Magian (western Judaeo-Christian) control of global culture and economics. The Order insists that its members fight against forces like globalism and rampant capitalism, in an effort to return to an earlier, less exploitative form of society.
5. The Way of the Rounwytha Tradition - The ONA teaches that the Magian culture has greatly reduced the role of women in society and spirituality. Thus it encourages the return to the Rounwytha tradition, which is the mystic, empathic, folk tradition that embraces and reveres the divine feminine archetype. The Rounwytha tradition encourages the development of strong female leaders, as well as challenging the patriarchal norms that are often indicative of esoteric or religio-political groups. The term itself is almost certainly derived from Old English riinwita, meaning 'one who understands' or perhaps 'one who knows secrets'.

THE SEVEN-FOLD WAY

The core mystical tradition of the ONA is the Seven Fold Way, also known as Hebdomadry. The Seven Fold way is essentially a hermetic system that defines itself as being deeply rooted in Western occultism, and provides a path to ascension that is exceptionally difficult in physical and psychic terms. The Seven refers to both the seven grades of the path, as well as the seven planets which are understood to have esoteric significance. The seven stages of the Way are:

- (1) Neophyte
- (2) Initiate
- (3) External Adept
- (4) Internal Adept
- (5) Master/Mistress
- (6) Grand Master/Mousa
- (7) Immortal

RITUALS/PRACTICES

A key practice is rituals meant to "presence" (manifest) a nexion, which is a connection between the acausal and causal world. This connection often is linked to a specific geographical location that over time is being infused with the energy to manifest a permanent "portal," and likewise to make the initiate a permanent living nexion.

The Order distinguishes between classical ceremonial magic (described primarily in its Black Book of Satan and Naos) and hermetic magic. The latter is less fixed to a certain text or setting, but is more "emotional" and intuitive in nature, usually done either in solitude or with a single other person.

➤ THULE SOCIETY



The Thule Society (German: Thule-Gesellschaft), was a German occultist and völkisch group founded in Munich right after World War I, named after a mythical northern country in Greek legend. The society is notable chiefly as the organization that sponsored the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (DAP; German Workers' Party), which was later reorganized by Adolf Hitler into the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP or Nazi Party).

The Thule Society was founded August 17, 1918 by Rudolf von Sebottendorff, a German occultist.

A primary focus of the Thule Society was a claim concerning the origins of the Aryan race. In 1917, people who wanted to join the "Germanic Order", out of which the Thule Society developed in 1918, had to sign a special "blood declaration of faith" concerning their lineage: The signer hereby swears to the best of his knowledge and belief that no Jewish or coloured blood flows in either his or in his wife's veins, and that among their ancestors are no members of the coloured races.

The Thulists believed in the hollow earth theory. The Thule Society counted among its goals the desire to prove that the Aryan race came from a lost continent, perhaps Atlantis.

The Thule-Gesellschaft maintained close contacts with followers of Theosophy and the followers of Helena Blavatsky, a famous Occultist during the second part of the 19th century.

Anthroposophical themes were common too, as the motto *Der Weg ist in Dir* - 'The Way is present in You', expresses. Self-realization and the supreme position of the human person were essential to the Thulists.

➤ WOTANSVOLK

Wotansvolk is a form of white nationalist, neo-völkisch paganism which was founded in the early 1990s by Ron McVan, Katja Lane and David Lane (1938–2007) while Lane was serving a 190-year prison sentence for his actions in connection with the white separatist revolutionary domestic terrorist organization group The Order, of which he was a member.

Wotansvolk practitioners see their religion as being rooted in ancestral European paganism which was driven underground, calling it the true spiritual heritage of the "Euro-Tribes". Followers of the movement often selectively cite Carl Jung's theories of an "Aryan collective subconscious", specifically his 1936 essay "Wotan". The term Wotanism in modern times emphasizes white nationalism, white separatism and an ethnocentric, pan-European interpretation of modern Paganism. W.O.T.A.N. is also an acronym for Will Of The Aryan Nation.

Unlike many Germanic neopagans within Heathenry, most Wotanists don't exclusively revere the Norse pantheon of Asatru but rather all the deities of European mythology. Wotanists may reject dualism, include Hermetic ideas, and see David Lane as a prophet.[citation needed] Lane's followers see the 14 words and the 88 Precepts as scripture and they primarily see the gods as Jungian archetypes, although Lane said one could be a deist, a pantheist, or an atheist and still be Wotansvolk. McVan and Lane have described many rituals and practices, none of which are required of practitioners. Some Wotanists consider the *Hávamál* to be their holiest text while rites of practice are taken from Lane's writings.

Wotansvolk ceremonies can be subdivided into communal rites and private rites. Communal ceremonies include seasonal blots and *sumbel*, rites of passage (birth, marriage, initiation, death), and magical warfare.

Ceremonies and rituals are to Wotansvolk principal working methods for reconnecting with the archetypal gods of the blood and effective ways of establishing reciprocal relations of power exchange between members of a race and their gods.

NATIVE AMERICAN

➤ GHOST DANCE

The Ghost Dance (also called the Ghost Dance of 1890) was a new religious movement incorporated into numerous American Indian belief systems. According to the teachings of the Northern Paiute spiritual leader Wovoka (renamed Jack Wilson), proper practice of the dance would reunite the living with spirits of the dead, bring the spirits of the dead to fight on their behalf, make the white colonists leave, and bring peace, prosperity, and unity to Native American peoples throughout the region.

The basis for the Ghost Dance, the circle dance, is a traditional form that has been used by many Native American peoples since prehistoric times, but this new ceremony was first practiced among the Nevada Paiute in 1889. The practice swept throughout much of the Western United States, quickly reaching areas of California and Oklahoma. As the Ghost Dance spread from its original source, Indian tribes synthesized selective aspects of the ritual with their own beliefs.

The Ghost Dance was associated with Wilson's (Wovoka's) prophecy of an end to white expansion while preaching goals of clean living, an honest life, and cross-cultural cooperation by Indians. Practice of the Ghost Dance movement was believed to have contributed to Lakota resistance to assimilation under the Dawes Act. In the Wounded Knee Massacre in December 1890, United States Army forces killed at least 153 Miniconjou and Hunkpapa from the Lakota people. The Lakota variation on the Ghost Dance

tended towards millenarianism, an innovation that distinguished the Lakota interpretation from Jack Wilson's original teachings. The Caddo still practice the Ghost Dance today.

Believers in the Ghost Dance spirituality are convinced that performing the Ghost Dance will eventually reunite them with their ancestors coming by railway from the spirit world. The ancestor spirits, including the spirit of Jesus, are called upon to heal the sick and to help protect Mother Earth. Meanwhile, the world will return to a primordial state of natural beauty, opening up to swallow up all other people (those who do not have a strong spirituality based upon the earth). The performers of the Ghost Dance theoretically will float in safety above with their ancestors, family, and peoples of the world who follow the extensive spirituality.

Ghost Dance shirts & dresses

Made of animal hide adorned with fringe and feathers, the paintings decorating a Ghost Dance dress or shirt ranged from the very simple to the complex with elaborate designs that represented their mythology, such as the sun, moon, stars, as well as trance-like visions.

This sacred clothing was worn by all believers – man, woman, or child – as an outside garment during the sacred dance, but it was also thought to have been worn at other times under ordinary dress.

"Ghost Dance" was a religion [in so far as it was] a system of worship that incorporated ceremonial

practice and prescribed behavior to achieve spiritual well-being. It (also) acquired a broad, pan-Indian group of followers spread out across 30 different Indian reservations and in many non-reservation Indian communities, too.

Why was the Ghost Dance performed?

Ghost Dancers believed that doing this dance was essential to bringing about the return of the Indian messiah. [But the dance alone does not bring back the messiah. Dancers knew] they also had to love one another, keep the peace, and, critically, they had to go to work. Repeatedly the prophet tells his followers you must work for white men, which I take to mean you must work for dollars, and do wage work. The Ghost Dance taught a code for living in the modern era by allowing Native people to accept these new ways of living as not just something white people are telling them to do, but something that an Indian prophet has instructed them to do. (In this way,) wage work becomes an authentic Indian activity; it's something Indians must do to preserve the Indian ways.

➤ INDIAN SHAKER CHURCH

The Indian Shaker Church is a Christian denomination founded in 1881 by Squaxin shaman John Slocum and his wife Mary Slocum in Washington State. The Indian Shaker Church is a unique blend of American Indian, Catholic, and Protestant beliefs and practices.

The Indian Shakers are unrelated to the Shakers of New England (United Society of Believers) and are not to be confused with the Native American Church.

Indian Shakers originally rejected the Bible and all other written scriptures and instead relied on direct communication between God and the individual. Such Shakers believe that the experience of the Gospel does not require a book, but rather is encoded in the mind and soul in accordance with the will of God.

The religion began to be practiced by many unrelated peoples along the Northwest Coast of North America, such as the Klallam, Quinault, Lower Chehalis, Yakama, Hoh, Quileute, Wiyot, Yurok, and Hupa, among others.

The new religion encountered much opposition and hostility from Euro-Americans. As had happened with the Ghost Dance, there was much misunderstanding and Anglos feared an Indian uprising. For a time, all Indian religious practices were banned by law and the Indian Shakers were included. Many members were imprisoned and chained for their practices.

In the 1960s, a break occurred among Indian Shakers in which one "conservative" faction continued to reject written religious material while another "progressive" faction was more tolerant of the use of the Bible and other written material.

Indian Shakers continue to practice on the Northwest Coast in Washington, Oregon, California, and British Columbia.

Christian elements of the Indian Shaker Church include belief in the Trinity and Sunday worship in plain churches furnished with a prayer table, the use of hand-held candles, the ringing of individual hand bells (to a very loud volume), and the sign of the cross (usually repeated three times). Christian sacraments and festivals are not observed. Protestant influence is shown in public testifying and confession of shortcomings. Native elements include brushing or stroking to remove evil influence, counter-clockwise movement of service participants around the room (often with loud stomping), and spontaneous reception of songs from the spirit.

Church members are expected to refrain from using alcohol and tobacco.

Carefulness, kindness, and supplication to God for help are emphasized.

A central aspect of Shaker Church services is the healing ritual, in which Church members channel the power of Jesus into healing the sick. During church ceremonies, Shakers in need of healing sit in chairs while others who have the "Power" (the power of Jesus) work to heal them. Healers make hand gestures upwards and sing to obtain the Power. Once the Power is obtained, they perform several rituals over the sick person including touch healing, hand clapping and candle waving. Shakers believe that candles have the power to reveal the diseased areas of the body. Shakers also believe that illness can be burned away over a candle once it is removed from the body. Onlookers ring bells incessantly throughout the healing ritual, which causes temporary partial deafness. Bell ringing is believed to aid in the healing process. Those being healed sometimes shake or vomit during the healing, which is a sign that disease is leaving the body.

➤ NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH



The Native American Church (NAC), also known as Peyotism and Peyote Religion, is a Native American religion that teaches a combination of traditional Native American beliefs and Christianity, with sacramental use of the entheogen peyote. The religion originated in the U.S. State of Oklahoma in the late nineteenth century after peyote was introduced to the southern Great Plains from Mexico. Today it is the most widespread indigenous religion among Native Americans in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, with an estimated 250,000 adherents as of the late twentieth century.

Followers of the Native American Church have differing ceremonies, celebrations, and ways of practicing their religion. For example, among the Teton, the Cross Fire group uses the Bible for sermons, which are rejected by the Half Moon followers, though they each teach a similar Christian morality. Ceremonies commonly last all night, beginning Saturday evening and ending early Sunday morning. Scripture reading, prayer, singing, and drumming are included. In general, the Native American Church believes in one supreme God, the Great Spirit.

Ceremonies are generally held in a tipi and require a priest, pastor, or elder to conduct the service. The conductor is referred to as the Roadman. The Roadman is assisted by a Fireman, whose task is to care for the holy fireplace, being sure that it burns consistently all night. The Roadman may use a prayer staff, a beaded and feathered gourd, a small drum, cedar, and his eagle feather as a means for conducting services. "The Roadman's wife or other female relative prepares seven sacramental foods and the "second breakfast" that are part of the church services. Her part takes place very early, between 4:30 and 5:00 in the morning. The seven sacramental foods are water, shredded beef, corn mush, rice, strawberries, cookies, and soft, individually wrapped candies. To counterbalance the bitterness of the peyote consumed during the services, the sweet foods were added later. The second breakfast is like any other breakfast. It generally includes boiled eggs, toast, hash brown potatoes, coffee, and juice. This meal is served well after sunrise and just prior to the closing of the church services.

Church services are not regular Sunday occurrences but are held in accordance with special requests by a family for celebrating a birthday, or for a memorial or funeral service. Services begin at sundown on either a Friday or Saturday evening and end at sunrise. Thus, a participant "sits up" all night, giving up a full night's rest as part of a small sacrifice to the Great and Holy Spirit and his Son.

The church services culminate in a feast for the whole community the following day. Because peyote is a stimulant, all of the participating members are wide awake, so they, too, attend the feast. The need for sleep is generally felt in the late afternoon, particularly after the feast. Gifts are given to the Roadman and all his helpers by the sponsoring family at the feast to show deep appreciation for all his hard work."

Common reasons for holding a service include: the desire to cure illness, birthday celebrations, Christian holidays, school graduations, and other significant life events.

NEW THOUGHT

The New Thought movement (also "Higher Thought") is a religious movement which developed in the United States in the 19th century, considered by many to have been derived from the unpublished writings of Phineas Quimby. There are numerous smaller groups, most of which are incorporated in the International New Thought Alliance.

New Thought holds that Infinite Intelligence, or God, is everywhere, spirit is the totality of real things, true human selfhood is divine, divine thought is a force for good, sickness originates in the mind, and "right thinking" has a healing effect.

Although New Thought is neither monolithic nor doctrinaire, in general, modern-day adherents of New Thought share some core beliefs:

- God or Infinite Intelligence is "supreme, universal, and everlasting";
- divinity dwells within each person, that all people are spiritual beings;
- "the highest spiritual principle [is] loving one another unconditionally... and teaching and healing one another"; and
- "our mental states are carried forward into manifestation and become our experience in daily living".

The New Thought movement originated in the early 19th century, and survives to the current day in the form of a loosely allied group of religious denominations, authors, philosophers, and individuals who share a set of beliefs concerning metaphysics, positive thinking, the law of attraction, healing, life force, creative visualization, and personal power.

➤ CHRISTIAN SCIENCE



Christian Science is a set of beliefs and practices belonging to the metaphysical family of new religious movements. It was developed in 19th-century New England by Mary Baker Eddy, who argued in her 1875 book *Science and Health* that sickness is an illusion that can be corrected by prayer alone. The book became Christian Science's central text, along with the Bible.

Eddy and 26 followers were granted a charter in 1879 to found the Church of Christ, Scientist, and in 1894 the Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, was built in Boston, Massachusetts.

The church is known for its newspaper, the *Christian Science Monitor*, which won seven Pulitzer Prizes between 1950 and 2002, and for its public Reading Rooms around the world.

Eddy described Christian Science as a return to "primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing." There are key differences between Christian Science theology and that of other branches of Christianity. In particular, adherents subscribe to a radical form of philosophical idealism, believing that reality is purely spiritual and the material world an illusion. This includes the view that disease is a mental error rather than physical disorder, and that the sick should be treated not by medicine, but by a form of prayer that seeks to correct the beliefs responsible for the illusion of ill health.

The church does not require that Christian Scientists avoid all medical care—adherents use dentists, optometrists, obstetricians, physicians for broken bones, and vaccination when required by law—but maintains that Christian-Science prayer is most effective when not combined with medicine. This consists of silently arguing with oneself; there are no appeals to a personal god, and no set words. Between the 1880s and 1990s, the avoidance of medical treatment led to the deaths of several adherents and their children. Parents and others were prosecuted for, and in a few cases convicted of, manslaughter or neglect.

Christian Science practitioners are certified by the Church of Christ, Scientist, to charge a fee for Christian Science prayer. There were 1,249 practitioners worldwide in 2015; Their training is a two-week, 12-lesson course called "primary class," based on the Recapitulation chapter of *Science and Health*. Practitioners wanting to teach primary class take a six-day "normal class," held in Boston once every three years, and become Christian Science teachers. There are also Christian Science nursing homes. They offer no medical services; the nurses are Christian Scientists who have completed a course of religious study and training in basic skills, such as feeding and bathing.

rites and ceremonies

Christian Science worship calls for no rites, ceremonies, or rituals. Adherents celebrate the sacraments of baptism and communion spiritually, in prayer, without material components.

afterlife and salvation

Individuals are thought to "pass on" to an existence similar to that experienced before death, where they can continue making strides toward eternal salvation. Death is considered the "last enemy" that does not offer any advantage toward salvation.

gender and sexuality

The term Father-Mother God is metaphorical; God is unsexed, not androgynous. Expectations for human sexuality (including homosexuality) emphasize the emulation of biblical and spiritual standards and patterns. Chastity, marriage, fidelity, and equality of the sexes are strongly supported.

equality

Christian Science believes women are equal to men. No discrimination is made among races.

baptism

Baptism is the spiritual purification of daily life, not a sacrament.

heaven and hell

Heaven and hell exist not as places or as parts of the afterlife but as states of mind. Mary Baker Eddy taught that sinners make their own hell by doing evil, and saints make their own heaven by doing right.

homosexuality

Christian Science promotes sex within marriage. However, the denomination also avoids judging others, affirming the spiritual identity each person receives from God.

diet

There are no special dietary considerations. Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are avoided.

blood transfusion

The Christian Scientist would have no objection to blood transfusion as such. However, they would regard it as a material method of treatment, and therefore in conflict with their reliance on spiritual means of healing alone. They would therefore not normally wish to be either a donor or a recipient.

as death approaches

Christian Science is kept free from ritual and there are no last rites. The presence of a Christian Science practitioner may be appreciated and the family should know how to contact an appropriate person.

last offices

Last Offices should be performed as normal. Christian Scientists would prefer the body of a female to be handled by a female. Post-mortems would not be acceptable unless required by law. Cremation is usually chosen in preference to burial.

organ donation

Organ donation would usually be prohibited.

fasting

Fasting is often thought of as denying oneself some luxury or necessity in the observance of a religious rite. From this standpoint it might appear that Christian Scientists do not fast, but that is not the case.

➤ church of divine science

The Church of Divine Science is a religious movement within the wider New Thought movement. The group was formalized in San

Francisco in the 1880s under Malinda Cramer.

The church's official founders were Malinda Cramer and Nona L. Brooks, with Fannie Brooks James, Alethea Brooks Small and Kate Bingham also playing decisive roles. Both Phineas Quimby and Emma Curtis Hopkins, noted New Thought leader of the day, were a direct influence.

Divine Science defines itself as "an organized teaching pertaining to God and the manifestation of God in Creation." It holds that its foundation truth is "that limitless Being, God, is Good, is equally present everywhere, and is the All of everything." It defines God as "pure Spirit, absolute, changeless, eternal, manifesting in and as all Creation, yet also transcending Creation" and that evil is therefore neither necessary nor permanent and has no reality within itself, but has existence only so long as human beings support it by believing in it. Like other New Thought churches, Divine Science considers healing very important, and emulates the work of Jesus Christ, who in the New Testament cures many people. The Denver Church's founder, Nona Brooks, stated, "The whole of Divine Science is the practice of the Presence of God. Truth comes through the Bible, Affirmative prayer, contemplation and meditation and the practice of the presence of God here and now."

Rituals

Although Divine Scientists do not practice the outward aspects of Christianity including the actual ingestion of bread and wine and the actual use of water for baptisms and christenings, they believe that every process of Life is a sacrament. As the Spirit of God is with us at all times, our sacraments are with us at every moment, eternally.

CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND TRIUMPHANT



Official logo

Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT) is an international New Age religious organization founded in 1975 by Elizabeth Clare Prophet. It is an outgrowth (and is now the corporate parent) of The Summit Lighthouse, founded in 1958 by Prophet's husband, Mark L. Prophet. Its beliefs reflect features of the traditions of Theosophy and New Thought. The church's headquarters is located near Gardiner, Montana, and the church has local congregations in more than 20 countries.

The church's theology is a syncretistic belief system, including elements of Buddhism, Christianity, esoteric mysticism, the paranormal and alchemy, with a belief in angels and elementals (or spirits of nature). It centers on communications received from Ascended Masters through the Holy Spirit. Many of the Ascended Masters, such as Sanat Kumara, Maitreya, Djwal Khul, El Morya, Kuthumi, Paul the Venetian, Serapis Bey, the Master Hilarion, the Master Jesus and Saint Germain, have their roots in Theosophy and the writings of Madame Blavatsky, C.W. Leadbeater, and Alice A. Bailey. Others, such as Buddha and Confucius, are historical religious figures. Some, such as Lanto, Lady Master Nada, Lady Master Lotus, and Lanello, are Ascended Masters who were first identified as such by Elizabeth Clare Prophet. All in all, she identified more than 200 Ascended Masters that were not identified as Masters of the Ancient Wisdom in the original teachings of Theosophy.

Group members practice prayers, affirmations, mantras and a dynamic form of prayer known as "decrees". These serve many purposes: devotion, calling on angels for protection, calling forth the light of God on the earth, praying for healing, for wisdom, seeking to know God's will and for the transmutation of negative karma. One of the most important uses of decrees is to invoke the violet flame, claimed to be the most effective method of balancing karma built up in the past. The doctrine of the Seven Rays is also taught, as well as teachings about the chakras and reincarnation.

Sacraments and Rituals

The church offers nine sacraments, including Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Penance, Marriage, Anointing the Sick (including Last Rites) and Ordination.

These are the seven sacred rituals that commemorate the seven rays of the Christ in our lives and in our associations with the Church.

Reincarnation

Reincarnation is a central doctrine for CUT. Its necessity is explained in a passage by Elizabeth Clare Prophet in which she is speaking about Jesus' titles Son of Man and Son of David.

Scripture

The Bible is not believed to contain all the teachings of Jesus, hence the need for modern instructions from the ascended masters.

➤ JEVISH SCIENCE

Jewish Science is a Judaic spiritual movement comparable with the New Thought Movement. Many of its members also attend services at conventional synagogues.

It is an interpretation of Jewish philosophy that was originally conceived by Rabbi Alfred G. Moses in the early 1900s in response to the growing influence of Christian Science and the New Thought Movement. Rather than the paternal God figure encountered in Hebrew tradition, "Jewish Science views God as an Energy or Force penetrating the reality of the universe. God is the source of all Reality and not separate from but part of the world and Right thinking has a healing effect". His fundamental teachings are found in

his 1916 book *Jewish Science: Divine Healing in Judaism*. The movement was institutionalized in 1922 with Rabbi Morris Lichtenstein's founding of the Society of Jewish Science. Jewish Science is compatible and in harmony with all branches of Judaism.

➤ RELIGIOUS SCIENCE



Religious Science teaching symbol

Science of Mind was established in 1927 by Ernest Holmes (1887–1960) and is a spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical religious movement within the New Thought movement. In general, the term "Science of Mind" applies to the teachings, while the term "Religious Science" applies to the organizations. However, adherents often use the terms interchangeably.

In his book, *The Science of Mind*, Ernest Holmes stated "Religious Science is a correlation of laws of science, opinions of philosophy, and revelations of religion applied to human needs and the aspirations of man." He also stated that Religious Science/Science of Mind (RS/SOM) is not based on any "authority" of established beliefs, but rather on "what it can accomplish" for the people who practice it.

The RS/SOM teaching generally incorporates idealistic and panentheistic philosophies. RS/SOM teaches that all beings are expressions of and part of Infinite Intelligence, also known as Spirit, Christ Consciousness, or God. It teaches that, because God is all there is in the universe (not just present in Heaven, or in assigned deities, as believed by traditional teachings), its power can be used by all humans to the extent that they recognize and align themselves with Its presence.

Personal responsibility is a major tenet of RS/SOM.

RS/SOM teaches that people can achieve more fulfilling lives through the practice called Spiritual Mind Treatment (Treatment), or Affirmative Prayer. Spiritual Mind Treatment, as currently taught in RS/SOM centers, contains five steps: Recognition, Unification, Realization, Thanksgiving, and Release. Some adherents of RS/SOM also use supplemental meditation techniques, including "Visioning"

There are three major organizations for Religious Science: Centers for Spiritual Living, the Affiliated New Thought Network, and the Global Religious Science Ministries. The last organization represents Religious Science churches in the United States, Canada, Central America, South America, Africa, Europe, India, Australia, and the Philippines.

➤ SEICHO-NO-LE



The logo of Seicho-no-ie

Seichō no Ie ("House of Growth"), is a syncretic, monotheistic, New Thought Japanese new religion that has spread since the end of World War II. It emphasizes gratitude for nature, the family, ancestors and, above all, religious faith in one universal God. Seichō no Ie is the world's largest New Thought group. By the end of 2010 it had over 1.6 million followers and 442 facilities, mostly located in Japan.

The basic principles of the Seicho-No-Ie teachings consist of three major components; (1) Only God-created perfect world exists (also referred to as the 'True Image'), (2) All phenomena are manifestation of only mind, (3) All religions emanate from one universal God. Seicho-No-Ie can be considered a philosophy or religion.

Seicho-no-Ie's main scripture is the Sutra known as the Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrine which the founder received from God while in meditation in 1931. The founder also was deeply interested in Christianity and wrote commentaries on St John's Gospel, which his followers study with great interest. He also developed the notion of the Eternal Christ a statue of whom can be found in Seicho-no-Ie places of worship.

Apart from the founder's birthday there are no religious festivals.

Seichō no Ie members are encouraged to read passages of Taniguchi's scriptures and sutras, practice meditation, and do something good every day. They are also strongly encouraged to tell others of Seichō no Ie's doctrine and lead them to its way of life. Apart from this general ideal, however, Seichō no Ie offers a large number of private and communal rituals and activities in which members (and potential members) are encouraged to participate.

Seichō no Ie's religious practice includes various ceremonies (private and communal, daily and annually) of reverence for ancestors which are quite common in the Japanese religious repertory. In Seichō no Ie their primary aim is not to ask for ancestors' assistance or protection. Rather it is to express one's gratitude towards one's ancestors and to please them with a bright, grateful heart, positive words and the delightful smell of incense, which contributes towards one's salvation.

Most prominent is the annual ancestor ceremony in August at the main ancestral shrine in Uji. For this occasion paper strips bearing names, dates of birth and death of members' ancestors are collected to be ritually read and finally burnt in a large purificatory fire (Fieldwork Observations). In 1977, rites for stillborn and aborted babies were separated from those for ancestors because of unborn babies' distinct spiritual status.

As in most other new religions, seasonal festivals of various scale and frequency may also be found in Seichō no Ie. Some ceremonies, such as annual celebrations in memory of Taniguchi's revelations and monthly memorial days for Taniguchi, Taniguchi Seichō and Teruko (as well as larger annual festivals) are only or primarily performed in Nagasaki. Others, such as ancestor veneration, and especially the annual Ancestral Memorial Festival in August, take place in Uji. Other events, such as ceremonies at the beginning of every month, are celebrated in all the facilities.

Seichō no Ie's Confucian-influenced ideal female role is readily discernible in the policies of its girls's school, countless testimonials and, above all, Taniguchi's own writings. Rather than equality between men and women or superiority of men over women, Taniguchi teaches that men and women are fundamentally different and that women, like men, should strive to fully develop their innate potential. As Seichō no Ie regards the family, especially husband and wife, as society's basic unit, peace and harmony (which are prerequisites for a peaceful, prosperous society), it encourages women to be loving housewives and caring mothers who "obey their husbands without hesitation" because husbands are head of the family endowed with fatherly, that is divine, wisdom.

As in many other new religions, testimonials describing people's release from illness, misery or strife through belief in a new religion's doctrine or the performance of its rituals are commonplace in Seichō no Ie.

➤ UNITY CHURCH

Unity, known informally as Unity Church, is a New Thought Christian organization that publishes the Daily Word devotional publication. It describes itself as a "positive, practical Christianity" which "teach[es] the effective daily application of the principles of Truth taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ" and promotes "a way of life that leads to health, prosperity, happiness, and peace of mind."

Unity was founded in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1889 by Charles Fillmore (1854–1948) and Myrtle Fillmore (1845–1931) after Mrs. Fillmore had been cured of her tuberculosis, she believed, by spiritual healing.

After World War I, Unity Village was developed 15 miles from Kansas City. The movement was led, after Charles Fillmore's death, by the Fillmores' sons and grandchildren.

Unity World Headquarters offer magazines, books, pamphlets and a prayer ministry. Silent Unity, a telephone and email service, offers people help through prayer and counseling.

Unity operates several programs, including a prayer program called Silent Unity, the Unity Society of Practical Christianity, Unity School of Christianity, Unity Institute, the Office of Prayer Research, the Association of Unity Churches, and Unity House, the church's publishing arm. The home of Unity is at Unity Village, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City.

Unity describes itself as a worldwide Christian organization which teaches a positive approach to life, seeking to accept the good in all people and events. Unity began as a healing ministry and healing has continued to be its main emphasis. It teaches that all people can improve the quality of their lives through thought.

Unity describes itself as having no particular creed, no set dogma, and no required ritual. It maintains that there is good in every approach to God and in every religion that is fulfilling someone's needs. It holds that one should not focus on past sins but on the potential good in all.

Unity emphasizes spiritual healing, prosperity and the curing of illness by spiritual means, but Unity does not reject or resist medical treatments. Unity is accepting of the beliefs of others.

Churches fall under the auspices of Unity Worldwide Ministries although each church is autonomous in its practices.

SHINSHUKYO

Japanese new religions are new religious movements established in Japan. In Japanese they are called shinshūkyō or shinkō shūkyō. Japanese scholars classify all religious organizations founded since the middle of the 19th century as "new religions"; thus, the term refers to a great diversity and number of organizations. Most came into being in the mid-to-late twentieth century and are influenced by much older traditional religions including Shinto, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Western influences include Christianity, the Bible and the writings of Nostradamus.

➤ CHURCH OF WORLD MESSIANITY



Church of World Messianity - Logo

The Church of World Messianity (Sekai Kyūsei Kyō in Japanese), abbreviated COWM, is a Japanese new religion founded in 1935 by Mokichi Okada.

There are three pillars of the religion, of which the key concept is johrei, claimed to be a method of channeling divine light into the body of another for the purposes of healing. The Art of Nature which includes nature farming, and the Art of Beauty which includes practices such as Ikebana, a form of Japanese flower arranging, are the other formal practices.

In 1926, Okada claimed to have received a divine revelation that empowered him to be a channel of God's Healing Light (johrei) to purify spiritual realm to remove the spiritual causes of illness, poverty, and strife from the world and inaugurate a new Messianic Age. He went on to teach Johrei to his followers allowing them also to achieve Messianity and spread the teachings across the world. Members are given permission to channel Johrei by wearing an O-Hikari pendant which contains a copy of one of Mokichi Okada's calligraphies. He is often referred to as "Meishu-Sama" (enlightened spiritual teacher) by his followers.

Okada's teaching is represented by a number of his works, such as Foundation of Paradise and Johrei: Divine Light of Salvation, which has been edited and translated by the Society of Johrei, an offshoot of COWM.

The movement currently claims 800,000 followers, including many in Brazil.

According to anthropologist of religion Winston Davis, Mahikari groups are comparable to Church of World Messianity and follow basically the same healing ritual.

In regard to other religions World Messianity is very tolerant. It believes that all religions come from one God.

➤ HAPPY SCIENCE



Happy Science logo

Happy Science (Kōfuku-no-Kagaku), formerly known as The Institute for Research in Human Happiness, is a controversial new religious and spiritual movement, founded in Japan on 6 October 1986 by Ryuho Okawa, that is widely criticized as a cult.

The Happy Science group includes a publication division called IRH Press, educational establishments such as The Happy Science Academy and The Happy Science University, a political party called The Happiness Realization Party, and a media entertainment division called New Star Productions.

The basic teachings of Happy Science are "Exploration of the Right Mind" and "The Fourfold Path" and El Cantare belief. According to Okawa, in order to obtain happiness one must practice the Principles of Happiness known as "The Fourfold Path", Love that gives, Wisdom, Self-Reflection and Progress.

The only requirement to join Happy Science is that applicants must have "the aspiration and discipline to seek the truth and actively contribute to the realization of love, peace and happiness on earth".

Happy Science worships a deity named "El Cantare" who they believe was born on Earth as Hermes and then Shakyamuni Buddha, and is said to be the core consciousness of Okawa himself.

The movement rejects monotheism and claim that there is a hierarchy in the heavenly spirit world and believing in the existence of many gods, Tathagatas, Bodhisattvas, and other high spirits.

Worship facilities are called "Syoja".

Services

Happy Science conducts a number of services such as Sunday Service, 7th Day Gratitude Service and Memorial Day ceremonies, led by the Head Minister of each location.

Ritual Prayer Ceremonies

Various prayers such as "Prayer for Economic Prosperity," "Prayer for Success," "Prayer for Exorcising Evil Spirits" and "Prayer for Recovery from Illness" are offered. Many members attend the ritual prayers every month, pledging to continue in their efforts in the month to come.

Ceremonies

Ceremonies held by Happy Science – New Year's Celebration, The Day of the Great Enlightenment, Celebration of the Lord's Descent, El Cantare Celebration and the 7th Day Gratitude Ceremony – are held to give thanks to the Lord El Cantare, where Dharma Friends gather together.

Diet

There aren't any particular restrictions as regards to diet.

➤ KONKOKYO



Crest of Konkokyo

Konkōkyō or just Konkō, is a religion and spiritual way of living of Japanese origin. Originating in Shinbutsu Shugo beliefs, it is now both an independent religion as well as Sectarian Shintō being a member of the Kyoha Shintō Rengokai (Association of Sectarian Shinto).

It is a syncretic, henotheistic and pantheistic religion, which worships the universe as the deity Tenchi Kane No Kami, or the Golden Kami of Heaven and Earth (or the Universe). Tenchi Kane No Kami is also referred to as "Tenchi No Kami-Sama," "Oyagami-Sama," "Kami-Sama," and "Kami." In English language, the deity can also be called, "Divine Parent of the Universe," "Principle Parent," "Parent Kami," "Kami-Sama," or "Kami." Although mentioned as 'he' for linguistic convenience, the Kami is neither male or female. Bunjirō Kawate (1814–1883) is recognized as the founder of Konkō-kyō way and teachings, beginning in 1859.

In Konkokyo, everything is seen as being in profound interrelation with each other. Kami is not seen as distant or residing in heaven, but present within this world. The universe is perceived to be the body of Tenchi Kane no Kami. Konkokyo's beliefs center around the betterment of human life in this world by showing appreciation for all things, apologizing, and providing mutual help and prayer for others.

While Toritsugi at churches is typically performed by ministers, lay members are also encouraged to perform Toritsugi in their daily lives to help others. When they meet people who are suffering, the Konkokyo way is to listen to their problems, support them, and pray for their wellbeing and happiness. Tenchi Kane no Kami wishes for all people to become a mediator and help others.

Konkokyo has churches where people can go to worship and pray. Though Konkokyo believes that Tenchi Kane No Kami is everywhere, and followers of the way can talk to the deity anytime and anywhere. The church is a place to receive assistance and guidance through Toritsugi, and for people to focus their prayers, to appreciate blessings, apologize for any irreverences they may feel they have made, as well as be a safe and calming center for people to visit.

The faith believes that all people came from and are connected by the universe. This means that all people are connected by Tenchi Kane no Kami and there is no one that does not belong. Konkokyo desires to have all people, regardless of race, creed, gender, and occupation, work together to resolve the problems of the world. The faith also respects and accepts all ethnic groups and religions.

Konkokyo does not force or require people to quit another religion before following Konkokyo ways; believers are free to belong to another religion concurrently.

Women in Konkokyo are also held in high esteem with many women serving as head ministers at its churches.

The faith differs in Jinja Shinto in that it does not believe in taboos including beliefs related to unlucky days, unlucky years (age), and ominous directions. There are no distinctions between pure and impure things or sacred and non-sacred places.

Konkokyo also does not impose any restrictions on food and drink. Konkokyo believers are permitted to consume alcohol, caffeine, meat, etc.

Celibacy is also not a requirement for the clergy or anyone.

There are no restrictions for Konkokyo believers. As well believers are not obligated or required to pay any dues or make any donations.

Konkokyo Kyoten, The Sacred Scriptures is the foundation for practicing the Konko Faith. This book is comprised of five parts and has been translated into English as five separate volumes.

Helping and saving people are central precepts in Konkokyo. The foremost wish of Tenchi Kane No Kami is to help and save people. But He can do so only through people.

Ancestral Worship

Konkokyo holds memorial services to thank our ancestors for giving us life and protection. At the services, living descendants also pray to have their ancestral spirits join hands with Tenchi Kane No Kami to bestow even more blessings.

According to Konkokyo beliefs, there is no Heaven or Hell upon death. Konkokyo also does not believe in transmigration or reincarnation.

Children are therefore highly valued and welcome by Konkokyo. The relationship between parent and child is also given much importance. Many activities for children are held, including an annual children's festival held at Konkokyo Headquarters with the participation of children from all areas.

Konkokyo believers are not obligated or required to pay any dues or make any donations.

STILL to this day Konkokyo is considered one of the 13 original Shinto sects. That is because of its close practices to the Shinto religion.

The main ritual they perform is called Tortisugi, this is a meditation practice. This lets them talk to Kami and get a spiritual blessing.

Konkokyo is a very modern religion so they don't have any mumbo jumbo kind of rituals they believe in keeping your body holy as well so yoga and exercise is considered a ritual.

➤ OOMOTO

Ōmoto also known as Ōmoto-kyō, is a sect founded in 1892 by Deguchi Nao (1836–1918), often categorised as a new Japanese religion originated from Shinto. The spiritual leaders of the movement have predominantly been women; however, Deguchi Onisaburō (1871–1948) has been considered an important figure in Omoto as a seishi (spiritual teacher). Since 2001, the movement has been guided by its fifth leader, Kurenai Deguchi.

Omotokyo was strongly influenced by Konkokyo, Ko-shinto (ancient Shinto) and folk spiritual and divination traditions; it also integrated Kokugaku (National Studies) teachings and modern ideas on world harmony and peace, creating a new doctrine. It shares

with Konkokyo the belief in the benevolence of Konjin, who was previously considered an evil kami, and shares with other ancient Shinto schools the teachings that proclaim the achievement of personal virtue as a step to universal harmony.

Members of Oomoto believe in several kami. The most important are Ookunitokotachi, Ushitora Konjin and Hitsujisaruru. Oomoto members also tend to recognize notable religious figures from other religions, or even notable non-religious figures, as kami – for example, the creator of Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof is revered as a god. However, all of these kami are believed to be aspects of a single God concept.

Oomoto is monotheistic but not exactly like Judaism, Christianity or Islam.

Oomoto has no professional priests. Some of the paid workers spend much or most of their time engaged in priest duties at the two headquarters. But in Oomoto anyone can become a priest. Men, women, and children are all eligible to study the doctrine and ritual, and to become certified to practice.

Oomoto promoted interfaith activities long before most religions acknowledged the importance of interfaith dialogue and prayer.

The basic ritual, practiced at each branch, at each headquarters and in each home once a month is called Tsukinamisai.

In it, Oomoto followers express their gratitude to the spirit by a token return of the basic necessities, placed with reverence upon the altar. Food, clothing, and shelter, the requisites of daily life, are reverently offered during the ceremony.

There are four Grand Festivals. Spring, Summer and Autumn are held in May, August and November, respectively. Setsbun Grand Festival is the most important, held each Feb. 3, the date of the sect's founding. Setsbun is an all-night prayer and purification vigil, with at least one male and one female priest from each branch participating, in addition to the Spiritual Leader and other key priests. Thousands of followers attend each year. Spring, Autumn and Setsbun festivals are held in Ayabe, and the Summer festival is in Kameoka.

Oomoto principles are: 1) Purity through purification of mind and body. 2) Optimism, specifically believing in the goodness of the Divine Will. 3) Progressivism as a way to social improvement. 4) Unification or reconciliation of all dichotomies (good and evil; rich and poor; humans and nature; humans and God, etc.)

In keeping with Ushitora no Konjin's instructions, the Spiritual Leader of Oomoto is always a woman, a descendant of Nao on the matrilineal line.

Oomoto followers believe their Spiritual Leader has direct contact with the Divine Spirit. Based on this she interprets the teachings according to present circumstances - social, political, etc. - and guides the spiritual activities of Oomoto followers. The Spiritual Leader is an active participant in most major and many minor rituals throughout the year.

Nao's transcriptions became known as the "Ofudesaki," which means "from the tip of the brush," and are collectively one of Oomoto's holy books. They are also known as "Oomoto Shinyu" ("Divine Revelations"). The other holy book is "Reikai Monogatari" by Onisaburo.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIho17Y3i_s

➤ PL KYODAN

PL Kyodan, or the Church of Perfect Liberty (Pāfekuto Rībatī Kyōdan), is a Japanese Shinshūkyō (new religious movement) founded in 1924 by Tokuharu Miki (1871–1938), who was a priest in the Ōbaku sect of Zen Buddhism.

The movement, unique for the use of English words in its name, is based on the earlier Hito-no-michi sect. It is not affiliated, however, with any of the major religious traditions of Japan.

The stated aim of the Church of Perfect Liberty is to bring about world peace.

PL teaches that "Life is Art" and that humans are born to express their own unique individuality in everything they do, "creating true art". To assist them in improving their lives and overcoming hardships, church members are taught why they have these problems and are guided in solving them by the Patriarch (known as oshieoya-sama 'teacher-parent') and church ministers.

PL does not have a holy book, but it has 21 PL Precepts which were announced by Tokuchika Miki on September 29, 1947. They became the basic teachings of the Church.

Object of worship in the PL Order is Mioya-O-Kami ("Parent God", who has no connection with any of the traditional deities of Japanese mythology. Indeed, the PL Kyodan is a monotheistic religion, though a very tolerant one. The Order teaches that other religions worship the one God according to different understandings of him.

➤ SEICHO-NO-LE



The Logo of Seicho-no-Ie

Seichō no Ie ("House of Growth"), is a syncretic, monotheistic, New Thought Japanese new religion that has spread since the end of World War II. It emphasizes gratitude for nature, the family, ancestors and, above all, religious faith in one universal God. Seichō no Ie is the world's largest New Thought group. By the end of 2010 it had over 1.6 million followers and 442 facilities, mostly located in Japan.

The basic principles of the Seicho-No-Ie teachings consist of three major components; (1) Only God-created perfect world exists (also referred to as the 'True Image'), (2) All phenomena are manifestation of only mind, (3) All religions emanate from one universal God. Seicho-No-Ie can be considered a philosophy or religion.

Seicho-no-Ie's main scripture is the Sutra known as the Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrine which the founder received from God while in meditation in 1931. The founder also was deeply interested in Christianity and wrote commentaries on St John's Gospel, which his followers study with great interest. He also developed the notion of the Eternal Christ a statue of whom can be found in Seicho-no-Ie places of worship.

Apart from the founder's birthday there are no religious festivals.

Seichō no Ie members are encouraged to read passages of Taniguchi's scriptures and sutras, practice meditation, and do something good every day. They are also strongly encouraged to tell others of Seichō no Ie's doctrine and lead them to its way of life. Apart from this general ideal, however, Seichō no Ie offers a large number of private and communal rituals and activities in which members (and potential members) are encouraged to participate.

Seichō no Ie's religious practice includes various ceremonies (private and communal, daily and annually) of reverence for ancestors which are quite common in the Japanese religious repertory. In Seichō no Ie their primary aim is not to ask for ancestors' assistance or protection. Rather it is to express one's gratitude towards one's ancestors and to please them with a bright, grateful heart, positive words and the delightful smell of incense, which contributes towards one's salvation.

Most prominent is the annual ancestor ceremony in August at the main ancestral shrine in Uji. For this occasion paper strips bearing names, dates of birth and death of members' ancestors are collected to be ritually read and finally burnt in a large purificatory fire (Fieldwork Observations). In 1977, rites for stillborn and aborted babies were separated from those for ancestors because of unborn babies' distinct spiritual status.

As in most other new religions, seasonal festivals of various scale and frequency may also be found in Seichō no Ie. Some ceremonies, such as annual celebrations in memory of Taniguchi's revelations and monthly memorial days for Taniguchi, Taniguchi Seichō and Teruko (as well as larger annual festivals) are only or primarily performed in Nagasaki. Others, such as ancestor veneration, and especially the annual Ancestral Memorial Festival in August, take place in Uji. Other events, such as ceremonies at the beginning of every month, are celebrated in all the facilities.

Seichō no Ie's Confucian-influenced ideal female role is readily discernible in the policies of its girls's school, countless testimonials and, above all, Taniguchi's own writings. Rather than equality between men and women or superiority of men over women, Taniguchi teaches that men and women are fundamentally different and that women, like men, should strive to fully develop their innate potential. As Seichō no Ie regards the family, especially husband and wife, as society's basic unit, peace and harmony (which are prerequisites for a peaceful, prosperous society), it encourages women to be loving housewives and caring mothers who "obey their husbands without hesitation" because husbands are head of the family endowed with fatherly, that is divine, wisdom.

As in many other new religions, testimonials describing people's release from illness, misery or strife through belief in a new religion's doctrine or the performance of its rituals are commonplace in Seichō no Ie.

➤ TENRIKYO



Tenrikyo – emblem

Tenrikyo, sometimes rendered as Tenriism, is a Japanese new religion which is neither strictly monotheistic nor pantheistic, originating from the teachings of a 19th-century woman named Nakayama Miki, known to her followers as Oyasama.

Followers of Tenrikyo believe that God of Origin, God in Truth, known by several names including "Tsukihi," "Tenri-Ō-no-Mikoto," and "Oyagamisama (God the Parent)" revealed divine intent through Miki Nakayama as the Shrine of God, and to a lesser extent the roles of the Honseki Izo Iburi and other leaders.

Tenrikyo's worldly aim is to teach and promote the Joyous Life, which is cultivated through acts of charity and mindfulness called hinokishin.

The primary operations of Tenrikyo today are located at Tenrikyo Church Headquarters (Tenri, Nara, Japan), which supports 16,833 locally managed churches in Japan, the construction and maintenance of the oyasato-yakata, and various community-focused organisations. It has 1.75 million followers in Japan, and is estimated to have over 2 million worldwide.

The ultimate spiritual aim of Tenrikyo is the construction of the Kanrodai, a divinely ordained pillar in an axis mundi called the Jiba, and the correct performance of the Kagura ritual around the Kanrodai, which will bring about the salvation of all human beings. A pilgrimage to the Jiba is interpreted as a return to one's origin, so the greeting okaeri nasai (welcome home) is seen on many inns in Tenri City.

Other key teachings include:

- Tanno (Joyous Acceptance) – a constructive attitude towards troubles, illness and difficulties
- Juzen-no-Shugo – ten principles involved in the creation, which exist in Futatsu Hitotsu (two-in-one relationships) and are considered to be applied continuously throughout the universe

The three scriptures of Tenrikyo are the Ofudesaki, Mikagura-uta, and Osashizu.

The sacred name of the single God and creator of the entire universe in Tenrikyo is "Tenri-Ō-no-Mikoto"

Tenrikyo utilises traditional musical instruments in its otsutome (lit. service or duty), Hyoshigi (wooden clappers), Chanpon (cymbals), Surigane (small gong), Taiko (large drum), Tsuzumi (shoulder drum), Fue (bamboo flute), Shamisen, Kokyū, and Koto.

The Hyoshigi, Chanpon, Surigane, Taiko, and Fue were traditionally the men's instruments but are now acceptable for women to play. The Shamisen, Kokyu, and Koto were traditionally women's instruments and, although not very popular, are now acceptable for men to play as well.

The Otsutome or daily service consists of the performance of the seated service and, optionally, the practice of a chapter or two of the 12 chapters of Teodori (lit. hand dance) or Yorozyuo. The daily service is performed twice a day; once in the morning and then in the evening. The service times are adjusted according to the time of sun rise and sun set but may vary from church to church. Service times at the Jiba in Tenri City go by this time schedule and adjust in the changing of seasons.

Instruments used in the daily service are the Hyoshigi, Chanpon, Surigane, Taiko, and Kazutori (a counter, to count the 21 times the first section is repeated). The Hyoshigi is always played by the head minister of the church or mission station. If the head minister is not present, anyone may take his or her place.

The daily service does not need to be performed at a church. It can be done at any time and anywhere, so long as that one faces the direction of the Jiba, or "home of the parent".

The purpose of the daily service, as taught by Miki Nakayama, is to sweep away the Eight Mental Dusts of the mind.

Tsukinamisai or the monthly service is a performance of the entire Mikagura-Uta, the sacred songs of the service, which is the service for world salvation. Generally, mission headquarters and grand churches (churches with 100 or more others under them) have monthly services performed on the third Sunday of every month; other churches perform on any other Sunday of the month. The monthly service at the Jiba is performed on the 26th of every month, the day of the month in which Tenrikyo was first conceived – October 26, 1838.

Instruments used in the monthly service are all of those aforementioned. Performers also include dancers – three men and three women – and a singer. Performers wear traditional montsuki, which may or may not be required depending on the church.

Marriage is an important institution in Tenrikyo. The term Tenrikyo uses to describe this institution is “husband and wife”. Tenrikyo attaches great significance to the husband-wife relationship, viewing it as a key element of human society. The Scriptures describe this relationship as having been essential to the creation and development of humanity.

