

FIRST WEDNESDAY || New Hope Church
Christian Science | First Church of Christ, Scientists



FOUNDER

▶ Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)

DATE

▶ Church of Christ, Scientist founded in 1879

LOCATION

▶ Headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts

KEY WRITINGS

- *Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures (1875)*
- *Manual of the Mother Church*
- *Christian Science Journal*
- *Miscellaneous Writings*
- Other books by Mrs. Eddy
- *Christian Science Sentinel*
- The Bible (not as reliable)

WHO IS GOD?

- ▶ According to Mrs. Eddy, God is an impersonal Principle of life, truth, love, intelligence, and spirit.
- ▶ God is all that truly exists; matter is an illusion.

WHO IS JESUS?

- ▶ According to Mrs. Eddy, Jesus was *not* the Christ, but a man who displayed the Christ idea. (“Christ” means perfection, *not* a person.)
- ▶ He was not God, and God can never become man or flesh.
- ▶ He did not suffer and could not suffer for sins.
- ▶ He did not die on the cross.
- ▶ He was not resurrected physically.
- ▶ He will not literally come back.

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- ▶ Mrs. Eddy defines the “Holy Ghost” as “Divine Science” (that is, the teaching of Christian Science).
- ▶ It is an impersonal power.

HOW TO BE SAVED

- ▶ Sin, evil, sickness, and death are not real.
- ▶ Humanity is already eternally saved.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH

- ▶ Death is not real.
- ▶ Heaven and hell are states of mind.
- ▶ The way to reach heaven is by attaining harmony (oneness with God).

OTHER BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

- ▶ Members use Christian Science “practitioners” (authorized professional healers who “treat” supposed illnesses for a fee) instead of doctors.
- ▶ Healing comes through realizing one cannot really be sick or hurt and that the body cannot be ill, suffer pain, or die (since matter is an illusion).
- ▶ Attracts followers by claims of miraculous healing.
- ▶ Publishes Christian Science Monitor newspaper.
- ▶ Established Reading Rooms and branches of The First Church of Christ, Scientists, located in around 1,200 cities.

The Church of Scientology

FOUNDER

- ▶ L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986)

DATE

- ▶ Founded 1954 in Los Angeles, California

LOCATION

- ▶ Current headquarters in Los Angeles, California

KEY WRITINGS

- Works by L. Ron Hubbard • *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* • *The Way to Happiness*

WHO IS GOD?

- ▶ Scientology does not define God or a Supreme Being.
- ▶ However, it rejects the biblical description of God.
- ▶ Everyone is a "thetan," an immortal spirit with unlimited powers over its own universe (but not all are aware of this).

WHO IS JESUS?

- ▶ Jesus is rarely mentioned in Scientology.
- ▶ He was not the Creator.
- ▶ He did not reach the level of "operating thetan" (i.e., being in control of supernatural powers and cleared from mental defects).
- ▶ He did not die for sins.

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is not part of this belief.

HOW TO BE SAVED

- ▶ There is no sin or need to repent.
- ▶ Thetans are reborn time and time again in new bodies through a process called "assumption" which is analogous to reincarnation.
- ▶ Salvation is freedom from reincarnation.
- ▶ Engrams (hang-ups in the form of subconscious "mental image pictures") are painful and debilitating; as they accumulate, people move further away from their true identity.
- ▶ One must work on his "engrams" with an "auditor" to achieve the state of "clear," then progress up the "bridge to total freedom."
- ▶ Auditing is a one-on-one session with a Scientology counselor or auditor.
- ▶ Through auditing, it is said that people can solve their problems and free themselves of engrams.
- ▶ Once an area of concern has been identified, the auditor asks the individual specific questions about it, in order to help him or her eliminate the engram, and uses the E-meter to confirm that the engram's "charge" has been dissipated and the engram has in fact been cleared.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH

- ▶ Hell is a myth.
- ▶ People who get clear of engrams become "operating thetans" (having "a state of complete spiritual freedom").

OTHER BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

- ▶ Members observe the birth of Hubbard and the anniversary of the publication of Dianetics.
- ▶ Controversy follows the group worldwide.
- ▶ *Time* magazine and *Reader's Digest* have published damaging exposés.
- ▶ Members believe that the practice of psychiatry is destructive and abusive and must be abolished.