

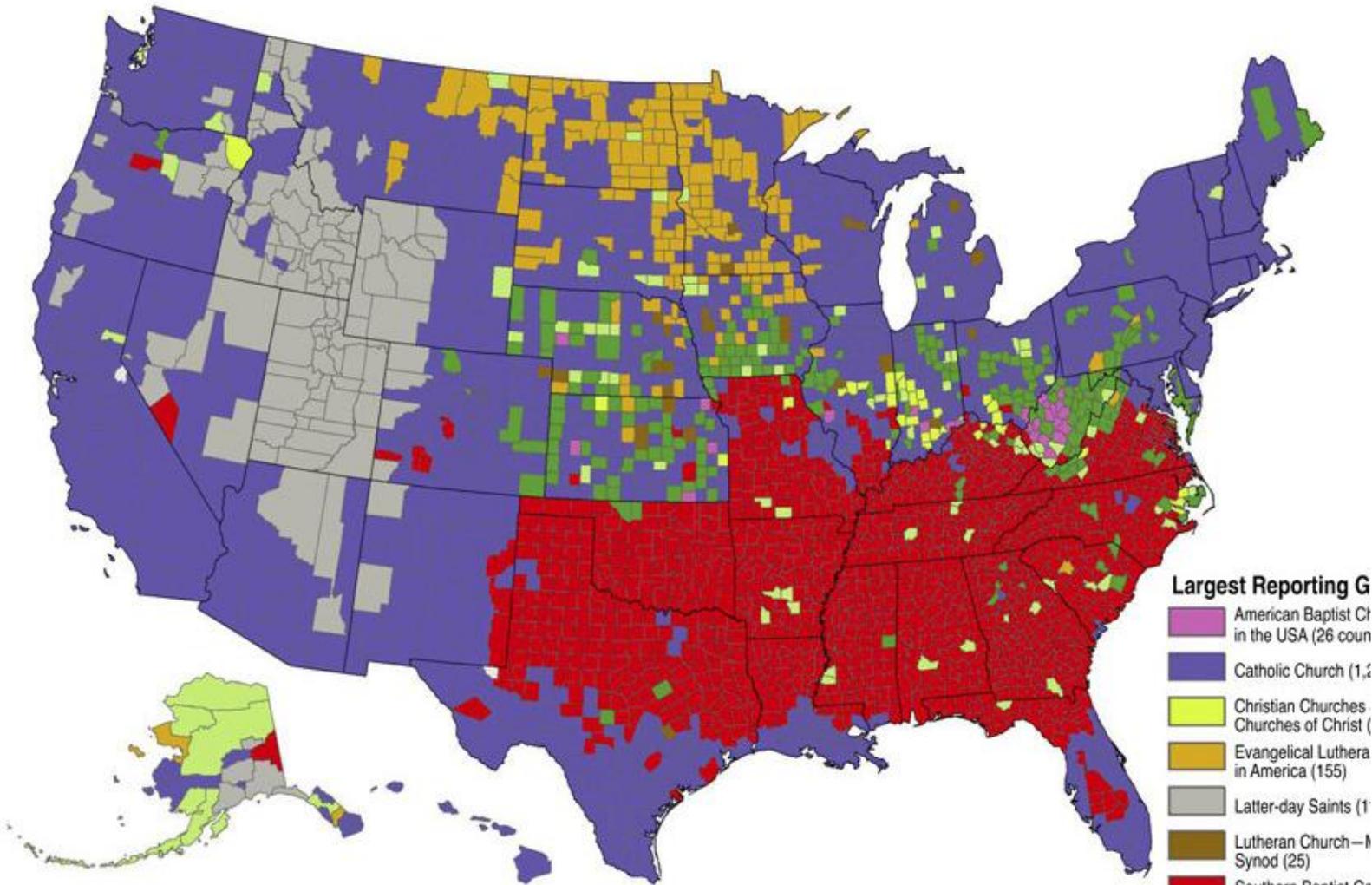


# Modern Cults

Mark D. Harris,  
MD, MPH, MBA, MDiv, PhD, ThM, DBA(C)  
MD Harris Institute

# Largest Participating Religious Group

## Group with the Largest Number of Adherents by County, 2010



### Largest Reporting G

- American Baptist Ch in the USA (26 coun)
- Catholic Church (1,2)
- Christian Churches Churches of Christ (
- Evangelical Luthera in America (155)
- Latter-day Saints (1
- Lutheran Church—M Synod (25)
- Southern Baptist Cc (1,217)
- United Methodist Ch
- Other\* (95)
- None Reported (2)

The "Other" category includes 34 groups with less than 10 counties each. Also shown as "Other" is Traverse County, Minnesota, with an equal number of Catholic Church adherents and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod adherents.

## Varieties

- Mormonism
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Christian Science
- Scientology
- Unification Church (Moonies)
- Death cults that still live

# Mormonism (Latter Day Saints)

- Founded by Joseph Smith in the United States in 1830
- Scripture – The Bible (modified), The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price
- Beliefs
  - God – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct beings. God is the omnipotent creator, but He is still subject to natural laws.
  - Man – will become a god and be married to his covenant wife ruling over a planet in the next life.
  - Creation – from existing matter (not ex nihilo).
  - Some Mormon sects practice polygamy
  - Afterlife – Other gods exist, and Mormons can become gods. God was once a man on another planet.

# Angel Moroni and Joseph Smith

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# Mormonism (Later Day Saints) (2)

- Saving ordinances (or ordinances viewed as necessary for salvation) include:
  - Baptism by immersion after the age of accountability (normally age 8)
  - Confirmation and reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost, performed by laying hands on the head of a newly baptized member;
  - Ordination to the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods for males;
  - Endowment (including washing and anointing) received in temples
  - Marriage (or sealing) to a spouse.

# HISTORIC SITES

of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Whether you're taking a break on a business trip or vacationing with family and friends, there are many opportunities to learn about the rich history and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

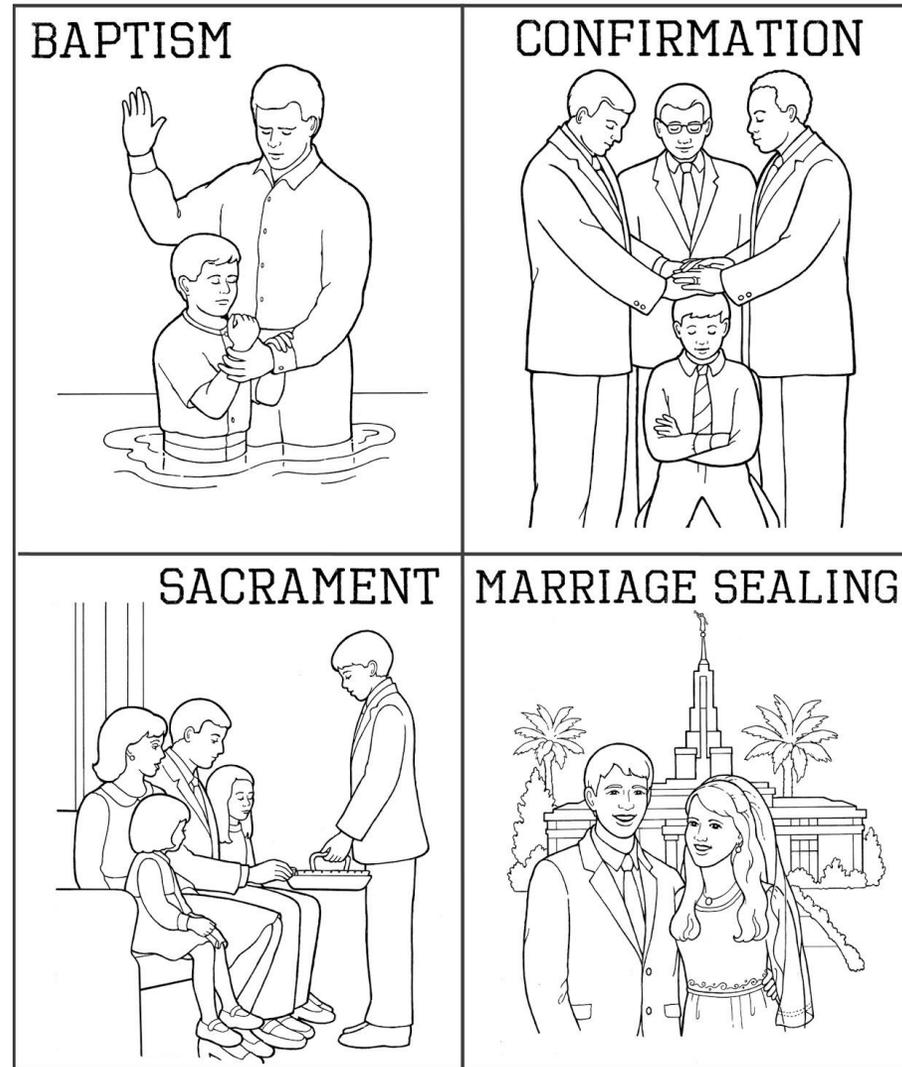
## KEY

- Historic Site
- Visitors' Center

# Mormonism (Later Day Saints)(3)

- Other ordinances
  - Lord's supper (commonly called the sacrament)
  - Naming and blessing children
  - Giving priesthood blessings and patriarchal blessings
  - Anointing and blessing the sick
  - Participating in prayer circles
  - Setting apart individuals who are called to church positions.
- Since ordinances are required for salvation, Mormons perform ordinances on behalf of the dead.

PRIESTHOOD ORDINANCES BLESS AND STRENGTHEN MY FAMILY



(IMAGES USED FOUND AT [HTTPS://WWW.LDS.ORG/MEDIA-LIBRARY/IMAGES/PRIMARY/SYMBOLS/COVENANT-PATH?LANG=ENG](https://www.lds.org/media-library/images/primary/symbols/covenant-path?lang=eng))

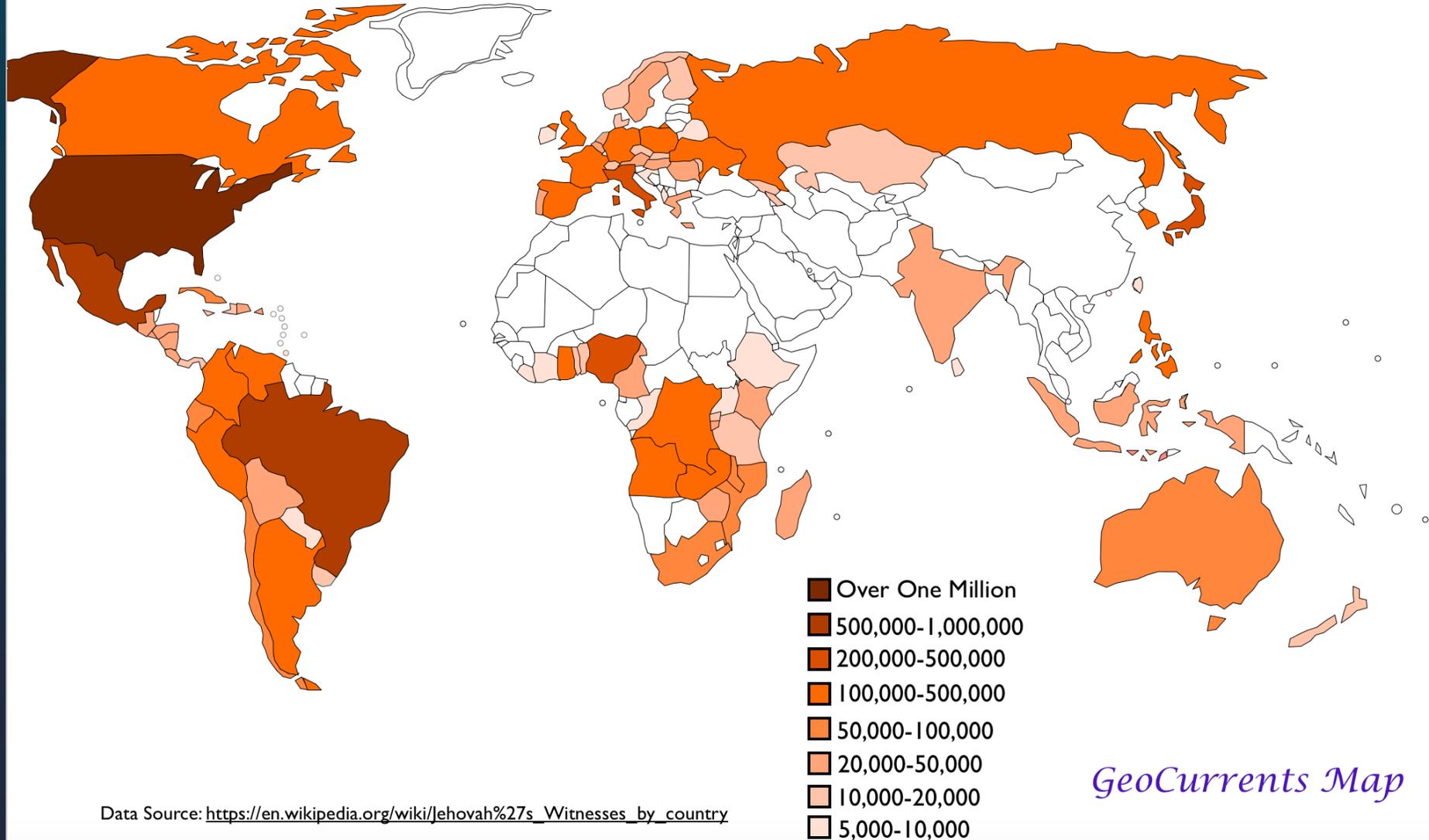
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# Jehovah's Witnesses (1)

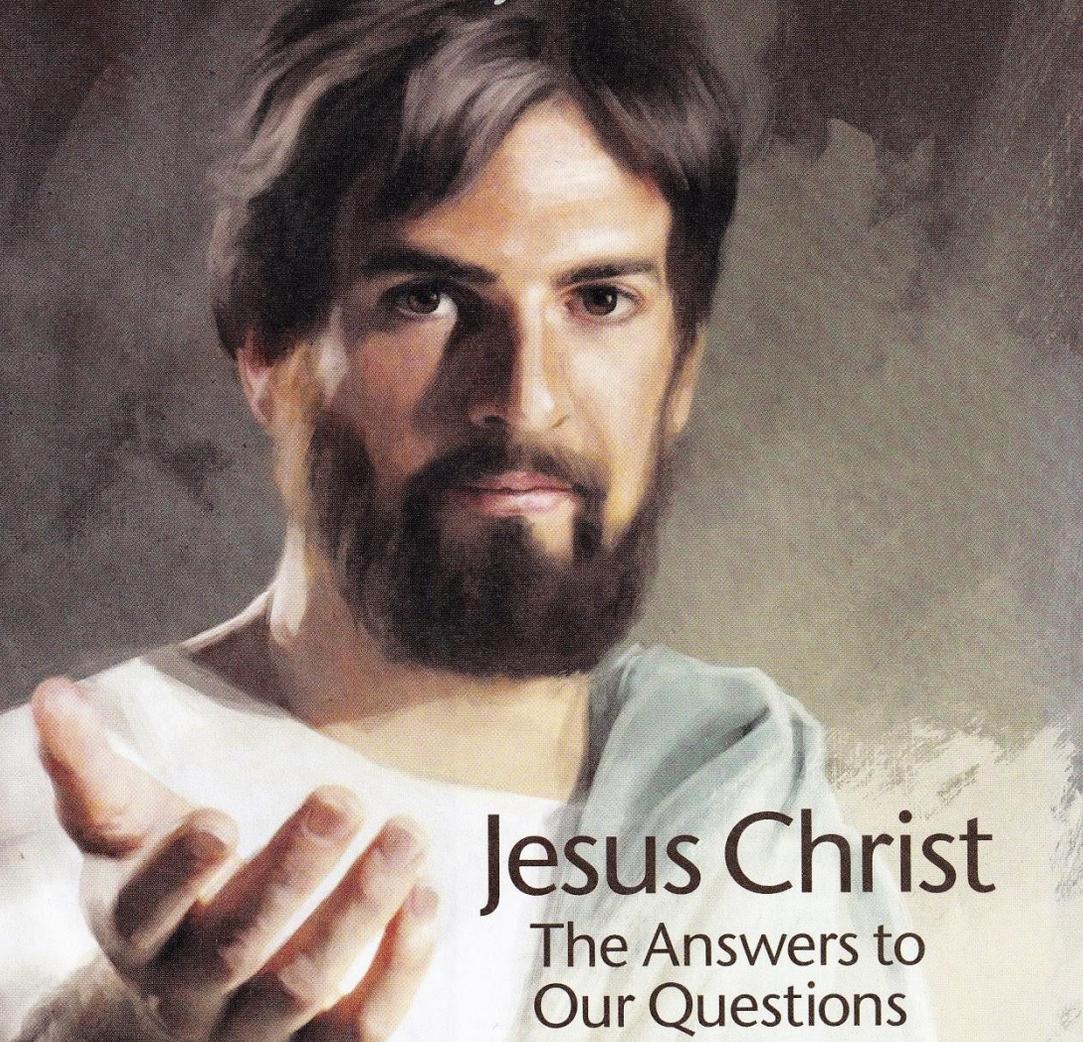
- Founded by Charles Taze Russel in the US in 1870
- Scripture – The New World Translation of the Holy Bible
- Beliefs
  - God - Reject Trinitarianism. The Holy Spirit is God's power, not a person
  - Jesus – a created being through whom God worked, resurrected in a spirit body, not a physical one. Jesus began to rule invisibly in heaven in 1914.
  - Man – the soul is not inherently immortal
  - Afterlife – No hell, but people cease to exist
- JWs do not observe Christian holidays
- Heavily evangelistic – even children preach
- Blood transfusions are not allowed
- Adherents – About 9 million worldwide

# Jehovah's Witnesses, 2014

("Publishers")



APRIL 1, 2012  
THE WATCHTOWER  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Jesus Christ

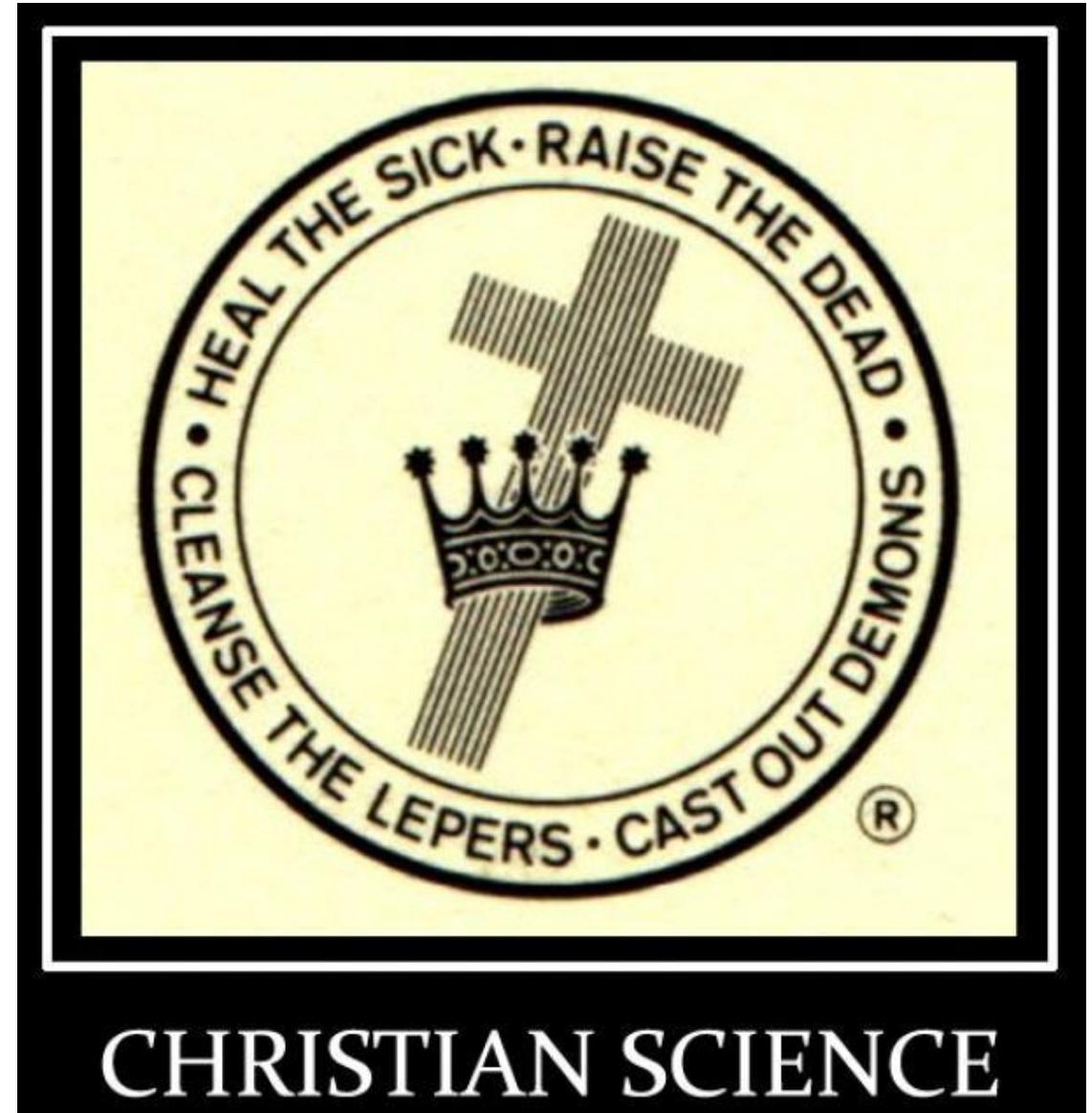
The Answers to  
Our Questions

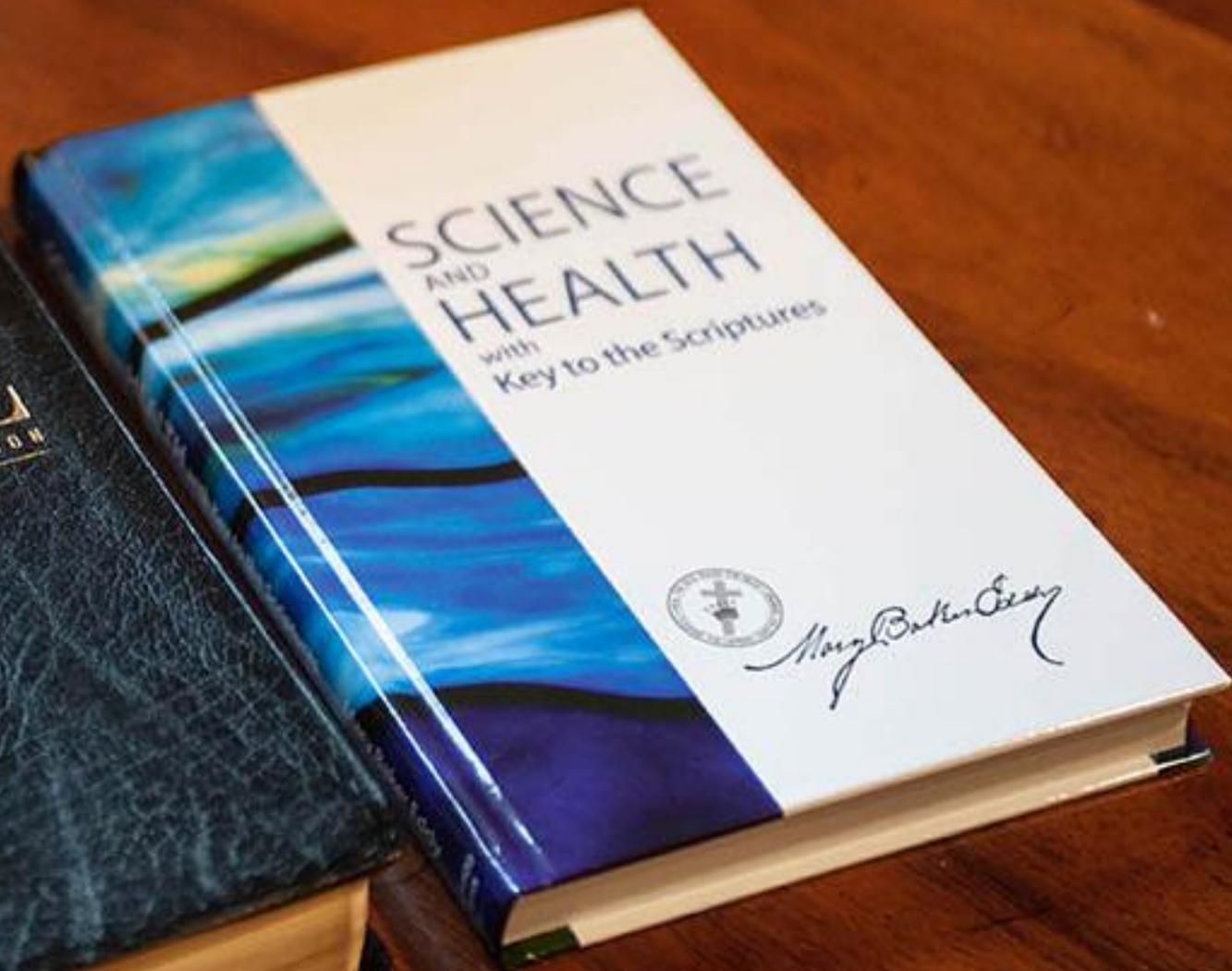
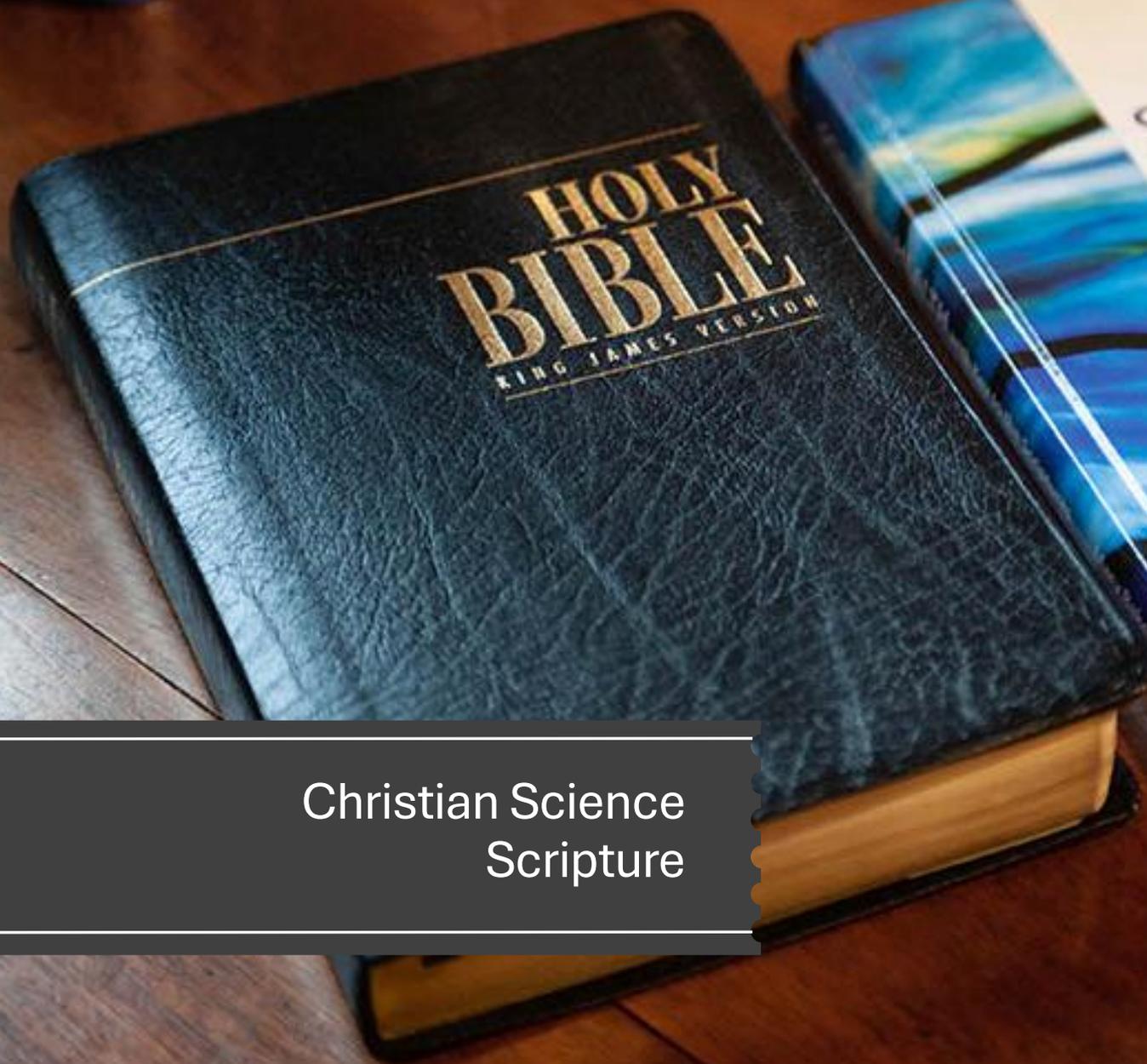
# Jehovah's Witnesses (2)

- JWs do not observe Christian holidays
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# Christian Science

- Founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the US in 1879
- Scripture – Bible, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
- Beliefs
  - God is not a person but an all in all (pantheism)
  - Afterlife - heaven and hell are states of mind
  - Healing - Christian Science healing is "not curative ... on its own premises, but rather preventative of ill health, accident and misfortune..."
  - Jesus – a man who attained the status of "Christ"
  - Salvation – people work out their own salvation with good works
- Adherents – About 50,000 worldwide



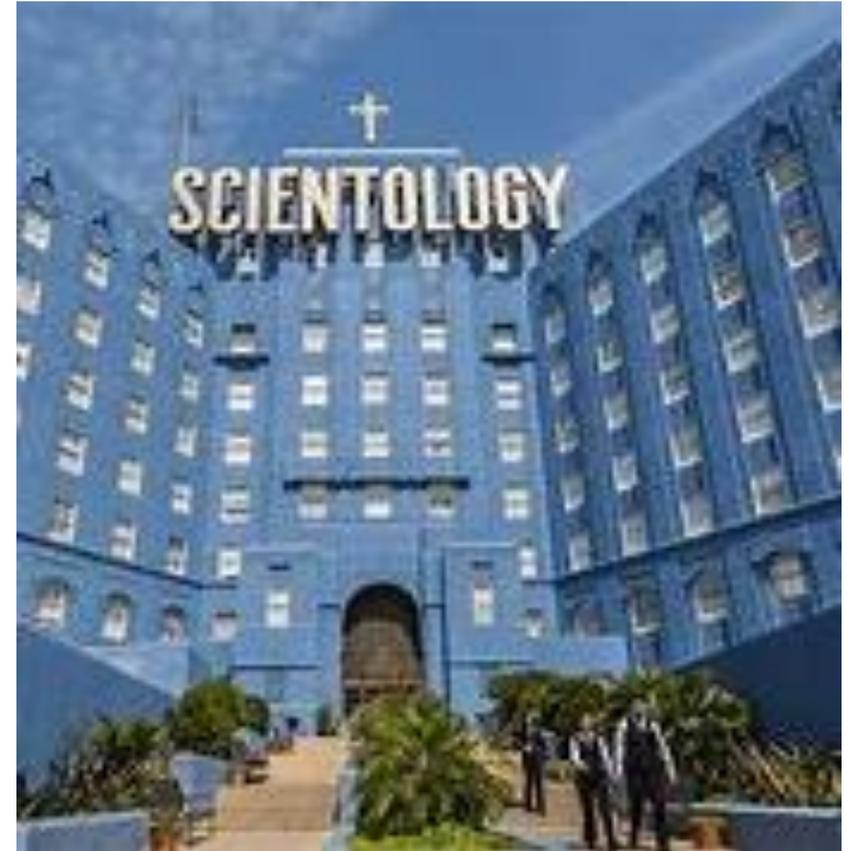


Christian Science  
Scripture

# Scientology (1)

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- Founded by L. Ron Hubbard in the United States in 1952
- Scripture – Writings of the founder, such as *Dianetics*
- Adherents – about 30,000 worldwide
- Beliefs
  - A civilization without insanity, without criminals and without war; where the world can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where man is free to rise to greater heights, are the aims of Scientology.



# Scientology (2)

- Audit – A scientology auditor induces a light hypnotic state and asks questions to help a preclear (subject) remove engrams (mental trauma). Doing this repeatedly over the years grows the subject into an Operating Thetan (OT). OTs have complete spiritual freedom (do anything one chooses, create anything, or go anywhere).
- An electropsychometer is used during the audit.
- The total cost for auditing from beginner to OT is \$560,000.
- There are 15 additional levels of Operating Thetan.



# Scientology (3)

- Man – a person is a soul (Thetan) living in a material body (Gnosticism). He is an immortal spiritual being.
- His experience exceeds a single lifetime
- His capabilities are unlimited, even if he doesn't realize it.
- Scientology is opposed to psychiatry and psychology
- Seems to appeal to celebrities

# Unification Church (Moonies) (1)

- Founded by Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012) in South Korea in 1954
- Scripture – Exposition of the Divine Principle
- Beliefs
- God – one living, eternal, and true God
- Man – created in God’s image
  - Each person grows to perfection so they are one with God in heart, will, and action, centered on God's love
  - United with God as husband and wife and give birth to God's sinless children, thereby establishing a sinless family and ultimately a sinless world;
  - Become masters of the created world, establishing loving dominion with Him in a mutual relationship of giving and receiving.
- Sin – Adam and Eve were tempted by illicit love. Mankind must fulfill certain conditions that restore what was lost because of the Fall.
- Christ – will come again when man is ready



Moonie  
Mass  
Wedding

# Unification Church (Moonies) (2)

- History – Man and God pay the price for sin
- Resurrection – Good people will be resurrected. People are made good by human effort (prayer, good works), being helped by the saints, and by God.
- Universalism – All people will eventually be restored to God.
- Jesus is the chosen One of God but His resurrection may not be literal (physical)
- The Bible is God's word but it is interpreted by future revelation, such as *the Divine Principle*.
- The ultimate renewal will result in earthly utopia
- Christ came again in the person of Sun Myung Moon

# Death and Doomsday Cults that still live (1)

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- Aum Shinrikyo
  - Founded by Shoko Asahara (1955-2018)
  - Attacked Tokyo subway with sarin gas (1995)
- Branch Davidians (David Koresh, 1959-1993)
  - Members died in their Waco, TX compound during the BATF siege.





# Death and Doomsday Cults that still live (2)

- Church of Euthanasia (Chris Korda, 1962-)
  - Four pillars – suicide, abortion, cannibalism, sodomy
- Heaven's Gate (Marshall Applewhite, 1931-1997)
  - Members committed mass suicide with sleeping pills and vodka in March 1997
- Order of the Solar Temple (Joseph Di Mambro, 1924-1994)
  - Many members died in mass suicides (1995, 1997)
- People's Temple (Jim Jones, 1931-1978)
  - Members died in Jonestown Guyana in 1978 from drinking koolaid laced with poison.
- Voluntary Human Extinction Project
  - American environmental movement

# Conclusion

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Discussion

# References

- H. Wayne House, Charts of World Religions, Zondervan, 2006