

is christian science a cult

is christian science a cult is a question that has sparked curiosity and debate among religious scholars, skeptics, and everyday seekers. Christian Science, founded in the late 19th century, has a unique approach to spirituality and healing that distinguishes it from mainstream Christianity. This article examines whether Christian Science fits the definition of a cult, explores its beliefs and practices, analyzes how it is perceived by experts, and compares it with other religious movements. We will also delve into the history of Christian Science, debunk common misconceptions, and provide an unbiased overview to help readers make informed judgments. If you are searching for an in-depth analysis of Christian Science, its classification, and its place in the religious landscape, this comprehensive guide will provide clarity and insight.

- Understanding Christian Science: Origins and Beliefs
- What Defines a Cult?
- Christian Science Compared to Cult Characteristics
- Expert Opinions and Academic Perspectives
- Common Misconceptions about Christian Science
- Christian Science in the Context of Other Religious Movements
- Key Takeaways on Christian Science's Classification

Understanding Christian Science: Origins and Beliefs

Historical Background of Christian Science

Christian Science was founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the United States in 1879. Eddy wrote "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," the central text for Christian Scientists, which outlines the movement's core beliefs and practices. The Church of Christ, Scientist, established in Boston, quickly grew due to its unique teachings on prayer, healing, and the nature of reality. Christian Science emerged during a period of religious innovation, when new movements sought to address spiritual and health concerns in different ways.

Core Beliefs and Practices

Christian Science teaches that spiritual understanding is the key to health and well-being. Followers believe that prayer and faith can lead to healing, viewing disease as a mental or spiritual error rather than a physical reality. The Bible and Eddy's writings are used for study and guidance. Unlike many Christian denominations, Christian Scientists do not practice sacraments such as communion or baptism, and they often abstain from medical intervention, relying instead on spiritual healing.

- Belief in the healing power of prayer
- Interpretation of Jesus' teachings as central to spiritual health
- Emphasis on spiritual reality over material existence
- Study of the Bible and "Science and Health"
- Absence of traditional clergy and church hierarchy

Organization and Structure

The Christian Science church operates with a relatively decentralized structure. Local congregations are called branches, and the Mother Church in Boston provides guidance and publishes literature. Members are encouraged to be self-reliant in their spiritual study and healing practices, which contributes to its reputation for independence compared to more hierarchical religious organizations.

What Defines a Cult?

General Definitions and Criteria

The term "cult" is widely debated and can carry negative connotations. Generally, a cult is defined as a group with unusual or extreme religious beliefs, often led by a charismatic leader, and sometimes characterized by manipulative or controlling practices. Sociologists and psychologists have outlined several criteria that are commonly used to distinguish cults from mainstream religions.

Common Cult Characteristics

- Isolation from mainstream society

- Charismatic leadership with unquestioned authority
- Strict control over members' behaviors
- Manipulation and exploitation
- Unique belief system outside mainstream norms
- Pressure to remain within the group

Distinguishing Between Cults and New Religious Movements

It is important to distinguish between genuine cults and new religious movements (NRMs). NRMs may have unconventional beliefs but do not necessarily engage in harmful or controlling behaviors. The use of the term "cult" should be applied cautiously and based on objective criteria rather than personal bias or misunderstanding.

Christian Science Compared to Cult Characteristics

Leadership and Authority

Christian Science does not have a single charismatic leader today; its founder, Mary Baker Eddy, passed away in 1910. Leadership roles within the church are largely administrative and rotate among members. There is no doctrine of infallibility, and members are encouraged to study independently. This differs from cults that often revolve around a living leader with absolute authority.

Control and Member Autonomy

Christian Science places significant emphasis on individual study and spiritual practice. Members are free to leave the church and are not subject to intense social or psychological pressure to remain. There is limited oversight of personal behavior, and the church does not isolate members from outside influences, making it distinct from groups with controlling tendencies.

Belief System

While Christian Science teaches unconventional beliefs regarding healing and reality, its theology is rooted in Christian scripture. The movement's focus on spiritual healing may

seem unusual, but it does not advocate violence, criminal activity, or manipulation. The church's teachings are publicly available and subject to open discussion and critique.

Expert Opinions and Academic Perspectives

Scholarly Views

Most religious scholars and sociologists classify Christian Science as a new religious movement rather than a cult. Academic research highlights Christian Science's historical context and its evolution as a distinct branch of Christianity. Experts note the absence of coercion, secretive practices, or psychological manipulation that are typical of cults.

Public and Media Perceptions

Media coverage of Christian Science often focuses on controversial topics such as the rejection of medical treatment. While these practices have attracted criticism, they are based on theological principles rather than enforced control. Public perception may sometimes label unconventional groups as cults, but expert analysis relies on more nuanced criteria.

Common Misconceptions about Christian Science

The Role of Medical Treatment

A widespread misconception is that Christian Scientists universally forbid medical care. In reality, the church does not prohibit members from seeking medical treatment, though it encourages reliance on spiritual healing. Individuals make their own health decisions, and there are no penalties for seeking conventional medicine.

Isolation and Secrecy

Some critics argue that Christian Science is secretive or isolates its members. The church holds public services, publishes literature, and encourages open discussion. Members participate in broader society and are not discouraged from engaging with people outside the church.

Legal and Social Controversies

Christian Science has faced legal scrutiny in cases involving child health and medical neglect. These controversies have shaped public perception, but they do not constitute

evidence of cult-like control or abuse. The church maintains that spiritual healing is a matter of personal conscience.

Christian Science in the Context of Other Religious Movements

Comparison with Mainstream Christianity

Christian Science shares foundational beliefs with Christianity, including the divinity of Jesus and the authority of the Bible. However, its teachings on healing and the nature of reality set it apart from mainstream denominations. Unlike cults, Christian Science does not demand exclusive loyalty or isolate members from familial or social relationships.

Comparison with Other New Religious Movements

There are many NRMs with distinctive beliefs, from Seventh-day Adventists to Jehovah's Witnesses. Christian Science is often grouped with these organizations due to its unique theology, but it does not exhibit the manipulative characteristics associated with cults. Its practices and organizational structure are transparent and subject to external scrutiny.

Key Takeaways on Christian Science's Classification

Summary of Findings

Christian Science is best understood as a new religious movement with distinctive beliefs about healing and spirituality. It does not meet the key criteria of a cult, such as charismatic authoritarian leadership, manipulation, or isolation. Public and academic perspectives generally classify it outside the realm of cults, though its unconventional views may invite scrutiny and controversy.

1. Christian Science was founded in the 19th century by Mary Baker Eddy.
2. Its core beliefs center on spiritual healing and the interpretation of Christian scripture.
3. The church operates with a decentralized structure and promotes member autonomy.
4. Expert analysis distinguishes Christian Science as a new religious movement, not a cult.

5. Common misconceptions stem from misunderstandings of its practices and beliefs.

Understanding whether Christian Science is a cult requires careful consideration of its history, beliefs, structure, and practices. By relying on factual analysis and expert opinion, readers can gain a balanced perspective on this unique religious movement.

Q: Is Christian Science officially classified as a cult by religious scholars?

A: Most religious scholars and sociologists classify Christian Science as a new religious movement rather than a cult, noting the absence of coercive control and authoritarian leadership.

Q: What are the main beliefs that make Christian Science different from other Christian denominations?

A: Christian Science emphasizes spiritual healing through prayer, considers disease a spiritual error, and relies on the writings of Mary Baker Eddy alongside the Bible, setting it apart from mainstream Christianity.

Q: Does Christian Science forbid its members from seeking medical treatment?

A: No, Christian Science does not forbid medical treatment; while spiritual healing is encouraged, members are free to make their own healthcare choices.

Q: What practices of Christian Science have led to controversy?

A: The reliance on spiritual healing instead of conventional medicine, especially in cases involving children, has led to legal and social controversies.

Q: How does Christian Science's structure differ from typical cults?

A: Christian Science has a decentralized structure, lacks a living charismatic leader, and promotes member autonomy, which contrasts sharply with cults that often have strict hierarchies and control.

Q: Are Christian Science church services and teachings open to the public?

A: Yes, Christian Science services are public, and their teachings and literature are accessible to anyone interested.

Q: How do experts define the difference between a cult and a new religious movement?

A: Experts distinguish cults by manipulative control, authoritarian leadership, and isolation, while new religious movements may have unconventional beliefs without these harmful practices.

Q: Can Christian Science members freely leave the church?

A: Yes, Christian Science members are free to leave without facing social, psychological, or financial pressure.

Q: What legal challenges has Christian Science faced?

A: Christian Science has faced legal challenges related to child health and medical care due to its emphasis on spiritual healing.

Q: Is Christian Science considered part of mainstream Christianity?

A: Christian Science is considered a distinct branch of Christianity with unique beliefs, but it is generally not classified as part of mainstream Christian denominations.

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Is Christian Science a Cult? A Critical Examination

The question, "Is Christian Science a cult?" is a complex one, sparking debate and eliciting strong opinions. This isn't a simple yes or no answer; understanding the intricacies of Christian Science requires a nuanced exploration of its history, beliefs, practices, and social impact. This in-depth analysis will delve into the key characteristics often associated with cults and examine how they apply (or don't apply) to Christian Science, allowing you to form your own informed conclusion.

Understanding the Core Beliefs of Christian Science

Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the late 19th century, centers on the belief that God is the sole cause and creator of all things, and that matter, including illness and death, is an illusion. Healing, therefore, is achieved not through medical intervention but through spiritual understanding and prayer. This emphasis on divine healing is central to their practice and distinguishes them from mainstream Christianity. Christian Scientists believe that through prayer and reliance on God, they can overcome physical ailments and achieve spiritual wholeness.

This core belief system, while seemingly benign to some, is at the heart of the cult debate. The complete rejection of conventional medicine, often resulting in delayed or forgone treatment for serious illnesses, is a significant point of contention.

Characteristics Often Associated with Cults: A Comparative Analysis

Many criteria are used to define a cult, and it's crucial to examine Christian Science against these characteristics. Let's explore some common features:

1. Authoritarian Leadership:

While Mary Baker Eddy established the foundational beliefs of Christian Science, the church's structure is hierarchical, with a board of directors and a designated leader. However, this organizational structure, while potentially restrictive, differs from the absolute, unquestionable authority often seen in cults. The emphasis is on adhering to Eddy's writings, not blind obedience to a single living leader.

2. Isolation and Control:

Christian Science communities can be close-knit, fostering a sense of belonging. However, there's a distinct difference between supportive community and enforced isolation. While members may prioritize their faith community, the church doesn't typically prevent members from engaging with the outside world or pursuing other relationships.

3. Manipulation and Mind Control:

Accusations of mind control often arise from the emphasis on spiritual healing over conventional medicine. However, while the rejection of medical treatment is a point of controversy, it's a matter of belief, not coercive control. Individuals choose to follow the teachings; it's not generally enforced

through manipulation or undue influence.

4. Exploitation and Abuse:

There are reports of harm caused by the rejection of medical care within Christian Science communities. However, these instances don't represent the entire faith, and the church itself does not endorse or encourage abuse. It is vital to distinguish between the potential consequences of individual beliefs and systemic exploitation.

5. Us-vs-Them Mentality:

Christian Science does promote a distinct worldview, separating itself from mainstream Christianity and medical practices. This distinction doesn't automatically equate to a harmful us-vs-them mentality. Many religious groups hold distinct beliefs, yet function constructively within society.

The Case Against Christian Science as a Cult

While certain aspects of Christian Science might initially appear cult-like, a deeper examination reveals crucial differences. The emphasis on personal interpretation of scripture and the lack of a charismatic, all-powerful leader differentiates it from many groups identified as cults. The decentralized nature of the church, while hierarchical, lacks the strict control and manipulative tactics common in many cults.

The Case For Considering Christian Science a Cult

The potential for harm stemming from the rejection of medical treatment remains a significant concern. This rejection, especially in cases of serious illness, leads to ethical questions and poses potential risks to the health and well-being of individuals and their families. This is where the line blurs and prompts the critical questioning of the church's practices.

Conclusion

Ultimately, whether or not Christian Science constitutes a cult is a matter of perspective and interpretation. While it possesses certain characteristics associated with cults, other crucial elements are absent. The lack of a single, absolute leader and the absence of overt manipulation set it apart from many groups definitively labeled as cults. However, the potential for harm due to the rejection of medical care remains a significant ethical and practical concern. Individual experiences within Christian Science will vary widely, and a balanced consideration of all aspects is necessary before drawing a conclusion.

FAQs

1. Is Christian Science recognized as a religion? Yes, Christian Science is officially recognized as a religion in many countries, including the United States.
2. Can Christian Scientists receive medical care? While the church emphasizes spiritual healing, individual members are free to seek conventional medical treatment. However, many choose not to.
3. What are the main criticisms of Christian Science? The primary criticism centers around the potential harm caused by the rejection of medical care, leading to delayed or forgone treatment for serious illnesses.
4. Does Christian Science have a formal structure? Yes, Christian Science has a hierarchical structure with Mother Churches and branches around the world.
5. How does Christian Science differ from mainstream Christianity? Christian Science's central tenet focuses on the belief that disease is an illusion and healing is achieved primarily through spiritual means, rather than medical intervention, a core difference from mainstream Christian beliefs.

is christian science a cult: *Denominations Comparison* Rose Publishing, 2013-12-06 The best-selling *Denominations Comparison* ebook contains a side-by-side comparison of what 12 Christian denominations believe about God, the Trinity, Jesus, and other spiritual issues. This easy-to-read ebook summarizes the beliefs of the different denominations on key topics and includes a Family Tree of Denominations which reveals the roots of today's denominations. *Denominations Comparison* includes a look at: Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Anabaptist, Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ, Adventist, and Pentecostal churches. Each denomination believes in the deity of Christ and the importance of Scripture, so how are the groups different? The *Denominations Comparison* shows what denominations have in common as well as where they differ. The *Denominations Comparison* ebook compares 12 denominations on 11 different topics, such as: •When it was founded and by whom •The number of adherents in 2000 •How Scripture is viewed •Who God is •Who Jesus is •How individuals are saved •What happens after death •The definition of the Church •How each looks at the Sacraments •Other practices and beliefs •The major divisions and trends today. The *Denominations Comparison* ebook is an excellent source for pastors and teachers who want to present denominational beliefs in a concise and focused manner. The full color ebook organizes the denominations comparisons in the order in which they came to be, first covering the six liturgical denominations followed by the six non-liturgical denominations. The Liturgical Churches compared are: •Catholic •Orthodox •Lutheran (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) •Anglican (Episcopal Church; Reformed Episcopal Church) •Presbyterian (The Presbyterian Church (USA) or PCUSA; The Presbyterian Church in America or PCA) •Methodist Churches (United Methodists Church; African Methodist Episcopal; Free Methodists) The Non-Liturgical Churches compared are: •Anabaptist (The Mennonite Church; Church of the Brethren; Amish) •Congregational (United Church of Christ: The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches; The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference) •Baptist (Southern Baptists, American Baptists; National Baptists) •Churches of Christ (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ) •Adventist (Seventh-Day Adventist Church, SDA, 7th Day Adventist) •Pentecostal Churches (Assemblies of God; Church of God in Christ) In addition to the side-side comparison of the 12 Christian denominations, the *Denominations Comparison* ebook contains a list of 42 Helpful Words

to Know for studying denominational differences. This list defines words such as: Anabaptist, apocrypha, canon, Eucharist, incarnate, pope, predestination, and puritan. The Denominations Comparison ebook also contains several helpful references, such as: •Official web sites for major denominations •General online references •Other web sites for the major traditions. Denominations Comparison also contains a short summary on the following Christian groups, their founders, size, and denominational ties (if applicable): •Calvary Chapel •Christian and Missionary Alliance •Church of God •Church of the Nazarene •Evangelical Covenant Church •Evangelical Free Church of America •International Church of the Foursquare Gospel •Salvation Army •Vineyard Ministries International Topical index: Adventists, African Methodist Episcopal, Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptists, Calvary Chapel, Catholic Church, Charismatic, Church of Christ, Church of England, Church of God, Congregational Churches, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Church, Foursquare Church, Free Methodists, Holiness Churches, liberal denominations, Lutheran Churches, Methodist Church, Orthodox Church, Pentecostal Church, Presbyterian Church, Quakers, Reformed Church, Roman Catholicism, Salvation Army, Trinity, United Methodist Church, Vineyard Churches, Westminster Confession.

is christian science a cult: God's Perfect Child Caroline Fraser, 2018-06-19 From Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former Christian Scientist Caroline Fraser comes the first unvarnished account of one of America's most controversial and little-understood religious movements. Millions of Americans – from Lady Astor to Ginger Rogers to Watergate conspirator H. R. Haldeman – have been touched by the Church of Christ, Scientist. Founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1879, Christian Science was based on a belief that intense contemplation of the perfection of God can heal all ills – an extreme expression of the American faith in self-reliance. In this unflinching investigation, Caroline Fraser, herself raised in a Scientist household, shows how the Church transformed itself from a small, eccentric sect into a politically powerful and socially respectable religion, and explores the human cost of Christian Science's remarkable rise. Fraser examines the strange life and psychology of Mary Baker Eddy, who lived in dread of a kind of witchcraft she called Malicious Animal Magnetism. She takes us into the closed world of Eddy's followers, who refuse to acknowledge the existence of illness and death and reject modern medicine, even at the cost of their children's lives. She reveals just how Christian Science managed to gain extraordinary legal and Congressional sanction for its dubious practices and tracks its enormous influence on new-age beliefs and other modern healing cults. A passionate exposé of zealotry, *God's Perfect Child* tells one of the most dramatic and little-known stories in American religious history.

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is christian science a cult: *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy and the History of Christian Science* Willa Cather, 1993-01-01 This controversial biography of the founder of the Christian Science church was serialized in McClure's Magazine in 1907-8 and published as a book the next year. It disappeared almost overnight and has been difficult to find ever since. Although a Canadian newspaperwoman named Georgine Milmine collected the material and was credited as the author, *The Life Of Mary Baker G. Eddy* was actually written by Willa Cather, an editor at McClure's at that time. In his introduction to this Bison Book edition, David Stouck reveals new evidence of Cather's

authorship of *The Life of Mary Baker G. Eddy*. He discusses her fidelity to facts and her concern with psychology and philosophy that would take creative form later on. Indeed, this biography contains some of the finest portrait sketches and reflections on human nature that Willa Cather would ever write.

is christian science a cult: Bad Faith Paul Offit, 2015-03-10 When Jesus said, "Suffer the children," faith healing is not what he had in mind

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is christian science a cult: **Comparing Christianity with the Cults** Keith Brooks, Irvine Robertson, Dillon Burroughs, 2007-04-01 What constitutes a cult? How does it contrast with what the Bible says? These colorful and concise brochures will answer seven fundamental questions of life and belief. Contrasted with the truth of God's Word are cults such as Christian Science, Spiritualism, Jehovah's Witness, Scientology, Mormonism, Eastern Mysticism, Unification Church, Wicca, and others. Perfect for training or for keeping by your front door. * Formerly titled *The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error*.

is christian science a cult: **The Religion of Chiropractic** Holly Folk, 2017-03-13 Chiropractic is by far the most common form of alternative medicine in the United States today, but its fascinating origins stretch back to the battles between science and religion in the nineteenth century. At the center of the story are chiropractic's colorful founders, D. D. Palmer and his son, B. J. Palmer, of Davenport, Iowa, where in 1897 they established the Palmer College of Chiropractic. Holly Folk shows how the Palmers' system depicted chiropractic as a conduit for both material and spiritualized versions of a vital principle, reflecting popular contemporary therapies and nineteenth-century metaphysical beliefs, including the idea that the spine was home to occult forces. The creation of chiropractic, and other Progressive-era versions of alternative medicine, happened at a time when the relationship between science and religion took on an urgent, increasingly competitive tinge. Many remarkable people, including the Palmers, undertook highly personal reinterpretations of their physical and spiritual worlds. In this context, Folk reframes alternative medicine and spirituality as a type of populist intellectual culture in which ideologies about the body comprise a highly appealing form of cultural resistance.

is christian science a cult: *Leaving Christian Science* Lauren Hunter, 2020-08-23 Whether you're a Christian Scientist searching for answers or a former follower still struggling to let go of the difficult and confusing teachings of Christian Science, this book can help you on your search for truth. In these ten intensely personal narratives, former Christian Scientists bravely recount their journey out of the religion and into authentic, biblical faith in Jesus Christ. Each chapter addresses a different theme, shining light on theological inconsistencies taught by Mary Baker Eddy in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. These themes include matter, Jesus Christ, contagion, prayer, and sin. With reflection questions, pastoral teaching, related Bible verses, and a guiding letter from the author, each story navigates common obstacles and paves the way for a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. For those yearning to find truth, there is hope to be found here.

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is christian science a cult: Faith Versus Fact Jerry A. Coyne, 2016-05-17 "A superbly argued book." —Richard Dawkins, author of *The God Delusion* The New York Times bestselling author of *Why Evolution is True* explains why any attempt to make religion compatible with science is doomed to fail In this provocative book, evolutionary biologist Jerry A. Coyne lays out in clear, dispassionate detail why the toolkit of science, based on reason and empirical study, is reliable, while that of religion—including faith, dogma, and revelation—leads to incorrect, untestable, or conflicting

conclusions. Coyne is responding to a national climate in which more than half of Americans don't believe in evolution, members of Congress deny global warming, and long-conquered childhood diseases are reappearing because of religious objections to inoculation, and he warns that religious prejudices in politics, education, medicine, and social policy are on the rise. Extending the bestselling works of Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens, he demolishes the claims of religion to provide verifiable "truth" by subjecting those claims to the same tests we use to establish truth in science. Coyne irrefutably demonstrates the grave harm—to individuals and to our planet—in mistaking faith for fact in making the most important decisions about the world we live in. Praise for *Faith Versus Fact*: "A profound and lovely book . . . showing that the honest doubts of science are better . . . than the false certainties of religion." —Sam Harris, author of *The End of Faith*

is christian science a cult: The Territories of Science and Religion Peter Harrison, 2015-04-06 Peter Harrison takes what we think we know about science and religion, dismantles it, and puts it back together again in a provocative new way. It is a mistake to assume, as most do, that the activities and achievements that are usually labeled religious and scientific have been more or less enduring features of the cultural landscape of the West. Harrison, by setting out the history of science and religion to see when and where they come into being and to trace their mutations over time reveals how distinctively Western and modern they are. Only in the past few hundred years have religious beliefs and practices been bounded by a common notion and set apart from the secular. And the idea of the natural sciences as discrete activities conducted in isolation from religious and moral concerns is even more recent, dating from the nineteenth century. Putting the so-called opposition between religion and science into historical perspective, as Harrison does here for the first time, has profound implications for our understanding of the present and future relations between them.

is christian science a cult: Why Evolution is True Jerry A. Coyne, 2010-01-14 For all the discussion in the media about creationism and 'Intelligent Design', virtually nothing has been said about the evidence in question - the evidence for evolution by natural selection. Yet, as this succinct and important book shows, that evidence is vast, varied, and magnificent, and drawn from many disparate fields of science. The very latest research is uncovering a stream of evidence revealing evolution in action - from the actual observation of a species splitting into two, to new fossil discoveries, to the deciphering of the evidence stored in our genome. *Why Evolution is True* weaves together the many threads of modern work in genetics, palaeontology, geology, molecular biology, anatomy, and development to demonstrate the 'indelible stamp' of the processes first proposed by Darwin. It is a crisp, lucid, and accessible statement that will leave no one with an open mind in any doubt about the truth of evolution.

is christian science a cult: The Emergence of Christian Science in American Religious Life Stephen Gottschalk, 2024-07-26 Christian Science is one of only two indigenous American religions, the other being Mormonism. Yet it has not always been examined seriously within the context of the history of religious ideas and the development of American religious life. Stephen Gottschalk fills this void with an examination of Christian Science's root concepts—the informing vision and the distinctive mission as formulated by its founder, Mary Baker Eddy. Concentrating on the quarter-century preceding Eddy's death, a period of phenomenal growth for Christian Science, Gottschalk challenges the conventional academic view of the movement as a fringe sect. He finds instead a serious and distinctive, though radical, religious teaching that began to flower just as orthodox Protestantism began to fade. He gives a clear and detailed account of the rancorous controversies between Christian Science and the various mind-cure and occult movements with which it is often associated, and contends that Christian Science appealed to disenfranchised Protestants because of its pragmatic quality—a quality that relates it to the mainstream of American culture. This title is part of UC Press's *Voices Revived* program, which commemorates University of California Press's mission to seek out and cultivate the brightest minds and give them voice, reach, and impact. Drawing on a backlist dating to 1893, *Voices Revived* makes high-quality, peer-reviewed

scholarship accessible once again using print-on-demand technology. This title was originally published in 1973.

is christian science a cult: The Future of Religion Rodney Stark, William Sims Bainbridge, 2023-04-28 Religion is alive and well in the modern world, and the social-scientific study of religion is undergoing a renaissance. For much of this century, respected social theorists predicted the death of religion as inevitable consequence of science, education, and modern economics. But they were wrong. Stark and Bainbridge set out to explain the survival of religion. Using information derived from numerous surveys, censuses, historical case studies, and ethnographic field expeditions, they chart the full sweep of contemporary religion from the traditional denominations to the most fervent cults. This wealth of information is located within a coherent theoretical framework that examines religion as a social response to human needs, both the general needs shared by all and the desires specific to those who are denied the economic rewards or prestige enjoyed by the privileged. By explaining the forms taken by religions today, Stark and Bainbridge allow us to understand its persistence in a secular age and its prospects for the future, This title is part of UC Press's Voices Revived program, which commemorates University of California Press's mission to seek out and cultivate the brightest minds and give them voice, reach, and impact. Drawing on a backlist dating to 1893, Voices Revived makes high-quality, peer-reviewed scholarship accessible once again using print-on-demand technology. This title was originally published in 1985. Religion is alive and well in the modern world, and the social-scientific study of religion is undergoing a renaissance. For much of this century, respected social theorists predicted the death of religion as inevitable consequence of science, education,

is christian science a cult: *Fathermothergod* Lucia Greenhouse, 2011 Chronicles the author's coming-of-age in a family whose Christian Science faith forbade consultations with doctors or the use of mainstream medicine, a belief system that caused doubt and bitter divides when the author's mother became seriously ill. A first book. 30,000 first printing.

is christian science a cult: *Christian Science* Mark Twain, 1907 In this book, my [Twain's] purpose has been to present a character portrait of Mrs. Eddy [founder of Christian Science Society], drawn from her own acts and words solely, not from hearsay and rumor; and to explain the nature an scope of her Monarchy, as revealed in the laws by which she governs it, and which she wrote herself. The controversial text was originally rejected by Twain's publisher.

is christian science a cult: *The Science of the Mind* Ernest Holmes, 2007-06-01 First published in 1926, this book is the most important writing from preacher Ernest Shurtleff Holmes. In it, he strives to introduce man to himself, as he truly is. Man is part of the Infinite Spirit, as is all of the visible and invisible in existence. And sharing in the creative power of the Infinite, man becomes able to make thought manifest, as is the case with illness. Holmes explains how the mind controls illness in the body and how changing one's mental state can be healing. In this volume, Holmes gives readers a complete course in Mental Science, so that they may come to understand the power and potential that exists within. Anyone looking for a new way to understand the world and their place in it will find this an empowering read.

is christian science a cult: Miscellaneous Writings Mary Baker Eddy, 1896

is christian science a cult: **1Q84** Haruki Murakami, 2011-10-25 The long-awaited magnum opus from Haruki Murakami, in which this revered and bestselling author gives us his hypnotically addictive, mind-bending ode to George Orwell's 1984. The year is 1984. Aomame is riding in a taxi on the expressway, in a hurry to carry out an assignment. Her work is not the kind that can be discussed in public. When they get tied up in traffic, the taxi driver suggests a bizarre 'proposal' to her. Having no other choice she agrees, but as a result of her actions she starts to feel as though she is gradually becoming detached from the real world. She has been on a top secret mission, and her next job leads her to encounter the superhuman founder of a religious cult. Meanwhile, Tengo is leading a nondescript life but wishes to become a writer. He inadvertently becomes involved in a strange disturbance that develops over a literary prize. While Aomame and Tengo impact on each other in various ways, at times by accident and at times intentionally, they come closer and closer to

meeting. Eventually the two of them notice that they are indispensable to each other. Is it possible for them to ever meet in the real world?

is christian science a cult: 52 Churches in 52 Weeks Dave Boice, 2018-10-09 If you could visit a different church each Sunday for one full year... Where would you go? Who would you see? What would happen to your faith? After a string of bad first dates and no church to call home, Dave Boice chronicles his yearlong spiritual journey in search for something more. What started as a simple endeavor to find a hometown church turned into a thrilling spiritual adventure that is sidesplittingly witty and deeply emotional. From the streets of Manhattan to the beaches of Orange County, Boice explores numerous denominations including Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Quaker, Greek Orthodox, Christian Science, and other churches. From 20,000-seat megachurches to being the lone congregant at a Scientology service, no building was too big (or as a visit to The World's Smallest Church can attest) too small. He danced with Pentecostals in Arkansas, immersed himself in prayer with monks that make beer in Massachusetts, and headbanged at a church known for heavy metal music in Ohio. You'll hear sermons from some of Christianity's most widespread preachers (Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes), most intellectual (Tim Keller and Os Guinness), most emergent (Nadia Bolz-Weber and Jay Bakker), to even the most curious (Todd Burpo from Heaven is For Real). Boice's unique undertaking and honest reflection reveals startling epiphanies and insights that will engage both believers and skeptics. *52 Churches in 52 Weeks* is a must-read for anyone who wrestles with faith in the 21st century.

is christian science a cult: Truth for Life Alistair Begg, 2021-11-01 A year of gospel-saturated daily devotions from renowned Bible teacher Alistair Begg. Start with the gospel each and every day with this one-year devotional by renowned Bible teacher Alistair Begg. We all need to be reminded of the truth that anchors our life and excites and equips us to live for Christ. Reflecting on a short passage each day, Alistair spans the Scriptures to show us the greatness and grace of God, and to thrill our hearts to live as His children. His clear, faithful exposition and thoughtful application mean that this resource will both engage your mind and stir your heart. Each day includes prompts to apply what you've read, a related Bible text to enjoy, and a plan for reading through the whole of the Scriptures in a year. The hardback cover and ribbon marker make this a wonderful gift.

is christian science a cult: The Problem of Democracy Nancy Isenberg, Andrew Burstein, 2020-04-14 Told with authority and style. . . Crisply summarizing the Adamses' legacy, the authors stress principle over partisanship.--The Wall Street Journal How the father and son presidents foresaw the rise of the cult of personality and fought those who sought to abuse the weaknesses inherent in our democracy. Until now, no one has properly dissected the intertwined lives of the second and sixth (father and son) presidents. John and John Quincy Adams were brilliant, prickly politicians and arguably the most independently minded among leaders of the founding generation. Distrustful of blind allegiance to a political party, they brought a healthy skepticism of a brand-new system of government to the country's first 50 years. They were unpopular for their fears of the potential for demagoguery lurking in democracy, and--in a twist that predicted the turn of twenty-first century politics--they warned against, but were unable to stop, the seductive appeal of political celebrities Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. In a bold recasting of the Adamses' historical roles, *The Problem of Democracy* is a major critique of the ways in which their prophetic warnings have been systematically ignored over the centuries. It's also an intimate family drama that brings out the torment and personal hurt caused by the gritty conduct of early American politics. Burstein and Isenberg make sense of the presidents' somewhat iconoclastic, highly creative engagement with America's political and social realities. By taking the temperature of American democracy, from its heated origins through multiple upheavals, the authors reveal the dangers and weaknesses that have been present since the beginning. They provide a clear-eyed look at a decoy democracy that masks the reality of elite rule while remaining open, since the days of George Washington, to a very undemocratic result in the formation of a cult surrounding the person of an elected leader.

is christian science a cult: Rewilding the World Caroline Fraser, 2014-04-29 A gripping

account of the environmental crusade to save the world's most endangered species and landscapes—the last best hope for preserving our natural home. Scientists worldwide are warning of the looming extinction of thousands of species, from tigers and polar bears to rare flowers, birds, and insects. If the destruction continues, a third of all plants and animals could disappear by 2050—and with them earth's life-support ecosystems that provide our food, water, medicine, and natural defenses against climate change. Now Caroline Fraser offers the first definitive account of a visionary campaign to confront this crisis: rewilding. Breathtaking in scope and ambition, rewilding aims to save species by restoring habitats, reviving migration corridors, and brokering peace between people and predators. Traveling with wildlife biologists and conservationists, Fraser reports on the vast projects that are turning Europe's former Iron Curtain into a greenbelt, creating trans-frontier Peace Parks to renew elephant routes throughout Africa, and linking protected areas from the Yukon to Mexico and beyond. An inspiring story of scientific discovery and grassroots action, *Rewilding the World* offers hope for a richer, wilder future.

is christian science a cult: Belief and Cult Jacob L. Mackey, 2025-01-28 A groundbreaking reinterpretation that draws on cognitive theory to show that belief wasn't absent from—but rather was at the heart of—Roman religion. *Belief and Cult* argues that belief isn't uniquely Christian but was central to ancient Roman religion. Drawing on cognitive theory, Jacob Mackey shows that despite having nothing to do with salvation or faith, belief underlay every aspect of Roman religious practices—emotions, individual and collective cult action, ritual norms, social reality, and social power. In doing so, he also offers a thorough argument for the importance of belief to other non-Christian religions. At the individual level, the book argues, belief played an indispensable role in the genesis of cult action and religious emotion. However, belief also had a collective dimension. The cognitive theory of Shared Intentionality shows how beliefs may be shared among individuals, accounting for the existence of written, unwritten, or even unspoken ritual norms. Shared beliefs permitted the choreography of collective cult action and gave cult acts their social meanings. The book also elucidates the role of shared belief in creating and maintaining Roman social reality. Shared belief allowed the Romans to endow agents, actions, and artifacts with socio-religious status and power. In a deep sense, no man could count as an augur and no act of animal slaughter as a successful offering to the gods, unless Romans collectively shared appropriate beliefs about these things. Closely examining augury, prayer, the religious enculturation of children, and the Romans' own theories of cognition and cult, *Belief and Cult* promises to revolutionize the understanding of Roman religion by demonstrating that none of its features makes sense without Roman belief.

is christian science a cult: The American Religion Harold Bloom, 2006 La 4ème de couv. indique : In this fascinating work of religious criticism, Harold Bloom examines a number of American-born faiths: Pentecostalism, Mormonism, Seventh-day Adventism, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Southern Baptism and Fundamentalism, and African American spirituality. He traces the distinctive features of American religion while asking provocative questions about the role religion plays in American culture and in each American's concept of his or her relationship to God. Bloom finds that our spiritual beliefs provide an exact portrait of our national character.

is christian science a cult: Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism Martin E. Marty, 2011-06-15 Many Americans today are taking note of the surprisingly strong political force that is the religious right. Controversial decisions by the government are met with hundreds of lobbyists, millions of dollars of advertising spending, and a powerful grassroots response. How has the fundamentalist movement managed to resist the pressures of the scientific community and the draw of modern popular culture to hold on to their ultra-conservative Christian views? Understanding the movement's history is key to answering this question. *Fundamentalism and American Culture* has long been considered a classic.

is christian science a cult: Catechism of the Catholic Church U.S. Catholic Church, 2012-11-28 Over 3 million copies sold! Essential reading for Catholics of all walks of life. Here it is - the first new Catechism of the Catholic Church in more than 400 years, a complete summary of what Catholics around the world commonly believe. The Catechism draws on the Bible, the Mass, the

Sacraments, Church tradition and teaching, and the lives of saints. It comes with a complete index, footnotes and cross-references for a fuller understanding of every subject. The word catechism means instruction - this book will serve as the standard for all future catechisms. Using the tradition of explaining what the Church believes (the Creed), what she celebrates (the Sacraments), what she lives (the Commandments), and what she prays (the Lord's Prayer), the Catechism of the Catholic Church offers challenges for believers and answers for all those interested in learning about the mystery of the Catholic faith. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is a positive, coherent and contemporary map for our spiritual journey toward transformation.

is christian science a cult: Daughter of Gloriavale Lilia Tarawa, 2017-08-23 In this personal account, Lilia Tarawa exposes the shocking secrets of the cult, with its rigid rules and oppressive control of women. She describes her fear when her family questioned Gloriavale's beliefs and practices. When her parents fled with their children, Lilia was forced to make a desperate choice: to stay or to leave. No matter what she chose, she would lose people she loved. In the outside world, Lilia struggled. Would she be damned to hell for leaving? How would she learn to navigate this strange place called 'the world'? And would she ever find out the truth about the criminal convictions against her grandfather? 'A powerful and revealing book...' Kirsty Wynn, New Zealand Herald 'An affecting parable and testament, in the most commendably secular senses.' David Hill, New Zealand Listener

is christian science a cult: Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America J. Gordon Melton, 1992 First Published in 1993. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

is christian science a cult: Lectures and Articles on Christian Science Edward Ansel Kimball, 1921

is christian science a cult: The Darkening Age Catherine Nixey, 2018-04-17 A New York Times Notable Book, winner of the Jerwood Award from the Royal Society of Literature, a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, and named a Book of the Year by the Telegraph, Spectator, Observer, and BBC History Magazine, this bold new history of the rise of Christianity shows how its radical followers helped to annihilate Greek and Roman civilizations. The Darkening Age is the largely unknown story of how a militant religion deliberately attacked and suppressed the teachings of the Classical world, ushering in centuries of unquestioning adherence to one true faith. Despite the long-held notion that the early Christians were meek and mild, going to their martyrs' deaths singing hymns of love and praise, the truth, as Catherine Nixey reveals, is very different. Far from being meek and mild, they were violent, ruthless, and fundamentally intolerant. Unlike the polytheistic world, in which the addition of one new religion made no fundamental difference to the old ones, this new ideology stated not only that it was the way, the truth, and the light but that, by extension, every single other way was wrong and had to be destroyed. From the first century to the sixth, those who didn't fall into step with its beliefs were pursued in every possible way: social, legal, financial, and physical. Their altars were upturned and their temples demolished, their statues hacked to pieces, and their priests killed. It was an annihilation. Authoritative, vividly written, and utterly compelling, this is a remarkable debut from a brilliant young historian.

is christian science a cult: The Urantia Book Urantia Foundation, 1955 This priceless and inexhaustible resource is the ultimate synthesis of science, philosophy and truth, of reason, wisdom and faith, and of past, present and future. This book comes in either red or blue.

is christian science a cult: E.W. Kenyon Geir Lie, 2021-01-23 For many years Geir Lie has researched the life and ministry of E.W. Kenyon and his influence on the modern faith movement both in the United States and around the world. His book, E.W. Kenyon: Cult Founder or Evangelical Minister? will be of great value to scholars and laymen alike who are interested in the progress and development of worldwide Pentecostalism. I highly recommend it. - Vinson Synan, PhD.

is christian science a cult: The Infinite Way Joel S. Goldsmith, 2011-07-01 2011 Reprint of 1949 Third Edition. Full facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. JOEL S. GOLDSMITH (1892-1964), was an important teacher of practical mysticism, and devoted most of his life to the discovery and teaching of spiritual principles which he founded and

called The Infinite Way. Goldsmith self-published his most famous work, The Infinite Way in 1947 based on letters to patients and students. In this collection of important essays Goldsmith describes the spiritual truth as he gleaned it though over thirty years of study of the major religions and philosophies of all the ages. He assures his readers that inner peace will come as one turns to the spiritual consciousness of life, and an outer calm will follow one's human affairs as a result.

is christian science a cult: The Chaos Of Cults A Study In Present Day Isms Jan Karel Van Baalen, 2018-10-15 This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. To ensure a quality reading experience, this work has been proofread and republished using a format that seamlessly blends the original graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

is christian science a cult: God's Perfect Child Caroline Fraser, 2000-08 From a former Christian Scientist, the first unvarnished account of one of America's most controversial and little-understood religious movements. Millions of americans-from Lady Astor to Ginger Rogers to Watergate conspirator H. R. Haldeman-have been touched by the Church of Christ, Scientist. Founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1879, Christian Science was based on a belief that intense contemplation of the perfection of God can heal all ills-an extreme expression of the American faith in self-reliance. In this unflinching investigation, Caroline Fraser, herself raised in a Scientist household, shows how the Church transformed itself from a small, eccentric sect into a politically powerful and socially respectable religion, and explores the human cost of Christian Science's remarkable rise. Fraser examines the strange life and psychology of Mary Baker Eddy, who lived in dread of a kind of witchcraft she called Malicious Animal Magnetism. She takes us into the closed world of Eddy's followers, who refuse to acknowledge the existence of illness and death and reject modern medicine, even at the cost of their children's lives. She reveals just how Christian Science managed to gain extraordinary legal and Congressional sanction for its dubious practices and tracks its enormous influence on new-age beliefs and other modern healing cults. A passionate exposé of zealotry, God's Perfect Child tells one of the most dramatic and little-known stories in American religious history.

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