

is christian scientist a cult

is christian scientist a cult is a question that has sparked curiosity among those seeking to understand the nature and beliefs of the Christian Science movement. Some wonder if Christian Scientist adherents are part of a cult, while others see it as a distinct religious group with unique practices. This comprehensive article examines the origins of Christian Science, its core beliefs, how it compares to recognized cult characteristics, and the perspectives from both critics and scholars. Readers will find an in-depth analysis of Christian Science history, teachings, leadership structure, and practices, alongside a discussion of whether it fits common definitions of a cult. By the end, you will possess a nuanced understanding of Christian Science and its place within the broader landscape of religious movements.

- Origins and History of Christian Science
- Core Beliefs and Practices
- Leadership Structure and Organization
- Comparison to Cult Characteristics
- Critics' Perspectives on Christian Science
- Scholarly Analysis and Definitions
- Conclusion: Is Christian Scientist a Cult?

Origins and History of Christian Science

Christian Science emerged in the late 19th century in the United States, founded by Mary Baker Eddy in 1879. The movement began with Eddy's publication of "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," which laid the foundation for its doctrines and spiritual healing practices. The Christian Science Church, officially known as The Church of Christ, Scientist, was established in Boston, Massachusetts, and quickly attracted followers interested in its approach to spirituality and health.

Over the decades, Christian Science spread internationally, establishing branch churches and reading rooms across the globe. Its teachings emphasize spiritual healing through prayer and an understanding of divine laws, setting it apart from mainstream Christian denominations. The movement's growth and organizational structure have contributed to ongoing discussions about its legitimacy and how it should be classified within the religious spectrum.

Core Beliefs and Practices

Spiritual Healing and Prayer

Central to Christian Science doctrine is the belief that spiritual understanding and prayer can heal physical ailments. Followers often turn to prayer rather than conventional medical treatments, trusting in God's power to restore health. This emphasis on spiritual healing is one of the most distinctive aspects of the movement and has been both a point of admiration and controversy.

View of God and Jesus Christ

Christian Scientists believe in one God, whom they describe as all-loving, all-powerful, and ever-present. Jesus Christ is regarded as the Son of God and the ultimate example of spiritual healing. However, Christian Science's interpretation of the Bible and Christ's teachings differs from traditional Christian views, focusing on metaphysical meanings rather than literal interpretations.

Role of Mary Baker Eddy's Teachings

Mary Baker Eddy's writings, particularly "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," are considered a central text alongside the Bible. Her teachings guide followers in understanding God's laws and the spiritual nature of reality. This reliance on a founder's writings is common in many religious movements and has contributed to the debate about whether Christian Science is a cult.

- Spiritual healing through prayer
- Non-literal interpretation of the Bible
- Emphasis on divine laws and metaphysics
- Mary Baker Eddy's writings as authoritative
- Focus on personal spiritual growth

Leadership Structure and Organization

The Church of Christ, Scientist

Christian Science is organized under The Church of Christ, Scientist, which operates as the central governing body. The church has a formal structure, including a board of directors, local branch

churches, and reading rooms dedicated to study and outreach. Members are encouraged to participate in church activities, but the organization does not practice coercive recruitment or retention methods.

Roles of Clergy and Practitioners

Unlike some religious organizations, Christian Science does not have a traditional clergy hierarchy. Instead, it has "practitioners" who are recognized for their dedication to spiritual healing and prayer. These practitioners provide guidance and healing support to members, and their role is based on spiritual qualifications rather than ecclesiastical authority.

Membership and Community Life

Membership in the Christian Science church is voluntary, and individuals may join or leave at their discretion. The church encourages engagement in community life, spiritual study, and service, fostering a sense of fellowship among adherents. There are no secretive initiation rites or rigid controls over members, which differentiates the church from organizations commonly labeled as cults.

Comparison to Cult Characteristics

Common Features of Cults

Experts define cults as groups exhibiting certain behaviors, such as authoritarian leadership, manipulation, isolation, secrecy, and control over members' lives. Cults often demand unquestioning loyalty, restrict outside contact, and use psychological tactics to maintain influence over followers.

Does Christian Science Match These Features?

When evaluating whether Christian Science is a cult, it is important to consider its organizational structure, transparency, and treatment of members. The church does not exhibit high levels of secrecy, nor does it use force or manipulation to retain members. Its leadership operates through elected boards rather than a single authoritarian figure, and members are free to leave without repercussions.

Controversial Practices and Public Perception

The most controversial aspect of Christian Science is its stance on medical treatment. Some critics argue that discouraging conventional medicine is a form of undue influence. However, the church

maintains that individuals have the right to choose their own healthcare approach. This position has led to public debates, but does not, by itself, fulfill the common criteria for cult behavior.

1. Authoritarian leadership: Not present in Christian Science
2. Manipulation or coercion: No evidence of systematic manipulation
3. Isolation from society: Members participate in wider communities
4. Control over personal lives: No strict controls enforced
5. Secrecy of teachings: Core beliefs published and accessible

Critics' Perspectives on Christian Science

Public Concerns and Criticism

Critics of Christian Science often focus on its approach to healthcare, especially regarding children and those unable to make medical decisions for themselves. Cases involving death or severe illness due to refusal of medical treatment have attracted media attention and legal scrutiny. Critics argue that such practices can endanger lives and raise ethical concerns about the rights of individuals versus religious freedom.

Cult Allegations and Counterarguments

Some critics label Christian Science a cult based on perceived dangers and differences from mainstream Christianity. However, most religious scholars and experts do not classify it as a cult due to its open structure, lack of coercion, and accessible teachings. The debate often hinges on definitions and the interpretation of controversial practices rather than clear evidence of cult-like control.

Scholarly Analysis and Definitions

Academic Views on Religious Movements

Scholars in religious studies distinguish between new religious movements (NRMs) and cults based on organizational structure, member autonomy, and transparency. Christian Science is typically categorized as an NRM rather than a cult, given its established history, published teachings, and voluntary membership.

Legal and Sociological Definitions

Legally, Christian Science is recognized as a legitimate religious organization in many countries, with constitutional protections for its practices. Sociologists analyze its community life, leadership, and member autonomy, finding that it does not fit the most common definitions of a cult. The distinction is important for understanding the movement's place in society and its relationship with broader religious traditions.

Conclusion: Is Christian Scientist a Cult?

The question "is Christian Scientist a cult" requires careful analysis of its beliefs, practices, and organizational structure. While Christian Science holds distinctive views on healing and spirituality, it does not exhibit the coercive or manipulative behaviors typically associated with cults. Its open membership, accessible teachings, and lack of authoritarian control set it apart from groups commonly labeled as cults. Understanding Christian Science as a unique religious movement allows for a more accurate assessment of its role in the religious landscape.

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

A: Most religious scholars and experts do not classify Christian Science as a cult. It is generally recognized as a new religious movement with established history, open teachings, and voluntary membership.

Q: What are the main beliefs of Christian Scientists?

A: Christian Scientists believe in spiritual healing through prayer, the power of God, the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the authority of Mary Baker Eddy's writings alongside the Bible.

Q: Does Christian Science discourage medical treatment?

A: Christian Science emphasizes spiritual healing but allows individuals to decide on their healthcare. While some members choose prayer over medicine, there is no enforced ban on medical treatment.

Q: How is Christian Science organized?

A: The movement is organized under The Church of Christ, Scientist, with elected boards, branch churches, reading rooms, and practitioners who support spiritual healing.

Q: Are Christian Science teachings secretive?

A: No, the core teachings of Christian Science are published in widely available texts such as "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" and the Bible.

Q: Why is Christian Science sometimes called a cult by critics?

A: Critics sometimes use the term "cult" due to disagreements with its healthcare practices and differences from mainstream Christianity, but this is not supported by academic definitions.

Q: Can members leave the Christian Science church freely?

A: Yes, membership is voluntary, and individuals can join or leave the church without facing coercion or punishment.

Q: What legal status does Christian Science have?

A: Christian Science is recognized as a legitimate religious organization in most countries and enjoys constitutional protections for religious practice.

Q: What makes a group a cult according to experts?

A: Cults are generally defined by authoritarian leadership, manipulation, secrecy, isolation, and strict control over members, none of which are characteristic of Christian Science.

Q: How does Christian Science view Jesus Christ?

A: Christian Scientists regard Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the ultimate example of spiritual healing, interpreting his teachings through a metaphysical lens.

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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 raising concerns for many. This in-depth analysis will explore the core tenets of Christian Science, examining its history, practices, and social dynamics to help you form your own informed opinion. We'll delve into the criteria often used to define a cult and objectively assess how Christian Science measures up against them. This isn't about judging beliefs but about understanding the structure and impact of this often-misunderstood faith.

Understanding Christian Science: Core Beliefs and Practices

Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy in the 19th century, centers around the belief that God is the sole creator and that all reality is spiritual. It posits that illness and suffering are illusions stemming from a misunderstanding of God's nature and power. Healing, therefore, is achieved not through medical intervention but through prayer and spiritual understanding, often facilitated by practitioners trained in Christian Science healing techniques.

Key Doctrines:

Spiritual Healing: The core tenet is the power of prayer to heal physical ailments. Material remedies are generally rejected.

Divine Mind: God is viewed as the sole intelligence, and all true knowledge comes from God.

Rejection of Materialism: The material world is seen as secondary and illusory, leading to a rejection of conventional medicine in favor of spiritual healing.

The Bible as Authority: The Bible is the primary source of teachings and authority within Christian Science.

The Cult Accusation: Examining the Criteria

Defining a "cult" is inherently difficult, with no universally accepted criteria. However, common characteristics often cited include:

Authoritarian Leadership: Is there an unquestioned leader or small group wielding significant power?

Isolation and Control: Does the group isolate members from outside influences or control their access to information?

Mind Control Techniques: Are manipulative or coercive techniques used to maintain loyalty and obedience?

Exploitation and Abuse: Are members financially or emotionally exploited or abused?

Intense Loyalty Demands: Is unwavering loyalty demanded, often at the expense of other relationships?

Christian Science and the Cult Criteria: An Objective Assessment

Applying these criteria to Christian Science requires careful consideration. While the writings of Mary Baker Eddy hold significant authority within the faith, it's not necessarily equivalent to the unquestioned authoritarian leadership seen in some cults. The Church of Christ, Scientist, has a structured hierarchy, but decision-making isn't concentrated in the hands of a single individual.

Isolation from conventional medicine is a more significant concern. The rejection of medical treatment, particularly for serious illnesses, has resulted in tragic consequences in some cases. This raises ethical questions and concerns about the potential harm to members who prioritize spiritual healing over medically proven treatments.

While overt mind control techniques are generally absent, the emphasis on interpreting scripture through a specific lens, and the potential for social pressure to conform to community beliefs, raise concerns about freedom of thought and potential for subtle coercion.

Financial exploitation is generally not a prominent feature of Christian Science, although members donate to support the church's activities. Cases of emotional or psychological harm due to the rejection of medical care are more concerning and require careful examination.

Conclusion: Navigating the Nuances

Whether Christian Science constitutes a cult is a subjective judgment based on the criteria employed. While it doesn't exhibit all the hallmarks of high-control groups, certain aspects – primarily the rejection of conventional medicine and potential for social pressure – warrant careful consideration and raise legitimate ethical concerns. It's crucial to approach this topic with sensitivity, respecting individuals' beliefs while acknowledging the potential for harm arising from practices that prioritize faith over evidence-based medicine. Further investigation and critical evaluation are essential to forming your own informed opinion.

FAQs:

1. Are Christian Scientists allowed to see doctors? While not encouraged, Christian Scientists are not explicitly forbidden from seeking medical attention. The decision ultimately rests with the individual.
2. How is Christian Science different from other Christian denominations? Christian Science differs significantly in its emphasis on spiritual healing, its rejection of materialism, and its interpretation of biblical texts.
3. What are the potential risks associated with Christian Science healing? The primary risk is the potential for delayed or inadequate medical treatment for serious illnesses, leading to potentially life-threatening consequences.
4. Has Christian Science faced legal challenges? Yes, Christian Science has faced legal challenges, particularly regarding the treatment of children, leading to court cases and legislative interventions in some jurisdictions.
5. Where can I learn more about Christian Science? You can explore the official Church of Christ, Scientist website and various academic resources to learn more about its history, doctrines, and

practices. However, it's crucial to approach information from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding.

is christian scientist 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 Methodist 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.

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is christian scientist 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.

is christian scientist 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 scientist a cult: *Perfect Peril* Linda S., Linda Kramer,, Ph D Linda S Kramer, 2015-01-07 Christian Scientists are trapped in a belief system that distorts their perception of reality, teaches them to mistrust their senses, and denies them many of the natural instincts that go along with being human. *Perfect Peril* is a tool for understanding and recovering from the Christian Science mindset. The book examines Christian Science in light of Robert J. Lifton's classic criteria for thought reform and shows how this religion lures its followers into thinking patterns that can

harm them emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It also examines Mary Baker Eddy's charismatic personality, leadership style, claim to divine authority, and misuse of biblical terms. *Perfect Peril* has been a source of validation, understanding, and resolution for people negatively impacted by Christian Science.

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is christian scientist 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*

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people realise that Christian scientists are trapped by a way of thinking which twists their perception of reality, teaches them to mistrust their senses, and short-circuits their ability to make informed, reasoned decisions regarding health care. In short, few people realise that Christian Scientists are under 'mind control'.

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is christian scientist 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.

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is christian scientist 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 scientist 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 scientist a cult: *For the Glory of God* Rodney Stark, 2004-08-29 Rodney Stark's provocative new book argues that, whether we like it or not, people acting for the glory of God have formed our modern culture. Continuing his project of identifying the widespread consequences of monotheism, Stark shows that the Christian conception of God resulted--almost inevitably and for the same reasons--in the Protestant Reformation, the rise of modern science, the European witch-hunts, and the Western abolition of slavery. In the process, he explains why Christian and Islamic images of God yielded such different cultural results, leading Christians but not Muslims to foster science, burn witches, and denounce slavery. With his usual clarity and skepticism toward the received wisdom, Stark finds the origins of these disparate phenomena within monotheistic religious organizations. Endemic in such organizations are pressures to maintain religious intensity, which lead to intense conflicts and schisms that have far-reaching social results. Along the way, Stark debunks many commonly accepted ideas. He interprets the sixteenth-century flowering of science not as a sudden revolution that burst religious barriers, but as the normal, gradual, and direct outgrowth of medieval theology. He also shows that the very ideas about God that sustained the rise of science led also to intense witch-hunting by otherwise clear-headed Europeans, including some celebrated scientists. This conception of God likewise yielded the Christian denunciation of slavery as an abomination--and some of the fiercest witch-hunters were devoted participants in successful abolitionist movements on both sides of the Atlantic. *For the Glory of God* is an engrossing narrative that accounts for the very different histories of the Christian and Muslim worlds. It fundamentally changes our understanding of religion's role in history and the forces behind much of what we point to as secular progress.

is christian scientist a cult: *Gospelbound* Collin Hansen, Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, 2021-04-06 A profound exploration of how to hold on to hope when our unchanging faith collides with a changing culture, from two respected Christian storytellers and thought leaders. "Offers neither spin control nor image maintenance for the evangelical tribe, but genuine hope."—Russell Moore, president of ERLC As the pressures of health warnings, economic turmoil, and partisan politics continue to rise, the influence of gospel-focused Christians seems to be waning. In the public square and popular opinion, we are losing our voice right when it's needed most for Christ's glory and the common good. But there's another story unfolding too—if you know where to look. In *Gospelbound*, Collin Hansen and Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra counter these growing fears with a robust message of resolute hope for anyone hungry for good news. Join them in exploring profound stories of Christians who are quietly changing the world in the name of Jesus—from the wild world of digital media to the stories of ancient saints and unsung contemporary activists on the frontiers of justice and mercy. Discover how, in these dark times, the light of Jesus shines even brighter. You haven't heard the whole story. And that's good news.

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is christian scientist a cult: *The Science Delusion* Curtis White, 2013-05-28 One of our most brilliant social critics—author of the bestselling *The Middle Mind*—presents a scathing critique of the "delusions" of science alongside a rousing defense of the tradition of Romanticism and the "big" questions. With the rise of religion critics such as Richard Dawkins, and of pseudo-science advocates such as Malcolm Gladwell and Jonah Lehrer, you're likely to become a subject of ridicule if you wonder "Why is there something instead of nothing?" or "What is our purpose on earth?" Instead, at

universities around the world, and in the general cultural milieu, we're all being taught that science can resolve all questions without the help of philosophy, politics, or the humanities. In short, the rich philosophical debates of the 19th century have been nearly totally abandoned, argues critic Curtis White. An atheist himself, White nonetheless calls this new turn "scientism"—and fears what it will do to our culture if allowed to flourish without challenge. In fact, in "scientism" White sees a new religion with many unexamined assumptions. In this brilliant multi-part critique, he aims at a TED talk by a distinguished neuroscientist in which we are told that human thought is merely the product of our "connectome," a map of neural connections in the brain that is yet to be fully understood. . . . He whips a widely respected physicist who argues that our new understanding of the origins of the universe obviates any philosophical inquiry . . . and ends with a learned defense of the tradition of Romanticism, which White believes our technology and science-obsessed world desperately needs to rediscover. It's the only way, he argues, that we can see our world clearly. . . and change it.

is christian scientist a cult: Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism Martin E. Marty, 2011-06-15 Many American's 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 class.

is christian scientist a cult: The Four Major Cults Anthony A. Hoekema, Anthony a Hoekema, 1989-01-09 This is a print on demand book and is therefore non- returnable. This standard work gives a history of each cult (Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Seventh-Day Adventism, and Mormonism) and sets out its doctrines, following the customary divisions of theology. The major teachings peculiar to each cult are examined in five appendices.

is christian scientist a cult: How We Believe Michael Shermer, 2000-11 Recent polls report that 96% of Americans believe in God. Why is this? Why, despite the rise of science, technology, and secular education, are people turning to religion in greater numbers than ever before? Why do people believe in God at all?

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spoken word, his life, and his disciples-to reach others with his message. The authors then pull some very simple rhetorical lessons from Jesus' life that readers can use today. Both Christian and non-Christian leaders in just about any field can improve their ability to communicate effectively by studying the words and methods of history's greatest communicator.

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is christian scientist a cult: After Doubt A. J. Swoboda, 2021-03-02 Is there a way to walk faithfully through doubt and come out the other side with a deeper love for Jesus, the church, and its tradition? Can we question our faith without losing it? Award-winning author, pastor, and professor A. J. Swoboda has witnessed many young people wrestle with their core Christian beliefs. Too often, what begins as a set of critical and important questions turns to resentment and faith abandonment. Unfortunately, the church has largely ignored its task of serving people along their journey of questioning. The local church must walk alongside those who are deconstructing their faith and show them how to reconstruct it. Drawing on his own experience of deconstruction, Swoboda offers tools to help emerging adults navigate their faith in a hostile landscape. Doubt is a part of our natural spiritual journey, says Swoboda, and deconstruction is a legitimate space to encounter the living God. After Doubt offers a hopeful, practical vision of spiritual formation for those in the process of faith deconstruction and those who serve them. Foreword by pastor and author John Mark Comer.

is christian scientist a cult: *No and Yes* Mary Baker Eddy, 1908

is christian scientist a cult: *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* Bronislaw Malinowski, 2014-04-10 This vintage book comprises three famous Malinowski essays on the subject of religion. Malinowski is one of the most important and influential anthropologists of all time. He is particularly renowned for his ability to combine the reality of human experience, with the cold calculations of science. An important collection of three of his most famous essays, *Magic, Science and Religion* provides its reader with a series of concepts concerning religion, magic, science, rite and myth. This is undertaken in an attempt to form a definite impression and understanding of the Trobrianders of New Guinea. The chapters of this book include: *Magic, Science and Religion*, *Primitive Man and his Religion*, *Rational Mastery by Man of his Surroundings*, *Faith and Cult*, *The Creative Acts of Religion*, *Providence in Primitive Life*, *Man's Selective Interest in Nature*, etcetera. This book is being republished now in an affordable, modern edition - complete with a specially commissioned new biography of the author.

is christian scientist 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 scientist 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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