

RELIGIONS OLD AND NEW: A COMPARATIVE CHART

BY: Matt Zahniser

TOPIC	MORMONS (LATTER DAY SAINTS - LDS)	JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES	ISLAM
GOD	Is married, was once a man. Has a father who is god over another world. Humans can become a god.	Jehovah is one, not three in one. Holy Spirit is not a person, but a force.	Once sovereign Lord, transcendent and cannot be known.
JESUS	Spirit brother of Lucifer. Is now a deity, one of many gods, and our "elder brother."	Not divine. Once the angel Michael. On earth was just a man. Rose only in spirit.	A prophet like Muhammad. Virgin-born. Not crucified, not God's Son.
SACRED WRITINGS	<i>The Book of Mormon; The Pearl of Great Price; The Doctrine and Covenants; and the Bible (least reliable)</i>	<i>New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.</i>	Qur'an (Koran). Secondary, Hadith (sayings and deeds of Muhammad). The Bible is Corrupt and unreliable.
SIN/ SALVATION	We become worthy through good works.	144,000 "elect" will be saved through Jesus. Non-elect must earn salvation.	Humans are fallible, fickle, and need guidance, not salvation. Rewards and punishment decided by God, based on human works and divine mercy.
LIFE AFTER DEATH	After death but before Judgment Day, the wicked get a second chance. Four levels of destiny. (1) Highest members of LDS church. (2) Good people but not LDS. (3) Unrighteous. (4) Lucifer, his angels, and the unrepentant "sons of perdition."	The lost will face annihilation. The 144,000 are being resurrected spiritually to heaven. Other Witnesses will be resurrected to an earthly life of endless bliss if they are faithful.	Eternal hell awaits those who reject Islam or do not live according to the light they have.
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	Abstain from alcohol, tobacco, coffee and tea. Spiritual support through age and gender groups, Sunday School, and priesthood groups. Temple rituals, meetinghouse worship and study.	Don't observe religious and secular holidays. Celebrate "Lord's Evening Meal" once a year Attend Sunday worship. Have several study meetings each week.	Pray five times daily. Fast during month of Ramadan. Share wealth with the needy. Pilgrimage to Mecca once in life.

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TOPIC	NEW AGE	TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION	UNIFICATION CHURCH (MOONIES)
GOD	Is impersonal, like the "Force" in <i>Star Wars</i> . Humans are gods who don't know it	The inner self of every person is divine, part of the impersonal "God"	One personal God. Has dual characteristics of masculine and feminine. Is not part of a Trinity.
JESUS	Esteemed as a great teacher, spiritual master, and guru. Was no more divine than other humans.	Like all persons, Jesus had a divine essence. Unlike most, He discovered it.	A perfect human whom God chose to be Messiah. Failed his mission to find a second Eve and start a perfect family. Is not the eternal son.
SACRED WRITINGS	No holy book. Interested in selected Bible passages. <i>I Ching</i> , Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist writings, as well as many works on astrology, mysticism, magic.	Writings of Maharishi, founder of TM, especially his commentary on the Hindu scripture, <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> .	The Bible, Sun Myung Moon's <i>Divine Principle</i> , and Moon's sermons.
SIN/SALVATION	People need to discover they are divine. The path to enlightenment is through self-awareness and the occult practices, such as channeling (communicating with the spirit world).	Humans are not sinful but have forgotten their inner divinity. Commitment to a guru and practice of meditation bring knowledge of the inner self.	The Fall came from Eve having sex with Lucifer. Humans atone for sin through good works. Ultimate redemption will come from True Parents (Moon and his wife). Moon completes the mission Jesus failed.
LIFE AFTER DEATH	Reincarnations occur until person reaches oneness with God. No eternal life as a resurrected person.	Reincarnation, followed by loss of personality in a final union of the self with the divine reality called Brahman.	Everyone will be saved.
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	The variety includes yoga, meditation, astrology, and channeling.	An initiation rite. Mentally recite mantras (secret words or syllables) twice daily, 20 minutes each time. Postures and breathing exercises of yoga are gradually added.	Moon chooses wedding partners. Mass weddings every few years (6,516 couples wed in 1988) Have "pledge" services to renew vows on the first day of each week, month, year and holy days. Worship on holy days. Use holy salt for spiritual cleansing.

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TOPIC	BUDDHISM/ NICHIREN SHOSHU	HINDUISM/KRISHNA	UNITY
GOD	Some worship Buddha as lord. Most worship impersonal deities they call "forces."	A divine force, known through Krishna instead of Christ. Other Hindus believe God is impersonal. Still others believe in many gods.	One personal God. Has dual characteristics of masculine and feminine. Is not part of a Trinity.
JESUS	Has no place in this religion.	A spiritually enlightened person, an earthly appearance of God. Some Hindus make no provision for Christ at all.	Was no more divine than other humans. He simply became aware of His divinity as can all humans.
SACRED WRITINGS	Lotus Sutra. When a phrase containing the essence of this book is chanted, good things happen, including salvation.	Vedas Upanishads, <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> , <i>Shrimad Bhagavatam</i> , and many other writings.	The Bible is respected, but not as final and authoritative. Respects scriptures of other faiths.
SIN/SALVATION	Salvation comes from devotion to the Lotus Sutra and chanting. Salvation includes deliverance from barriers to good health, happiness, a new world order and union with Buddha.	By chanting the name Hare Krishna and serving him in total devotion, humans are saved from further reincarnations.	Salvation is not through repentance. It is through realizing Christ already dwells in us. Everyone will reach this point eventually.
LIFE AFTER DEATH	Teaches reincarnation. People can reach impersonal union with Buddha.	Unenlightened people will be reborn on earth or in one of the many heavens and hells. Those immersed in Krishna consciousness will become one with him.	No literal hell. No heaven. People are reincarnated until they reach oneness with God, as Jesus did.
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	Three important ones: (1) chanting the Daimoko, a phrase that is the essence of <i>Lotus Sutra</i> ; (2) worship before Gohonzon, a scroll containing Daimoko; and (3) Kaidon, pilgrimage to world headquarters on Mount Fuji.	Worship approved images. Chanting, offerings, study of texts, begging, yoga. Most important is public chanting of Hare Krishna mantra.	Worship services with instruction and community support. 24-hour prayer ministry.

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TOPIC	SCIENTOLOGY	SATANISM	CHRISTIANITY
GOD	Many gods exist. Humans can become gods, called "operating thetans."	God exists as a universal, impersonal force who does not care about humans. Satan represents the ultimate force with which to reckon.	Is personal, eternal, all-powerful. Revealed to humans as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
JESUS	Jesus was an Essene who believed in reincarnation. The Crucifixion is a legend.	Jesus is the enemy, the target of Satan's designs. Satan is the personal savior.	Second person of Godhead. Virgin-born. Died for sins of humanity, rose again, ascended to heaven.
SACRED WRITINGS	<i>Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health</i> , by L. Ron Hubbard.	Anton La Vey's <i>Satanic Bible</i> .	Bible.
SIN/ SALVATION	Humans are spirit beings with many past lives. Bad experiences in past lives cause problems and hang-ups (engrams) in present lives. Salvation involves getting clear of engrams, being release from the cycle of reincarnation, and becoming an operating thetan (god)	Salvation means being free of moral scruples and having power over one's own destiny and the destiny of others.	All have sinned. All who repent and confess Jesus as Lord will be saved.
LIFE AFTER DEATH	People who get "clear" of engrams become operating thetans, immortal spirits with unlimited powers.	Offers no clear teaching about life after death. Some believe they will rule in hell with Satan.	All will be judged by God. The righteous will enjoy everlasting life, the unrighteous will suffer eternal separation from God.
SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	Devotees wanting to become "clear" work with an "auditor," who leads them on a spiritual journey to erase the effects of engrams. Weekly worship according to the book of <i>Ceremonies</i> . Observe the birth of the founder and anniversary of the publication of <i>Dianetics</i> .	Black Mass imitates the Roman Catholic Mass. Rituals help people accept their carnal side without guilt. Ritual cursing of enemies. Sexual rituals observed on 10 satanic holidays. Blood sacrifices, even human sacrifices, are authorized by the <i>Satanic Bible</i> .	Prayer, reading the Bible, worshiping God in weekly church services, rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Communion)