

is christian science scientology

is christian science scientology is a question that arises due to superficial similarities in terminology and the presence of both in the landscape of religious and spiritual movements. However, a closer examination reveals they are distinct in their origins, core beliefs, practices, and organizational structures. This article will delve into the fundamental differences between Christian Science and Scientology, exploring their foundational texts, theological tenets, approaches to healing, and historical development. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for anyone seeking clarity on these two influential but separate movements. We will explore the genesis of each, their unique paths, and the specific doctrines that set them apart.

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Origins and Founders of Christian Science and Scientology

The origins of Christian Science trace back to the mid-19th century in the United States, founded by Mary Baker Eddy. Eddy developed her distinct theological system following a period of personal illness and spiritual seeking. Her insights, she believed, revealed a deeper understanding of God and the spiritual nature of reality, which she detailed in her seminal work, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." This work became the foundational text for the Christian Science church.

In contrast, Scientology emerged in the mid-20th century, conceived by science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard. Hubbard developed his theories through a series of lectures and books, most notably "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health." Initially presented as a therapeutic system for improving mental well-being, Dianetics evolved into the religious philosophy known as Scientology. Hubbard's extensive writings and lectures form the core scripture of the Church of Scientology.

Core Theological Beliefs: Distinguishing Christian Science and Scientology

The theological underpinnings of Christian Science are deeply rooted in Christian tradition, albeit with a unique interpretation. Christian Scientists believe in one God, who is infinite, divine, and omnipresent. They emphasize the spiritual perfection of God and, by extension, the spiritual perfection of His creation, which includes humanity. This leads to the core tenet that matter and material phenomena are illusions or the absence of good, and that

spiritual understanding can overcome material limitations, including sickness and death. They view Jesus Christ as the Savior who demonstrated the power of spiritual understanding over material law.

Scientology, on the other hand, posits a different cosmology. While it acknowledges a Supreme Being, its focus is more on the nature of the spirit or "Thetan," which is considered an immortal, spiritual being. Scientology teaches that humans are these immortal Thetans who have forgotten their true nature through countless lifetimes. The goal of Scientology is to raise an individual's spiritual awareness and ability through a process of auditing and training, enabling them to become more fully themselves and achieve spiritual freedom. While it may use terminology like "spiritual," its philosophical framework is distinctly different from traditional Christian theology.

Christian Science's Emphasis on Spiritual Perfection

A cornerstone of Christian Science is the belief that God is All-in-all, and that man is His image and likeness. This implies that there is no reality in sin, sickness, or death, as these are seen as departures from spiritual perfection. The practice of Christian Science involves fervent prayer and spiritual understanding to align one's consciousness with divine reality, thereby overcoming perceived material discord. This spiritual healing is not seen as a replacement for medical intervention, but rather as the primary means of addressing all human issues.

Scientology's Focus on the Thetan and Auditing

In Scientology, the individual is understood as a spiritual being, the Thetan, who has experienced a long evolutionary journey. Through a process called auditing, which involves one-on-one counseling sessions with an auditor using a device called an E-meter, individuals confront and overcome past traumas, engrams (painful or traumatic memories), and other spiritual impediments. The aim is to increase spiritual awareness, ability, and morality, leading to higher states of spiritual being, such as "Clear" and "Operating Thetan" (OT) levels.

Approaches to Healing and Well-being: A Divergent Path

The approach to healing is perhaps one of the most striking areas of divergence between Christian Science and Scientology. Christian Scientists typically eschew conventional medical treatment in favor of spiritual healing through prayer, relying on the principles articulated by Mary Baker Eddy. They believe that by understanding God's perfection and the spiritual nature of existence, the perceived reality of disease can be dissolved. This is a central tenet of their faith and is practiced within their community through dedicated practitioners.

Scientology's approach to well-being is through its unique system of auditing and training. The goal is to free individuals from the limitations of their past experiences and to enhance their spiritual and mental capabilities. While not strictly advocating against medical care,

Scientology's primary focus is on spiritual rehabilitation and the attainment of higher states of consciousness through its proprietary methods. The E-meter plays a significant role in the auditing process, used to identify areas of spiritual distress.

Christian Science Healing Practices

Christian Science healing is a practice of prayer and spiritual understanding. It involves recognizing the omnipotence of God and the unreality of material conditions. Practitioners, who are often ordained by the church, dedicate their lives to this practice, offering services to those who seek spiritual assistance for any ailment or problem. The emphasis is on divine power to correct all discord.

Scientology's Auditing and Training Methods

Scientology offers a structured path of self-discovery and spiritual advancement. Auditing sessions are designed to address past traumas and unwanted mental conditions. Training courses provide in-depth study of Hubbard's writings and principles. The ultimate aim is to achieve greater spiritual awareness and freedom, allowing individuals to live more fulfilling and capable lives.

Sacred Texts and Literature: Distinct Canons

The primary sacred text for Christian Scientists is the Bible, along with Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." Eddy's book is considered by Christian Scientists to be a divinely inspired interpretation of the Bible, unlocking its spiritual meaning. These two works form the basis of their theology, sermons, and daily study.

For Scientologists, the core texts are the extensive writings and lectures of L. Ron Hubbard. These works, spanning numerous books, lectures, and policy letters, form the foundational scriptures of Scientology. They detail the philosophy, practices, and ethical principles of the movement, guiding adherents on their spiritual journey.

Organizational Structure and Community: Different Models

The Church of Christ, Scientist, is structured as a global church with local branches known as branch churches and Christian Science Societies. It is governed by the Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts. Services typically involve readings from the Bible and "Science and Health," along with hymns and congregational prayer. The organization emphasizes a democratic structure and the collective spiritual effort of its members.

The Church of Scientology is a hierarchical organization with a centralized leadership. It operates through various "churches" and "missions" worldwide, all adhering to the organizational structure established by L. Ron Hubbard. The progression through different "Operating Thetan" levels is a key feature of its organizational and spiritual pathway, with

distinct hierarchies of spiritual advancement.

Key Differences Summarized

The fundamental differences between Christian Science and Scientology can be distilled into several key areas:

- **Foundational Beliefs:** Christian Science is rooted in a specific interpretation of Christian theology, emphasizing spiritual perfection and divine healing. Scientology is a distinct philosophy focused on the spiritual nature of the individual (Thetan) and the liberation of spiritual potential through auditing and training.
- **Founder's Background:** Mary Baker Eddy was a spiritual leader and theologian, while L. Ron Hubbard was a science fiction author who developed a system he termed "auditing."
- **Concept of God:** Christian Science views God as the divine, infinite, omnipresent reality, central to its understanding of creation and healing. Scientology acknowledges a Supreme Being but places greater emphasis on the capabilities and evolution of the individual Thetan.
- **Approach to Healing:** Christian Science relies solely on spiritual means through prayer and understanding of God's omnipotence. Scientology offers a therapeutic system of auditing and training to address spiritual and mental blockages.
- **Sacred Texts:** Christian Science uses the Bible and "Science and Health." Scientology's canon consists of the extensive works of L. Ron Hubbard.
- **Path to Spiritual Growth:** Christian Science focuses on spiritual understanding and aligning consciousness with divine truth. Scientology's path involves auditing, training, and achieving progressively higher states of spiritual awareness and ability.

While both movements offer pathways to spiritual enlightenment and well-being and may use some similar abstract language, their core doctrines, historical development, and practical applications are fundamentally distinct. Recognizing these differences is essential for a clear understanding of each movement.

FAQ

Q: Are Christian Science and Scientology related in any way?

A: No, Christian Science and Scientology are not related. They are two distinct religious and philosophical movements with different founders, origins, core beliefs, and practices.

Q: Did L. Ron Hubbard found Christian Science?

A: No, L. Ron Hubbard did not found Christian Science. Christian Science was founded by Mary Baker Eddy. L. Ron Hubbard is the founder of Scientology.

Q: Do Christian Scientists use Scientology practices?

A: No, Christian Scientists do not use Scientology practices. Their spiritual healing is based on the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy and the Bible, not on L. Ron Hubbard's principles of auditing.

Q: Does Scientology believe in Jesus Christ in the same way Christian Science does?

A: Christian Science views Jesus Christ as the Savior who demonstrated the power of spiritual understanding over material law. While Scientology acknowledges Jesus, its primary focus is on the individual's inherent spiritual nature and potential, not on Jesus as a central figure of salvation in the Christian sense.

Q: Is the term "Science" in both names significant?

A: The term "Science" in both names refers to a systematic study or discipline. In Christian Science, it denotes a spiritual science or a systematic understanding of God and His laws. In Scientology, "Science" refers to the scientific methodology and principles L. Ron Hubbard applied to the study of the mind and spirit. The use of the term is coincidental and does not imply a shared methodology or origin.

Q: Where did Christian Science originate?

A: Christian Science originated in the United States in the mid-19th century, founded by Mary Baker Eddy.

Q: Where did Scientology originate?

A: Scientology originated in the United States in the mid-20th century, founded by L. Ron Hubbard.

Q: What is the main difference in their approach to healing?

A: Christian Science emphasizes spiritual healing through prayer and understanding of divine perfection, typically foregoing medical treatment. Scientology's approach to well-being involves auditing and training to address spiritual and mental blockages, though it does not strictly prohibit medical care.

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