

is the church of religious science the same as scientology

is the church of religious science the same as scientology is a question that often arises due to superficial similarities in terminology and public perception. While both are spiritual or philosophical movements, their origins, core beliefs, practices, and organizational structures are distinctly different. This article aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed examination to clarify these distinctions, exploring the foundational principles of Religious Science, the history and tenets of Scientology, and their respective approaches to spirituality and human potential. We will delve into their philosophical underpinnings, their unique pathways to self-discovery and well-being, and the key differentiators that set them apart. Understanding these differences is crucial for anyone seeking clarity on these two distinct paths.

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Understanding Religious Science

Religious Science, also known as the Science of Mind, is a distinct spiritual philosophy and practice that focuses on the power of thought and belief in shaping one's reality. It emphasizes the inherent divinity within each individual and the interconnectedness of all things through a Universal Mind or Spirit. The movement teaches that by consciously aligning one's thoughts and beliefs with the principles of Universal Intelligence, individuals can create positive changes in their lives, fostering health, happiness, and prosperity. It is a path that encourages self-empowerment through mental and spiritual discipline.

The Origins and Founder of Religious Science

Religious Science was founded by Ernest Holmes in the early 20th century. Holmes was deeply influenced by the New Thought movement, which emerged in the United States in the 19th century and focused on the healing power of positive thinking and the concept of a benevolent God. Holmes synthesized various philosophical and spiritual ideas into a cohesive system, articulating his teachings in seminal works like "The Science of Mind." His aim was to create a practical spiritual philosophy that could be applied to everyday life, offering a way to understand and harness the power of the mind for personal transformation. The first Church of Religious Science was established in Los Angeles in 1926.

Core Beliefs of Religious Science

The foundational tenets of Religious Science revolve around several key principles. Central to its philosophy is the belief in one Universal Spirit or Divine Presence, often referred to as the Infinite, the Great Creator, or the Divine Mind, which permeates all existence. This Spirit is seen as inherently good and abundant. A crucial aspect is the belief in the individual's ability to connect with this Universal Spirit and, through conscious thought and affirmative belief, to manifest desired outcomes. Religious Science teaches that "there is no death, only life," and that the spirit is eternal. It also posits that our thoughts have creative power, and by consciously directing them, we can influence our experiences. The concept of "oneness" signifies that all beings and all things are fundamentally connected to this Divine Source.

Practices and Philosophy in Religious Science

Practices within Religious Science are designed to cultivate conscious awareness and to align one's inner state with desired outcomes. Meditation and affirmative prayer, often called "treatment," are central. Treatment involves declaring the truth of what one wishes to manifest, focusing on the already-existing presence of the desired outcome in the Universal Mind, rather than pleading or begging. Visualisation is also a common technique, where individuals vividly imagine their goals as already achieved. The philosophy encourages a proactive approach to life, seeing challenges not as insurmountable obstacles but as opportunities for spiritual growth and demonstration. Emphasis is placed on gratitude and the recognition of good in all situations.

Understanding Scientology

Scientology is a religion and a set of beliefs and practices created by L. Ron Hubbard. It offers a path to spiritual enlightenment and self-discovery through a system of auditing and training. Scientology posits

that humans are immortal spiritual beings called "thetans" who have forgotten their true nature and abilities. Through its unique practices, Scientology aims to restore this awareness, thereby improving spiritual well-being and overcoming limitations.

The Origins and Founder of Scientology

Scientology was founded by Lafayette Ronald Hubbard (L. Ron Hubbard), an American science fiction author. Hubbard first introduced his ideas in a book titled "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health" in 1950, which described a therapeutic system focused on the mind's reactive and "analytical" engines. Later, he expanded these concepts into a broader religious philosophy, which he termed Scientology. The first Church of Scientology was established in 1953 in Camden, New Jersey. Hubbard developed a vast body of work that forms the core scripture and operational guide for Scientology, covering a wide range of topics from spiritual rehabilitation to ethics and management.

Core Beliefs of Scientology

At the heart of Scientology is the belief that individuals are immortal spiritual beings, or "thetans," who have lived through countless lifetimes. These thetans, according to Scientology doctrine, have become disconnected from their spiritual nature and abilities due to traumatic experiences encountered throughout these past lives, which are stored in the "engram" bank of the reactive mind. Scientology teaches that these engrams are the source of irrational behavior, fear, and unhappiness. Another key belief is the existence of the "analytical mind," which is considered the rational and conscious part of the mind, and the "reactive mind," which stores painful experiences and trauma. The ultimate goal in Scientology is to achieve a state of "Clear" and then to advance up the "Bridge to Total Freedom," reaching higher states of spiritual awareness and capability.

Practices and Philosophy in Scientology

Scientology employs a specific set of practices and procedures to achieve its stated goals. The primary practice is "auditing," a form of spiritual counseling conducted by a trained auditor. During auditing, a person, referred to as a "preclear," communicates with the auditor, who uses a device called an E-meter. The E-meter is claimed to measure changes in electrical resistance in the body, which are interpreted by the auditor as indicators of areas of spiritual distress or areas where engrams may be stored. The aim of auditing is to confront and neutralize these painful experiences, thereby freeing the individual from their negative effects. In addition to auditing, Scientologists undergo "training" courses, which involve studying Hubbard's writings and lectures and passing examinations to demonstrate comprehension and application of Scientology principles. Ethics and morality play a significant role, with a detailed system of rules and

procedures designed to maintain spiritual progress and a functioning society.

Key Differences Between Religious Science and Scientology

Despite superficial resemblances in their focus on personal transformation and mental well-being, Religious Science and Scientology are fundamentally different in their origins, philosophies, and methodologies. Recognizing these distinctions is vital for those seeking to understand either path. The divergence lies in their foundational beliefs about the nature of reality, the human spirit, and the methods employed to achieve spiritual goals.

Philosophical Foundations

The philosophical underpinnings of Religious Science are rooted in the New Thought movement and are generally aligned with metaphysical principles that emphasize the inherent goodness and oneness of the universe. It draws parallels with concepts found in various mystical traditions and Eastern philosophies, focusing on the realization of one's divine nature through present-moment awareness and conscious creation. Scientology, on the other hand, is based on the specific teachings of L. Ron Hubbard, which are presented as a distinct science of the mind and spirit. Its philosophical framework is proprietary, developed exclusively from Hubbard's writings and is presented as a complete system for spiritual rehabilitation and advancement. While both address the power of thought, Religious Science emphasizes the innate divinity and creative potential within, whereas Scientology focuses on clearing the reactive mind of past traumas and engrams to reawaken the spiritual being.

Spiritual Goals and Methods

The ultimate spiritual goal in Religious Science is the conscious realization and expression of one's divine nature, leading to a life of joy, abundance, and peace. The methods employed are affirmative prayer, meditation, visualization, and the conscious application of spiritual laws to everyday life. The emphasis is on cultivating positive mental states and beliefs in the present moment. In contrast, the primary goal in Scientology is to achieve a state of "Clear" and then to advance through the "Bridge to Total Freedom," aiming to restore a thetan's full spiritual capabilities and awareness. The methods are highly structured and involve extensive auditing sessions with the aid of an E-meter and a rigorous curriculum of training courses. While Religious Science encourages personal spiritual insight and self-directed growth, Scientology offers a prescriptive path with defined stages and specific techniques.

Organizational Structure and Governance

Churches of Religious Science are generally organized as spiritual centers or congregations, often affiliated with larger organizations like United Centers for Spiritual Living. They typically operate with a degree of autonomy, guided by the principles of Ernest Holmes and a denominational structure that emphasizes spiritual leadership and community support. Scientology, however, is a highly centralized and hierarchical organization with a global structure. The Church of Scientology International is the primary governing body, overseeing numerous affiliated churches, missions, and organizations worldwide. Its operational framework is detailed and strictly regulated, with a clear chain of command and emphasis on adherence to the founder's directives and organizational policies.

Terminology and Language

While both movements might use terms related to mind, spirit, and awareness, their specific lexicon differs significantly. Religious Science utilizes terms common in New Thought and metaphysical circles, such as "Infinite," "Divine Mind," "Spirit," "Affirmation," and "Treatment." These terms generally refer to universal spiritual concepts. Scientology, however, has a unique and extensive terminology that is specific to its doctrines and practices. Words like "thetan," "engram," "reactive mind," "analytical mind," "auditing," "preclear," and "E-meter" are central to its vocabulary and are used in precise, technical ways within the context of Hubbard's teachings. The technical nature of Scientology's terminology can sometimes lead to confusion when compared with broader spiritual or philosophical language.

Public Perception and Misconceptions

The public perception of both Religious Science and Scientology can be influenced by various factors, including media portrayals and the general public's understanding of spiritual and religious movements. Scientology has often been the subject of controversy and scrutiny, leading to public misconceptions about its practices and goals. Religious Science, while less widely known than Scientology, is generally perceived as a more mainstream New Thought denomination, focused on positive spiritual philosophy and personal empowerment through inner awareness. The shared use of "Science" in their names, "Science of Mind" for Religious Science and "Scientology," can be a significant source of confusion, leading people to believe they are related or the same when in reality they represent distinct spiritual paths with different origins and objectives.

In conclusion, while both Religious Science and Scientology offer pathways for individuals seeking spiritual growth and self-improvement, they are distinct and independent movements. Their origins, foundational philosophies, core beliefs, and practical methodologies are profoundly different. Religious Science, rooted in New Thought, emphasizes the inherent divinity and creative power of the individual through conscious

thought aligned with Universal Spirit. Scientology, founded by L. Ron Hubbard, presents a specific system for spiritual rehabilitation and advancement through auditing and training, aiming to clear the mind of past traumas and restore spiritual capabilities. Understanding these fundamental distinctions is key to navigating the diverse landscape of spiritual and philosophical exploration.

FAQ

Q: Are the core beliefs of Religious Science and Scientology the same?

A: No, the core beliefs are significantly different. Religious Science teaches the inherent divinity and oneness of all beings with a Universal Spirit, emphasizing conscious creation through positive thought. Scientology posits that humans are immortal spiritual beings (thetans) who have forgotten their true nature and abilities due to past trauma, and aims to restore this through auditing and training.

Q: Did the same person found both Religious Science and Scientology?

A: No, they were founded by different individuals. Religious Science was founded by Ernest Holmes, a prominent figure in the New Thought movement. Scientology was founded by L. Ron Hubbard, an American science fiction author.

Q: What is the primary method of spiritual practice in Religious Science?

A: The primary methods in Religious Science include affirmative prayer (treatment), meditation, and visualization, focusing on present-moment realization and conscious creation.

Q: What is the primary method of spiritual practice in Scientology?

A: The primary methods in Scientology are auditing, a form of spiritual counseling using an E-meter, and training courses that involve studying L. Ron Hubbard's works.

Q: Is there a connection between the terminology used in Religious Science and Scientology?

A: While both discuss the mind and spirit, the specific terminology is distinct. Religious Science uses terms like "Universal Spirit" and "Affirmation." Scientology has a unique lexicon including terms like "thetan," "engram," and "auditing."

Q: Is Religious Science considered a branch of Scientology or vice versa?

A: No, there is no organizational or philosophical link between Religious Science and Scientology. They are independent and distinct spiritual movements with separate origins and doctrines.

Q: Why do people often confuse Religious Science and Scientology?

A: The confusion often stems from the word "Science" appearing in both names ("Science of Mind" for Religious Science and "Scientology"), leading to a superficial assumption of a shared origin or purpose. The focus on self-improvement and mental well-being also contributes to this misconception.

Q: What are the ultimate goals of practitioners in each movement?

A: In Religious Science, the goal is the conscious realization and expression of one's divine nature and the creation of a joyful, abundant life. In Scientology, the goal is to achieve a state of "Clear" and advance through higher spiritual states of awareness and capability on the "Bridge to Total Freedom."

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