

Contemporary Error

[4th edition - August 2006]

	Page
Lesson 1 Introduction	1
Lesson 2 Islam	7
Lesson 3 Hinduism	14
Lesson 4 Spiritism	17
Lesson 5 Jehovah's Witnesses	22
Lesson 6 Mormonism	27
Lesson 7 Freemasonry	32
Lesson 8 Scientology	35

Authors:

Mark Visser
Errol Hoare

SBCI, P.O. Box 324, Hillcrest 3650, South Africa
E-mail: sbc@absamail.co.za Tel. 031-7660284 Fax. 031-7660449

Introduction

Lesson 1

In these days of varied teachings it is important for Christians to know what they believe, and essential to know how to recognise false teaching.

1 John 4:1 *“Beloved, believe not every spirit but TRY THE SPIRITS whether they are of God”*.

This study is not intended to be critical of others’ beliefs, but rather to show the error of some of the other religions, cults and heresies, according to the Word of God, so that the differences can be clearly seen. We must remember that there are many sincere people who are caught up in the cults who are earnestly attempting to find peace and fulfilment for the deep needs of the human spirit, which only the TRUTH can fill.

The basic error of cults is that they demote God, devalue Christ, deify man, deny sin and degenerate Scripture. Therefore, the correct theology regarding all of the following Bible doctrines is necessary to be in accordance with Historic Christianity:

1. The attributes of God.
2. The Person of Christ.
3. The requirement of Atonement.
4. The source of revelation.

A. What is a “Cult” and what is a “Heresy”?

1. Cult.

A cult is a **system of religious worship** – either "a new faith", which has been "imported from another society" or the result of "cultural innovation". Generally however, evangelicals have used the term "cult" to refer to religious groups that deviate from recognised standards of evangelical orthodoxy.

Most religious traditions are the study of phenomena and are divided into two main types:

- a) The Abramic tradition – which represents the religions of Abraham, i.e. Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
- b) The Yogic tradition – which represents religions of Indian origin that have the practice of yoga or meditation at their core, i.e. Hinduism and Buddhism.

2. Heresy.

A heresy is a **doctrine or opinion that is contrary to the fundamental doctrine** or creed of any particular church. A heretic is one whose errors are doctrinal and usually of a malignant character, tending to subvert the true faith.

Most cults and heresies falter on the doctrine of the person and work of Christ. This is the rock on which they all split.

B. Nine ways to “test the spirits”

Remember:

1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but TEST the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world”.

You need to know what you believe about these nine points:

1. God.

Most cults deny that God is personal.

Definition of a person: A self-determining and self-conscious being who thinks, feels, wills and acts, and who enters into fellowship with others.

John 17:3 “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent”.

2. The Trinity.

Most cults deny the existence of the Trinity and its divine members.

Creation: Gen.1:26 “Let us make man in **our** image”

Tower of Babel: Gen.11:7 “Let **us** go down and there confound their language”.

Baptism of Jesus: Matt.3:16-17.

3. The Person of Jesus Christ.

Most cults, if not all, deny His deity.

Matt.16:13 “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Note Peter’s answer and Jesus’ response – v.16-17).

1 John 2:22-23 “Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son”.

1 John 4:2-3 “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God”.

4. The Work of Christ (The Atonement).

Cults deny the cleansing power of the blood.

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many”.

Rom.5:8 “But God commandeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST DIED FOR US”.

5. The Resurrection and Promised Return.

Bodily resurrection and return denied by most cults.

Acts 1:11 “... *this SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go*”.

6. Salvation by Faith / Sin & Judgement / Heaven & Hell.

Denied by most cults.

Heb.9:27 “*And it is appointed unto man to die once but after that the judgement*”.

Eph.2:8 “*For by grace are ye saved through faith ... not of works ... gift of God*”.

1 Pet.2:24 “*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree ...*”

Cf. John 1:12, 3:16.

7. Man.

Cults never look on man as a sinner in need of a Saviour.

Rom.3:23 “*For ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*”.

1 Tim.1:15 “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief*”. (Paul)

8. The Holy Spirit.

His person denied by cults.

John 14:16 “*And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another COMFORTER, that He may abide with you forever*”.

John 14:26 “*But the COMFORTER, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE, whatsoever I have said unto you*”.

9. The Bible.

2 Tim.3:16 “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ...*”

2 Pet.1:21 “*Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*”.

2 Pet.3:16 “*... the ignorant and unstable distort ... the Scriptures, unto their own destruction*”.

Remember:

Jesus said in John 14:6 “*I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*”.

Acts 4:12 “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*”.

C. The Christian Creeds

Paul, the apostle, exhorts us to watch our life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them because if you do you will save both yourself and the hearer (1 Tim.4:16). Again Paul encourages us to hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that we can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. (Tit.1:9)

From ancient times the Apostles' Creed and other creeds of the Christian faith have been of great assistance to the church in obeying its mission and vision. **It presents in concise language and consecutive order the doctrine of the Christian faith.**

1. The Apostles' Creed.

a) "The Old Roman Creed".

[From Epiphanius, lxxii.3 (P.G. xlii. 385 D).]

The creed of Marcellus, Bishop of Ancyra, delivered to Julius, Bishop of Rome, c. 340. Marcellus had been exiled from his diocese through Arian influence and spent nearly two years at Rome. On departing he left this statement of his belief:

"I believe in God Almighty, and in Christ Jesus, His only son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried, and the third day rose from the dead, who ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, whence He cometh to judge the living and the dead, and in the Holy Ghost, the holy church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, the life everlasting".

b) A Gallican Creed of the Sixth Century.

[Extracted from a sermon pseudo-Augustinus, 244 of Caesarius, Bishop of Arles, 503-543]

"I believe in God the Father Almighty; I also believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell, rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, sat down at the right hand of the Father, thence He is to come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh and life eternal".

2. The Nicene Creed.

a) The Creed of Caesarea.

At the Council of Nicaea (325), Eusebius of Caesarea, the historian, suggested the adoption of the creed of his own church. It ran thus:

"We believe in one God, the Father All-sovereign, the maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, Life of Life, Son only-begotten, Firstborn of all creation, begotten of the Father before all the ages, through whom also all things were made; who was made flesh for our salvation and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again on the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; We believe also in one Holy Spirit".

b) The Creed of Nicaea.

Eusebius' creed was orthodox, but it did not deal explicitly with the Arian position. It was taken as a base, and put forward by the council in this revised form (additions and alterations in italic type):

“We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, *begotten of the Father*, only-begotten, *that is the substance¹ of the Father*, God of God, Light of Light, *true God of true God*, *begotten not made, of one substance² with the Father*, through whom all things were made, *things in heaven and things on the earth*; who for us men and for our salvation *came down* and was made flesh, *and became man³*, suffered and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge living and dead. And in the Holy Spirit.

And those that say "There was when He was not," and "Before He was begotten He was not", and that, "He came into being from what-is-not⁴", or those that allege, that the son of God is "Of another substance or essence", or "changeable⁵," or "alterable⁵", these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematises”.

¹ ‘from the inmost being of the Father’, inseparably one.

² sharing one being with the Father, and therefore distinct in existence though essentially one.

³ taking on himself all that makes man, expanding ‘was made flesh’.

⁴ ‘from nothingness’.

⁵ ‘i.e. morally changeable’.

c) **The Nicene Creed.**

Found in Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 118, c. A.D. 374, and extracted by scholars, almost word for word, from the Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril of Jerusalem; read and approved at Chalcedon, 451, as the creed of (the 318 fathers who met at Nicaea and that of) the 150 who met at a later time (i.e., at Constantinople, 381). Hence often called the Constantinopolitan or Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed, and thought by many to be a revision of the creed of Jerusalem held by Cyril. See for discussions, Hort, *Two Dissertations* (1876), Burn, *Introduction to the Creeds* (1899), Bindley, *Oecumenical Documents* (1906), Badcock, *History of the Creeds* (1938). Badcock puts forward a new theory.

“We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all the ages¹, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge living and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end; And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceedeth from the Father, who with Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spake through the prophets; In one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church; We acknowledge one baptism unto remission of sins. We look for a resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come”.

¹ The additions, "God of God", (from the creed of Nicaea) and "from the Father and the Son" occur first in the "Creed of Constantinople" as recited at the third Council of Toledo, 589. The latter phrase, the '*filioque* clause', had already been used at an earlier council of Toledo in 447; it gained popularity in the West and was inserted in most versions of the creed, except that of the Roman Church, where Pope Leo III in 809 refused to insert it.

The statement of faith below is compiled from the fundamental Christian creeds mentioned in this teaching.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in One God our Father, All Sovereign Maker of heaven and Maker of earth, Maker of things visible and invisible.

We believe in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son – our Lord.

The Word of God, begotten of the Father before all ages, light of lights, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made. Who for us human beings and for our salvation came down from the heavens and was made flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. He was despised by His own people, was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried, and rose again on the third day, ascended into the heavens to sit on the right hand of the Father.

Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father and alone offers remission of sins and resurrection of the flesh and life everlasting.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, life giver, that proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together. He is our councillor, comforter and friend.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, the communion of the Saints, which is made up of people from every tongue, tribe and nation that live by the truth of the Word of God, and believe in Him. For there is one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism and that is into Jesus Christ.

We believe that Jesus Christ will return in glory to judge the living and the dead.

We believe that a home has been prepared for both those alive to Christ and those dead to Christ. The people of the past, present and those still to come.

We believe that every individual whose faith is in Christ Jesus should have one common vision acted out in various ways. The vision of the Great Commission.

We believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God. The Word of God is alive and active in bringing healing and restoration between God and mankind. The Word of God will never contradict itself whether in written form as in the Holy Bible or in spoken form, past, present or in the future, and the restoration and building up of the Body of Christ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son (Word) of GOD becoming mature as one body of the fullness of Christ.

We believe that our Statement of Faith is the very truth of God the Father, and not the invention of any man.

Teacher's Note:

We suggest that the students study the following 7 religions/cults one by one, and after each one you have a class discussion, to ensure that the error is made perfectly clear.

Islam

Lesson 2

A. Introduction

The founder of the Islamic religion is Ubu'l-Kassim. Ubu'l-Kassim was an orphan from the age of approximately 6 years and raised by his uncle who earned his living trading with a camel caravan to many destination. Young Ubu'l-Kassim spent much of his youth in the fellowship of Jews and Christians. These encounters were later to influence his teachings. He himself became a caravan driver and later married a wealthy widow. This gave him the opportunity to spend much time meditating on spiritual things.

After spending six months in solitary meditation in a cave at the foot of Mt. Hira, near Mecca, he started to receive mystic visions. He had suffered all his life from a physical weakness, having fits and foaming at the mouth, falling down and rolling on the ground, much the same way as the incident described in the Bible. He was not sure what this was, but his wife felt it was a special spiritual anointing given to him and helped him with his visions.

Ubu'l-Kassim was **born in Mecca in AD 570 and died in Medina AD 632**. This same Ubu'l-Kassim was later to be called **Mohammed, the Prophet**.

According to Islamic tradition, Ubu'l-Kassim, who was to become Mohammed, frequently returned to this cave at Hira. It is said that on one such occasion, he was confronted by the angel Gabriel. Gabriel grabbed him by the throat and choked him into submission telling him he had to proclaim "the message" – and the message was: "Proclaim in the name of the lord, the creator, who created man from a clot of blood".

During his frequent returns to this cave, the revelations increased. What he saw and heard has now become **Islam's sacred book, the Koran** (or Qur'an, meaning recitation). Over a 22 year period, Mohammed memorised all 78 000 words of the Koran's 114 chapters and passed on the teachings orally, as he was illiterate. His message, at the beginning, encountered stiff resistance from the pagan population, as wealth and material gain were their gods. Mohammed, whose name means "the praised one", preached that the wealthy should share their wealth with the poor in exchange for the promise of a glorious after-life. Few converts accepted the message. Also, his message denouncing idol-worship, threatened the livelihood of Meccan businessmen, so Mohammed and his followers soon became outcasts who were stoned and beaten. In AD 622 he received a vision warning him of mortal danger and he escaped to the oasis Yathrib, 250 miles away. This event is recorded in their history as the Hagira or the "migration, or flight", and marks the beginning of the Moslem (also Muslim) era. The name Yathrib, was later changed to Madinat al-Nabi – today known as Medina.

Medina, which means "the city of the prophet", is second only to **Mecca** as a **Moslem spiritual centre**. Mohammed, finding himself outcast and without funds, sanctioned the plundering of caravans and other travellers who had something "to offer". His followers mercilessly attacked innocent citizens. By now Mohammed was ruling as a king and a prophet over his followers and the Islamic concept of the Jihad, or holy war, was propagated. Those who were to die in these ventures in god's name were promised immediate transition into paradise.

In AD 628 the rebel leader Mohammed led a force of ten thousand men towards Mecca and in a bloodless coup gained control of the city. Ten years later all Arabia was under Muslim control. Not long after his triumphal entry into Mecca, Mohammed died in AD 632.

One of his disciples, Abu'ul-Bakr was chosen as his successor and the Islamic empire was to last in that form for a thousand years. During this time they prospered and the Arabs developed the concept of Algebra as we know it today. Their skills in architecture were well developed too. Many of the pointed arches that grace Europe's lofty cathedrals were designed by these self same architects.

B. Symbols

The crescent moon and stars.

C. Articles of Faith

The Koran is considered to be more than just a holy Islamic book. Moslems believe that every word was literally dictated by god and that its substance is eternal and uncreated. As a result, the five pillars of faith, which we will list below, are binding rules of conduct.

1. God.

For the Moslem **Allah** is the only true God. There is no such blasphemous "thing" as the Trinity. Jesus Christ is a prophet of Allah; He is not the Son of God or God Himself. Allah, the Moslem god, is unapproachable by sinful man. He is so perfect and holy he can only communicate to mankind through a progression of angels and prophets. Allah, the Moslem god, is a god of judgement not grace, a god of wrath rather than love. The Moslem must submit to Allah to a point where Allah is able to hold back his judging arm.

2. Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ to the Moslem is just **one of many prophets** of Allah. Jesus Christ was the prophet to His people in His day. Mohammed is "The Prophet" and supersedes Him and is for the people today. Jesus did not atone for anyone's sins. Jesus Christ did not die on the cross. Islamic teaching on this subject varies; some say that Judas Iscariot was substituted for Jesus on the cross while others say that God miraculously delivered Him from the hands of the Romans and Jews before He could be crucified. Most Moslems believe that Jesus Christ was taken bodily into heaven without having died to return again as previously stated.

3. Sin and Salvation.

Islam does not teach about sin and salvation but teaches the concept of works and fate. Every Moslem hoping to escape judgement must satisfy Allah through the works of the five pillars of faith.

4. The Five Pillars of Faith.

a) Reciting the Shahada.

Every day the Moslem must publicly affirm the monotheism of god, and prophetic status of Mohammed. "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his messenger".

- b) **Daily prayer towards Mecca.**
Morning, noon, late afternoon and sunset and before bedtime. Prayers must be said while kneeling with foreheads touching the ground.
- c) **Alms giving.**
Charity was originally a voluntary aid to the poor and was considered to purify one's remaining material possessions. Today this has become a Moslem tax.
- d) **Fasting during the month of Ramadan.**
Between sunrise and sunset no eating or drinking is permitted. This is to commemorate the month the angel Gabriel delivered the Koran to Mohammed.
- e) **The pilgrimage to Mecca.**
Every Moslem must attempt to make this journey once in a lifetime. This is to facilitate his salvation. Once there, he walks seven times around the Kabba (a cubical building housing a black stone). If possible he must kiss the rock contained inside the Kabba, which Moslems believe was carried to earth by Gabriel.

Interesting to note, the Kabba is said to have been originally built by Ishmael and Abraham, on the spot where Adam uttered his first prayers to God.

During the trip to Mecca other holy sites in the area are visited and the goats, sheep and camels are sacrificed. There is also a ritual of throwing stones at the "sacred pillar" which is called "the stone of Satan" – re-enacting the stones that Ishmael is said to have thrown at the devil when he attempted to dissuade Abraham's son from submitting to his father's plans to offer him as a sacrifice. The Koran says it was Ishmael, not Isaac, whom Abraham laid on the altar at Mt. Moriah.

5. Further beliefs and practices.

- There is a rosary containing 99 beads to recount the unmentionable names of Allah. The camel is the only creature on earth to know the 100th name.
- They hold mass type services for the dead.
- They forbid statues and music in mosques.
- They practice circumcision.
- Women have to veil their faces and drape their bodies in ankle length dresses.
- They permit polygamy – each man is allowed four wives as long as he treats them equally.
- They insist on abstinence from alcohol, eating of pork and gambling.
- They meet for congregational worship at noon on Fridays and are committed to building minarets (towers from which to broadcast the call to prayer).
- They believe that Christ did not die but was taken up to heaven and teach that Jesus will return in the last days to convert the whole world to Islam and will insist that "Law of Apostasy" converts of other faiths, especially Christians,

must be imprisoned or lose their jobs and possibly their lives.

- It should be noted that Islam is a complex faith, spanning many cultures and countries and uses parts of both the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Bible. The Bible is seen as corrupt and inferior to Mohammed's message. Many of the old prophets are mentioned in the Koran, but none compares with the last and greatest of all – Mohammed.
- Islam accepts the virgin birth of Christ and even the Scriptural account of His miracles. However the Moslem's interpretation of how these events occurred is not compatible with Biblical theology. They also say that the Christians' faith in Christ as God incarnate, is blasphemy, for whoever joins other gods with God will be forbidden entry into the Garden.

D. Sects

Islam is a fragmented faith with numerous sects. The few most prevalent are:

1. The Wahhabi.

This group tends to be the most strict and puritanical. It was founded in the 18th century and teaches strict adherence to the Koran.

2. The Shiites.

They believe that only descendants of Mohammed's family are the rightful heirs to leadership. Since Mohammed bore no sons who survived him, his cousin and son-in-law Ari is considered to be the line of the prophets. Approximately 10% of all Moslems belong to this sect of Islam.

The Shiites believe that an Imam who disappeared in AD 882 will return someday as a Messiah. The Madhi (the guided one) will establish a kingdom on earth.

3. The Sunnites.

The majority of all Moslems consider themselves adherents of this orthodox sect.

E. The universal appeal of Islam

The simplicity of Islam's message is its chief attraction: one god, a rigidly defined method of worship and a clearly explained destination of man's soul. Salvation by good deeds and ardent devotion offer solace for those who conform to the outward display of piety without having to experience a spiritual rebirth of their inner nature.

F. Mission Statement

Moslems have the sacred mission to bring the entire world under Allah's dominion – by force or persuasion. All other religions are seen as Satanic. Allah alone is to be praised and worshipped. Mohammed originally prayed facing Jerusalem and gave the Jews an opportunity to submit to his spiritual authority. When they refused, he persecuted them severely. Christians must also be opposed, violently if necessary. Although Islam teaches that Allah is omniscient and merciful and compassionate, a Moslem is taught to hold him in

such awe that he is virtually unapproachable. Allah is to be feared and strictly obeyed. His attributes cannot be personally experienced in a man's heart. Allah demands a system of total submission, but he offers no immediate forgiveness of sin in return. A Moslem has no security of salvation and must wait until the day of judgement, when works, not grace, will determine his destination in the next life.

One-sixth of the world's population follows Islam. Its strongholds are considered to be the Middle East, Indonesia and North Africa where more than 90% of the population is Moslem.

G. Conclusion

The Moslem's life, his faith and his culture are so deeply intertwined that for him to turn to Christ is almost the same as committing suicide. When a Moslem decides to place his faith in Christ he not only becomes a social outcast and loses his family, his culture, his stability and his social life, but often his life will be in danger, especially if he used to belong to one of the more orthodox sects of Islam.

It is interesting to note that God did promise to make Ishmael's offspring a great nation. (Genesis 16:9-11; 17:20; 21:13,18; 25:12-18).

Sufism (a cult offshoot of Islam)

A. Introduction

This cult proposes to reach god not through the five pillars, but through entering into a trance induced by dancing. Sufism's emphasis is on union with god through meditation and ritual rather than Koranic obedience. They combine Islamic doctrines with Christian and Gnostic beliefs. The main difference between Sufism and the traditional Islamic belief is that the traditional Muslim is content with submitting to the will of Allah, but the Sufi wants an immediate, ecstatic experience of oneness with God. The means to accomplish this is a ritual of twirling and dancing. From this ritual came the well-known phrase "whirling dervishes" (whirling beggars). They turn and twirl for an hour or more at a time without any sign of fatigue, repeating the name of Allah like a mantra in a prayer to the accompaniment of a musical beat. Eventually they enter into an unconscious trance state and fall on the floor – which is supposed to represent an awakening from indifference.

This cult was established by a man called Rumi in 1273 AD.

B. Articles of Faith

They use as a basis the Islamic scriptures, as well as Gnostic texts.

The basic principle of Sufism is "God is love, lover and beloved". They claim harmony with all the world's religions and peoples, and this is apparently accomplished by contemplating the immanence of God. Sufism virtually ignores sin and redemption. It has a lack of fixed doctrinal structures, and is built upon subjective, mystical interpretations of truth. Their spiritual hierarchy called "Awliya" could be likened to familiar spirits (demons) with "Qutd" as a personification of Lucifer. Dervish trance states exhibit the characteristics of biblically defined demonic possession.

C. Symbols

The Samazen (pupil) closing with a circular skirt, preparing for dancing and meditation.

Black Muslims (sect of Islam)

A. Introduction

This is another "home grown religion" which emanated from America.

In 1913, a North Carolina black man named Timothy Drew arrived in Newark, New Jersey, under the name of Noble Drew Ali. He founded the Moorish-American Science Temples on the doctrine that Negroes were of Moroccan (Moorish) origin, and that Jesus was a black man killed by white Romans. Many of his teachings were taken from the Aquarian Gospel, an occult book written by Levi Dowling.

When Ali died, Wallace Ford, a salesman from Detroit, appeared on the scene claiming to be Ali's reincarnation. He claimed that he was born in Mecca and had been sent to America to redeem the black man from the Caucasian devil. One of Ford's spokesmen, Elijah Mohammed (formerly Robert Pool) helped him to found the "nation of Islam". Elijah Mohammed insisted that Ford was an incarnation of Allah himself. In 1935 Ford disappeared from sight and Elijah Mohammed assumed leadership of the organisation.

Elijah Mohammed was jailed during World War II as a conscientious objector and styled himself the messenger of Allah and effectively recruited black prisoners for his cause. His message to them was that Wallace Ford was the God and Messiah predicted by Christians and the Mahdi proclaimed by Moslems. The white beast, created by mad black scientists had been allowed to reign for 6 000 years and that period ended in 1914, and the time was ripe for the "nation of Islam" and the divine black god-men guided by Allah, to arise and take control of the world.

A new figure came on the scene by the name of Malcom X. He became the mouth-piece of Elijah Mohammed and was an eloquent evangelist until he was murdered by one of Mohammed's rivals on February 1, 1965. During the 1960's, membership blossomed in the turbulent racially tense America, and dozens of temples were opened in ghettos and neighbourhoods. They then moved into the churches of former white congregations who had fled the inner cities for the suburbs. They prospered, bought farms, started self-help schemes, opened businesses and projects. They are disciplined, preach on cleanliness and morality and align themselves with Islamic teachings in the main. They differ, however, on racial issues and preach a racial intolerance.

The Koran is accepted to be the holy scripture of god's prophet, although they also entertain fanciful speculation that the black man originated on the moon 65 trillion years ago. Critics of Black Muslims have labelled their theology as racial hatred, but Black Muslims prefer to call it "social separation". Heaven and hell play no part in their theology, as they believe the black man went through his hell during the time of slavery and therefore is now called to reign.

Upon the death of Elijah Mohammed in 1965, his son Wallace took over the movement. His leadership lacked some of the strength of his father. His most important change was to drop

the racial or social separation teachings, which alienated them from so many people. With this new image, Black Muslims have gained official recognition as an orthodox Islamic body under the name “Community of Islam in the West”. Followers of this movement are now referred to as Bilalians. Bilal was supposedly the first black convert of the prophet Mohammed.

B. Mission Statement

Universal appeal to black youth who feel exploited by the predominantly white society and are promised a vision of a black ruled nation. A call to nationalistic supremacy and the promoting of self respect based on a strict moral code.

Since God is black and the black man is a god, recognising these facts "will help blacks to shed the white man's religion (i.e. Christianity)". Black Muslims promote a self-sufficient black economy and demand to have seven or eight states ceded to them in order to establish a black nation. Their Black Muslim god is Wallace Ford, believed to be Allah incarnate – the Saviour of mankind.

TEN RULES FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH YOUR MUSLIM NEIGHBOURS:

- 1. USE THE WORD OF GOD.** Muslims respect the sacred books: the law of Moses, Psalms, The Gospels and Koran (Quran). Let the Word of God speak for itself. The Gospels are the best portions to start with, particularly Matthew and Luke.
- 2. BE CONSTANT IN PRAYER.** It is the Holy Spirit who wins men to Christ. Seek His guidance and power as you present the Word.
- 3. BE A GENUINE FRIEND.** Saying “Hello” is not enough. If you really care, show it by inviting them into your home, sharing your time, and helping with their problems.
- 4. ASK THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTIONS.** “Do you expect to go to heaven?” “Do you have the assurance that God will accept you?” “What does the Koran teach about forgiveness?” “May I show you what the Bible teaches?” Questions like these show that you have an interest in the important things in life.
- 5. LISTEN ATTENTIVELY.** When you ask a question, courtesy requires that you listen to the answer no matter how long it takes. You will be surprised at how much you learn.
- 6. PRESENT YOUR BELIEFS OPENLY.** State what you believe, clearly and without apology, showing Scripture passages that support those teachings. Thus, you place the responsibility for doctrine where it belongs – on the Word of God.
- 7. REASON - DON'T ARGUE.** Argument may win a point but lose a hearing. There are some points on which you can argue forever without achieving a thing, except closing a mind against you.
- 8. NEVER DENIGRATE MUHAMMAD OR THE KORAN.** This is as offensive to them as speaking disrespectfully about Christ or the Bible is to us.
- 9. RESPECT THEIR CUSTOMS AND SENSITIVITIES.** Do not offend by putting your Bible (a holy book) on the floor, or appearing too free with the opposite sex, or refusing hospitality, or making jokes about sacred topics such as fasting, prayer, or God.
- 10. PERSEVERE.** Muslims have a lot of re-thinking to do when they are confronted with the Gospel. But rest assured that the Word of God will do its work, in His good time.

Hinduism

Lesson 3

A. Introduction

Hinduism is perhaps the oldest of all false religions and probably the most difficult to understand. There is no order of function and therefore you cannot approach the subject as one building a house; first foundations, then walls, then separate rooms linked by doorways or passages of truth. Hinduism at first glance appears to be more like a dense, impenetrable, tropical forest rather than a house, with no formal structure or system at all. The very essence of Hindu faith is to be found in the text contained in the "Vedas" the most sacred of all Hindu texts: "Truth is one. They call him by different names".

Many religious systems (*not* Christianity) promote an inclusive viewpoint, but ultimately require adherence to specific beliefs, which set them apart from others. Not so Hinduism, which is an all-encompassing faith and strives to adopt any and all other doctrines of faith into its own interpretation and frame of reference.

In the words of **Radna Krishna** "While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits".

Mahatma Gandhi "A man may not believe in God, and still call himself a Hindu".

B. Origin

To try and grasp the origin of this religion, it is important to look at Indian history.

THE FIRST PERIOD was called "Pre-Vedic" and dates back 3000 years. These settlers on the Indian peninsula were Animistic. Local deities were worshipped in a manner resembling witchcraft.

THE SECOND PERIOD came with the Aryan Conquerors. They brought their own gods – such as "Soma" – a deity of the hallucinogenic soma plant.

The "Vedas" (wise sayings) dominated the religious philosophy of this second period. These sayings were passed on orally and collected in written form about 1000 BC, known as the "Rig Veda". During that period the polytheistic nature of Hinduism developed (33 million gods).

That time also saw the development of the caste system:

Brahmins	were priests and scholars
Kshatriyas	were rulers and soldiers
Vaishyas	were merchants and farmers
Sudras	were peasants and servants

The Untouchables were added later. This group was made up of about 3 000 sub castes.

In later years the caste system became the justification for the doctrine of **KARMA** (deeds

determining destiny). Therefore, your destiny and fate was sealed at birth, being determined by your previous life.

THE THIRD PERIOD called the "Upanishadic period" started about 600 BC. Until that period there was positive hope for the devotee, as provision was made for exorcism and spell casting, etc. The Vedic gods were finite super-humans, who lived a life of licentiousness and debauchery.

The Upanishads developed this grass-roots religion of the masses into a **MONISTIC** (matter and mind are one) philosophic faith. Life was seen as an endless cycle of the soul's transmigration. Escaping the law of Karma and achieving liberation from the wheel of life would occur only when the "ATMAN" (soul of the individual) would be identified with and absorbed into the Universal Soul (**BRAHMAN**). This religious world-view known as **BRAHMANISM** was the beginning of modern Hinduism as it is known today.

THE FOURTH PERIOD began and developed after the Christian era began. Vedantic Literature became the dominant "scripture". Philosopher **SHANKARA** expounded the Theory of **MAYA** (all matter and reality is illusory). Self-renunciation and moral duty became a pathway to freedom from self and inclusion into the impersonal One (=Nirvana – a heavenly state).

C. Articles of Faith

There are none as this faith is all encompassing, although all Hindus share the same basic foundation of beliefs.

Certain sects may emphasise one school of literature over another, for there are many, but the Vedas and Upanishads and Smriti are common to all.

Hinduism's two basic theological premises are rooted in **PANTHEISM** (the belief that God is at one with and pervasive in all created matter) and **MONISM** (the idea that all is one, the universe exists as a unitary principle).

The divisions of Hinduism are devotional and not theological, although the choice of your favourite deity tends to give direction to your school of thought.

In Hindu thought:

1. **BRAHMA** is the creator. (Brahma is the masculine form of Braman, which is neuter.)
2. **VISHNU** is the preserver.
3. **SHIVA (or Siva)** is the destroyer.

These three comprise the Hindu trinity. Vishnu and Shiva being the most popular.

At the centre of Hinduism is a monotheistic riddle which views reality as being of one essence (indispensable quality or element), but also insists that it has many forms or expressions (polytheism). The human soul (Atman) is divine and yearns for union with Brahma. This Brahma-Atman unity produces an illuminating, mystical experience. In this state self is dissolved and disappears into the oneness of God. Therefore, since man is ultimately god and sin is merely an illusion, moral guilt and final judgement for one's conduct are debatable concepts of little importance.

Four Ways to Salvation

The philosophy of Yoga (union with god) has four main streams or paths to follow for salvation.

1. **BHAKTI YOGA** the way of devotion.
2. **KARMA YOGA** the way of service.
3. **JWANA YOGA** the way of knowledge.
4. **RAJA YOGA** the way of contemplation.

The choice of which to follow is each person's own preference.

Further beliefs and practices

1. A Hindu sees his physical nature as the reason for his soul's bondage; he looks to re-incarnation as his hope. (This is the opposite to resurrection.)
2. The consciousness of a Hindu is irrelevant as he may come back as an animal or even a plant. (Opposite to Bible teaching – we never lose our identity.)
3. A Hindu sees a soul as part of a whole. (Opposite to Genesis' teaching, where each person is an individual and a divine act of creation.)
4. **Incarnation** – Because of pressure from Christianity (God's love for man through Jesus Christ) a new doctrine was formulated whereby the impersonal, unknowable god of Hinduism would manifest himself amongst his people once in each age when they were desperately in need.

This God-man is called an AVATAR. This is not a once-off experience like Jesus was as a Saviour, but a recurring experience to constantly show men the way to God. The Avatar is a human object of veneration and worship, i.e. Krishna, Rama, etc.

Other Offices, or Priesthood

- Swamis** celibate monks, ascetics.
Sadhus less educated holy men.
Guru religious teacher who has mastered Yoga.
Satguru perfect master able to give instantaneous enlightenment.

D. In Conclusion

The Hindu strives to attain purity by becoming a god, part of which requires that he worship man and animals.

In the BHAGAVAD-GITA, chapter 10, KRISHNA declares, "I am the Prince of Demons".

Even today certain groups regularly sacrifice animals and humans, as they seek to satisfy their gods and come to this ecstatic state of purity and illumination, finally becoming god as self is dissolved and they are absorbed into the oneness of god.

Spiritism (Sometimes misnamed spiritualism)

Lesson 4

The basic principle of spiritism is the foretelling of future events or the disclosure of hidden knowledge through pretended communication with the spirits of the dead.

Persons who claim to have this power of communication with the "dead" are commonly known today as **mediums**. (King James Version designates such persons as having "familiar spirits".)

It is an **ancient form of deception** and **one of the oldest of religious cults**. The Word of God strictly forbids spiritism. See Lev.19:31, 20:6,27, Deut.18:11, Isa.8:19-20. "Anyone who does these things is an object of horror and disgust to the Lord". (Deut.18:9-12).

There is as yet no scientific proof for any communication with the dead (necromancy) in spite of the most determined efforts by its adherents. We believe that it is inconceivable that the dead can be disturbed by the incantations of men and women ... or the inhabitants of the realms of the dead (both in hades and heaven) would be subject to the price of mediums whose practices God thoroughly condemns. **Demon spirits take the shape and form of the deceased, or merely imitate the voice and give a message.**

Many mediums have been exposed as **frauds**, but much spiritistic activity is very real – an indication of demonic power whose source is the prince of darkness himself. Even adherents admit that Spiritism is beset with the **gravest dangers**, often resulting in moral degradation, madness and even death.

Spiritists repeatedly attempt to prove that the Bible endorses Spiritism and claim that many Biblical characters, including the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ, were mediums and encouraged such practices. "For those who believe, spiritualism leads to God" (Dr. Marcus Bach).

Gal.5:16-21 warns against "Spiritism (that is, encouraging the activity of demons)..". (Living Bible). In the light of Old Testament and New Testament scriptures it is very clear that a Christian who attends Spiritist meetings does so in direct disobedience to God's command.

Definition of Spiritism – National Spiritualist Association:

"A Spiritualist is one who believes, as the basis of his or her religion, in the communication between this and the spirit world by means of mediumship, and who endeavours to mould his or her character and conduct in accordance with the highest teachings derived from such communication".

Its seven principles are:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Brotherhood of Man.
3. Continuous Existence.
4. Communion of spirits and Ministry of Angels.
5. Personal responsibility.
6. Compensation of retribution hereafter for good or evil done on earth.

7. A path of endless progression.

They also believe in prophecy, clairvoyance (power of discerning objects not present to the senses), gift of tongues, laying on of hands, healing, visions, trance revelations, automatic writing and materialisation (ability of spirits to assume visible or concrete form).

"Spiritualism is the greatest revelation the world has ever known" (Conan Doyle).

"Spiritualism is an outpouring of the spirit upon humanity, a divine revelation from the spheres of light. It is the highest message of truth which we have ... the great redeemer, the emancipator which releases human souls from the bondage of superstition and ignorance.." (*Spiritualist Manual* Revision of 1940)

A. A brief look at its history

1. Spiritism in the Old Testament.

It is a cult of antiquity. Note, for example the following scriptures:

- Ancient Egyptians practised magic, sorcery and necromancy and used these powers to duplicate some of Moses' miracles – Exod.7:11, 8:18, etc.
- Death penalty for sorcerers – Exod.22:18, Lev.20:27.
- Called those consorting with "familiar spirits" and "wizards" **cursed** by God – Lev.19:31, 20:6 (i.e. "familiar spirits" – demons; "wizards" – mediums).
- Daniel came into contact with them – Dan.1:20, 2:2, 2:27, 4:7, 5:7.
- Isa.8:19, 19:3, 47:9 speak of ancient spiritists who cast sorcery upon Israel.
- King Saul, before his apostasy, upon God's command drove them out of Israel – 1 Sam.28:3,9 – and later died because of his decision to consult with the witch of Endor (1 Chron.10:13-14).
- King Josiah expelled them as well – 2 Kings 23:24.
- Manasseh's downfall was a result of it – 2 Kings 21:6, 2 Chron.33:6.
- Egyptians, Babylonians, Chaldeans and Canaanites all practised spiritism. God told the Israelites: "The nations you replace all do these **EVIL** things, but **the Lord, your God WILL NOT PERMIT YOU TO DO SUCH THINGS**" (Deut.18:9-12) (Living Bible).

See also Lev.19:26; Isa.2:6, 47:12-14; Jer.27:9-10; Zech.10:2; Mal.3:5.

2. Spiritism in the New Testament.

- Gal.5:20 – condemns witchcraft as "acts of the sinful nature".
- Rev.9:21 – condemnation for those who do not repent of their sorcery.
- Rev.21:8 – "those who practise magic arts...their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur".
- 1 Tim.4:1-2 – In the last days many shall abandon the faith "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons".
- Acts 13 – Paul and Elymas the sorcerer (v. 6-11) "You son of the devil ... will you never end your opposition to the Lord?"
- See also Acts 8:9ff, Acts 16:16ff, Acts 19:19, Rev.22:15, Gal.5:20.
- Whenever Jesus dealt with evil spirits in the Gospels, He cast them out and bound their power. There is no demonic force that can withstand the power and

presence of the Holy Spirit.

3. **Spiritism in modern days.**

It is a very old delusion, but its **modern revival** began with the **Fox Sisters** on the 31st March 1848, when their family moved to Hydesville, New York. Margaret and Kate Fox, the two youngest daughters of the family of six children, developed into mediums and claimed to have worked out a code of communication with the author of the strange rappings heard in the house. These are known as the "Rochester Rappings" and the cottage today is a shrine of this movement. Much publicity was given to these "rappings" and the movement developed and spread far and wide. It is interesting to note that the majority of mediums today are women.

Spiritism has a strong appeal to those who have lost somebody through death, because of its offer to make contact with the lost one from beyond the grave.

B. What do they believe about ... ?

1. **God.**

"God" is "infinite intelligence" – i.e. a "**supreme IMPERSONAL power**". "Infinite intelligence pervades and controls the universe, and is without shape or form, it is impersonal, omnipresent and omnipotent".

2. **The Trinity.**

Absolutely denied.

The first thing, which the Christian has to face, is that the doctrine of the Trinity seems to have no adherents in circles of the spiritists' world. The divinity of Christ as a co-equal partner with the Father is universally denied. The Christian doctrine of the remission of sins to the penitent, through the virtue of Christ's sacrifice and atonement, is vigorously denied. Their hymnal is changed accordingly and all reference to the Trinity removed.

3. **The Person of Jesus Christ.**

"It is an absurd idea that Jesus was any more divine than any other man" (Dr Weisse, a noted spiritist).

"All testimony from advanced spirits only shows that Christ was a medium or reformer in Judea; that he is now an advanced spirit in the sixth sphere; but that he never claimed to be God and does not at present" (Weisse).

"Tom Paine is in the seventh sphere, one above our Lord, though he was so many centuries behind him in entering into the spirit life" (Weisse).

"The miraculous conception of Christ is merely a fabulous tale" (Haweis).

In all their services His Name is carefully omitted in their prayers and the motto of every man is: "Every man, his own priest and his own saviour". Sir Conan Doyle declared that our Lord was a superior sort of medium – and he only regrets "that he often lost his tongue" (!).

Spiritists completely deny the very existence of miracles.

"Miracle, means something done in defiance of natural law, therefore there are no miracles. The demonstrations you speak of can be manifested today by our Sensitives (often called mediums) by the application of perfectly natural forces, when necessary conditions for such manifestations are provided".

4. The work of Jesus Christ (The Atonement).

Totally denied.

"The whole doctrine of original sin, the fall, the vicarious atonement, the placation of the Almighty by blood – all this is abhorrent to me. The spirit-guides do not insist upon these aspects of religion" (Sir A. Conan Doyle).

"Vicarious atonement has no place in the philosophy of spiritualism – sooner or later everyone shall be in perfect bliss through his own efforts".

"Advanced spirits do not teach the atonement of Christ ... nothing of the kind" (Nicholas).

"Your doctrine of atonement is the very climax of a deranged imagination and one that is of the unrighteous and immoral tendency" (Hall).

"We regret and condemn the practice of spiritualists sending their children to be instructed at the various religious denominations in the teaching of a vicarious atonement, or salvation by faith and not of works" (Spiritists' Convention, UK).

5. Resurrection of Christ and Second Coming.

Absolutely denied, as is also the resurrection of the believer.

6. Salvation/Sin & Judgement/Heaven and Hell.

Denial of the resurrection, judgement to come and man's eternal destiny.

Salvation

"The doorway to reformation is never closed" – even in the life to come.

"Even the most degraded personality can in time attain to the greatest heights ... each must work out his own salvation ... it is easier, however, to begin progress in earth life".

"Future bliss" is not by faith in "notions of atonement and vicarious sacrifice" but by **"merit that man lays up for himself by slow and laborious process"**.

Sin and judgement

"Every soul will progress through the ages to heights, sublime and glorious, where God is love and love is God".

"The wicked must compensate for their evil deeds, here and hereafter, and attain a stay of justice before they are prepared to enter upon the path which leads to spiritual happiness and progression".

Heaven and hell

"We do not believe in such places as purgatory and hell. Communicating spirits have merely graduated from this form of life into another. That life can be heaven or hell-like, just as each spirit chooses to make it; the same applies to our life here".

"We do not believe in 'demons', imaginary beings whose existence cannot be proven ... We believe in intelligent and ignorant spirits. No being is naturally 'evil' or 'bad' – evil always originates in ignorance".

Spiritists believe in different spheres, not in heaven or hell.

7. Man.

"The spark of divinity dwells in all" – and all are the children of God.

"The fall of man is a legend and misleading".

"Man is a spiritual being, elevated from the lower forms of life, up through the period of consciousness (i.e. life on earth), to the state of higher moral and spiritual faculties which survive, unaffected, the decomposition of the physical body".

"Every human soul born into life is a child of God".

"Spiritualism proclaims 'the doorway to reformation is never closed against any soul here or hereafter'".

8. The Holy Spirit.

Personality and Deity denied. See their doctrine of "God".

9. The Bible.

They do not accept the Bible as the one and only God-given revelation. Spiritism "accepts truth wherever it is found".

Their Bible interpretation is highly fantastic – for example, the transfiguration and appearances of the risen Christ are viewed as "materialisations". They insist that Peter in Acts 5:1 PSYCHICALLY proves Ananias guilty of cheating.

C. Conclusion

- Spiritism involves a denial of all major Christian doctrines (e.g. the personality of God, the atonement of Christ, the authority of the scriptures, etc.)
- It produces supernatural manifestations that the Bible describes as originating in demonic forces.
- It is practised, therefore, by persons who wilfully ignore God and the Bible and His declared means of making men holy – i.e. the sending of His Son into the world that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16,36).
- It is imperative for the child of God to abstain from any contact with spiritists and their religion, save only to present to them the claims of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- Luke 16: Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus tells us emphatically that there is no communication between the spirits of the departed and those who are alive. ("It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgement" – Heb.9:27).

DEFINITION OF A "SORCERER"

"User of magic arts, wizard, enchanter" (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

"Person who practises magic with the aid of evil spirits; magician; witch".

Sorcery: "Magic performed with the aid of evil spirits, witchcraft" (Thorndike English Dictionary).

Jehovah's Witnesses [Watchtower Bible and Tract Society]

Lesson 5

Also known as: Millennial Dawn International Bible Student Association

A. History

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society came into existence in the year 1884 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Charles Taze Russell was both the founder and first president of the society and was the man that brought into existence the organisation that is now known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

Russell was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1852 and grew up as a strict Congregationalist. Early in his religious experience he revolted violently against the concept of hell and eternal punishment for the unsaved. This started him on a path which culminated in Russell's denial of practically every major Christian doctrine of faith: from the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the bodily resurrection from the grave, right through to the visible second advent of our Lord. Russell was a controversial figure for many years and was also a prolific writer who put out the series of six volumes entitled "Studies in the Scriptures" as they are known today. Originally they were entitled "Millennial Dawn". Pastor Russell, as he was now called, was a man of great energy and devoted his life to his newfound faith.

On October 31, 1916, aboard a transcontinental train near Pampa, Texas, the first president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Pastor Taze Russell, passed away. He was wrapped, according to his last wishes, in a bed sheet resembling a Roman toga.

It is interesting to note that modern day Jehovah's Witnesses try desperately to distance themselves from their roots, denying that they are still following Pastor Russell's theology. However, at his death, there was a scramble for the vacant position, which resulted in the election of Judge J.F. Rutherford as successor of Russell. It was Rutherford who, with his marvellous business acumen, tremendous vitality and insatiable drive for accomplishment, made this little-known religion into a multi-million dollar religion. It was during the time of Joseph Franklin Rutherford that the Watchtower and Bible Tract Society was first called Jehovah's Witnesses.

B. Origin of their beliefs

The theology of the Jehovah's Witnesses is eclectic by nature, that is, it is by no means original. Their basic theology is borrowed, and they are in fact modern followers of the great Arian heresy promulgated in the third century of the Christian church. Pastor Russell got his doctrine from Arius of Alexandria, a learned presbyter who denied categorically the deity of Jesus Christ. Therefore to understand their theology, we must look back.

The Arians of the 4th Century.

At that time in the Christian Church's history, its two greatest opponents were the Romans and the Arians, who came against the Christians both politically and doctrinally. The Arian heresy challenged the cornerstone of all Christendom and the authority of the Bible itself, by denying with boldness the true deity of Jesus Christ. They said that Christ was higher than man, but inferior to God, and not eternal.

The origin of the controversy between those orthodox Christians who believed Jesus Christ to be truly God and truly man, and those called "Arians" began in the year 319 AD with Arius of Alexandria, a learned teacher and presbyter of the Alexandrian Church in Egypt.

Arius of Alexandria actually learned his theology from Lucian of Antioch, a leader of the Syrian church, whose scholar he was for a while. This Greek-thinking mystic trained a whole group of potential enemies to orthodox Christianity and schooled them in the cleverness of "dialectical theology". The rationalistic theology of Greece had begun to infiltrate itself into the Christian doctrine, forever seeking a reasonable explanation to revelations and mysteries that were never intended to be fully understood outside of the mind of God. (Colossians 2:2-3.) They based their teaching on the concept that "once the son of God was not" thereby challenging the eternal deity of Christ. Lucian was martyred by zealous orthodox disciples. Arius of Alexandria took up where he left off.

The **Arian heresy** can be summed up in this short proposition:

1. If God the Father gave birth to the son, then Jesus Christ, who was born, has an origin of existence.
2. Therefore, once the Son was not.
3. And therefore, He was created.

Arius, like those before him, arrived at this seemingly reasonable theory because, not fully comprehending Scripture, he sought to supply an answer for a question the Bible never completely answered: namely, how Christ is both God and man, never ceasing to be either yet true to each nature.

Anthanasius, the greatest adversary of Arianism, said that there was unity between the divinity of the Father and the divinity of Christ. This wrestling over doctrines went through the whole church. **Constantine** tried to solve the dispute and at last called for a meeting of bishops in **Nicea in AD325**. Anthanasius, still a deacon, was permitted to speak but not to vote. He managed to convince most of the council of the truth of his doctrines and was shortly thereafter elected as Bishop of Alexandria at only 33 years of age. He lived in peace until his death in AD373 and his views became the general doctrine of the Christian Church.

The first ecumenical council, the **Council of Nicea (325 AD)** and the ecumenical **Council of Constantinople (381 AD)** established the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. These two ecumenical councils have been traditionally linked together by the Nicene Creed.

The purpose of the Nicene Creed was to refute the Arian claim that the Son was the highest creation of God and thus essentially different from the Father. [A creed (from the Latin "credo" – "I believe") is an authoritative statement of the main articles of the Christian faith to which believers are expected to assent]. Therefore, the Nicene Creed affirms the unity of God, insists that Christ was begotten from the Father from before all time and declares that Christ is of the same essence as the Father. Thus the Son is God in every respect. The Creed also upholds the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are a modern counterpart of the Arians of the 4th Century and have adopted almost verbatim the Christological formula (the doctrine of Christ, His person and nature) that Arius made popular.

C. Comparing their doctrines to what the Bible says

Here we shall look at what they say regarding: the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Resurrection of Christ, the Return of Christ and the existence of Hell and Eternal Punishment.

The doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses:

What the Bible says:

The Trinity

(Speaking of John 1:1-3)

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) “Does this mean that Jehovah God (Elohim) and the Son are two persons but at the same time one God and members of a so-called “trinity” or “triune god”? When religion so teaches it violates the Word of God, wrests the Scriptures to the destruction of those who are misled, and insults God-given intelligence and reason”.
<i>(The Truth Shall Make You Free, p45)</i> | John 1:1; 14:16,26
Genesis 1:26; 11:7
Isaiah 9:6
Matthew 28:19 |
| b) “Only the religious “Trinitarians” are presumptuous enough to claim, without Scriptural basis, that two other persons are equal with Jehovah God; but Jesus does not Himself claim to be one of such persons”. <i>(The Kingdom Is at Hand, p507)</i> | |
| c) “The Trinity doctrine was not conceived by Jews or the early Christians”. <i>(Let God Be True, p92)</i> | |
| d) “The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that Satan is the originator of the Trinity doctrine”.
<i>(Let God Be True, p82)</i> | |

The Deity of Christ

- | | |
|--|--|
| a) “The true Scriptures speak of God's Son, the Word, as “a god”. He is a “mighty God”, but not “the Almighty God”, who is Jehovah”.
<i>(The Truth Shall Make You Free, p47)</i> | John 1:1, 14, 18
John 5:18; 8:58
John 20:28; 17:1-5 |
| b) “At the time of his beginning of life he was created by the everlasting God, Jehovah, without the aid or instrumentality of any mother. In other words, he was the first and direct creation of Jehovah God... He was the start of God's creative work. He was not an incarnation in flesh but was flesh, a human Son of God, a perfect man, no longer a spirit, although having a spiritual or heavenly post and background”.
<i>(The Kingdom Is at Hand, pp. 46, 47, 49)</i> | Phil.2:8 - 11
Col.1:16-17; 2:9
Heb.1:1-4
Titus 2:13
Rev.1:8, 12-18 |
| c) “This One was not Jehovah God, but was existing in the form of God ... he was a spirit person ... he was a | |

mighty one although not Almighty as Jehovah God is; he was a god, but not the Almighty God who is Jehovah". (*Let God Be True*, p34, 35)

- d) "Being the only begotten Son of God .. the Word would be a prince among all other creatures. In this office he [Christ] bore another name in heaven, which name is "Michael"... Other names were given to the Son in the course of time". (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p49)

The Resurrection of Christ (physical)

- a) "In his resurrection he was no more human. He was raised as a spirit creature".
(*The Kingdom Is at Hand*, p258) John 2:17-19
John 20:27-28
- b) "Jehovah God raised him from the dead, not as a human son, but as a mighty immortal spirit son... So the King Christ Jesus was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature".
(*Let God Be True*, pp. 43, 122) Luke 24:39-44
Mark 16:14
1 Cor.15:15
- c) "Therefore the bodies in which Jesus manifested himself to his disciples after his return to life were not the bodies in which he was nailed to the tree. They were merely materialised for the occasion, resembling on one or two occasions the body in which he died..."
(*The Kingdom Is at Hand*, p259)
- d) "The Firstborn one from the dead was not raised out of the grave a human creature, but he was raised a spirit".
(*Let God Be True*, p272)

The return of Christ (visible)

- a) "Christ Jesus comes, not as a human but as a glorious spirit". (*Let God Be True*, p185) Matt.24:30
Rev.1:7
1 Thess.4:16-17
Zech.12:10
- b) "Since no earthly men have ever seen the Father... neither will they see the glorified Son..."
(*Let God Be True*, p186)
- c) "It is a settled Scriptural truth, therefore, that human eyes will not see him at his second coming, neither will he come in a fleshly body".

"Christ Jesus came to the Kingdom in AD 1914, but unseen to men". (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, pp. 295, 300)

The existence of Hell and Eternal Punishment

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| a) | “The Bible hell is the tomb, the grave ...”
(<i>Let God Be True</i> , p72) | Matt.5:22; 8:11-12
Matt.13:42-50 |
| b) | “God-dishonouring doctrine...”
(<i>Let God Be True</i> , p79) | Matt.25:41,46
2 Peter 2:17 |
| c) | “The doctrine of a burning hell where the wicked are tortured eternally after death cannot be true...”
(<i>Let God Be True</i> , p80) | Jude 13 |

D. Summary

Whilst the Jehovah's Witnesses are zealous in their witness of what they believe, it is clear that what they believe is quite different to what Christians believe.

Their terminology is the same: they use words such as "born again", declare that they believe that Jesus is God, but as we have seen they do not mean what we mean when we use those terms.

Jesus clearly stated that He was the way, the truth and the life and that no man could come to the Father but through Him. If Jesus was not God, then He was not a perfect sacrifice, if He was not the perfect sacrifice, then He was unable to take our sin and therefore we would not be able to state that by God's grace we have been forgiven or redeemed. That is why no Jehovah's Witness will be able to tell you that he is sure of his salvation, and that is why they work so hard, for they have to (by the effort of their own flesh and their own goodness) work their way into the favour and acceptance of the God which they serve.

Caution:

We must never forget in our zeal to "contend for the faith", that Jehovah's Witnesses are souls for whom Christ died. Whilst we must refute their anti-Christian teachings, we should neither run from them, nor scorn them, but rather show them the redemptive love of Christ, so that His grace may reach them also through repentance.

Mormonism

Lesson 6

A. Introduction

Mormonism falls into the category of new religions and had its source and origin in America.

Charles W. Ferguson (in his book, *The Confusion of Tongues*, p366) says its "Bible" came into being at Palmyra, New York. It proclaimed Zion to be first in Illinois and later in Utah. Its sacred history deals with North and South America, with landmarks familiar to us all and not with events in far off Judea. Its "Exodus" took place across the plains of our continent, its "Red Sea" was the Mississippi and when the last trumpet sounds, Jesus is coming to American soil – the headquarters in Salt Lake City.

Joseph Smith claimed to be a prophet and had the revelations on which Mormonism is based. He was born in Sharon, Vermont, on the 23rd December 1805 and was martyred at Carthage in Illinois on the 27th June 1844. His statue, standing in Sharon, gives testimony to this.

Joseph Smith's father also claimed to be a prophet, whilst his mother, Lucy Smith, was known as versed in the occult (she would be called "psychic" today).

In the year 1820, Joseph Smith had his first vision. Three years passed and Joseph Smith had a dream that led him to start the new religion called Mormonism.

Joseph claims that not far from Palmyra, a resurrected saint called the **angel Moroni** (who had apparently died in about AD 400) had appeared to him. This angel Moroni gave Joseph Smith an important message. Apparently Moroni had been the son of Mormon and the last of the Nephites, which were a group who had been destroyed by their rivals, the Lamanites. This whole story was recorded on certain golden tablets that Moroni had hidden under the hill Cumorah, until the appointed time for their disclosure to the prophet of the latter day church.

Joseph greatly desired these valuable plates and wanted to look for them immediately, but he was rebuked by the angel and told that he could not have them for four more years. During those four years he visited the site regularly.

In 1827 Joseph Smith was permitted by the angel to take the tablets home. Joseph Smith claimed to have these tablets in his possession for three years before he started their translation. These tablets were inscribed in "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics" and were translated by Smith using his personal Rosetta Stone which he called the "urim and thummim". Because he was the only one able to look upon the tablets, he strung a sheet across his room and got his friend, Martin Harris, to take down the translation as he read it to him from behind this curtain. Harris was not allowed to see the tablets, for his eyes were too profane to look upon these celestial tablets.

Oliver Cowdery later took over from Harris, being more literate and thought to be better at the job. Finally, in 1830, the new revelation was published in Palmyra and three witnesses certified the existence of the plates. In August of that year, **the Church of Christ**, which later became the **Church of Christ of the Latter Day Saints**, was formed by six people

who met at Fayette, New York. In 1831 Joseph left New York for Kirkland, Ohio. From there he went to Missouri (according to history this was done in a hurry as there was a threat of a huge bank fraud hanging over his head). Things did not go too well for him there either and ultimately he moved to a new place on the banks of the Mississippi, called Nauvoo, in Illinois. It was here that militia killed him in 1844.

In 1847 **Brigham Young**, using hard-headed business principles rather than revelations and visions, led the followers to a new area in Utah. There they are today and have grown to many million strong. Once rejected by the American people, whom they call the Gentiles, they now seem reconciled to them – they all live happily side-by-side. This, of course, was not always the case in the early days under Joseph Smith.

B. Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints

Joseph Smith received the revelation of the articles of faith and set out thirteen general statements as the main points of Mormon belief.

As we look at some of these, we will see that they sound very similar to the articles of faith for Christian believers. However, their interpretation of these articles bears no resemblance to the traditional Christian doctrines on which we base our faith.

Article I: "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost".

What do the Latter Day Saints mean by the above article?

- a) Firstly, this is not a trinity of three persons in one God, for Mormon catechism teaches that there are many gods. These many gods are human beings grown divine. "God Himself was once as we now are and is an exalted man". (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p4).
"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's". (Joseph Smith, *The Doctrine of Covenants*).
Roberts (*The Lord Has Spoken*, p314) argues this same point from the position of the physicality of the Son, Christ. If Christ was physical, then the Father must also be physical.
- b) "The gods not only have bodies and wives, but are polygamous, with an endless progeny of children. The difference between the Holy Spirit and the other gods is that the Holy Spirit has a more refined materiality". (Smith, *Compendium of Doctrine*, p259). Mormonism teaches that all spirit is material and all matter is eternal.

Article III: "We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel".

As with all modern religions and cults, salvation is by works and not by grace through faith. This is based on their understanding that the death of Christ cancelled the necessity of man's dying. With the penalty of sin removed by the atonement, man is apparently then in a position to earn his own salvation by his obedience to the law and gospel (John Taylor, *The Meditation and Atonement*, p170).

Talmage says it this way, "that the works of Mormonism are considered meritorious and deserving, is clear". Consistently, justification by faith is rejected. To understand this fully,

we must understand the Latter Day Saints' understanding of sin. "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression". (Talmage). Having rejected the doctrine of the imputation of the guilt of sin, Latter Day Saints likewise repudiate the transmission of inherent corruption, or original sin. (Joseph Smith, *Doctrine and Covenants*.)

The Latter Day Saints believe that even Adam cannot be held responsible for his sin. "His sin was not a sin and his fall was not downward but upward". Mormonism clearly states that Adam's sin was necessary and inevitable and that it affected mankind to great advantage.

Talmage states, "Adam found himself in a position that compelled him to disobey one of the requirements of God. He and his wife had been commanded to multiply and replenish the earth. Adam was still immortal, Eve had come under the penalty of mortality, and in such dissimilar conditions the two could not remain together, and therefore could not fulfil the divine requirement. On the other hand, Adam would be disobeying another command by yielding to his wife's request. He deliberately and wisely decided to stand by the first and greater commandment, and, therefore, with a full comprehension of the nature of his act, he also partook of the fruit that grew on the tree of knowledge. The fact that Adam acted understandably in this matter is affirmed by the Scriptures".

The Mormon catechism puts the whole matter more briefly and bluntly. "Was it necessary that Adam should partake of the forbidden fruit?" Answer: "Yes. Unless he had done so, he would not have known good and evil here, neither could he have had moral posterity". "Did Adam and Eve lament or rejoice because they had transgressed the commandment?" Answer: "They rejoiced and praised God".

Elder MacAlister gives this explanation, "The earthly bodies of Adam and Eve were no doubt intended by the heavenly father to be immortal tabernacles for their spirits, but it was necessary for them to pass through mortality and be redeemed through the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ that the fullness of life might come. Therefore, they knowingly disobeyed God's command".

They place a great importance on God's commandment for Adam and Eve to populate the earth, which is where the root of the Mormon's greatest moral defect, polygamy, lies.

Article VIII: "*We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly. We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God*".

While they consider the **Bible** and the **Book of Mormon** to be most authoritative books, the church of the Latter Day Saints also accepted Joseph Smith's **Doctrine and Covenants** and **Pearl of Great Price** as authoritative works.

The Book of Mormon is a record of extra-Biblical as well as Biblical history. The source of this information was allegedly taken from the golden plates that Joseph Smith translated with the aid of the "urim and thummim" from "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics".

The principal content of the Book of Mormon is the narrative of the dispersal of the Jews after their captivity and their settlement and struggle in America.

Further beliefs and practices.

1. Adam = God.

This is the doctrine that Adam was the Father God, based on the statement by Brigham Young in the *Journal of Discourses*: "When the virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. The Holy Ghost did not beget him. And who was the Father? He was the first of the human family – Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden and who is our Father in heaven".

2. Baptism for the Dead.

This practice of baptising the dead by proxy is based on the Mormon interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29, that no dead person may go to heaven until baptised. If we consider their understanding that flesh is immortal, then we will understand why they practice the baptism for the dead.

How do they view the subject of baptism for the dead? "Millions of earth sons and daughters have passed out of the body without obeying the law of baptism. Many of them will gladly accept the word and law of the Lord when it is proclaimed to them in the spirit world. But they cannot there attend to the ordinances that belong to the sphere that they have left. Can nothing be done in this case? Must they forever be shut out of the kingdom of heaven? Both justice and mercy join in answering "yes" to the first and "no" to the last question. What, then, is the way of their deliverance? The living may be baptised for the dead. This glorious truth, hidden from human knowledge for centuries, has been made known in this greatest of all divine dispensations. It gives men and women the power to become "saviours of Mt. Zion", Jesus being the great captain of the army of redeemers".

It is interesting to note that the Latter Day Saints have one of the most competent computerized systems in the world, set aside for this very purpose, and that all Mormons are involved in the collation of facts and genealogies necessary for this task. A Mormon missionary was asked about this and about how far back they would go. He stated "right back to Adam".

3. Three Heavens.

Mormon doctrine teaches that there are three heavens:

- a) **Celestial heaven** – the highest heaven reserved for faithful Mormons only.
- b) **Terrestrial heaven** – an earthly paradise reserved for non-Mormons who are ignorant of the truth, but who are nonetheless, honourable persons.
- c) **Telestial heaven** – the lowest of the three Mormon grades of heaven where the wicked apparently dwell.

4. Three migrations from the Bible lands.

According to the *Book of Mormon*, there were three migrations from the Bible lands.

The last two included the Lamanites and the Nephites. The Lamanites were warriors who eventually destroyed the Nephites. The Lamanites went on to become the American Indians. The Lamanites are said to have originally been descendants from one of the tribes of Israel.

5. Polygamy.

Whilst polygamy has been categorically denied by the officials of the Mormon church, the practice or principle remains. The principle comes from "the revelation of the eternity of the marriage covenant" which was given through Joseph the Seer, on July 12th, 1843, and reads as follows: "And again as pertaining to the law of the priesthood. If any man espouse a virgin and desire to espouse another and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second and they are virgins and have vowed to no other man, then he is justified, he cannot commit adultery, for they are given unto him. For he cannot commit adultery with that which belongeth to him and no one else. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery for they belong to him, and they are given unto him, therefore he is justified".

To further justify this "prophetic" word, a doctrine was developed that a woman cannot be saved without being "sealed" to a man. This brings us to "spiritual wifery".

6. Spiritual wifery.

This is a temple-performed marriage, in which a spiritual affinity occurs between the partners and makes the marriage eternal.

7. The Mormon Temple.

The Mormon temple plays a very important part in Mormonism. For here it is that the ritual of baptism of the dead by proxy, celestial marriages and spiritual wifery take place.

The Mormon temple is not to be confused with the local Mormon church. There are very few temples in the world and South Africa, which is seen as a major mission area for Mormons, has only one temple and that is located in Johannesburg. The temples, when they are first opened, are normally open to the public in general for a few days. At the end of that period, however, they become out of bounds for everyone except those select few who are invited to be part of temple ceremonies.

The temple ceremonies are secret and are not known to the average Mormon. These secret rituals are very similar to those practised in the Masonic Lodges. Joseph Smith who was initiated to Masonry on March 5th, 1842, along with several other Mormon leaders, organised the first Mason Lodge in Nauvoo, Illinois. He, along with 1500 other Mormons, were kicked out of Masonry shortly afterwards and immediately started the temple ceremonies of Mormonism.

Freemasonry

Lesson 7

A. Introduction

Isn't Freemasonry just a **secret society** that believes in doing good works?

Listen to what a Mason says: "Masonry is an eminently religious institution, and on this ground should the religious Mason defend it". [Taken from *The Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, Albert G. Mackey, former General Grand High Priest of the General Grand Chapter of the United States.]

Because Freemasonry is a secret society, some of its history is difficult to trace. However, it has been said that it originates as far back as the time of the building of King Solomon's temple. Some of its decrees are linked with ancient orders dating back to the crusades. Albert Pike, in *Morals and Dogmas*, states "The first Masonic legislator, whose memory is preserved to us by history, was Buddha who, about 1,000 years before the Christian era, reformed the religion of Manous. He called to the priesthood all men, without distinction of caste, who felt themselves inspired by God to instruct men".

The reliable history of the movement dates back to **1717 AD**, when two clergymen, a Presbyterian and an Anglican were instrumental in forming the **first Grand Lodge in London**.

Freemasonry is found in many parts of the world and has had considerable influence in the area of politics and religion. For instance, it is claimed that at least 15 of the American Presidents have been Masons.

B. Masonic Teachings

1. Their view of God.

In most Lodges God is acknowledged as "The Great Architect of the Universe", or "Supreme Grand Master", or "The Nameless One of a Hundred Names".

From Pike's *Morals and Dogmas* page 23: "It [Masonry] reverences all the great reformers. It sees in Moses – Law Giver of the Jews, in Confucius and Zoroaster, in Jesus of Nazareth and in the Arabian Iconoclast, great teachers of morality and eminent reformers if not more, and allows every brother of the Order to assign to each such higher and even divine character as his creed and truth require".

"We do not under-value the importance of any truth. We utter no word that can be deemed irreverent by anyone of any faith. We do not tell the Moslem that it is only important for him to believe that there is but one God, and wholly unessential whether Mohammed was his prophet. We do not tell the Hebrew that the Messiah whom he expects, was born in Bethlehem nearly 2,000 years ago, and that he is a heretic because he will not so believe. And as little do we tell the sincere Christian, that Jesus of Nazareth was but a man like us, or his history but the unreal revival of an older legend. To do either is beyond our jurisdiction".

“Masonry, of no one age, belongs to all time; of no one religion, it finds its great truths in all. To every Mason there is a God, one supreme, infinite in goodness, wisdom, foresight, justice and benevolence, creator, disposer and preserver of all things. How or by what intermediates he acts or creates, and in what way he unfolds and manifests himself, Masonry leaves to creeds and religions to inquire”.

2. **The Masonic Trinity.**

The Mason in the Royal Arch Degree, a degree through which the Knight Templar is to pass on his way to the "Christian Degree", has a secret name revealed to him at his initiation ceremony. This name is the name of the true God re-discovered and is "JAH-BUL-ON". "This", quotes Rongstad in *How To Respond To The Lodge*, "is the Royal Arch Mason's Trinity. JAH is an abbreviation for the Hebrew name of God "Yahweh", or "Jehovah". BUL or BAL is the name for the Assyrian deity mentioned throughout the Old Testament as Baal. ON is the Egyptian Sun God".

3. **Salvation.**

The following excerpts are from the Masonic “Bible”.

- a) Freemasonry is a complete system of symbolic teaching, and can be known only by those acquainted with its meaning.
- b) Its symbols are moral, philosophical and religious and reveal to the intelligent Mason the awful mystery of life and of death.
- c) A belief in God and a belief in a resurrection to a future life is the belief of every true Mason.
- d) "The cornerstone" in Masonic symbolism, signifies a true Mason.
- e) "By the lambskin", the Mason is reminded that purity of life and rectitude of conduct is so essentially necessary to his gaining admission to the celestial lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe forever resides.

And thus, guided by Masonry, they may live in hope of being accepted by the most high as successful candidates for admission into the Grand Lodge above.

4. **The New Birth.**

“The Lodge is then the reception of an entered apprentice, a symbol of the world, and the initiation is a type of the new life upon which the candidate is about to enter. He came inquiringly to our doors, seeking the new birth and asking a withdrawal of the veil which conceals divine truth from his uninitiated sight”. (*The Ritualist*, p22, by Mackey.)

5. **Further beliefs and practices.**

“*An Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences*”, by Albert G. Mackey, published by the Masonic History Company has the following quotations:

- a) **The Bible:** "The Bible is used by Masons as a symbol of the will of God, however it may be expressed. And therefore, whatever to any people expresses that will, may be used as a substitute for the Bible in a Masonic Lodge. Thus in a

Lodge consisting entirely of Jews, the Old Testament can be placed on the altar alone. The Turkish Masons make use of the Koran".

- b) **The Religion of Masonry:** "The religion of Masonry is not sectarian. It admits men of every creed within its hospitable bosom, rejecting none and approving none for his peculiar faith".
- c) **The Cross:** "On the revival in 1707 when the ritual was re-modified, it differed very greatly from the meagre one in practice among the Masons. All allusions to the cross were left out because Masonry was not sectarian but universal".
- d) **The Master Mason:** "As a Master Mason he is taught the truth most important and necessary of the truths, that having been faithful to all his trusts, he is at last to die and to receive the reward of his fidelity".
- e) **The Final Destination:** Being a secret society, the final destination will not be known until you arrive there. We saw under the Masonic teaching that they declare firstly that God is whoever you choose Him to be. We then see under "trinity", that He has a name and represents three known gods and his name is "JAH-BUL-ON, the true god". This "true god" is later revealed to be Lucifer. For reference we quote Albert Pike – "Sovereign of Universal Masonry". He also occupied simultaneously the position of Grand Master of the Central Directory of Washington and that of Grand Commander of the Sovereign Pontiff of Universal Freemasonry. On July 14, 1889, he gave these instructions to the 23 Supreme Councils of the World:

"To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the brethren of the 32nd, 31st, and 30th degrees. The Masonic religion should be by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferian doctrine. If Lucifer were not God, would Adonai (the God of the Christians), whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy, and hatred of man, barbarianism and repulsion for science, would Adonai and his priests calumniate him. Yes, Lucifer is God. Thus the doctrine of Satanism is a heresy and the true and pure philosophic religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonai (Jesus Christ). But Lucifer, the "God of Light" and "God of Good" is struggling for humanity, against Adonai, the "God of Darkness and Evil".

C. Conclusion

We note that:

- a) The Masonic religion is universal and syncretistic (attempting inconsistently to unify or reconcile differing schools of thought).
- b) The supreme degrees of Masonry worship Lucifer.
- c) Salvation through faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross is denied. Masonry offers salvation to its members on the basis of moral reformation alone.
- d) Exclusively male communities.
- e) Masonic initiation is symbolic of receiving the new birth.

Scientology

Lesson 8

In the late 1940's **Ron Hubbard** declared: "If a man really wants to make a million, the best way would be to start his own religion" ... and he did just that, calling it the "**Church of Scientology**" in 1954.

According to their literature....

- Scientology is "the fastest growing spiritual self-betterment and reform group in the world".
- "Man's situation needed a solution and Scientology is that solution".
- "Scientology helps man to become more able and brings about greater individual peace and happiness. This feeling of happiness becomes a major part of a Scientology individual's life".
- "In addition, one of the aims of Scientology is to achieve a world without insanity, war and crime".
- "Scientology helps people to achieve their goals ... Scientology makes it possible for any religion to attain its goals and is therefore a religion of religions. Scientology alone provides the essential answers to life".

A. What is “Scientology”?

The word "**Scientology**" was coined by Hubbard and means "**The study of knowledge**" or "**The science of knowledge**", i.e. "knowing how to know" "... in order that man can come to understand himself truly and fully so that he can bring peace with sanity to his earthly existence... It is a study of man as a spirit in his relationship to life and the physical universe... a religious philosophy ... concerning itself with man and his relation to the supreme being and life, bringing man to total freedom and truth". It is **a religion heavily influenced (as we shall see later) by Eastern religious philosophy and “science fiction”**.

It claims to be "a modern religion for today's man ... designed to assist individuals of all faiths and creeds to discover for themselves the essential answers to life". The Church of Scientology conducts "basic services such as sermons at church meetings, christenings, weddings and funerals".

The Reader's Digest (May 1980) calls it “**one of the oldest, wealthiest and most dangerous of the major new religions or cults operating today... a multi-national racket, masquerading as a religion**”.

Before we consider their teaching and method of operation, it is necessary first to take a look at their background.

B. Background

1. **Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology and Dianetics** (the philosophy behind the movement) has a most interesting background. The British *Sunday Times* carried an article entitled "the odd beginning of Ron Hubbard's career" and describes his close and bizarre association with Alister Crowley, a known satanist, whose dabbling in black magic earned him the title "the wickedest man in the world". Hubbard was one of his most enthusiastic disciples as a young man. (Scientology denies this).

They believe him to be an "educationalist, philosopher, researcher, writer and explorer". He claims that he is a nuclear physicist who was severely wounded in the Second World War. "Taken crippled and blind to a naval hospital", he claims to have "worked his way back to fitness and full perception in less than two years" ... in the process discovering dianetics and scientology – "the answers to most of mankind's ills".

The Reader's Digest (May 1980) researched his background and claim that US Navy records do not indicate he saw combat or was ever wounded. "In fact, he was discharged and given a 40% disability pension because of an ulcer, arthritis and other ailments". He took a course in molecular and atomic physics, which he failed. He was also arrested for petty theft in connection with cheques and complained to the FBI that the Communist spies were after him. A note attached to one of his letters to the FBI carries the words "Make 'appears mental' card". The Veterans administration for psychiatric care requested to treat him for "long periods of moroseness and suicidal inclinations".

At present he lives on a southern California ranch in great style and wealth. *The Reader's Digest* states that his retinue includes young women, known officially as 'messengers', who light his ever-present cigarettes and catch the ashes. "They record every word he says, including his frequent obscene outbursts of rage, help him out of bed in the morning, run his shower and dress him. His office is scrubbed daily and his laundry rinsed 13 times in fresh water. Former members say that he erupts violently if he smells soap on his clothes! His third wife, Mary Sue Hubbard, assists him enthusiastically".

2. His writings.

In 1950 he published *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, and this is the textbook of the movement ... "The most advanced and most clearly presented method of psychotherapy and self-improvement ever discovered". Two years later he published *Scientology: A History of Man*, and today he has a tremendous collection of books, articles and tape-recorded lectures on the market.

3. The Church of Scientology.

He founded the first **Church of Scientology** in Washington DC in **1954** and, at the present time, **claims to have more than five million adherents** "with thousands joining yearly". Figures in 1978 claimed 79 churches worldwide, 172 missions and study groups in 34 nations and over 6000 full time staff. His churches pay him a percentage of their gross (usually 10%) and untold riches are placed in bank accounts in Switzerland and elsewhere under his and his wife's control. Scientology literature informs us "he is probably a millionaire several times over".

4. The financial structure.

Scientology has many courses and each costs a fair amount of money. *The Reader's Digest* (May 1980 and Sept 1981) carries many testimonies of people who have spent literally thousands of dollars. One French Scientologist spent 200,000 dollars for a few weeks' "services" at the Florida centre. Hubbard continually adds new grades and "levels" of belief and the higher one goes, the more costly it becomes.

A recent schedule of costs in South Africa states "the Church of Scientology requests a minimum donation for church services rendered ...you may give more if you wish". The costs are listed as follows:

MEMBERSHIP

First six months' membership is free.

Yearly renewal costs R40.00 per member.

Permanent membership costs R120.00 per member.

SERVICES

Purification rundown costs R500.00.

Survival rundown and co-audit course costs R500.00.

Success through communication course (first and most basic) costs R40.00.

Happiness rundown – per 12 half-hour intensive – cost R630.00.

According to the US government information, the movement is grossing more than 150 million dollars per year in the USA alone. (In 1976 the IRS found 2,86 million dollars in cash on Hubbard's 100 metre flagship APOLLO .. and "he has a lot more stashed away").

According to *the Reader's Digest*, his policy letters to staff are punctuated with exhortations to "**make money, make more money, and make other people produce so as to make money**". "When numbers of recruits and receipts fall off, he orders his staff onto a diet of rice and beans. Once firmly in control of mind and money he reduces his converts to "emotional serfs" working fulltime for a small 'fee', making new recruits and more money to help clear this planet of insanity, crime and evil".

In order to take advantage of financial grants, the organisation also has '**front**' bodies such as the "Social co-ordination bureau", "Apple Schools" (USA) and "NARCONONS" (drug rehabilitation programme), with high fees for its services and a poor success rate, according to a West Berlin Senate Investigation.

"His book sales are astronomical", can be read in Scientology literature, "and he is one of the highest paid writers in America".

5. Method of operation.

He directs Scientology "ministers" to watch newspapers for stories of accidents, illness or death. "As speedily as possible, make a personal call on the bereaved or injured person ... unless you have bodies in the shop, you get no income. So, on any pretext, get bodies in the place".

(*R/Digest* Sept '81) "I.Q. tests and 'communications courses' are offered to the general public and they undergo "hypnotic training routines" developed by him. According to a University of California psychologist who has interviewed hundreds of former cult members: "These routines can split the personality into a severe, disassociated state, and the recruits are hooked before they realise what is happening". Peace and freedom from anxiety are promised to the troubled, and "auditing" (scientology counselling), we are assured, will increase one's IQ one point per hour of counselling. "Scientologists are the upper tenth of the upper tenth in intelligence".

The Scientology "minister" uses an E-meter (a crude type of lie detector) to "audit" the recruit. Candidates grip this machine and supply the most personal details of their lives. When the needle jumps they are told that an "engram" has been detected – i.e. a recall of an unpleasant experience either in this life or in former incarnations. When these experiences are confronted he will become "totally free", restored to a superhuman state, his "memory bin" cleared. Already 32,000 individuals from many parts of the world have achieved the state of "clear" ... this number is expected to reach the million mark by 1985". (Scientology article, *Durban Mirror*, July 1981, by Sc. Success Centre). "Is Ron clear? Yes – in order to map the route for others, he had to make it himself". This auditing process is very costly as one progresses through different "levels" until you become an "operating thetan" (or spirit), who can make vast space journeys at will, uninhibited by the body.

N.B. According to their own documents and defectors affidavits, these confessions are filed for blackmail purposes against anyone involved who becomes a "potential trouble source" by threatening to defect, go to the authorities or generate hostile publicity.

The "eight-pointed cross" of Scientology represents the "eight parts or dynamics of life" and the "operating thetan", through the processes of Scientology can eventually live in perfect harmony in each of these areas.

These are: a) The self dynamic; b) sex dynamic (families and procreation); c) group dynamic (mankind); d) animal kingdom; e) all living things; f) physical universe (i.e. control over matter energy, space and time); g) spiritual dynamic; h) The God dynamic (realisation and understanding of the supreme being).

When the individual has personally unravelled his true role in the scheme of things and recognised his true role and his own cause with respect to the events of his life, this is termed in Scientology 'the state of clear'.

C. What do they believe about ... ?

1. God.

"We have no dogma in Scientology ... each person attains his own certainty as to who God is and exactly what God means to him. The author of the universe exists. How this is symbolised is dictated by your early training and conscience".

"The watchword of Scientology is: **IT IS ONLY TRUE IF IT IS TRUE FOR YOU**".

2. The Person of Jesus Christ.

They see Him as a "great man of his times... a great man with a lot of knowledge .. a philosopher". "There are many great religious prophets and leaders, each of whom has left a path towards God. Religious prophets are recognised in Scientology as the torchbearers of culture and civilisation".

3. The Work of Christ (The Atonement).

Not part of their teaching.

"We believe .. that man is basically good, that he is seeking to survive, that his survival depends upon himself and upon his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe: .. and we believe that the spirit alone may save or heal the body".

"It is our mission as scientologists, as it was Christ's disciples, to bring wisdom, good health and immortality to mankind".

4. **The Resurrection and Promised Return.**

Not part of their theology.

5. **Man.**

"Man is a spirit being (thetan) operating by a body, i.e. the personality is an immortal spirit that can separate from the body without death or derangement". **Hubbard claims to have traced human existence back 74 billion years, suggesting it began on Venus.** "Today's earthlings are material manifestations of eternal spirits, who are reincarnated time and again over the aeons". (In his "executive directive" at Christmas 1980 Hubbard wrote: "I am as well as can be expected for anyone over several trillion years old .. the future is ours".)

"The true believer is told that he is an elite thetan – a hero of a long-lost intergalactic civilisation slaughtered by evil forces on the planet Helatrobos some 40 trillion years ago. The defeated Thetans were then exiled to the planet Earth, where they remained in ignorance, until Hubbard summoned them to resume their rightful place in the Galactic Confederation". (*R/Digest* Sept 81). Scientology quote: "Man is not his body, his mind or his brain. He, a spiritual force, energises the physical body and his life".

6. **Salvation / Sin & Judgement / Heaven & Hell.**

"Man is basically good but aberrated [Oxford Dic. 'aberration' – straying from the path, breaking of rules, moral slip, deviation from type]. Through Scientology he can confront his actions, erase the ignorance and aberration which surrounds him, and know and experience truth again... Sin is composed of lies and hidden actions and is therefore untruth".

Sin or aberrations, according to Hubbard, have lessened the Thetan's abilities and made him more dependant on his body. "Through Scientology's "auditing" this process can be reversed and complete spiritual ability restored to the Thetan. These abilities, lessened through many lifetimes, have caused man to be in his present state. Our earthly troubles result from ghostly mental images (engrams) – painful experiences either in this life or in former incarnations". In his original book *Dianetics*, Hubbard claimed to have "cleared" 270 cases of engrams, thus greatly increasing IQ's and curing assorted ills. In his monthly *personal letters* he advertises that Scientology can remedy ailments from cancer to the common cold. It can cure problems from arthritis to heart trouble and is the only specific cure for atomic-bomb burns!

"**Dianetics** (the philosophy of Scientology) gives the discovery of the single source of all man's insanities, psychosomatic ills, neuroses and more! It describes exactly what this is and how it remained hidden for so long. The technology of dianetics provides workable ways to get rid of this single source so the mind can be restored to its full maximum potential".

“The ideal for the Thetan is to be fully perceptive, without *any* aberrations, in each of the eight dynamics of life – free from material inhibitions – the free, supernatural being he was originally before the trouble started and he was exiled to earth ... **The faithful will go with Ron to the next planet**”.

As we have already noted, advanced courses on salvation and "enlightenment" can be very costly, until one finally reaches the perfect state of being in full control of his own mental matter, energy, space, time, etc. – no longer acting unknowingly, but always acting knowingly. "Scientology helps you to intelligently control all parts and conditions of existence .. it helps put you at cause over your mind and life".

It is not surprising to find, as the *R/Digest* (Sept 81) puts it: “an international trail of tragic victims ... resultant insanity and even suicide”.

7. **The Holy Spirit.**

See their doctrine of God.

8. **The Bible.**

"Scientology itself demands no belief or faith: Its watchword is: ***IT IS ONLY TRUE IF IT IS TRUE FOR YOU***".

Their textbook is Hubbard's book on Dianetics, as well as his other literature.

(Special note: One of the books that they sell is the *SCIENTOLOGY PASSPORT TO FREEDOM*. "Valid for life, the Scientology Passport to Freedom can also be renewed each lifetime with a new name ... you can keep track of your progress in Scientology from lifetime to lifetime, pick up your journey where you left off and continue on. With this passport, you will now travel faster and smoother on your journey to freedom, bringing order into your progress as you go. So, what does it take to be free? Buy your passport and walk the bridge to freedom ... your travel papers await you!")

A former "auditor" or "spiritual counsellor", who defected after ten years said: "If they were to tell you that stuff at the start, you'd just laugh and walk out. It seems absolutely incredible now, but I actually came to believe it". It is given in "time-released capsules". Scientology literature tells us that "confidential materials in the upper level courses are not given to 'raw meat' (new recruits) to ensure that a student does not impede his progress, or that of his friends, by studying materials he is not yet qualified to handle".

In 1972 a South African Commission of Enquiry found that Scientology was not a religion and that some of its adherents were involved in "harmful practices". Hubbard is banned in this country.

The *R/Digest* mentioned state evidence that, in the USA, court convictions, seized church documents and defectors' affidavits, testify that Scientology has indulged in burglary, espionage, blackmail, kidnapping, false imprisonment, conspiracy to steal government documents and to obstruct justice. "In the months since the article appeared in May 1980 a flood of reader reaction has convinced us that our article only scratched the surface. Indeed, there is every indication that Scientology's international operations are at least as chilling as the US operations described in the May 1980

article. And they continue to grow at an alarming pace". (*R/Digest*).

Recent articles in the newspapers, as well as the *R/Digest* tells us of the Worldwide Guardian Office, headed by Mrs. Hubbard and a South African woman. Created in 1966 its objective was "to sweep aside opposition sufficiently to create a vacuum into which Scientology can expand". Hubbard's charge to it was: "Don't ever defend – always attack". Its duty is "to ferret out those who want to stop Scientology".

Said Hubbard: "Find or manufacture enough threat against them to cause them to sue for peace. Originate a black PR campaign to destroy the person's repute and to discredit them so thoroughly they will be ostracised. Be very alert to sue for slander at the slightest chance so as to discourage the public presses from mentioning Scientology. The purpose of the suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win".

Court cases against Scientologist are also in the news: at the moment cases are on appeal of eleven of Hubbard's top Guardian aides on charges of conspiracy, burglary and theft of secret documents from US government offices. "Suits filed by the church were for the sole purpose of financially bankrupting its critics and to create an atmosphere of fear ..." (US attorney, Ray Banoun, who is handling the prosecution mentioned above).

Lorna Levett of Calgary, Alberta, founded a Scientology mission and headed it for six years, according to the *R/Digest*, until she came to realise that "we are involved in an **international conspiracy**". In 1974 she led a mass defection of 43 fellow members and, despite smears, harassment and a 100 000 dollar lawsuit, they have successfully resisted every scientology effort to silence them. She declares "**Psychological coercion by dangerous mind-bending cults under cover of religion can only occur ... when the truth is allowed to go unpublished**".

***"In the latter times some will abandon the faith
and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons". (1 Tim.4:1)***