

## World Religions/Beliefs/Cults

<u>Elements of Faith</u>	<u>Evangelical Christianity*</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Jewish</u>
<b>Supreme Being</b>	One God, revealed and experienced as three Persons (Trinity): Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The Christian God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is eternal and does not change.	Muslims believe that there is one and only one God, who has no equals and no partners. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity as blasphemous. They see God as so transcendent that He is not bound by anything—even by the need to be consistent with Himself. The Islamic understanding of God is profoundly different from the Biblical understanding of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.	Monotheistic, Personal, Deliverer
<b>Key Figure in History</b>	Jesus, the Christ, the eternal, divine Son of God and the only way to salvation (John 14:6).	Muhammad, who was a prophet and human being.	Abraham, Moses
<b>Teachings on Christ The Person</b>	One divine person, eternal, with two natures, divine and human. Supreme example of God’s love for humankind. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.	Muslims believe Jesus was a non-eternal, created human being and was a great prophet.	Most: rabbi, not Messiah Some: Redeemer of Gentiles
<b>His Work</b>	Jesus, on the cross, became the ultimate sacrifice for all our sin. Because of His death, burial and resurrection, mankind can once again have a right relationship, through Him, with God the Father.	Jesus did not die, but only appeared to be crucified. He was taken by Allah to himself and will return before the final judgment.	Most consider him itinerant Jewish teacher
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	The Holy Spirit is an eternal member of the Trinity, who guides, counsels and directs believers and churches.	There is no Holy Spirit. There is no other god but Allah. The concept of the Trinity is blasphemy.	Another name for God
<b>Holy Writings</b>	The Bible (Old and New Testaments) is the authoritative, unique, inspired, and inerrant Word of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.	The <i>Quran (Koran)</i> is the final and infallible witness of Allah. The Bible (OT and NT) is viewed as incomplete and corrupted.	Hebrew Bible ( <i>tanach</i> ), Torah, Prophets, writings
<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	Man was created in God’s image. Since Adam’s fall, all humans are sinners and our relationship with God is damaged beyond any human ability to repair it.	Man is made by Allah with the ability to follow the will of Allah.	Created in image of God; free, self-determining
<b>Doctrine of Sin</b>	Sin is willful rebellion against God. All people have sinned and are sinners (Romans. 3:23 and Romans 5:12).	Sin is disobedience to the will of Allah.	Rebellion, unfaithfulness to God
<b>Doctrine of Salvation</b>	Humans beings cannot save themselves or work their way into heaven (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is God’s free gift through a personal relationship with Christ. It is only through a conscious decision to follow Christ that one can attain salvation and eternal life.	Works of repentance and submission to Allah are shown through the five pillars of Islam: perfect faith, prayer, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage (haj) to Mecca. Ultimately who is saved or not saved is Allah’s decision. Martyrdom is the only assurance of reaching paradise.	Repentance Trust in God Obedience
<b>Meeting Site</b>	Anywhere	The most common place where Muslims meet is the mosque.	Synagogue
<b>Life After Death</b>	Eternal communion with God (heaven); eternal separation from God (hell). Believers can be assured of where they will spend eternity.	Paradise (gardens where there will be eternal security, fruit and drink and chaste women are provided); or Hell (eternal torture). Ultimately, where one spends their life after death is Allah’s decision. There is no real assurance where one will spend eternity, except through martyrdom.	Range of views: 1. Reward or punishment in heaven or hell 2. Vagueness 3. Afterlife denied

\*Evangelical Christians believe that salvation is possible only through personal faith in Jesus Christ, recognize the inspired Word of God as the only basis for faith and Christian living and are committed to using God's Word to bring others to faith in Jesus Christ.

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<u>Elements of Faith</u>	<u>American Indian Religion</u>	<u>Hindu</u>	<u>Buddhist</u>	<u>New Age</u>
<b>Supreme Being</b>	Personal God, creator, generally beneficent; empowers lesser beings	Polytheism; Major Triad: Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu	Southern: irrelevant Northern: Buddhahood	No personal God All is one (monism) Everything is God (pantheism)
<b>Key Figure in History</b>	None	None	Gautama	No single person, many gurus, Teachers, prophets
<b>Teachings on Christ The Person</b>	No interest in person or work of Christ	Incarnation of God (avatar) One among many; not unique	a teacher who may possess Buddhahood. One among many	A great teacher; a prophet an avatar of the divine
<b>His Work</b>		Jesus was a great religious teacher		Achieved and showed the way to ultimate consciousness
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	God's presence and influence, active in world, particularly in nature			
<b>Holy Writings</b>	Oral and written tradition, folklore; accumulated wisdom of tribe	Vedas, Upanishads epics, Puranas	Sutras	Extremely numerous
<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	Humans subordinate to supernatural forces and spirit-beings	Divine, eternal soul part of God. Physical body has little worth	All in flux. One lifetime for each person, composed of skandra (parts); but many lives for the parts	All are God with a potential to discover the ultimate within
<b>Doctrine of Sin</b>	Acts that upset harmony of nature and/or disrupt welfare of community (tribe)	Ignorance of oneness with God. Violations of caste (class) rules	Desire that results in suffering	No concept of sin, only ignoring the God/ultimate within
<b>Doctrine of Salvation</b>	Well-being of individual and tribe; gained by prayer, pledges and sacrifice that win attention and help of supernatural forces/departed elders	Liberation of soul from cycles of reincarnation in physical body through knowledge, works, or love and devotion of chosen deity (yoga)	Perceive truth in four "Noble Truths," follow Eight-Fold Path the middle way. Northern: includes faith in the Buddha	Change your consciousness to discover the ultimate within through yoga, trance channeling, past-life regressions, harnessing psychic energy, etc.
<b>Meeting Site</b>	Human/natural "shrines"	Temple/home altars	Temple/home altars	Various; retreat centers are popular
<b>Life After Death</b>	Existence in life patterned after this world, but free of pain and suffering. Wicked forgotten or annihilated	Cycles of reincarnation until union with/reabsorption of soul into God	Southern: Dissolution at death, no continuing life. Northern: Pure Land	Cycles of reincarnation until union with/reabsorption of soul into the divine

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<u>Elements of Faith</u>	<u>Roman Catholic</u>	<u>Jehovah's Witness</u>	<u>Mormon</u>	<u>Worldwide Church of God</u>
<b>Supreme Being</b>	One God, revealed and experienced as Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit	Jehovah, Unitarian view	God the Father an exalted man with physical body	Godhead is "family" not limited to three persons. Only God and Jesus so far.
<b>Key Figure in History</b>	Jesus, the Christ	Charles Taze Russell	Joseph Smith Jr.	Herbert W. Armstrong
<b>Teachings on Christ The Person</b>	One divine person, eternal, with two natures, divine and human. Supreme example of God's love for humankind and His intended pattern of living.	Stages of Existence: 1. Archangel Michael 2. Jesus, perfect man, became Messiah at baptism; 3. After spiritual resurrection, became Michael again.	Jesus is the spiritual and physical offspring of God by procreation. Jesus' death guarantees immortality to all regardless of faith, but atonement must be completed by works	Eternal, but subordinate to God. A perfect man who became Christ at baptism, Son of God at resurrection
<b>His Work</b>		Christ's ransom sacrifice made salvation possible		His death removes only sins committed before baptism.
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	Eternal member of Trinity, guide of churches and Christians	God's impersonal force	Spiritual body in human form. Not omnipresent	Impersonal power from Godhead enabling believers to obey god
<b>Holy Writings</b>	Bible inspired and authoritative; canon includes seven O.T. apocryphal books. Tradition reflects and interprets Scripture.	Bible (New World translation of Holy Scriptures) as interpreted by Watch Tower Society	Bible (except errors); <i>Book of Mormon</i> ; <i>Doctrine and Covenants</i> ; <i>Pearl of Great Price</i> . Also revelations of prophets	Bible verbally inspired, but must be interpreted by one of "God's true servants"
<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	Persons able to respond to God with love or rejection; unable alone to avoid all sin	Created in God's image; a soul, not immortal; capable of responding to God	Pre-existent spiritual offspring of God, basically good, gods in embryo	Created with evil nature, no immortal soul. Anglo-Saxons chosen people
<b>Doctrine of Sin</b>	Guilt of sin inherited (Mary uniquely excepted); basic sin is pride	Willful rebellion against Jehovah	Disobedience to God's laws. Adam's fall, in God's plan, caused loss of immortality. Each is responsible for own sin	Disobedience. Breaking any of Ten Commandments, especially not keeping Sabbath (Sat. worship)
<b>Doctrine of Salvation</b>	God's gift of grace through Christ's atonement. Received by faith through the sacraments administered by Church	Faith in Jehovah plus works (baptism, moral life, faithfulness in Kingdom Hall activities); those ignorant of Jehovah given chance to believe during millennial period	Exaltation or godhood through obedience to Mormon teachings; repentance, faith, baptism, priesthood, endowments, celestial marriage, faithful tithing. Baptism for dead saves some non-Mormons	Process completed at final resurrection. Baptism and obedience to God's law necessary. Only Jesus born again so far; new birth and immortality at resurrection. Goal: to become divine member of family of God.
<b>Meeting Site</b>	Church	Kingdom Hall	Ward	Church
<b>Life After Death</b>	Purgatory, intermediate state of cleansing before heaven. Eternal communion with God (heaven); eternal separation from God (hell).	144,000 elect reign with Christ in Kingdom of God (heaven). Other JWs on glorified paradise earth. Annihilation for all who reject Jehovah.	One of three kingdoms: 1. Celestial—(renewed earth) where men become gods or angels 2. Terrestrial—planet for righteous non-Mormons 3. Telestial—planet for wicked Second death for Satan and those who commit unpardonable sins	World Tomorrow: New Roman Empire to bring tribulation before millennium of peace on earth when unbelievers have opportunity to believe and obey. Renewed earth, ruled by Old/New Testament believers, becomes Kingdom of God. Annihilation for unbelievers. No hell

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<u>Elements of Faith</u>	<u>Church of Scientology</u>	<u>Unification Church</u>	<u>Unity</u>	<u>The Way International</u>
<b>Supreme Being</b>	Supreme being affirmed but exact nature determined by each person	One person only. Dual characteristics (positive/negative, male/female)	Impersonal principle universal intelligence and love	Unitarian, Eternal spirit
<b>Key Figure in History</b>	L. Ron Hubbard	Sun Myung Moon	Charles and Myrtle Fillmore	Victor Paul Wierwille
<b>Teachings on Christ The Person</b>	Great teacher who fully realized his personal divinity.	Perfect man who was faithful to God and attained deity; not equal to God. He was to restore relationship between humans and God by marriage. Mission incomplete because crucified before marriage; spiritual, not physical, savior	Jesus was a man inhabited by the Christ-spirit.  Jesus was a way-shower whose crucifixion not sacrificial, but released grace (inspiration)	Pre-existence denied, not co-equal with God. Son of God but not God the Son. Perfect man (earthly divinity denied). Ransom death was legal transaction making salvation possible
<b>His Work</b>	One savior among many who teach how to be “clear”			
<b>Holy Spirit</b>			Impersonal idea	Another name for God, not distinct from God
<b>Holy Writings</b>	Selected writings of L. Ron Hubbard	Bible, as interpreted in <i>Divine Principle</i> (Moon’s basic teachings)	Bible as interpreted by Fillmores Also revere other inspirational writings	King James Version of Bible as “worked” (studied/explained) by Wierwille
<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	Immortal divine soul, basically good in three parts: soul (thetan), mind, body (physical)	Created in image of God (duality: male and female)	All possess the Christ-spirit within	Body, soul and spirit, but not immortal
<b>Doctrine of Sin</b>	Engrams (learned behavior or conflicts from past) prevent individuals from realizing own divinity	Broken relationship with God. Humans related to Satan as result of sexual sin in the Fall.	Failure to realize and live up to one’s divine potential	Adam’s fall caused loss of human spirit and broken relationship. Little emphasis on individual sins
<b>Doctrine of Salvation</b>	Dianetic counseling (auditing) leads individual to become “clear” of engrams, attain full human potential, become fully aware of personal divinity	Accept Christ for spiritual salvation, Lord of Second Advent for physical salvation. Pay personal indemnity (works) for self, ancestors, world, etc. Unification marriage required for physical salvation	Overcoming lower human impulses, increasing awareness of God within (Unity), living up to one’s divine potential	Human spirit lost in Fall regained through faith in Christ. Spiritual maturity, manifested through speaking in tongues, comes through renewed mind. Sinless perfection attainable in this life
<b>Meeting Site</b>	Church or mission	Church	Church (Center)	Twig Fellowship
<b>Life After Death</b>	Reincarnation of soul (thetan) until it attains state of spiritual awareness and liberation from matter, energy, space and time	All humans will become divine in earthly Kingdom of God. Perfect relationship with God restored	“This World” focus. Tendency toward belief in reincarnation. Ultimate union with impersonal God	Soul sleep for all between death and resurrection. Finally, heaven or hell

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<u>Elements of Faith</u>	<u>Church of Christ, Scientist</u>	<u>Seventh-Day Adventist</u>	<u>Baha'i World Faith</u>	<u>Sikh</u>
<b>Supreme Being</b>	Impersonal: Life, Truth, Love, Omnipotence and goodness of God stressed	One personal God; trinitarian (three persons in one)	One God who is unknowable except through manifestations	One God, called "true name" ( <i>sat Guru</i> )
<b>Key Figure in History</b>	Mary Baker Eddy	Ellen G. White	Baha'u'llah	Nanek
<b>Teachings on Christ The Person</b>	Jesus, separate from Christ, a human being who, more than any other, shows "Christ-ideal"	Divine Son of God, personal savior	Son of God but not divine. One of God's manifestations, which include Krishna, Buddha, Abraham, Moses, Muhammad, Baha'u'llah (Glory of God).	A holy man, but not divine
<b>His Work</b>	Jesus is "Way-shower," Healer	Christ entered heavenly sanctuary in 1844 to judge faithful and to complete work of atonement prior to Second Coming	Jesus is great prophet-educator for his age.	Taught humans Golden Rule; his death not vicarious
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	Christian Science church	Eternal member of Trinity; Comforter and Guide		
<b>Holy Writings</b>	Bible, as interpreted by Mary Baker Eddy in <i>Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures</i>	Bible White's writings believed inspired auxiliary counsel	Most Holy Book (Kirab-i-Aqdas)	Adi Granth. Considered inspired and authoritative; other whole writings respected
<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	In God's image and likeness, therefore divine. Spirit as opposed to matter, which is unreal	Created in image of God, all have sinned. Each person is a soul, not immortal	Soul created by God, basically good. Men and women of all races equal	Each person a soul (and part of universal soul) who has been reborn into present life
<b>Doctrine of Sin</b>	Illusion of the reality of matter, evil and death	Willful rebellion against God	Lack of knowledge brings disobedience to divine commands	Choosing to live in self-centeredness; sensuous desires preferred to ego-abandoning submission to God
<b>Doctrine of Salvation</b>	Casting out illusions of reality of matter, sin, evil and death in favor of the "all-reality" of spirit	Faith in Christ. Continued obedience evidenced by baptist, tithing, keeping dietary laws and Ten Commandments, esp. Saturday as Sabbath	Through faith in God and Baha'u'llah and good works toward world unity and peace	Attaining liberation (release) from cycle of death/rebirth through path of devotion
<b>Meeting Site</b>	Church	Church	Spiritual Assembly	Temple ( <i>gurdwara</i> )
<b>Life After Death</b>	Since there is no death, move onto another plane toward fulfillment in Love, Light, Truth	Soul sleep; faithful resurrected to 1,000 years in heaven (at Second Coming). After final judgment, earth renewed as eternal home of redeemed. Wicked annihilated	Immortal soul; individual retains identity, progresses to presence of God. Heaven: rapid progression to God; Hell: slow progression to God	Reincarnation (transmigration of souls) until one attains individuality—extinguishing absorption into God

\*\*Used with permission and adapted from the North American Mission Board, SBC. "Interfaith Evangelism Comparative Belief Chart."