

Diversity, Healing, and Health Care

EXPLANATION OF THE GRID BELOW

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Religious Beliefs and Healing

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For information related to the world distribution of religious sects see:

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0855613.html>

For full or partial texts of many religious books see:

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/index.htm>

For additional general religious information see:

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/profiles/listalpha.htm>

or

<http://religion.rutgers.edu/vri/index.html>

Connect through hyperlinks to general information about religious groups. The headings are hyperlinked at the top of each religion page.

Every individual, regardless of specific group religious influences, has their own individual belief system. A person accepts and rejects the beliefs around him or her and in doing so creates his or her individuality. Users of this program are reminded that the information here is based on generalities and therefore no single person is likely to fit the all the information of one religious group. We live in a fast paced world, where religious influences and ideas are exchanged at lightening speed through the internet, world travel, and other influences of exchange. This information is provided in the hopes that by understanding each other, healthcare can be improved for all, communication will improve, and differences can be respected or tolerated through understanding rather than dominance.

The religious groups are based on patient populations served by the sponsoring organization, On

Buddhism

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General beliefs:

The doctrine, attributed to Gautama Buddha, that suffering is inseparable from existence but that inward extinction of the self and of the senses culminates in a state of illumination beyond both suffering and existence. There are many different kinds of Buddhism each with its own style and practice. Originating in Asia, some people practice Buddhism in conjunction with other religions. Resolution and balance lie in focusing on the four noble truths: suffering is an important part of life; selfish craving causes suffering; this suffering can be brought to an end; the end will bring true happiness. There is an eight-fold path to follow, achieving right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation. One changes oneself to develop generosity, integrity, and self-knowledge. The Buddhist sacred place of meditation is called a temple. It is not considered a place of worship since for most Buddhists, Buddha is not a god.

Belief about illness and disease

Prayer is a tool for cleansing. Chanting is used to create peace of mind and an atmosphere of positive energy and tranquility.

Belief about disability

Disability is part of the suffering that is inherent to life.

Beliefs about healing practices

Since prayer is part of the healing and cleansing process, prayer and meditation are important to enable medications and other medical treatment to assist with healing.

Beliefs related to food and health

Many Buddhists are strict vegetarians. Some holy days include fasting from dawn to dusk but considerations are allowed for the frail and elderly for whom fasting could create problems.

Beliefs related to death and dying

Life is the opportunity to cultivate understanding, compassion and joy for self and others. Terminal illness may be seen as a unique opportunity to reflect on life's ultimate meaning, and the meaning of one's relation with the world. Therefore, it is important that medication does not interfere with consciousness. Death is associated with rebirth. Serene surroundings are important to the dignity of dying.

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Holy days

There are no traditional celebrations on these holy days however rather than shake hands on these days, both hands may be held together in a pray position at chest level, and a slight bow given as greeting.

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov., Dec.
Feb. 15: Nirvana Day - death of Buddha	Apr. 8: Hanamatsuri Day - birth of Buddha		Dec. 8: Bodhi Day - the day on which Siddh Gautama vowed to meditate under the Bodhi attaining enlightenment

Links and Miscellaneous

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/chaplaincy/buddhism.cfm>

<http://www.dragonflower.org>

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If you have links or other information you think may be useful to this page, please email the [webmaster](#).

Protestantism, Christianity

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Examples: Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist (Northern, American and Southern churches), Lutheran, United Methodist, Quaker, Pentecostal, Universalism, and many more. Suggestions for additions to this information may be emailed to the designer/researcher at bdnapier@earthlink.net

General Beliefs

Many materials lump all Protestant beliefs together. There is wide variation in Protestant beliefs from strict dogmas to liberal beliefs. The religious groups selected here are all groups who provide and own skilled nursing facilities and convalescent centers, and are therefore more involved in healthcare issues than other religions may be.

The term Protestant refers to the historical religious origins with the Catholic churches. Early disagreements about doctrine caused protests which split the church into Catholic and Protestant (those protested) groups. Many of those groups have split further, often based on interpretation of Biblical scriptures or doctrines, accepted roles of men and women, or issues related to women as clergy. Some groups have names that appear to describe geographic regions (e.g. Southern Baptist) but the descriptor (southern) refers to the region where the church was founded and its churches are located throughout the world. The place of worship is usually called a church. The religious leaders are called clergy, pastor or father, depending upon the organization. Clergy marry. Some churches belong to national associations of the religious group who influences the governance of the church. Others are independent.

Most celebrate Sunday as the primary religious day of week, or Sabbath, on which services are held. Seventh Day Adventist celebrate Sabbath on Saturday, and some traditionally Sunday churches also hold Saturday evening services.

Beliefs focus around the Old and New Testaments of the Bible as sacred writings, and around the teaching of Jesus Christ. Most Protestant churches believe in the Holy Trinity: God, the Father (also referred to as Maker); Christ (who is considered to be both man and God, as in Biblical reference to 'the word became flesh and dwelt among us'; and the Holy Spirit (also referred to as the Holy Ghost). Prayers may be directed to one or all of the Holy Trinity.

Belief about illness and disease:

These vary with different groups, varying from illness and disease being a test of faith, to their being a curse, or brought on by living outside the laws of God and therefore retribution for personal evil. Most of the church organizations that run skilled nursing centers believe that illness and disease are a test of faith, without evil attachment, and since this can happen to anyone regardless of piety, it is the religious thing to care for those who have more problems. Illness, disease, and disability are not unnatural, but a part of the living body.

Belief about disability

See belief about illness and disease. Disability is related to and sometimes an outcome of illness and disease.

Beliefs about healing practices

Miracles can happen. Prayer is a strong healer, including prayer by others even when the ill person has lost faith. Western medicine is usually held in high regard.

Beliefs related to food and health

No special or universal food beliefs are common to Protestant religions, although there may be regional or cultural beliefs. Individual cultural beliefs are accepted. Feasting, or social gatherings involving food are common to all Protestant and Catholic churches, with some secular pride in who has the best "pot lucks," a gathering in which people bring a dish to

share, and little planning as to what will be brought occurs.

Beliefs related to death and dying

These vary widely with Protestant religions. Memorial services rather than funerals, and cremation rather than burial are more common in Protestant religions than in other sects.

Holy days

Protestants and Catholics share many common holy days, though few Protestant churches celebrate Saints' Days which are common in the Catholic churches.

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov., Dec.
Easter week: Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday before Easter. Easter in March or April - Date for Easter is the same in Protestant religions, and may differ from Orthodox Catholic date.	Additional Festival Days are observed by different communities throughout the year.		Dec. 24, Christmas

Miscellaneous

There are many sects and separate religious orders that make up the protestant religions. Views and religious expectations for members also varies. For a variety of information about specific Protestant denominations, review the web sites linked below. This listing does not intend to endorse any of these sites as a better source of information than any not listed. They are a variety.

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/chaplaincy/protestant.cfm>

Christianity, Latter Day Saints (Mormon)

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General

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith. The term Mormon comes from the Book of Mormon which along with the Bible form the basis of beliefs. Believers prefer the term LDS (Latter-day Saints) to Mormon, though it is not considered a rude term. The center of the church is Salt Lake City, Utah, where the church head is known as the President and considered a prophet. He (the president is always a man) governs the church with the assistance of the Council of the Twelve. Worship is conducted in churches and temples. Churches are for Sunday worship, and temples are for greater religious ceremonies, like weddings. There are no professional clergy. A Bishop is the presiding officer of churches with men receiving the status of Bishop through works and study after they are called to the position by revelation of those in authority. One of the steps is going on a mission, which until about 30 years ago was done only by men. Young men and women may go on a mission, during which they study and teach to convert followers to their religion while their families support them for two years. A mission may be within the U.S. or in any foreign country. There is a worldwide network to support the young people, usually between the ages of 18 and 25, while "on mission."

Monday nights are set aside for "Family Home Evening" - a time for families to gather together to study gospel principles, talk about upcoming family events and concerns, and have fun.

"Home teaching" is where pairs of priesthood holders visit assigned families in their congregation ("Ward") on a monthly basis to share a gospel message as well as help with any needs the family may have. Women do a similar type of thing- it is called "Visiting Teaching"- they visit assigned women in their congregation.

Belief about illness and disease

Many LDS wear an undergarment called a Temple Garment, which is believed to provide extra protection since it is a privilege to be ceremoniously given this garment. Since faithfulness and divine protection are associated with the garment, it is important to honor their wish to maintain the spiritual comfort this clothing provides.

Belief about disability

Mormons are supportive of persons with disabilities or other life situations that can create problems. The LDS Welfare system provides support to individuals and families while asking people to participate as they are able to help in service. Deseret Industries is a vocational training system as well as thrift store system that provides work and materials locally and to projects outside the U.S. Participants are taught skills from retailing, to maintenance, and job hunting, as well as utilizing volunteers to maintain the Deseret Industry programs. No federal money supports this system so that more flexible guidelines can be used to provide opportunities to participants. Bishops recommend participants to the programs. (Additions or corrections can be sent to bdnapier@earthlink.net)

Beliefs about healing practices

Prayer provides comfort and is believed to aid in healing. Those who are priesthood holders will often come and give blessings of healing to those who are sick.

Beliefs related to food and health

Healthy diet is part of the LDS teachings. Latter-day Saints abstain from tobacco, alcohol, and beverages such as coffee, tea and some sodas that contain caffeine. They may drink

beverages similar to coffee and tea, such as some browned-grain beverages. The beverage restriction is not a church doctrine but fits into ways to promote healthy diet.

Beliefs related to death and dying

LDS includes a strong belief in life before birth and after death. Couples marry "for time and all eternity." Death therefore is a passing to another part of life. Life and death decisions are an individual or family discussion and decision. Dying persons may be asked to deliver messages to people who have died before them.

Holy days

Members of the LDS church celebrate Easter and Christmas as the most important holidays. Members in the US also celebrate traditional holidays such as Thanksgiving, Halloween, Independence Day, birthdays, etc. The only particularly LDS holiday is July 24th, on which members usually have some kind of celebration (in Utah it is a state holiday) to commemorate the arrival of the Mormon pioneers into Utah.

Links & Miscellaneous

<http://www.mormon.org> for general information about the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)

<http://www.mormon.org/learn/0,8672,1598-1,00.html> for the "Thirteen Articles of Faith"

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/mormon/mormon.html>

If you have additional information that could contribute to this site, please email

bdnapier@earthlink.net

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Judaism

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General

Judaism includes religious beliefs and a philosophy for a code of ethics. There are four major groupings of Jewish beliefs: Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative and Orthodox, with branches in those groupings, such as the Orthodox Hasidic beliefs. The beliefs are based on the Torah, which is also the first five books of the Bible used by Christian believers, and the Talmud, a book which interprets the Torah. Work, as interpreted by the Talmud, is not performed on holy days, and depending upon the group, work may be interpreted as use of electricity, handling money, riding in a car, cooking or use of the phone. Prayer shawls are common and are often passed between generations of family. The clergy are known as Rabbi. Worship is in a synagogue or temple.

Belief about illness and disease

Restrictions related to work on holy days are removed to save a life, however tests, signatures, and assessments for medical needs that can be scheduled to avoid holy days are appreciated.

Belief about disability

Information needed. Email information to bdnapier@earthlink.net

Beliefs about healing practices

Information needed. Email information to bdnapier@earthlink.net

Beliefs related to food and health

Orthodox or Kosher involves no mixing of meat with dairy, and separate cooking and eating utensils are used for preparation and consumption. Kosher laws include special slaughter and food handling. "Keeping Kosher" is predominantly an Orthodox practice. When food has passed Kosher laws of preparation a symbol (K) appears on the label. Many holy days include a fasting period.

Beliefs related to death and dying

Psalms and the last prayer of confession (vidui) are held at bedside. At death, arms are not crossed, and any clothing or bandages with patient's blood should be prepared for burial with the person. It is important that the whole person be buried together.

Holy days

Holy days begin at sunset and end at sunset of the following day. Saturday is the weekly holy day, called Shabbat. Holy days are seasonal and do not fall on the same calendar days every year.

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov., Dec.
Chanukah - festival of lights	Shavuot - festival of weeks.	Rosh Ha Shanah - new year celebration.	Yom Kippur - the atonement, Sukkot - feast of harvest celebration

Links and Miscellaneous Information:

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/chaplaincy/jewish.cfm>

<http://www.jewfaq.org/beliefs.htm><http://www.jewfaq.org>

<http://www.ou.org/torah/belief.html>

<http://www.mishpacha.com>

[http://jewish.com/askarabbi/Lifecycle_Events/Death/Jewish beliefs about afterlife/](http://jewish.com/askarabbi/Lifecycle_Events/Death/Jewish_beliefs_about_afterlife/)

<http://www.jewish.org>

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Jehovah's Witness, Christianity [return to religions grid](#)

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General

Founded in the late 1800s, believers use "Jehovah" as their sole term for God. Beliefs are based on a literal translation of the Bible. Scriptures are a guide for all aspects of life including medical care. Religious responsibilities include actively seeking the conversion of others to their belief through a variety of evangelistic activities, such as door-to-door distribution of materials, one of which is their magazine "Watch Tower." The place of worship is called Kingdom Hall. There are no clergy. Each Hall is supervised by elders who act as primary teachers, preachers, and who visit members who are hospitalized. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, which is why they do not celebrate any of the holy days connected with the events in Jesus' life. Jehovah's Witnesses are conscientious objectors and preach non-violence.

Belief about illness and disease

Medical care is combined with prayer and scripture reading. Extraordinary means of continuing life are not needed when death is imminent but no active means that could hasten death may be used.

Belief about disability

Information needed. Submit to bdnapier@earthlink.net

Beliefs about healing practices

There is high regard for the medical professionals, and strong religious concerns related to use of blood products, transfusion, and surgery or injury that may require blood transfusions. Because the body is considered sacred and must remain whole, blood transfusions are rejected for religious reasons. Pre-operative banking of one's own blood products is also prohibited.

Beliefs related to food and health

The scriptures are not interpreted to contain any dietary restrictions.

Beliefs related to death and dying

There are no last rites although they may want the support of Kingdom Hall elders for prayer and scriptures. Death is believed to be a deep sleep while believers wait for Jehovah to transform the world. At that time the dead will be given new life.

Holy days

Holy days are not celebrated. Worship is observed on Sundays. Gifts are not exchanged for holidays, and most believers do not celebrate birthdays, Christmas, Lent, Easter or national holidays.

Links and Miscellaneous

<http://www.watchtower.org/>

http://www.towerwatch.com/Witnesses/Beliefs/their_beliefs.htm

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/Jwitness.html>

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Islam (Muslim)

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General

Islam affirms the oneness of God who is called Allah. Islamics believe in prophets and Mohammed is considered the greatest of all prophets. The Koran or "Quran" is the holy book. Islamic clergy are called Imam. Worship occurs in a mosque. Imams are advisors in the faith, but are not treated as priests or clergy. Prayer is vital and occurs five times a day: dawn, sunrise, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening. Prayers is done facing east, toward the sacred place in Mecca, and often occurs on a prayer rug with ritual washing of hands face and feet prior to prayer. As with some other religions who use the term "God willing," Islamics may say "In the name of Allah the compassionate, the merciful" prior to meaningful activities or medical procedures to assure god's benevolence. Islamic beliefs include the father as spokesperson and decision maker.

Men may marry outside their faith as long as the woman is brought into faith. No human has the authority to change what Allah has prohibited in the Quran. If an Imam gives permission to allow a Muslim woman to date he is not in the fold of Islam. Woman are either taught by their husband, mother and/or father. Muslim men and women are not allowed to date. The Quran is followed as well as the sayings and teachings of the Last Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). It is strictly prohibited for a Muslimina to marry outside of Islam. The men can marry a Jew or Christian, but dating is prohibited. When the "intent of marriage is made" there is no delay in a marriage ceremony (nikah). Women are expected to "be modest" in the presence of men and this may be interpreted in strictest belief being covered head to foot with the exception of parts of the face and hands.

The issues of modesty for women are important for women clinicians to be aware. Women who have viewed naked men other than their husbands are considered unclean, a potential dishonor to their family, and of low repute. This includes female nurses and doctors, and is considered one reason that many Islamic countries use large number of foreign nurses within their healthcare systems. A 'modest woman' under this definition would not consider a profession that included viewing naked men for any reason. Strict Islamic followers may respond in what would be considered more appropriate behaviors in the U.S. when treated by male clinicians.

Belief about illness and disease

Allah is seen as in control of the beginning and end of life, and therefore complaints and expression of powerlessness are rare since it is all seen as in God's hands. To question, or ask questions of health care providers is considered a sign of mistrust, so questions are less likely to be asked by patients and family.

Belief about disability

Disability is seen as under the control of Allah.

Beliefs about healing practices

All outcomes whether death or healing are seen as predetermined by Allah.

Beliefs related to food and health

Consumption of pork or alcohol is prohibited. Other meats must meet ritual requirements and many use Kosher (Jewish ritually prepared) foods since these meet the requirements of Islamic believers as well. During the holy days of Ramadan (29 days in December and/or January), neither food nor drink is taken between sunrise and sunset, though frail, ill and young

children are exempt.

Beliefs related to death and dying

It is important for dying patients to face east and to die facing east. Prayer is offered but need not be done by an Imam.

Holy days

Ramadan: 29 days in December and/or January.

Links and Miscellaneous

<http://www.islamfortoday.com/beliefs.htm>

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/chaplaincy/muslim.cfm>

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/islam.html>

<http://www.understanding-islam.com/related/scategory.asp?catid=4>

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Hinduism

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General

Hinduism originated 1000 BC in Southern Asia in the area which is now India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. There are approximately 1.3 million practicing Hindus in North America. There is no singular doctrine or founder and the holy writings include Bhagavad-Gita, Veda, and Upanishads. There is one god who is worshiped (different from reverence, since God is not revered) in many forms, and the goal of life is to attain Nirvana, or oneness with God. Karma shapes one's current life and actions now affect this life and the next. The place of worship within one's home is the household alter. Outside of home, it is a temple or holy site to which believers may travel as pilgrimages. Clergy are priests, usually called "Swamiji."

Meditation rather than prayer is the preferred communication with God

Belief about illness and disease

Many aspect of illness and disease are a result of past and current life actions, the result in one's Karma.

Belief about disability

Many aspect of illness and disease are a result of past and current life actions, the result in one's Karma.

Beliefs about healing practices

Believers hold that faith and prayer can heal. Belief in right hand as more holy, left hand as unclean may guide some hand use. Eating must be done with the right hand, and placement of an IV may also be preferred in the right hand to promote clean healing. The left hand is used to wash the body and to dispose of bodily waste and secretions.

Beliefs related to food and health

Many but not all are vegetarians, particularly related to beef, other meats, and eggs. Many holy days include fasting.

Beliefs related to death and dying

Death marks a passage since the soul has no beginning or end. At death the soul may be reborn as another person, and one's Karma is carried forward. It is important for Karma to leave this life with as little negativity as possible to insure a better life next birth. Holy water and basil leaves may be place on the body; sacred threads may be tied around wrists or neck. The deceased arms should be straightened.

Holy days

Holy days may vary related to geographic region from which the believer has immigrated. Holy days vary as to the exact dates, therefore they are described seasonally:

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov., De
Diwali - Festival of Light	Shivra Ratri - all night worship	Rama Navami - Festival of colors	Krishna's birthday

Links and Miscellaneous

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/chaplaincy/hindu.cfm>

<http://www.hinduism.8k.com/>

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Confucianism

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General beliefs

Confucianism is a philosophy of living rather than a religion and may guide one's life while one practices other religions without contradiction. Confucius was a Chinese scholar and statesman who lived during feudal times (over 2000 years ago). He established an ethical and moral system that governs all relationships.

Confucianism views the family as the basic unit of society. Certain reciprocal relationships and responsibilities must be observed to preserve harmony. The relationships exist between ruler and subjects, husband and wife, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, and friends. A specific hierarchy is observed that places highest importance on rank and age in all interactions. Saving face (not being publicly embarrassed) and not causing shame to another are important. Since the family is the core unit, all actions of an individual reflect on the family and on all members of the family. Life is most valued when the virtues of kindness, righteousness, propriety, intelligence, and faithfulness are observed.

Confucianism is usually practiced in conjunction with other religious beliefs. Since it originated in Asia, the most common followers are Buddhist.

The topical areas below are not discussed related to Confucianism since other religious practices would be followed in conjunction with Confucianism.

- Belief about illness and disease
- Belief about disability
- Beliefs about healing practices
- Beliefs related to food and health
- Beliefs related to death and dying
- Holy days.

The original believers, most of whom were Chinese believed that there are three basic dimensions related to the living of life:

- The search for spirituality in the inner self and its relation to the world that is the province of Buddhism.
- The right relations with one's neighbor which is the province of Confucianism.
- The right relations with the cosmos which is the province of the Taoism.

Hence the Chinese practice three religions (more appropriately referred to as belief systems incorporating religion, and philosophy of life) simultaneously, and Confucianist temple serves primarily Confucianism but the other religions as well since they are considered compatible.

It is like a good swimmer who knows that there are three elements related to winning a competition: his mental preparation, his physical readiness, and a sense of affinity with the water that surrounds him.

.....These three belief systems are not mutually exclusive so that Taoism deals with one's relations with one's neighbor, and Buddhism deals with one relations with the world, but the

approaches are different.
Links and Miscellaneous

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/>

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Christian Science, Christianity

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General beliefs

Christian Science is founded on the belief that through study of the bible and right living, one can rediscover the healing power that Jesus used. Known as the First Church of Christ, Scientist, it was founded in Boston in 1876 by Mary Baker Eddy. It is based on the belief that one maintains a healthy mind and body through study of God (the all loving Father-Mother) as the only reality of existence. Evil and illness can be overcome through the maintenance of a healthy mind and body. Churches are in over 74 countries.

The term "Christian Science," as defined by the founder, Mary Baker Eddy. She wrote, "The term CHRISTIAN SCIENCE was introduced by the author to designate the scientific system of divine healing. The revelation consists of two parts: 1. The discovery of this divine Science of Mind-healing, through a spiritual sense of the Scriptures and through the teachings of the Comforter, as promised by the Master. 2. The proof, by present demonstration, that the so-called miracles of Jesus did not specially belong to dispensation now ended, but that they illustrated an ever-operative divine Principle" (*Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*).

Christian Science is a means of spiritual self-care. People of many different denominations and faiths, or no faith, are applying the ideas in *Science and Health* to heal disease, emotional and mental problems, broken relationships, financial challenges, and other concerns. Eddy's primary text on spirituality and healing, *Science and Health* contains an explanation of Christian Science. The full text may be read online at <http://www.spirituality.com>. Healthcare decisions are entirely matters of individual choice, and frequently include a combination of scriptures, Christian Science Practitioners, and western medicine.

Science and Health describes the relevancy and healing application of the Scriptures, and the basic principles of spiritual reality and healing which anyone can apply in daily life. These include understanding that:

- God is divine Love, Father-Mother, and is the supreme power and presence.
- The true nature of each individual as a child of God is inherently spiritual.
- God's infinite goodness, realized in prayer, heals problems of every sort.

When Mary Baker Eddy began to share her system of prayer-based healing, founding a church was not her intention. But as the readers of *Science and Health* started meeting together, she began, in 1879, the formal establishment of what she later named The First Church of Christ, Scientist. Eddy founded several weekly and monthly magazines, in English and other languages, including [The Christian Science Monitor](#), a leading international newspaper and the recipient of seven Pulitzer Prizes.

Churches of Christ, Scientist have no ordained ministers, or clergy. Members are elected periodically to conduct Sunday and Wednesday services. Sermons are derived from the King James Version of the Holy Bible and from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*. Weekly Bible lessons (which may be viewed online) from these books are studied daily and read aloud on Sunday. Although spiritual healing is obtained through prayerful study of these two books, Christian Science practitioners (full-time spiritual healers) are available to help anyone find prayerful solutions. Christian Science practitioners visit people in their homes and rarely attend people who are hospitalized.

Christian Science believers are usually treated by Christian Science Practitioners, people who receive training in disease and church beliefs and who provide prayer-directed treatment. Christian Science members vary from complete refusal of western medical practices, to more moderate beliefs that one must be in the right place with God for western medicine to be of benefit. Christian Science Practitioners will not customarily come into hospitals. Refusal of many common hospital and medical procedures is common. Prayer is individual and private and strengthened in groups.

There are not ordained clergy, but a great deal of study goes into achieving lay leadership status within the church. The place of worship is called a church.

Belief about illness and disease

Attitudes about illness and disease are an integral part of the Christian Science beliefs. Prayer is used to focus the healing qualities of Jesus and one's own body to promote natural healing. Christian Science believers are frequent participants in the Harvard continuing medical education about spirituality and healing, and have participated in studies related to the effects of prayer on healing.

Illness is considered evil and is not part of God's cosmic plan, for God is good and never wills evil. God maintains an intimate relation with the world that he created. The purpose of life is to maintain a perfect harmony with God and the world. Evil thoughts (e.g. selfishness, greed, and the like, even subconsciously) will result in the disruption in the harmonious connections between God, man, and the universe. Illness may be derived from such disruption. The occasion of illness is a moment for self-reflection and the re-establishment of this harmonious relation. The patient may seek the help of a spiritual healer who is a member of the church. He or she will talk to the patient and help him repent his sins, and reconstruct the harmony between the patient and God. If that fails, then the patient is asked to seek the assistance of a medical doctor.

Science and Health is being used and recommended by individual spiritual seekers as well as healthcare professionals. It is on the suggested reading list for Harvard Medical School's semi-annual symposium, "Spirituality and Healing in Medicine," which is attended by physicians, nurses, clergy of many religions, Christian Science Practitioners, and others interested in the healing effects of spirituality.

Belief about disability

Disability is not viewed negatively and is separate from physical and mental illness. Prayer continues to lessen disability, but is not seen as a failure of achieving proper mental and physical balance. Since Christian Science holds that the true nature of all of God's children is the flawless, whole, spiritual likeness of the divine, any form of disability is viewed as healable when one fully grasps his God-derived life as unrestricted and always active.

Beliefs about healing practices

Central to practice of Christian Science healing is the idea that man's true nature is actually spiritual. The reasoning is that, since God, who is Spirit, created man in His image and likeness, that creation must be wholly spiritual. While physicality, disease, and death are regarded as impositions on this true nature, they are not ignored, but instead seen as an imperfect view of God and man, to be replaced by a tangible understanding of the spiritual reality of things. Prayer and mental/physical balance are seen as the necessary elements for healing to occur. Believers will usually opt for lowest possible dosages of medications, and avoid anything that interferes with being able to maintain cognitive faculties for prayer and personal healing. There is no church policy mandating church members' health care decisions.

Beliefs related to food and health

No specific restrictions. Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are avoided.

Beliefs related to death and dying

The Christian Science church maintains it's own skilled nursing facilities. Death is considered

a natural part of life and invasive life-sustaining options are usually refused. Christian Scientists do not see death as an escape to spiritual life, but as the last, or ultimate, material obstacle to be overcome by a full understanding of spiritual life.

Holy days

Christian days are observed with pray, not with commercialism or gifts. A special church service is held annually to mark Thanksgiving Day in the United States.

Links and Miscellaneous

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/chrissci.html>

["Have Christian Scientists any religious creed?"](#)..For more on the basic teachings of Christian Science, see Tenets of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy's response to the question

<http://www.marybakereddylibrary.org>Information and readings about Christian Science and its founder Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)

<http://www.spirituality.com/>A guide to scriptures and Christian Science readings

<http://www.tfccs.com/>The First Church of Christ, Scientist

<http://www.csmonitor.com/>Pulitzer Prize winning newspaper The Christian Science Monitor.

http://www.spirituality.com/dt/sg_home.jhtmlDaily devotions and guide to readings to meditate and understand Christian Science belief

- Eddy, Mary Baker (1920). "Retrospection and Introspection," *The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy*, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Eddy, Mary Baker (2000). "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," *The Writings of Mary Baker Eddy*, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Eddy, Mary Baker Eddy (1936). *Manual of The Mother Church: The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston Massachusetts, 89th edition*, Trustees under the Will of Mary Baker Eddy, Boston Massachusetts.
- Gill, Gillian (1998). *Mary Baker Eddy*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books,

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Roman Catholicism, Christianity

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General

The Roman Catholic Church is based in Rome under the leadership of the Pope and the Vatican. The beliefs are based on the Bible as the guiding text, and include many holy sacraments. Belief in God includes the Holy Trinity: God, the father; Jesus, the son; and the Holy Spirit. Clergy are priests (addressed as "Father") and nuns (addressed as "Sister"). Priests and nuns are considered devoted to the church, and may not marry. Place of worship is a church, and the service is called "Mass". The priest is seen as the intermediary between the believer and God. In addition to praying to God, prayer is also directed to Mary and to Saints who are deceased persons who have been designated holy and elevated to special respect within the church. Prayer ritual can be based around a Rosary, a special string of beads used for prayer meditation.

Belief about illness and disease

Tend to be reflected in the culture rather than a central belief by the Roman Catholic Church.

Belief about disability

Tend to be reflected in the culture rather than a central belief by the Roman Catholic Church.

Beliefs about healing practices

Prayer, particularly those that provide a blessing, are important before and during medical procedures. The Sacrament of the Sick (also associated with "Last Rites") includes anointing with oil and prayers. The Sacrament of Reconciliation includes confession of one's sins to put things right for the individual to experience or be open to the love and forgiveness of God. These are two important sacraments for healing. Miracles of healing and holy water are valued.

Beliefs related to food and health

Older Catholics may refrain from eating meat on Fridays, though this has not been a church practice for many years. During the 40 days before Easter (called Lent), Catholics may abstain from foods that they personally select as penitence.

Beliefs related to death and dying

Information needed. Submit to bdnapier@earthlink.net

Holy days

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov.,
Easter week: Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday before Easter. Easter in March or April - Date for Easter is the same in Protestant religions, and may differ from Orthodox Catholic date.	Additional Festival Days are observed by different communities throughout the year.		Dec. 24, Chri

Links and Miscellaneous

<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/chaplaincy/romancatholic.cfm>

http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/roman_catholicism.html

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Orthodox Catholicism, Christianity (Eastern, Russian and Greek)

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General

The Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church is based in Istanbul under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The largest Orthodox churches in the US are Russian and Greek, and smaller Albanian, Armenian, Antiochian, Ethiopian, Romanian, Serbian, Syrian, and Ukrainian churches. The beliefs are based on the Bible as the guiding text, and includes holy sacraments, Icons (two dimensional images of saints, Biblical personalities, and events). Cultural influences and languages are associated with the geographic origin of sections of the church, rather than the strict Latin base common to Roman Catholic. Clergy are deacons, priests or presbyters. All are male and may marry. Place of worship is a church.

Belief about illness and disease

Tend to be reflected in the culture rather than a central belief by the Orthodox Church.

Belief about disability

Tend to be reflected in the culture rather than a central belief by the Orthodox Church.

Beliefs about healing practices

Prayer and miracles are part of the healing beliefs.

Beliefs related to food and health

Greek Orthodox do not eat meat or dairy on Wednesdays, Fridays, and most holy days. Fasting and/or abstinence are observed during the 40 days prior to Christmas, and the 49 days prior to Easter, with exceptions made for frail or ill persons.

Beliefs related to death and dying

There is no obligation to prolong life when death is imminent however basic care would not be withdrawn. Holy communion or other blessings are offered to dying patients but is not required. There are no 'last rites,' but special prayers are provided for the dead and to support the family or others.

Holy days

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov., De
January 6: Epiphany. March or April - Easter, date for Orthodox Easter may differ from Roman Catholic or Protestant	Pentacost - 7 Sundays after Easter		December 24: Chris

Links & Miscellaneous

<http://www.oca.org/>

<http://www.stpaulsirvine.org/>

O.C.A. = Orthodox Church of America

Greek orthodox

<http://www.antiochian.org/>

<http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/>

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Santeria (Afro-Caribbean) [return to religions grid](#)

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General

Santeria is based on a combination of west African religious traditions, and French interpretations of Roman Catholicism. It dates back to early slavery in the Caribbean and associated areas, including parts of Mexico, Central and South America. When slaves were prohibited from practicing their own religions or forced into conversion to Roman Catholicism, the spirits of the original religion became associated with or hidden by association with Catholic saints. As a blended religion, there may be many variations. Every person is believed to possess a spirit, which may at times be over-ridden by another spirit, causing negative and positive behaviors. Believers see this as a natural type of possession by spirits. Spirits may be captured and held in bottles, therefore many home altars include ornamental bottles, where dead loved ones can be kept in a comfortable surrounding. Bottles are often recycled from other sources and brightly decorated. Each person has a small spirit and large spirit, which perform different functions related to life, energy and success. Spiritual balance is important. The high priest is called Babalawo, and other priests and priestesses are Santeros and Santeras. Worship is in the house of the Santeros or Santeras, or at home alters.

Belief about illness and disease

Genetic disorders, birth marks, and some illnesses may be seen as caused by curses, requiring spiritual investigation and cleansing. One can be cured by coercing the God that is believed to hold the power to cure specific illnesses, by establishing the right relations with the spirits with one's neighbor which breaks up the harmonious relations between the individual and the divine world. This can be done by the Santeros or Santeras who hold the power of healing. Healing involves extensive use of fauna.

Belief about disability

Genetic disorders, birth marks, and some illnesses may be seen as caused by curses, requiring spiritual investigation and cleansing. Nothing particularly unique other than prayer and service to the right spirits can result in healing.

Beliefs about healing practices

Healing involves fixing the spirit through investigation by Babalawo, and can include cleansing, herbs, and diet. Curses or evil eye are common beliefs. Where Chinese herbal medicine is available, the healers may use them as sources for unusual medicines. Nothing particularly unique other than prayer and service to the right spirits can result in healing.

Beliefs related to food and health

Food can have negative and positive effects. There is strong belief in food possessing hot and cold healing properties, as well as use of herbal remedies provided by Santeros, Santeras or Babalawo. Cleansing ceremonies may include animal sacrifices of chickens, doves, pigeons, or goats. No specific beliefs other than some people take vows to "serve" certain spirits which means that they must consume certain foods associated with these spirits on the days of the week dedicated to those spirits.

Beliefs related to death and dying

No set or clear belief. Some believe in reincarnation, while others believe in a heaven that is much like the heaven of Christians. At death one's spirit is freed from the body and needs protection so it will not fall into the hands of someone who may capture it and misuse the spirit. Babalawo may be called to provide a special cleansing ceremony after death, to clean the

body and protect the spirit.

Holy days

No specifically identified holy days. There are special days related to the spirits, and dedication of oneself to a particular spirit may include consuming particular food on the days of the week dedicated to that spirit.

Winter - Jan., Feb., Mar.	Spring - Apr., May, June	Summer - July, Aug., Sept.	Fall - Oct., Nov.,
Many religious days are regional based on geographic region from which the Santeria believers have roots.	A mixture of Christian and West African holy days are observed.		

Miscellaneous Information:

Lok of San Francisco. You may suggest additional religious groups through feedback in the usability survey or by emailing bdnapier@earthlink.net

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