

**A Study
of
Denominational
Doctrines**

12 Lessons

Prepared by:
Paul E. Cantrell

2010

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**Prepared:
Originally by Lon Mahandro
Arranged by:
Paul E. Cantrell
277 Deitch Lane
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050**

pecantrell@juno.com

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Lesson One

Adventist

Adventism in general is based upon the conviction that the second advent of Christ is the sole hope of the world. When Christ comes again He will destroy the wicked and then He will reign on the earth for 1,000 years with the righteous. In the early 1800s there was quite a bit of speculation concerning the second coming. It was during this period that William Miller of Low Hampton, New York, began to preach and teach the doctrine he had understood from his study of Daniel and Revelation.

Miller was a Baptist but he drew followers from the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches. For several years his followers were called Millerites. He adopted the “day” for a “year” in the Daniel prophecies and concluded that the 2,300 “days” of Dan. 8:14 concurred with the “seventy weeks of years” of Dan. 9. Thus, starting from 457 B.C., the year of the command to rebuild Jerusalem he decided that the period would end in the year 1843. Convinced that the cleansing mentioned in Dan. 8:14 was the earth and that fire would be the element used in the second advent, and that this would occur between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. When that prediction failed he recalculated and came up with the date of Oct. 22, 1844.

Many followers were so convicted that they sold their possessions, or gave them away, purchased white robes and waited. When Oct. 22nd passed with no second coming, vast numbers lost all interest in Adventism and went back to their former churches or abandoned the faith altogether.

There still remains several groups who are Adventist in belief, looking for the second coming and the earthly rule of Christ, although some have become a-millennial. Other areas of disagreement within the movement include: (1) what is the state of the dead-conscious or unconscious-as they wait the resurrection? (2) Who are to arise-the righteous *and* the wicked, or only the righteous? (3) Is there to be eternal punishment for the wicked or ultimate annihilation? (4) What is the nature of immortality? (5) Does the cleansing of the sanctuary of Dan. 8 refer to a sanctuary in heaven, or on earth? (6) When should the Sabbath be celebrated-on the first day, or on the seventh?

Some groups formed the Advent Christian Church, holding various opinions on the six points above. Others formed the Church of God General Conference, differing on one or more of the points. By far, the largest group would be the Seventh-day Adventist. Following the “great disappointment” of 1844 they concluded that an event had indeed occurred in Oct. 1844. They believed that the event corresponded with a change in Christ’s ministry in heaven from the Holy to the Most Holy Place.

After Miller’s prophecies had failed a new and unusual leader began to be recognized in the person of Ellen G. White, a self proclaimed prophet. In one of her many visions she saw the 10 commandments with the fourth one having a halo of light around it. This, she said, emphasized that the 4th commandment was still binding.

WHAT IS THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT? _____

Doctrinally, the Seventh-day Adventists are evangelical conservatives who accept the scriptures as the revelation of God through inspired writers. They believe in divine creation and the fall of man into sin. Humans are by nature mortal and sinful, but may receive immortality through divine grace and the redemption offered through the total atoning work of Jesus Christ. They bind tithing on all members and support their ministers and missionaries from the tithe.

They believe in the gift of prophecy in the church today, and because the body of man is the temple of the Holy Spirit they rigidly abstain from the use of alcohol, tobacco and use of drugs. They teach the pre-millennial, personal, visible return of Christ “at a time unknown but close at hand” and that a new earth will be created out of the ruins of the old as the final abode of the redeemed. They practice baptism by immersion and foot washing as a preparatory service for Communion.

They have 50 publishing houses, 10 liberal arts colleges, 3 universities, a theological seminary, and medical, dental and physical therapy schools. They support 442 medical units and 51 nurses’ training schools. World wide they support 926 colleges and secondary schools, and 4,105 elementary schools, and have more than 6 million students enrolled in Bible correspondence schools. Membership, world wide, is almost 4 million in about 23,500 congregations.

Lesson Two

Christian Science

To call Christian Science a Christian denomination is rather difficult to justify. It is a denomination based on the Bible, but only slightly. Its founder wrote: "The Bible has been my only authority. I have had no other guide in 'the straight and narrow way' of Truth." But we must note the following significant statement: "The decisions by vote of Church Councils as to what should and should not be considered Holy Writ; the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions; the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New, - these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages." (*Science and Health*, p. 139.) The founder is believed to have received her insights through divine revelation.

Mary Baker was born in Bow, New Hampshire on July 16, 1821. As a child she was very nervous and sickly, and missed much school. She was raised in a strict Calvinist family, but often argued with her father about religious teachings he imposed. In 1843 she married George Glover who died within the year. In 1853 she married Daniel Patterson in what proved to be a very unhappy marriage. They separated in 1866 and divorced in 1873.

During the time of her marriage to Mr. Patterson her health was very poor. She heard of a man in Portland, Maine named Phineas P. Quimby who was effecting remarkable cures without medicine. She began to visit him and for quite some time she was an enthusiastic follower of Mr. Quimby, accepting his conviction that he had rediscovered Jesus' own healing methods. This relationship deteriorated when Mrs. Patterson (later Mary Baker Eddy) began to claim that Mr. Quimby had actually stolen his material from her. Mr. Quimby died in January of 1866.

On Feb. 1, 1866 Mrs. Patterson had a very painful fall on the ice. Years later she said that her doctor had told her at the time that the fall would be fatal to her, however three days later she was miraculously healed. On Feb. 14th she wrote Mr. Julius Dresser, a former pupil of Mr. Quimby, and asked him to come and help her since, as she said, "I am slowly failing." The doctor who attended her following the fall signed an affidavit that he had never told her that her fall would be fatal.

In the years that followed she carried on a growing healing practice and taught others her ideas, and even began to set them down in writing. In 1870 she began to charge \$300.00 for teaching her system of healing. Although the fee was high, those taking the lessons could set themselves up as a doctor and charge fees just like a regular physician. It was during this time that she finished writing *Science and Health*, and in 1875 the first organization of a society was effected.

In 1877 she married Asa Gilbert Eddy, who had been her first student to assume the title of "Christian Science Practitioner." In 1882 Mr. Eddy died from organic heart disease. Mrs. Eddy, however, announced to the newspapers that he had been murdered with arsenic mentally administered by "certain parties in Boston who had sworn to injure" the Eddys.

On August 23, 1877, *The Church of Christ (Scientist)* was incorporated and was given a charter with headquarters in Boston. The church manual states that the purpose of the church was to be: “to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.”

Many health problems plagued Mrs. Eddy and on December 3, 1910, Mrs. Eddy, who had taught that there is no death, quietly “passed on”. Shortly before her death Mrs. Eddy told one of her closest associates, Adam Dickey: “If I should ever leave here, will you promise me that you will say that I was mentally murdered?”

The rules and by laws of the church are found in the Church Manual, written by Mrs. Eddy. She incorporated into the Manual the stipulation that with respect to these rules nothing could be adopted, amended, or annulled without the written consent of the Leader. So it is, that it is impossible to alter the rules of the church in any way. In 1895 Mrs. Eddy promulgated a by-law which “ordained the Bible and *Science and Health* as pastor on this planet of all the churches of the Christian Science denomination.” This means that at the present time no sermon is preached in Christian Science services. Prescribed portions of Scripture are read by the Second Reader. These are followed by the reading of correlative passages from *Science and Health* by the First Reader. The same lesson is read on a particular Sunday in every Christian Science Church the world around. Some songs are sung, there is a period of silent prayer and the audible repetition of the Lord’s Prayer. The latter is followed by a quotation from *Science and Health* giving Mrs. Eddy’s interpretation of the “spiritual sense” of this prayer.

Source of Authority: 1. Mrs. Eddy is believed by Christian Scientists to have received her insights through divine revelation. 2. Her book, *Science and Health*, is recognized as their final authority. 3. The Bible is often said to be in error, while “Christian Science is unerring and divine”. 4. They have so completely reinterpreted the Bible as to read into it any meaning they wish.

Their Doctrine: 1. Matter and evil (including all inharmony, sin disease, death) are unreal. Evil is nothing, unreal, an illusion and a false belief. Sin, which may in most cases be equated with evil, is a delusion, an illusion. 2. The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief or conviction of the necessity and power of ill-health. Disease is an illusion and a delusion. The cure of a sickness for Christian Science is to help a person understand that he is not really sick. Death is defined as “an illusion, the lie of life in matter; the unreal and untrue...” “Any material evidence of death is false, for it contradicts the spiritual facts of being.”

A young Christian Science from Deal,
Who said: “Although pain is not real,
When I sit on a pen, and I puncture my skin,
I dislike what I fancy I feel.

Since to the Christian Scientist matter does not exist, God cannot have created since the universe is matter. The common belief that we have bodies is simply an error of mortal mind. “Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual.”

Concerning Jesus Christ, in summary of their belief and teaching, they deny the unity of the Person of Jesus Christ, Jesus' present existence, the absolute necessity for Jesus' earthly mission, the incarnation of Christ, the Virgin birth of Jesus, the sinlessness of Jesus, the full deity of Jesus, and Jesus' genuine humanity. They reject Jesus' suffering, death, physical resurrection, and ascension into heaven. Yet, they dare call themselves a church of Christ.

Any teaching of salvation would be meaningless because they deny sin, and any need for salvation. So, if sin is not real, and if man has never fallen, what does man need to be saved from? Their answer: "from false beliefs". They have no rite of baptism and do not administer the Lord's Supper. They deny there is a heaven and a hell. "Heaven is not a locality, but a divine state of Mind in which all the manifestations of Mind are harmonious and immortal, because sin is not there."

Lesson Three

Church of the Brethren

The Church of the Brethren began in 1708 in Germany. Since the Lutheran Church was the state church it was quickly evident that they would not fit in Germany. In 1719 one group, under the leadership of Peter Becker, came to America to take up free lands offered by William Penn. A second group of 59 families joined them in 1729.

Generally speaking, the Brethren were from the German Reformed, or Lutheran church, and accepted the practices of the Pietists. This group in the Lutheran Church had become unhappy with the formalism and ritual in the Lutheran Church and the “barrenness” of their religion. Their assembly was very simple. They saluted one another with a “holy kiss”, practiced foot washing before the Lord’s Supper, dressed very plainly, with the women covering their heads in services. They refrained from worldly amusements, refused to take oaths, go to war, or engage in lawsuits. In the beginning they were also known as Dunkers from their practice of baptizing three times, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Church of the Brethren has approximately 170,000 members in 1,064 churches. There are several other groups of Brethren, such as The Brethren Church (Ashland) in Ohio which is sometimes referred to as Progressive Dunker; The Old German Baptist Brethren; the River Brethren; the Brethren in Christ; the Old Order (or Yorker) Brethren; the Plymouth Brethren. They are pacifists and base their conduct on the inner Christian life, stating that is more important than church organization.

A considerable number of Brethren had settled in Lancaster County, PA, and sometime after 1800 a group that had settled near the Susquehanna River disputed with others and broke away forming what was to become called the River Brethren. Other disputes produced groups known as the Old Order, or Youker , Brethren and the Brinsers, or United Zion’s Children.

Lesson Four

The Baptist Church

The Baptist churches make up one of the major Protestant denominations in the United States. There are 27 different Baptist groups, and many unaffiliated independent congregations, with approximately 27,500,000 members as of the mid-1970's. Baptist often say they have no founder but Christ and that Baptist have been preaching and practicing from the days of John the Baptist.

1. Could this possibly be correct? Why, or why not? _____

The Baptist movement had its beginning in the early 1600's in Holland and England as well as in Germany and Switzerland. The name Baptist appeared in various forms in Europe:

Pedobaptist baptized infants and children,

Anti-Pedobaptist opposed infant baptism,

Anabaptist rebaptized adults who had been baptized as children.

It is probably from the Anabaptist that most of the current Baptist doctrine and teaching comes. They championed the idea of the separation of the church from government and looked to the Bible as the sole law of the church. They baptized by sprinkling in the beginning, but later adopted immersion as the proper Biblical baptism.

The first Baptist church in America was formed by Roger Williams in Rhode Island. Most of the Baptist have been heavily influenced by the teachings of John Calvin, believing in predestination, the perseverance of the saints, etc. (Perseverance of the saints is sometimes identified as "once saved always saved", or "the impossibility of apostasy".) More will be said about that later.

The Baptist church generally had good growth in the United States, but with the oncoming of the Civil War there was a definite division in the denomination. In 1845 the Baptist in the

southern states formed the Southern Baptist convention. While remaining separated, it was not until 1907 that the northern Baptist formed a convention. In 1950 the convention became the American Baptist Convention.

Theologically, there is not much difference between the two major conventions. The Southern Baptist are more conservative than the American Baptist, but all the Baptist groups would be considered conservative. They believe in the inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Christ and the immortality of the soul, and stress the importance of baptism. However, they do not believe that baptism is necessary for salvation.

They insist that salvation is through repentance and faith, and that baptism should be administered after one has already been saved. Baptism, according to Baptist, admits one into the church. This would mean that one can be saved outside of the Baptist church. If this is true, then what is the reason for the Baptist church? They insist, “We do not join the church to be saved, but because we are saved.”

2. Read Mark 16:16. What is between “belief” and “salvation”? _____
3. Acts 22:16. Why was Saul told to be baptized? _____
4. Rom. 6:3-4. How does one get into Christ? _____
5. What is wrong with this verse? “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ because of the forgiveness of your sins....” _____

The Baptist form of church government is that there is a “pastor” in charge of every congregation. The congregation may have deacons who serve under the “pastor”.

6. Read Acts 11:30; 14:23; and 20:17. How would you respond to the teaching of “a pastor” in charge of each congregation? _____

A basic teaching of most Baptist churches is “once saved always saved”. Sam Morris, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Stamford, Tx. wrote: “We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. ... ‘Do you mean to say it doesn’t make any difference how a man lives?’ No. I do not mean to say anything of the sort; it does make a big difference how he lives but that difference relates to his fellowship with God, his prayers, his conscience, his joy, his influence, and his heavenly rewards and not to the salvation of his soul.” (From a track published by “Gospel Broadcasts”).

7. Read Luke 8:13; Acts 8:13-23; 1 Cor. 9:27 and Gal. 5:4. How can a Christian lose his soul?

John Hagee, a Baptist minister from Texas, and a highly respected “pastor” and writer in the Southern Baptist Convention, made this prediction during the last week of January, 1998: “Fearing for its security, Israel will make a pact with an Antichrist in Europe to ensure Israel’s safety against hostile armies on all sides. After three and one half years the Antichrist will break the treaty and make war with Israel. But Jesus will return to conquer the Antichrist and an army of 200 million. Jesus will rule the world from his new earthly base in Jerusalem.” Mr. Hagee made this prediction in a face-to-face meeting with Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu in Washington, DC. They also presented a check for \$1.07 million to the United Jewish Appeal that week.

This is a part of the Baptist doctrine concerning the millennial reign of Christ. That doctrine says that Jesus Christ will return to the earth and reign for 1,000 years from David’s throne in Jerusalem. The priesthood will be restored, as will sacrifices, and the ordinance of circumcision and the Sabbath observance.

Somewhere in this doctrine you will find the rapture and tribulation. The rapture may be pre, mid or post, tribulation, depending on who you hear discussing it.

In *A Study of Major Religious Beliefs in America* by John David Stewart on page 61 he

says: “No matter what doctrine a person holds, he probably could find a group of Baptist somewhere who would agree with him. There are Baptist who are strongly Calvinistic, believing that man’s salvation has been predetermined-the ‘*Two Seed in the Spirit Predestinarian Baptist*’; and there are Baptists who insist that all men are free to accept or reject Christ-the ‘*Free Will Baptist*’. There are Baptists who believe there is a continuous ‘succession’ of Baptist churches back to the days of the apostles-the ‘*Landmark Baptists*’; and Baptists who practice foot washing as a religious rite- the *Duck River Associations of Baptists*’, also known as the ‘*Baptist churches of Christ*’. There are Baptists who worship on Saturday-the ‘*Seventh Day Baptists*’, and those who reject Sunday Schools and any sort of money based mission or benevolent organization-the ‘*Primitive Baptists*.” Baptists are firm in their belief that each congregation should rule its own affairs.”

One of the fastest growing groups is The Baptist Bible Fellowship, International. It is an independent group but the churches are loosely affiliated with one another. They are ultraconservative in doctrine. This group would include the Falwell church in Lynchburg, Va. that includes Liberty Baptist College.

Lesson Five

Friends (Quakers)

George Fox lived in England. He sought spiritual truth and peace. Failing to find such in the churches of his time he did find it in a personal relationship with Christ. He said, "When all my hopes in churches and churchmen was gone... then I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.'" This is the Inner Voice, or Inner Light, of Quakerism, based upon the description of John 1:9 -- "... the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"--thus a voice available to all, having nothing to do with outward forms or ceremonies, rituals, or creeds. To the Quaker, every person is a walking church; every heart is God's altar and shrine.

Fox and his followers refused to go to church, insisted on freedom of speech and assembly, their own worship, they would not take oaths in court, refused to go to war, would not doff their hats to anyone, king or commoner. They made no distinction in sex or social class, condemned slavery and England's treatment of prisoners and the insane. When Fox was taken to court he advised a judge to "tremble at the Word of the Lord" to which statement the judge called him "Quaker".

Severe persecution was inflicted on Fox and his followers. Between 300 and 400 died in prison and over 3,000 suffered beatings and imprisonment for their faith. In spite of the persecution, or maybe because of it, the movement prospered. The society of Friends was founded in 1652. In 1682 William Penn came to Philadelphia. He made a treaty with the Indians that is described as the "only treaty never sworn to and never broken."

Quakers controlled the Pennsylvania legislature until 1756, when they refused to vote a tax to pay for a war against the Shawnees and Delaware Indians, and instead, stepped down and out of power. Their discipline at that time was very strict. Pleasure, music, and art were all taboo. Sobriety, punctuality and honesty were demanded in all directions. Dress was painfully plain and speech was biblical. Marrying out of the Meeting was not permitted.

Worship in the society is done in weekly “meetings”. Once each month there is a “meeting” for business that keeps records of membership, births, deaths, and marriages. It also appoints committees, considers queries on spiritual welfare, and transacts all business of the group. Group decisions await the “sense of the meeting.” Lacking unity of opinion, the meeting may have a “quiet time” until unity is found, or it may postpone consideration of the matter or defer it to a committee for study. Minority opinion is not outvoted, but convinced. Every man, woman and child is free to speak in any meeting. Women and men hold positions of absolute equality in Quaker polity.

Quaker worship may be either programmed or unprogrammed, but the two are not always distinct. There are no rites or outward sacraments. While Friends believe in spiritual communion, partaking of the elements is thought unnecessary. Generally there is no choir, collection, singing, or pulpit. The service is devoted to quiet meditation, prayer, and all vocal contributions are spontaneous. They believe in being guided by the Inner Light. The Inner Light is highly important in Quaker belief. They seek not holiness, but perfection--a higher, more spiritual standard of life. They believe that the truth is unfolding and continuing. They value the Bible highly but prefer to rely on individual fresh guidance from the Spirit of God which produced the Bible, rather than follow only what has been revealed to others.

Marriage is not necessarily a ceremony to be performed by a minister; in cases where the traditional Quaker marriage is observed, the bride and groom simply stand, or sit, before the meeting and make mutual vows of love and faithfulness, sign the marriage certificate, and are thereby married.

In 1661 the society gave a Declaration to Charles II which said: “We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatever.. The spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, not for the kingdoms of this world.” Quakers, as a society, have never departed from this Declaration, although there is great tolerance toward members who vary from this position.

The Friends have never been great proselytizers; they depend almost entirely upon birthright membership and membership by “convincement”.

One of, if not the most significant activities of the Friends is the American Friends Service Committee. This is the volunteer activity that is always among the first group to aid victims of war, hunger, and natural calamities. This group has been very active with the United Nations Relief Organization. Among their activities has been the placing of conscientious objectors in non fighting roles such as first-aid, ambulance drivers, farm workers, and any other non fighting positions.

Membership in the United States and Canada is about 123,000 and about 200,000 total throughout the world. The society has been very active and prominent in peace conferences and in camps for all ages, especially for youth. There have been very few divisions in the society and most of them have been resolved over time.

Lesson Six

Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witness is identified as one of the major cults. From a religious standpoint a cult is a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious as also are the adherents of that system. (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1976 edition). Major religious cults in the United States would include Spiritism, Christian Science, Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism and Jehovah's Witnesses. A similarity of all cults is that they exist by feeding off of legitimate (respected and organized) religious groups. That is to say, they prey on unhappy or uninformed members of religious groups.

Charles Taze Russell was born about 1854 to a Congregational family. Because of the popularity of the Seventh Day Adventist movement under Ellen G. White's leadership, he associated himself with it. He soon left that system, taking with him much of White's teaching, which he strongly denied. He soon dropped the peculiar Sabbath doctrine, but kept much of the rest, including the strong desire to foretell the return of Christ.

Russell claimed to be inspired like the Apostles and Prophets of the Bible, only more so. Even though the apostles did not know the date for the coming of Christ, and even Jesus said the angels did not know and neither did the Son, but only the Father, Russell said he knew.

Russell was a bold liar who often found himself in court for various reasons. When his wife sued for divorce because of his improper relationship with Rose Ball, he denied it violently until convincing testimony finally caused him to admit the relationship. He promptly transferred all his property to corporations and societies over which he had absolute control, trying to avoid paying alimony.

On another occasion he sued a newspaper, The Brooklyn Eagle, for slander. They had printed that he was selling a new kind of wheat, calling it "Miracle Wheat", for \$60. per bushel. In court he admitted that there was "some element of truth in the story".

He was a prolific writer. In the opening pages of his *Studies in the Scriptures* he wrote that it would be better to leave the Bible unread but read his comments on it than to omit the latter but read the Bible. He claimed that no one ever understood the Book of Revelation until the "Pastor" came upon the scene, and that Jesus meant Russell alone when he spoke of "that faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath set over his household to give them their food in due season." Matt. 24:45.

Russell began preaching in 1874. He predicted that Christ would return in 1878. When this did not occur he "recalculated" and came up with 1914 as the date. The movement was known as Russellites, then Millennial Dawnist, until the headquarters were moved from Pittsburgh to Brooklyn, New York in 1909. At that time they adopted the name, Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1956

the name was changed to the Watchtower Bible and Track Society of New York, Inc. However, they are still known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

What happened to the 1914 date? According to them, the Lord did return on that date, but it was a quiet return. And, He is reigning in His kingdom today.

Russell had built quite a thriving religious "business" during his life and when he died there was a struggle for his position. A devoted follower, Judge Joseph F. Rutherford, delivered an impressive eulogy at Russell's funeral stating that while other mortals sleep in death until the resurrection, "Our dear brother sleeps not in death, but was instantly changed from the human to the Divine nature, and is now forever with the Lord."

Although Judge Rutherford often and strongly condemned "titles", he did not hesitate to insist on his title as judge. Actually, he had no legal or moral right to such a title. He had been admitted to the legal profession in Missouri although he had no instruction or training in the law. When the duly appointed judge was not in town the local lawyers took turns serving as judge. Rutherford served on four occasions. On two of them there were no cases to be heard.

Rutherford served as president until 1942. When he died Nathan H. Knorr was selected. Knorr died in 1977 and the movement is now under the leadership of Frederick W. Franz. According to Rutherford, Jehovah's Witnesses are not a church. They meet in Kingdom Halls, not "church buildings". They are one of the most intensely evangelistic religious groups in the world. All members, called publishers of the Kingdom, are required to be active in door to door canvassing. Members are required to devote 15 hours a month to "preaching". Pioneers are required to give at least 90 hours per month. Special pioneers and missionaries donate a minimum of 140 hours per month and are sent to isolated areas and foreign lands to found new congregations. Generally, they provide their own support, although some meager funds are supplied by the society.

The headquarters staff, including the president, are housed in the Bethel Home in Brooklyn and are engaged primarily in editorial and printing work. They generally receive an allowance of \$30. per monthly. Their official journal, the Watchtower, has a circulation of 10,050,000 and more than 2,477,000 Witnesses are active throughout the world. More than one billion Bibles, books, and leaflets have been distributed since 1920.

Based on their conclusion that Christ came back to earth in 1914, Judge Rutherford wrote "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" in 1920. In it he prophesied, "Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the faithful prophets of old..."

They teach baptism by immersion, but err concerning its purpose. They believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, however they have their own translation of the Bible called The New World Translation, which has errors they inserted. They believe that one must have the Watchtower magazine as a "key to unlock the Scriptures." Meaning that they actually follow what the Watchtower Society says, not the Scriptures.

They reject the Biblical teaching of the nature of God. They claim that since Christ is called “the first-born of all creation,” Col. 1:15, He was actually created by God, and is not God Incarnate as the scriptures claim. They fail to understand that firstborn means “the preeminent one”. The same passage in Colossians talks of the fact that Christ created all things and all things are sustained by Him.

Their concept of the kingdom is terribly flawed, since they state that Christ returned in 1914 and established the kingdom. The Bible teaches that the kingdom was established on Pentecost, following the ascension of Christ back to the Father.

They teach that man does not possess a soul, but is a soul, and that when one dies his soul dies. They deny there is a place of everlasting torment. Hell, they say, is the grave. They teach that when the end comes God will cleanse the earth by fire just like He cleansed it with water in Noah’s day. Judge Rutherford wrote: “Reason would lead us to the conclusion that Jehovah would not create a wonderful earth like this, permit man to bring it to a high state of cultivation in many places, and then completely destroy it. Such is wholly out of harmony with his character.”

At the time the earth is cleansed by fire, they say, all the saved will be placed on the cleansed, sin free, earth and all the evil dead simply have ceased to exist. They are no more. Judge Rutherford said of the doctrine of eternal torment: it is impossible because (1) it is unreasonable, (2) it is repugnant to justice, (3) it is contrary to the principle of love, and (4) it is wholly unscriptural.

A 1924 pamphlet says that there is an eternal punishment, but not eternal damnation, far less eternal torment. The punishment consists of quietly going out of existence. The dead, (those not existing?) will be raised with the same thoughts they had before their destruction, and those who have not had an opportunity to hear or to appreciate the (Russellite) gospel, will live again, namely, during the Millennium. If then, following their former bitter experience of the result of evil (that is death, destruction), they fulfill the Christian’s part of the atonement, they will enter life eternal. Should they, however, choose to live in sin once more, their “punishment” will consist of “everlasting cutting off.”

One special group, the 144,000 Christians mentioned in Revelation 7 and 14, will become the bride of Christ and will rule with him in heaven.

Lesson Seven

Mennonite/Amish Churches

The Mennonite Churches are closely related to the Brethren. The first congregation of historical record was organized at Zurich, Switzerland, in 1525. It consisted of Swiss Brethren who disagreed with Ulrich Zwingli in his readiness to consent to a union of church and state. They also denied the scriptural validity of infant baptism. Because of this they were labeled Anabaptist, or Re-baptizers.

Menno Simons was a converted Roman Catholic priest. He was baptized about 1534. He organized so many Anabaptist congregations that his name became identified with the movement. Followers in Holland, Germany, Switzerland and England suffered severe persecution because of their resistance of any union of church and state.

William Penn opened his colony to them and they began to settle near Philadelphia. As more immigrants came the movement spread over Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Indiana, Illinois and as far as western Canada.

The Mennonite belief is based upon a confession of faith signed at Dordrecht, Holland, in 1632. In 18 articles, the following doctrines were laid down: faith in God as creator; humanity's fall and restoration at the coming of Christ; Christ as the Son of God, redeeming humankind on the cross; obedience to Christ's law in the gospel; the necessity of repentance and conversion for salvation; baptism as a public testimony of faith; the Lord's Supper as an expression of common union and fellowship; matrimony only among those "spiritually kindred"; obedience to and respect for civil government except in the use of armed force; exclusion from the church and social ostracism of those who sin willfully; future reward for the faithful and punishment for the wicked. (Handbook of Denominations by Frank S. Meed. p. 153)

Today, the Lord's Supper is served twice a year in most congregations. Generally, baptism is by pouring and most observe the foot washing ordinance in connection with the Supper, after which they salute one another with the "kiss of peace." The sexes are separated in these two ceremonies. They baptize only on confession of faith. They try to strictly follow the New Testament. They refuse to take oaths and oppose secret societies. Among their strong points are their mutual aid of one another and a dedication to worldwide relief through the Mennonite Central Committee.

Their congregations are autonomous. The officers of the church are bishops (often called elders), ministers, and deacons (almoners).

The Amish are a segment within the ranks of the Mennonite church. It takes its name from Jacob Amman a Swill Mennonite bishop of the late 17th century. He insisted on strict adherence to the confession of faith, especially in the matter of shunning excommunicated members. He considered the conduct of the Mennonites to be too liberal.

Early Amish immigrants to the United States settled in Pennsylvania then gradually some moved to Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska and other western states and Canada. Many of the Amish are distinguished by their plain way of living, plain clothing, refusing to use most “modern” equipment including automobiles, tractors, telephones and electricity. These are generally identified as the Conservative Amish Mennonite Church and the larger Old Order Amish Mennonite Church. They have continued to hold on to the “Pennsylvania Dutch” language and the seventeenth-century culture of their Swiss-German forebears. Their education is generally through the 8th grade in common school rooms. Their worship assemblies are generally in the home of a member.

There are several groups in the Mennonite movement. The largest is the Mennonite Church, made up of some 1200 congregations with about 1,000,000 members. In 1963 they adopted a revised version of the confession of faith, intended to be more biblical than philosophical or theological.

The Reformed Mennonite Church was organized in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1812 under the leadership of John Herr. They maintain that there can be but one true church for all believers. They recognize as ordinances baptism, the Lord’s Supper, foot washing, marriage, and the kiss of peace. These are “for edification and not a means of salvation”. Baptism by pouring or sprinkling is considered an outward testimony of the baptism of the Spirit within the heart, which must precede the reception of water baptism. Communion is restricted to members of the church. They insist on modest and uniform clothing and require women to wear a head covering. They do not vote or hold any governmental office and refuse to worship with any who are not united in faith and practice. They have no Sunday schools, believing it obligatory upon parents to teach their own children.

In 1859 John Holderman, a minister in the Mennonite church in Ohio, became convinced that his church was apostate and in error in many teachings. He began to preach the necessity of the new birth, Holy Ghost baptism, more adequate training of children in the fundamentals, disciplining of unfaithful members, avoidance of apostates, and the condemnation of worldly minded churches. They hold to the same confession of faith and teach that there is but one true church “from the time of the apostles to the end of the world.” They teach that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, and must govern all doctrine and teaching. There are almost 100 congregations with about 12,000 members.

In about 1927 a group of the Old Order Amish led by Bishop Moses M. Beachy in Somerset County, Pa. broke away seeking a milder and more relaxed life and worship. They meet in church buildings, have Sunday schools, and are active in supporting missionary work.

The Old Order (Wisler) Mennonite Church is composed of 38 churches with about 9,000 members. In 1872 Bishop Jacob Wisler in Indiana led a separation from the Mennonite Church protesting the use of English in the services and the introduction of Sunday Schools. There is still some involvement with the Mennonite church, though they are separated.

The Mennonite Brethren Church of North America was organized in 1860 having withdrawn from the Mennonite church in the Ukraine. Still holding to the plainness of life they

desired to have a more Baptist organization, while seeking a closer attention to prayer and Bible study. There are about 260 churches with 38,000 members.

There are several other groups in the Mennonite church, that while unaffiliated with the main body, still share such fundamental doctrines as the necessity of suffering injustice without retaliation, believer's baptism, the New Testament view that Christians must be separate from the evils of an unregenerate society, and moral earnestness.

Lesson Eight

Mormons

The Mormon “prophet” Joseph Smith. was born on December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont. His parents were very poor, fairly uneducated and somewhat superstitious. Joseph claimed he had visions and divine revelations as early as age 15.

When he was 17 he said that the angel Moroni revealed to him the spot where golden plates containing the history of ancient America were buried. He found the plates. They were written in “reformed-Egyptian caractors.” (He probably meant characters). His claim was that the angel provided the “Urim and Thummim” which supplied the translation. The plates were said to have been hidden in the earth from 420 AD until Sept. 22, 1823, when they were found on the “Hill Cumorah”. The faithful translation of the plates produced the Book of Mormon, which includes extensive quotations from the King James Translation of the Bible.

Opponents of Joseph Smith said that he had originally claimed that he translated the plates with the use of a “peepstone in a hat,” from which he read the plates and dictated the information to a companion, Sidney Rigdon. Court documents filed in Massachusetts charged Joseph Smith with stealing an unpublished novel, *The Manuscript Found* from a man he worked for named Solomon Spaulding, and then claiming the work to have divine origin. Smith claimed that John the Baptist appeared to him and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them the Aronic priesthood. Later he said that Peter, James, and John met with them and conferred upon them the priesthood of Melchizedek and the keys of apostleship.

In 1830 Joseph Smith organized the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints” in Fayette, N.Y. A ”revelation” commanded the group to move Kirtland, Ohio. When the “Safety Bank” at Kirtland, a Mormon enterprise, failed in 1838, Smith and Rigdon fled with the group to Missouri. Again, they were not well received and by the order of the governor they left the state. They settled in Carthage, Illinois in 1844.

It was here that Joseph Smith made his biggest claims. He even announced as a candidate for the presidency of the United States. Charges began to surface. The charges included gross immorality (for plurality of wives), counterfeiting, sheltering criminals who were fleeing from justice, and other things. Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, were jailed. An angry mob stormed the jail and killed them both. This proved to be a boon to the movement, since, now they had a martyr.

Joseph Smith, Jr. claimed that his father, the prophet, had said that a direct descendant must lead the group. But a very charismatic man named Brigham Young took the majority of the group and headed west. In July 1847 they arrived in Utah, which was then an unoccupied Mexican territory. At the close of the Mexican War in 1849, Utah became American territory. The Mormons refused to be ruled from Washington, but through a long process of bargains, they agreed. Brigham Young remained the First President of the Church until his death in 1877, at the age of 76.

The book that Joseph Smith supposedly translated is *The Book of Mormon*. That book contains many things that contradict the Bible. Later writings are by the title of Doctrine and Covenants and another by the name of The Pearl of Great Price.

Just a few of the doctrines of the Mormon church will be cited. (There are too many to dwell on.)

Mormons teach that all men are potentially gods. (“In his mortal condition man is a God in embryo.”) They teach that Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others have become gods. They teach that God has a physical, human body. The living apostleship continues today. They have a “Council of Twelve Apostles” as their highest governing body. Miraculous gifts and revelations continue today, they say. Mormons have other “inspired, authoritative” books in addition to the Bible, and these “so-called” inspired books contain numerous contradictions. They say that Jesus was born in Jerusalem. (Alma 7:10). Believers were called Christians long before the birth of Christ. (Alma 46:15). Christ appeared on earth to minister to people long after His ascension. (III Nephi 10:18,19).

Polygamy (a plurality of wives) is claimed as a divine right, and is not practiced in the United States since the government passed a law making it a punishable crime. The Mormons try to “prove” polygamy from Isaiah 4:1; and Matt. 22:30. Joseph Smith wrote: “Abraham received concubines and they bare him children, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Go ye therefore and do the works of Abraham, enter ye into my law, and ye shall be saved. But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.”

“Jesus Christ was a polygamist; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, were his plural wives, and Mary Magdalene was another. Also, the bridal feast of Cana of Galilee, where Jesus turned the water into wine, was on the occasion of one of his own marriages.” Brigham Young. (Wife No. 19, Ch. 35.) “We say it was Jesus Christ who was married (at Cana, to Martha and Mary), whereby he could see his own seed before he was crucified. The reference is to Isaiah 53:10.” Apostle Orson Pratt. (The True Origin of Mormon Polygamy, p. 207).

And, Mormons say that there are two kinds of angel beings. Angels who are resurrected personages, having bodies of flesh and bones, and then “The spirits of just men made perfect-they who are not resurrected, but inherit the same glory.”

One of the most unusual teachings of the Mormon church is the “baptism for the dead”. “Millions of earth’s 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 ordinances that belong to the sphere which they have left. Can nothing be done in their 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 baptized for the dead. Other essential ordinances may be attended to vicariously. This glorious truth, hid 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 ‘Saviors on Mount Zion,’ Jesus being the great Captain in the army of redeemers.” (Mormon Doctrine, p. 48)

Then there is the Mormon version of the Virgin Birth. “When the Virgin Mary conceived the child Jesus, the Father had begotten him in his own likeness. He was NOT begotten by the Holy Ghost. 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.” Brigham Young (Journal of Discourses, 1:50).

Lesson Nine

Pentecostal

Pentecostalism is an inclusive term applied to a large number of sects, assemblies, and churches. Many have either a Methodist or Baptist background, and they are primarily concerned with perfection, Holiness, and the Pentecostal experience.

Generally speaking most of them believe in the Trinity, original sin, salvation through the atoning blood of Christ, the Virgin birth and deity of Jesus, the divine inspiration and literal infallibility of the Scriptures, manifestations and “blessings” of the working of the Holy Spirit-the fiery Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit, pre-millennialism, and future rewards and punishments. They practice baptism, usually by immersion, and the Lord’s Supper. Foot washing is frequently observed in connection with the Supper. Many practice divine healing, and speaking in tongues.

The churches that make up the Pentecostal group bear a great variety of names and do not always include the word *Pentecostal*. For instance there is the largest single group, Assemblies of God, with over half a million members. Also, there is the Church of God groups. No accurate count of total membership is possible since many of them never issue any statistical information.

As a general statement, they are fundamentalists, have a strong belief in the infallibility and inspiration of the Bible, the fall and redemption of the human race, baptism in the Holy Ghost, a life of holiness and separation from the world, divine healing, the second advent of Jesus and his millennial reign, eternal punishment for the wicked and eternal bliss for believers. They practice baptism and observe the Lord’s Supper and are especially insistent that baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues. The Assemblies of God believe that all the gifts of the Spirit should be in operation in the normal New Testament church.

Local congregations are independent and regulate their own affairs. The movement is divided into 57 districts in the U.S. and each district presbytery examines, licenses, and ordains pastors.

Various groups exist in the Pentecostal camp. They include the Calvary Pentecostal Church, Inc; the Elim Fellowship; Emmanuel Holiness Church; the Independent Assemblies of God, International; International Pentecostal Church of Christ; International Pentecostal Holiness Church; Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc.; Pentecostal Church of God; Pentecostal Free-Will Baptist Church, Inc.; and the United Pentecostal Church International.

Lesson Ten

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN

This loosely organized group had its origin in the British Isles. They are commonly called Brethren or assemblies. They may be designated as a Bible Chapel or Gospel Hall, usually prefixed with the name of the town, community, street, or some biblical term like Grace, Bethel, or Bethany.

They have a weekly hour long “remembrance meeting” for the Lord’s Supper, and an unstructured service. All of the men of the assembly are free to take oral part. They may employ a preacher, but he is never in charge of the meeting. The congregations are autonomous and therefore there is sparse information about their size.

Plymouth Brethren are committed to all the fundamentals of orthodox Christianity, including the verbal inspiration of Scripture. They are part of the mainstream of American evangelicalism, strongly emphasizing gospel preaching and the necessity for personal conversion.

They have always emphasized the unity of all believers, but refuse to be united with denominations, seeing that as union and not unity. Some of the assemblies are known to be exclusive and others open, based on who can participate in the supper. There is estimated to be less than 100,000 in the entire group. They are strongest in New York and Chicago metropolitan areas and in the states of Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida, Michigan, Iowa and California.

They are definitely not a part of the Church of the Brethren that had its roots in Germany.

Lesson Eleven

The Salvation Army

In 1861, William Booth, an ordained Methodist minister left his pulpit and went into the slum areas in London, England. He dedicated his life to the poor unchurched masses in those slums. He tried to meld his work into that of the Methodist Church but those he taught would not attend the Methodist worship, and some that did found that they were not very well received. In addition, he found that he needed those he taught to help handle the great crowds that came to his meetings. In 1878 what had started as The Christian Mission was changed to The Salvation Army.

Booth took on the terminology of an army. Articles of War (declaration of faith) were drawn up. The mission stations became the corps, members became soldiers, the evangelists became officers and converts were listed as seekers. Booth was designated as “general”, and he gradually set up his organization on a military pattern, with a direct line of authority from the “general” down.

Booth’s work spread quickly. In 1880 it was established in the U.S., then in Australia, France, Switzerland, Sweden, India, Canada and beyond. Now the Salvation Army works in 85 lands with approximately 25,000 officers. It preaches the gospel in about 112 languages at 15,500 evangelical centers. It operates more than 3,038 social institutions, hospitals, schools and agencies. Membership is about 2 million.

In the United States the Army conducts religious and social programs in all 50 states having 11,158 centers of operation, including 7,246 service extension units. All of this is administered by more than 5,000 officers assisted by about 25,000 employees. The local unit is called the corps, of which there may be several in a city. Each corps is commanded by an officer. The officer is responsible to divisional headquarters, of which there are 38 in the United States. The divisions are grouped into four territories, Eastern, Central, Southern, and Western, with headquarters in New York City, Chicago, Atlanta, and Ranch Palos Verdes, Calif. The national headquarters is in Verona, New Jersey.

Converts who desire to become soldiers (members) must sign the Articles of War, then as members they give volunteer service. The officer in each corps is similar to that of minister in other denominations. There is a two year basic training for each officer. This basic training comes at one of four training centers. The source of officer candidates is from the corps. A soldier who has served actively for at least six months may make application for officership and, if accepted, may enter the School for Officers’ Training. The officer graduates from the school as a lieutenant and following additional studies, is eligible to attain the ranks of captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, and commissioner.

The Army recognizes the Bible as the only rule of Christian faith and practice; God as creator and Father of all humankind; the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; Jesus Christ as Son of God and “Son of man”; sin as the great destroyer of soul and society; salvation as God’s remedy for human sin and the ultimate and eternal hope made available through Christ;

sanctification as the individual's present and maturing experience of a life set apart for the holy purposes of the kingdom of God; and an eternal destiny that may triumph over sin and death.

The Army has a dual function as church and social agency. Its social services are a means of putting the socially disinherited in a condition to be physically and spiritually uplifted. By far, the Army is best known for its social and welfare programs, although its desire is first and foremost to be a church. The Army is financed largely through voluntary subscriptions, federal funds, and annual maintenance appeals from each service.

Lesson Twelve

Church of the Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene had its beginning as a break-off of the Methodist church. They adhere closely to the original Wesleyan ideology. The Nazarene Manual has been called a “rewritten and modified Methodist Discipline.”

Their doctrine is built around sanctification as a second work of grace. All ministers and local church officials must have undergone this experience. They believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, the atonement of Christ for the whole human race; the justification, regeneration, and adoption of all penitent believers in Christ; the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment. Members believe in divine healing but never to the exclusion of medical agencies. The use of tobacco and alcoholic beverages is denounced.

Two ordinances - baptism by either sprinkling, pouring or immersion, and the Lord's Supper are practiced. Membership is on confession of faith and on agreement “to observe the rules and regulations... of the church.” It is considered a middle-of-the road church, neither extremely ritualistic nor extremely informal. One of their church historians calls it the “right wing of the holiness movement.”

Their organization is very similar to the Methodist with superintendents located in the districts. Each local group will select its own minister. There is a general assembly that elects a board that oversees the business of the churches. There are approximately 7,500 congregations world wide with about 700,000 members. They have a strong emphasis on evangelism and education. They operate 8 liberal arts colleges, one theological seminary and several Bible colleges. Their publishing house is in Kansas City and does an annual volume of about \$10,000,000. About two thirds of the membership is in the United States.

