

## **A Final Hiatus: The Teachings of the Historic Cults In America**

### General Characteristics of Cults

1. Time factor: Within the last 200 years in America.
2. Doctrinal factor: Deny some essentials of the Faith.
3. Leadership factor: Founder is some kind of revered prophet that requires strict obedience.
4. Biblical (authority) factor: Low view of the Bible with their own “sacred writings”.
5. Organizational factor: Exclusive, the only ones with “real truth”, no salvation outside of their group.

As I think about the major American cults (I would not call Scientology one), I surmise the leader’s insights were very much a part of a disappointment or a need unmet.

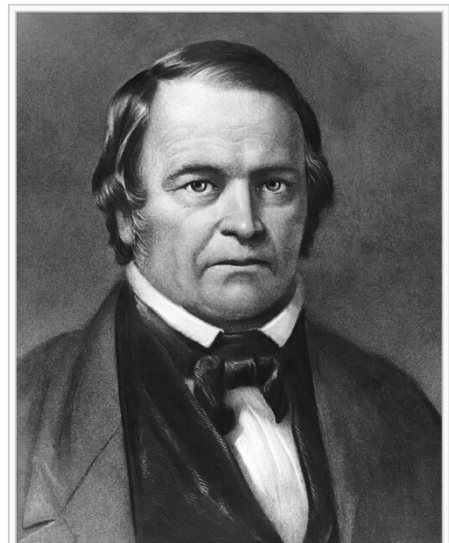
## **Seventh Day Adventist**

### 1. Their founders

William Miller (1782–1849).

Born in western Massachusetts, raised in Washington County, New York, sheriff in Vermont, army captain in War of 1812, farmer at Low Hampton, New York, 1816 - converted from deism and joined a Baptist church, began a 14-year study of the Scriptures, concluded Christ's advent in 1843.

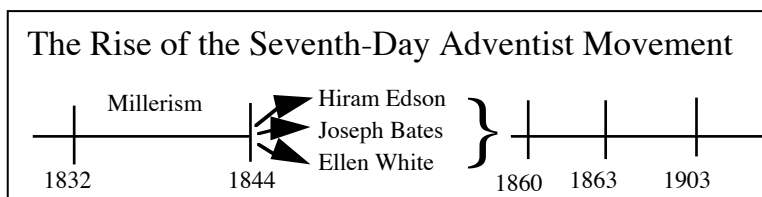
1831 - lectured in New York and Vermont, 1832 licensed as a Baptist.



1845 - some still hoped, general conference of Adventists, Albany, New York (Unity impossible).



Harmon, born near Portland, Maine, family in Chestnut Street Methodist Church, 9 years - struck in head, unconscious 3 weeks, face disfigured, invalid rest of life, 1840, 42 - Miller lectured in Portland, family joined the Millerites.



1844 - 1st vision (Adventists entering heaven).  
1845 - Vision (Christ entering Holy of Holies in the heavenly sanctuary - confirmed Hiram Edson's vision - Christ did come, but wrong place)  
1847 - Vision - taken into Holy of Holies.  
1860 – name, Seventh Day Adventist adopted.  
Current membership- 24 million in 200 countries and one of the fastest in growth, most in South America

## The Theology of Seventh-Day Adventism

<b>Authority</b>	Ellen G. White, continuing prophecies
<b>God</b>	Orthodox
<b>Christ</b>	Orthodox
<b>Atonement</b>	Substitutionary but incomplete
<b>Man</b>	Orthodox
<b>Sin</b>	Personal depravity
<b>Salvation</b>	By faith, obeying Mosaic law and Sabbath
<b>Church</b>	Exclusivist
<b>Eschatology</b>	Premillennial, post-tribulational
<b>Judgment</b>	Soul sleep, annihilation
<b>Practice</b>	OT dietary laws, Sabbath, believers' baptism, foot-washing

2. Their doctrine:
  - a) soul-sleep after death.
  - b) annihilation of the wicked.
- 3) doctrine of atonement - blotting out of sin not at the cross, but future (a three-fold work).
  - cross work.
  - 1844 - Investigative Judgment (checking the records of men, especially 4th commandment.
  - Day of Atonement - sins laid on scapegoat - Satan.)

## Mormonism

### 1. The founder

Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844).

Born 23 December 1805 in Sharon, Vermont.

1817 - moved with family to Palmyra, New York, Burnt-over area - religious excitement, family joins a local Presbyterian church).

1820 - September - 1st Vision (14 years.) -  
(he had been praying for direction as to which church was right.

1823 - 21 September - 2nd Vision. Angel Moroni reveals the location of the plates (plates to Book of Mormon).

1827 - 22 September - allowed access to the plates and work on them.

1829 - Oliver Cowdery joined Smith. "John the Baptist" appeared to him in May shortly afterwards - Peter, James, and John later.

1830 - 26 March - Book of Mormon for sale. (298 direct quotes of KJV).

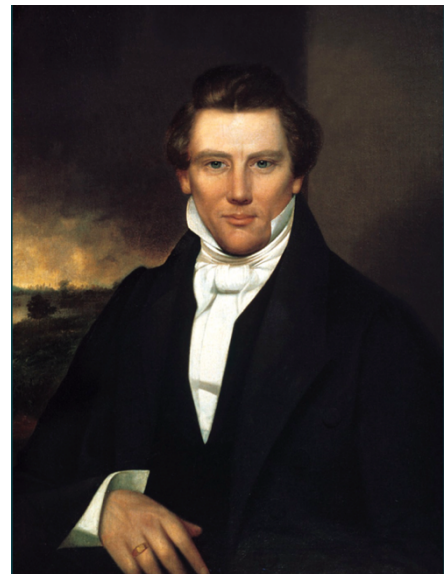
6 April - "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" 6 members  
Fayette, New York.

1831 - Moved to Kirkland, Ohio (Young joins).

1837 - moved to Independence, Missouri (revelation of the city of Zion).

1839 - moved to Nauvoo, Illinois.

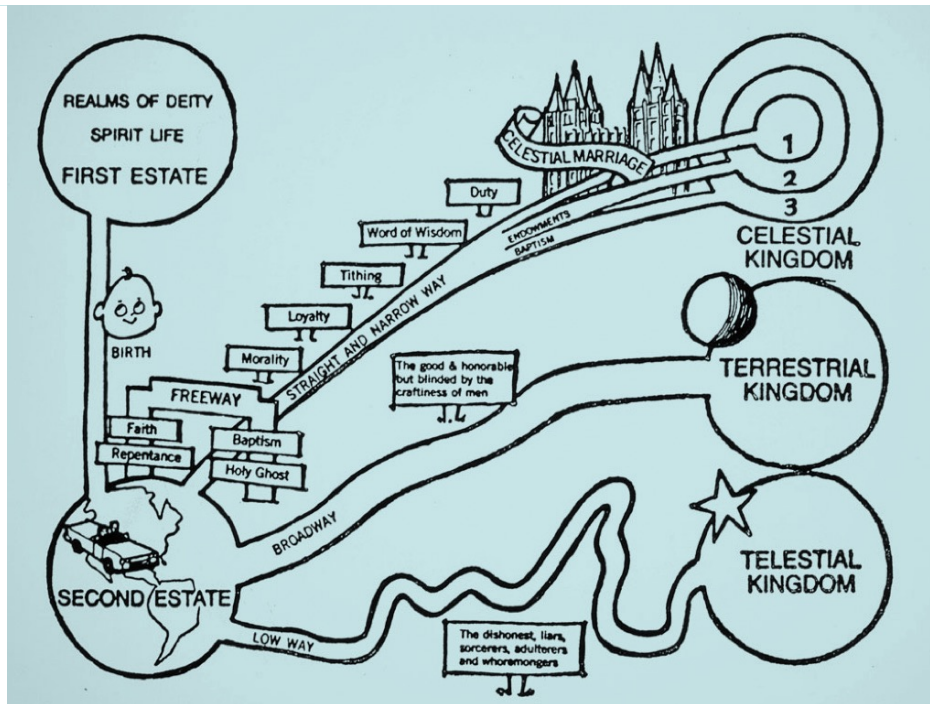
1843 - revelation of polygamy.





1844 - ran for presidency, Liberty Party (June 28 – jailed for multiple wives, lynched by an angry mob).

2. Their leader went west: Brigham Young (1801–77).



## The Westward Trek of Mormonism



1846-47 - moved westward (46-Iowa; 1847-Utah).

1877- 140,000 Mormons.

Today: 17.5 million members globally, 6.2 here with 6,200 congregations, 20,000 missionaries (39 countries).

### 3. Their doctrine.

## Theology of Mormonism

Authority	Book of Mormon, revelations of apostles	Salvation	By faith, baptism, laying on of hands, keeping commandments
God	God was once a man, has body, polytheism - man becomes a god	Church	No church from the apostle John to Joseph Smith (1795–1830), exclusivist
Christ	Divine but not unique	Eschatology	Israel (American Indians) restored, Millennial reign of Christ in Jerusalem (Independence, Missouri)
Atonement	Erased effect of Adam's sin		
Man	Preexistent	Judgment	Second chance after death, all eventually advance to godhood
Sin	Innate goodness	Practice	No alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea; fasting; tithing; Sabbath; baptism for dead

## Jehovah's Witnesses

### 1. The Founder

Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916).

Born near Pittsburgh, son of a wealthy cloth merchant, mother died at nine years, Presbyterian, Scots-Irish descent, 15 years - partner with father, joined a Congregational Church (troubled by predestination and hell).

17 years - avowed skeptic. 1870 - entered an Adventist Bible study. Entered and organized a Bible class of 6 (1870–75).

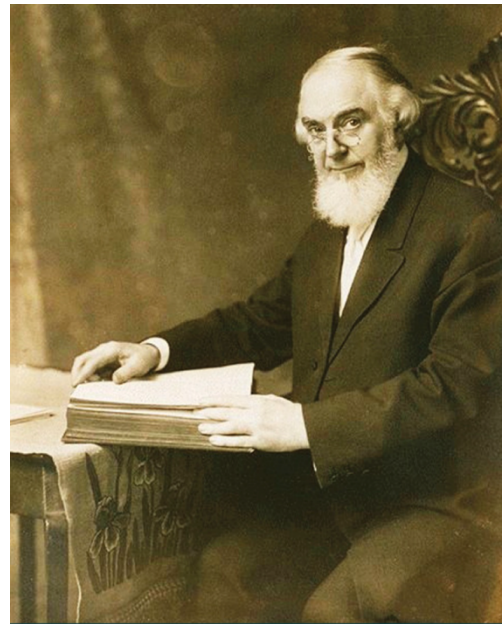
1876 - contacted Adventist group in Rochester, married Maria Ackley (separated 1897, divorced 1913).

1879 - Zion Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence.

1881 - Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (30 groups, 7 states).

1884 - legal beginnings.

1912 - Miracle Wheat Scandal



J. J. Ross – “Some Facts About the Self Styled ‘Pastor’”, Charles T. Russell. Russell sued for libel, during trial, Russell guilty of perjury (could not read Greek - never ordained).

1916 - died at Pampa, Texas.

Current size- 9 million, 118,000 churches

### 3. Their doctrine:

Denial of the Trinity, immortality of the soul, Christ's deity, the atonement in that it only provides an opportunity for man to work for salvation, Christ's bodily resurrection, existence of hell, Christ's visible return.

## Theology of Jehovah's Witnesses

Authority	Bible - New World Translation	Salvation	Faith plus works
God	Monotheism	Church	Exclusivist
Christ	Arian, unique, created	Eschatology	The 144,000 spend eternity in heaven, other Witnesses on earth
Atonement	Ransom, incomplete	Judgment	Soul sleep, annihilation
Sin	Personal depravity (not total)	Practice	No voting, holding office, saluting flag, taking oath, blood transfusions; pacifism

## Christian Science

### 1. The Founder

Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)

Born in Bow, New Hampshire; youngest of six, devoutly religious Calvinistic parents, ill most of life, nervous child, little formal schooling, largely self-taught, spinal illness caused by spasmodic seizures, semi-invalid.

1837 - joined a congregational church.

1843 - married George Glover - died within a year, Mary pregnant.

1854 - married Daniel Patterson - unhappy, not a provider. Separated in 1866.



1862 - healed amidst failing health - Phineas P. Quimby a faith healer (used hypnotism and laying on of hands). (Mary later launched her own healing career and denied Quimby's influence).

1866 - fell on icy pavement, critically ill, reported a miraculous healing. Pt.:  
Marks the beginning of Christian Science.

1873 - divorced.

1875 - moved to Lynn, Massachusetts, wrote (Science and Health) (hired a man to correct spelling and grammar errors, James Wiggins).

1877 - married Gilbert Eddy - sewing machine agent.

1879 - Church of Christ (Scientist) incorporated.

“On 3 December 1910, Mrs. Eddy, who had taught that there is no death, quietly passed on”.

Current numbers no longer published

## 2. Their doctrine.

God is impersonal, a principle in the universe (panentheism).

Christ is an outstanding person, not divine.

There is no matter; matter is an illusion.

## Theology of Christian Science

Authority	Mary Baker Eddy	Salvation	Realization that sin does not exist
God	Panentheism, matter does not exist	Church	Exclusivist, polity and doctrine cannot be changed without written permission from M.B.E.
Christ	Divine idea, Jesus was a man	Eschatology	None
Atonement	Example	Judgment	Probation to grow in truth, or annihilation
Man	Coeternal with God, bodies non-existent	Practice	No sacraments
Sin	Imaginary		

# Scientology

## 1. The Founder

Lafayette Ron Hubbard (1911-1986)

Born in Nebraska

1930 George Washington University for one year, failed in attempts to enter the Naval Academy. Naval officer in World War II but sent home for ineptitude.

1946 married a second time without divorce his first.

Diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, later malignant narcissism and myopia

1948 arrested in California for petty theft

1954 Founded the Church of Scientology in Los Angeles

Early 1970s Founded the “Sea Organization,” a private, quasi-military Scientologist fleet serving as commodore.

1975 unsuccessful attempt to take over Clearwater, Fla.

1978 indicted in France for fraud

Current numbers are estimated 8 million worldwide

## 2. The Doctrine

No set dogma (a post-modern mind cult)

An individualized belief in a Supreme Being (the Eighth Dynamic)

The godlike nature of the individual

The power of the human mind.

An emphasis on the individual’s own journey



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