

CZESTOCHOWA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Robert Janik

Managerial, Social, and Political Aspects of the Activity of Selected Religious Groups



Częstochowa 2022

*To my friends,
Jutta Holländer
and Peter Schmidt-Holländer.*

Czestochowa University of Technology

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**MANAGERIAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL
ASPECTS OF THE ACTIVITY
OF SELECTED RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

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Introduction

Religions have accompanied mankind since the beginning of its existence, and there are many indications that its development was facilitated by them. Analysis of the history of *homo sapiens* also allows the conclusion that its success has been indispensably associated with readiness for creative problem solving, consistency in the implementation of new ideas and courage in taking risks. In this regard, religious life provided mankind with valuable inspirations.¹

Religions have dealt with the relationship between the sacred and the profane and built axiological systems that distinguish “good” from “evil”, the theological search for the existence of the “moral compass” has played an important role in this context. In the sacred texts of many religions, one can also find passages dedicated to management and to the issues such as the “use of talents,” showing initiative and resourcefulness.

Early civilizations initiated numerous processes which led to the development of different forms of statehood. As a rule, religions created specific political and social climates conducive to the formation of organizations, and because they had the educated ranks of clergy at their disposal, they could provide states with cadres of administrators if needed. The developed hierarchies present in religious organizations also played an important role in supporting civilizational projects.

Since the Reformation and the associated religious wars, the influence of religion has begun to wane, especially since the French Revolution. In addition, the political, social, and economic changes that took place as a result of technical development and industrialization significantly accelerated the process of secularization. The 20th century was particularly difficult for religions, as it was then that atheism and anti-

¹ Anthony Giddens and Phillip W. Sutton, *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021), pp. 95-98;

Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 17-28;

Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), pp. 102-130.

clericalism were included in the program of the communist movement. Apart from this, the broad spectrum of non-Marxist socialism also often showed anti-religious tendencies.

What is more, the threat to traditional Christian Churches has come not only from the political left, but also partly from the far right. While it was not noticeable in the cases of Italian² or Spanish fascism, it was rather different as far as the most murderous fascist system, National Socialism in Germany, was concerned; it was only the need to concentrate upon warfare that prevented Adolf Hitler from implementing his plan to introduce a “Germanic cult” in the Third Reich.

After World War II, the societal and political influence of traditional Christian Churches in Europe, as well as their membership, decreased because of cultural changes. Furthermore, in large swathes of Asia, especially in China, North Korea and Vietnam, the “red movement” triumphed, which meant that religious life did not develop in the territories under its control. Cultural changes to the disadvantage of traditional beliefs also did not miss big parts of Latin America and some Arab countries, where clerical circles lost a lot of their political influence as a result of “Arab socialism.”

However, the renaissance of religions was seen before long. The turning point was the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the invasion of Afghanistan by USSR troops, both in 1979, which resulted in a “holy war” declared by the radical Islamic forces on the Soviets. The support for the *mujahideen* from Western countries, led by the USA, enabled them to win and caused a wave of “religious revival” in Muslim countries. The forces which collided with the power of Western democracies in the 21st century were activated in this period. In Central and Eastern Europe, religious revival played an important role in overthrowing communism.

We can tentatively say that, in the last few decades, the role of religion in the world has begun to grow, although not always in traditional forms, for example, in the West, the so-called “new religious groups”, which often show syncretistic tendencies, have been popular. Just like many widely recognized confessional organizations, some of them are very interested in business, politics, economics, and managerial practices. The achievements of “traditional” religions as well as the “new” ones in these areas of activity deserve attention.

² Douglas Murray, *The Strange Death of Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 218-219.

The Role of Religions in the Rise of the First Ancient States

I.1. The Formation of the First State Structures

The period of the formation of the first states in antiquity was an extremely important time in the development of mankind, and the one in which religion played a serious role. People's beliefs and the related systems of values, as well as the resulting ways of acting and shaping social reality, were extremely important in shaping the behavior of the human species in many areas. However, it is hard to ignore the importance of leadership, which played a very important role in the evolution of ancient social structure. In hunting and gathering societies, in which decision-making centers were not yet fully developed, its beginnings were only barely visible. Activities such as food gathering and defense, typical of these communities, were usually team activities, in which it was both physical fitness and strength as well as the speed of decision making and experience that counted. Apart from the difficulties in hunting animals with primitive weapons, a significant problem was competition with other groups of people claiming the same hunting areas³. Such a situation was conducive to the formation of hermetic, disciplined communities whose members were aware of responsibility for the common good and of the importance of mutual loyalty. In these communities, leadership was associated with the efficiency and effectiveness of the conducted activities as well as with the acceptance of the chiefs by the community members.

The influence of a geographic location⁴ upon the socio-economic development of the first countries was significant. The first civilizations, which contributed to the development of state organizational structures, enjoyed convenient locations near large water resources and the presence of animals that could be domesticated⁵. Because of

³ Ulf Hannerz, *Anthropology's World* (New York: Pluto Press, 2010), pp. 13-37.

⁴ Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography* (London: Elliott & Thompson, 2015), pp. 283-287.

⁵ Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 19-26.

this, the groups living in river valleys were able to develop faster than others. The huge amounts of water from the rivers of the Near East and other countries of Asia, like the Nile, Euphrates, Tigris, Indus, Ganges, Huang He or Yangtze, posed a threat to people living in their vicinity but nevertheless proved to be helpful in food production⁶. These lands also had other riches to offer, especially alluvial soils and metal ores, allowing the development of metallurgy and the production of tools and effective weapons necessary to defend one's possessions. In order to exploit these riches, human cooperation on a large scale was necessary, and that could only be implemented in bigger groups in which the commands of the leaders were obeyed, and in which, as a rule, certain beliefs in the existence of the same metaphysical beings were shared, which consolidated such groups⁷. One can say without any exaggeration that the "community of faith" and a collective reference to the spiritual world played a key role in this process of the formation of better organized groups of people⁸. Simultaneously, the rulers were perceived as divine beings, and the existence of an educated group of priests allowed the creation of the organizational foundations of state institutions.

An increase in the degree of organization of many human groups made possible the creation of the structures from which the first states evolved, most importantly ancient military forces and administration. Administrative structures were necessary in order to organize a tax-collecting system. As the rulers at the time were seen as gods or divine beings, paying taxes had the character of a religious act⁹ and priests who collected them had a status comparable with contemporary civil servants. They often created the state ideology, also emphasizing the ruler's positive qualities and justifying their right to exercise power.

A more detailed analysis of human activity shows that the influence of religion was not only limited to the spheres of power, but also included many other areas of human activity¹⁰, such as architecture, economics or broadly understood "management", which nowadays is artificially separated from "politics".

It is worth paying attention to the fact that the emergence of state organisms was connected to the economic activity of the people who were dependent on the work of state structures. Mutual relationships (between the state and business, using contemporary language) were also the ones in which religion played a significant role. This rendered it possible to implement ambitious architectural projects such as building temples or pyramids, which required proper administration.

⁶ Securing fertile areas, but at the risk of flooding, was a challenge for the population, and only joint actions could ensure success. This was accompanied by an intensification of the domestication of animals.

⁷ James P. Spradley and David W. McCurdy, *Anthropology: The Cultural Perspective* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975), pp. 423-437.

⁸ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, 12 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 189-204.

⁹ Traces of the fiscal systems in the case of Judaism can be found in the pages of the Old Testament, an example of which may be the records of Israeli tribes related to the tax and duties collection, which were excessively high during the reign of King Solomon.

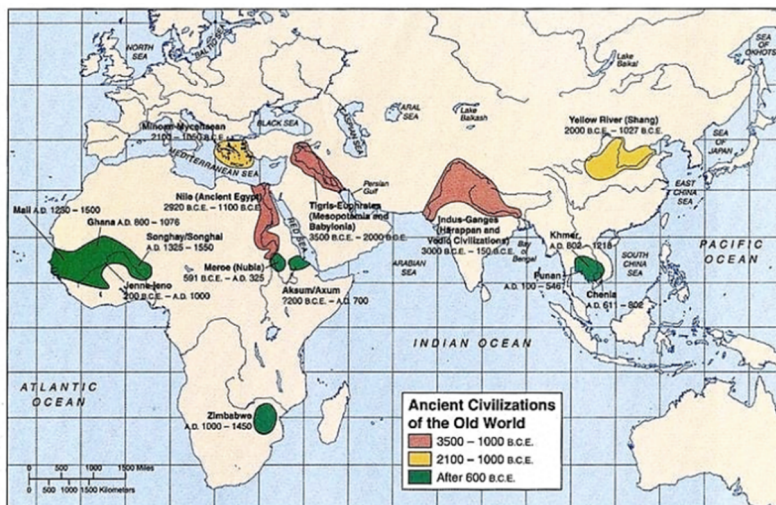
¹⁰ Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 58-64.

One more factor crucial to statehood and various aspects of management was the creation of codified legal systems, which was of great importance to civilization and the development of social sciences. Their origins should be sought in common law: the emergence of larger state organisms resulted in the need to codify the law in writing and ensure obedience to them by securing the support of state power and religion. The creation of the legal system was based upon moral law¹¹. Although the development of writing and the foundations of mathematics as well as the related development of various organizational structures are associated primarily with Mesopotamia and Egypt¹², one should not forget other cultural centers which made a significant “civilization leap”, like the areas of today’s Pakistan (the Harappan Culture) or China¹³. It is worth noting that all these “cultures” were associated, as previously mentioned, with large rivers.

I.2. The Influence of Religion upon the Formation of Management

An important factor conditioning the process of development of different kinds of management (including state administration) was, as mentioned above, religions, especially those of the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Phoenicians or Carthaginians, Greeks and Romans, Zoroastrianism, Brahmanism or Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism as well as Christianity.

Map 1: The First Civilizations of the World



Source: <https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.psu.edu/dist/d/92580/files/2019/04/cune-2-1eu4qfu.jpg>

¹¹ Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 3-4.

¹² Robert Janik, *Political, Economic and Managerial Reflections on the Globalization Process* (Częstochowa: Publishing Office of the Faculty of Management Częstochowa University of Technology, 2017), p. 9.

¹³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2002), pp. 40-55.

I.2.1. Mesopotamian Cults

Mesopotamian polytheistic cults were very closely related to politics¹⁴. Rulers were largely seen as intermediaries between people and gods, or even as divine beings. For this very reason, special prerogatives, including the right to collect tributes, which took on the features of aforementioned state taxes, were assigned to them and to their helpers, who were often priests. It required a priestly cadre with skills such as keeping reliable records of those who paid the required fees as well as those who were guilty of negligence in this regard.

Image 1: Gilgamesh



Source: <https://external-preview.redd.it/2hoDtcWOKPzJVVBYYYSg8S5Osg16GC8eUmnvulTj9CU.jpg?auto=webp&s=0a9d1ae37b659c873f056b232e0130186990762c>

¹⁴ Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Die nichtchristlichen Religionen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Bücherei, 1964), pp. 50-60.

Perceiving rulers in terms of intermediaries imposed certain obligations on them and forced them to care for the wellbeing of the country in the eyes of their subjects. It should be remembered that failures in avoiding natural disasters or problems with the harvest could discredit the ruler in the eyes of their subjects, and even cause armed revolts. One can find increased activity amongst rulers of the priestly caste for the improvement of economic life, particularly the precise calculation of river floods, the cycles of the moon phases, and so on, which led to flourishing geometry and astronomy, resulting in the creation of the calendar, as well as astrology, which was used to set horoscopes. The belief in Mesopotamian gods was also visible in the introduction of one of the first written legal codifications, the Code of Hammurabi, which is full of references to local deities¹⁵.

I.2.2. Egyptian Religion

Egyptian cults resembled the Mesopotamian ones in their polytheistic nature as well as in the role of religion in state building processes. The country's relatively high level of political stability, compared to that observed in Mesopotamian territories, created opportunities for the development of the cult of pharaohs, who were worshipped as the emanations of deities.

Image 2: Osiris



Source: <https://egypte-ancienne.fr/images/osiris.jpg>

¹⁵ 'Hammurabi's Code of Laws', trans by L.W. King, *sacred-texts.com* <<https://sacred-texts.com/ane/ham/ham04.htm>> [accessed on 5 January 2021].

It was also in this case that there were clear political connotations related to the organization of religious life and the dual role of priests, who were the servants of metaphysical forces and, simultaneously, performed their duties as state officials. Like in neighboring Mesopotamia, they collected taxes and carried the “torch of wisdom”, for example, one of the duties of priests was the creation of schools, primarily for the members of the elite.

It is important to note that, to become a priest, one was required to have previously attended temple schools and received not only theological education, but also knowledge important for administrative service. It is worth noting that in Egypt, on the initiative of the pharaoh Akhenaten, probably the first system of monotheistic beliefs in the world was created, although it collapsed after his death.

I.2.3. Zoroastrianism

Little is known about the life of the founder of this religion, Zoroaster or Zarathustra (ca. 550-523 BCE), who created a dualistic concept of the “fight between good and evil”, symbolized by light and darkness. Regardless of this, the influence of his doctrinal system upon Persia was significant and long lasting. The “career” of this religion began with Cyrus the Great and the Achaemenid Persian Empire (ca. 550-330 BCE), continued during the Parthian Empire (247 BCE-224 CE), and then also during the Sasanian Empire (224-651 CE), although in a heterodox form called Zurvanism¹⁶.

Zoroastrian faith is characterized by:

- a quasi-monotheistic doctrine, including the faith in the supreme god, transcendent to the world (Ahura Mazda);
- belief in the innate goodness of a human¹⁷;
- dualism manifested, *inter alia*, in the existence of aforementioned Ahura Mazda and his adversary Angra Mainyu, which symbolizes the fight between good and evil (and also the duality of existence);
- faith in the spiritual (though also material) nature of the world and human beings and the need to obey the three commands: good thoughts, good words and good actions;
- the conviction about the need to keep fire, water, earth, and air clean;
- belief in the afterlife, the possibility of the expiation of sins, the existence of heaven and hell and waiting for the Last Judgment.

The creation of an axiological system by Zoroastrianism and the acceptance of “freedom of choice” was essential for the development of management.

¹⁶ Joshua J. Mark, ‘Zoroastrianism’, *World History Encyclopedia*, 12 December 2019. <<https://www.worldhistory.org/zoroastrianism/>> [accessed on 12 February 2023].

¹⁷ Zoroastrians believe that human beings are essentially divine in nature and share the spiritual nature of God.

Other important points are responsibility for the family and the state and striving to maintain a “balance in actions”¹⁸. In this context, the attitude towards duties is important both in relation to one’s own family as well as to the community and the state. It was these moral choices that gave the Zoroastrian community a great social, economic, and political significance. It should be noticed that Zoroastrianism has largely influenced the development of many religions, most notably Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá’í Faith¹⁹.

Image 3: Ahura Mazda



Source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/NqTkURIFbfU/maxresdefault.jpg>

1.2.4. Phoenician / Carthaginian Religion

The beliefs of the Carthaginians were an important source of their activity, although there are opinions that this activity was often condemnable in terms of our contemporary ethics and linked to cruel practices such as child sacrifice²⁰. The fact is, however, that their significant civilizational development, including the creation of the first alphabetical script, accounting, the development of commercial and banking institutions, metallurgy, dyeing textiles purple, or navigation, is notable. In the case of the latter, they had particular success due to the ability to build ships from ready-made elements. They built a competitive society that created an interesting state governance system in which officials played an important role, and they are also credited with founding the first cartels in human history.

¹⁸ “Free will” has been emphasized a lot in Zoroastrianism.

¹⁹ Jayaram V., ‘Important Beliefs of Zoroastrianism’, Hinduwebsite.com <<https://www.hinduwebsite.com/zoroastrianism/beliefs.asp>> [accessed on 5 January 2022].

²⁰ Singer, *Practical Ethics*, pp. 3-4.

Image 4: Tanit, the Great Goddess



Source: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinning.com/564x/f1/1a/a2/f11aa263d5edd1ad70b50f84081b5926.jpg>

I.2.5. Greek and Roman Religions

In the religions of ancient Greece and Rome, pantheons of divine beings were worshipped²¹. There was a kind of competition between them, and the deities which were considered particularly “effective” were worshipped more frequently. Consequently,

²¹ Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (New York: New American Library, 1942), pp. 24-91.

the deities who were considered more powerful and useful in terms of assisting humans in achieving certain purposes were chosen as community patrons. They could count on particularly abundant gifts, in line with the Roman principle *do ut des*.

Greek religion contributed to the formation of the concept of policies²² and various systems of management. One of their great achievements was the erection of magnificent architectural masterpieces²³, which required the use of efficient management techniques. In this process, there were divisions according to the type of work performed, which corresponded to the “specializations” of individual deities who took care of particular human activities.

Some experiments of Greek politics with democracy contributed to the development of political thought²⁴, in which an important role was attributed to religious beliefs. The most famous center for creating this system was Athens, considered the cradle of democracy. The management of this city-state became an important element of the “people’s power”, resulting in a number of solutions which, although not always successful, ultimately contributed to the development of the theories of political science and organization as well as management.

The Roman pantheon reflected the pragmatic attitude of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Roman deities largely resembled the Greek ones with some other “heavenly figures” brought from different parts of the empire²⁵.

The remarkable achievements of Roman engineering are proof not only of the high level of Roman technical thought but also of effective management. Also noteworthy are their skills in creating transport and military infrastructure as well as the versatility of troops. Additionally, in the case of Roman law, strong religious influences are visible, a good example of which is The Laws of the Twelve Tables (*Lex Duodecim Tabularum*), codified between 451 and 449 BCE.

²² Dave Robinson and Judy Groves, *Introducing Philosophy* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2007), pp. 3-39.

²³ Robert Furneaux Jordan, *A Concise History of Western Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969), pp. 13-44.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Politics* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1959), pp. 2-67;

Aristotle, ‘Happiness is Self-fulfilment’, in: *Classic Philosophical Questions*, ed. by James A. Gould, 5th edn (Columbus, OH: C.E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1985), pp.156-167;

Janusz Sztumski, ‘Chancen und Gefahren für die Demokratie im 21. Jahrhundert’, in *Dimensionen der Politik: Aufklärung – Utopie – Demokratie* ed. by Axel Rüdiger and Eva-Maria Seng (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 2006), pp. 547-554;

William S. Sahakian and Mabel L. Sahakian, *Ideas of the Great Philosophers* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), pp. 31-40; Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* Volume I (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 115-154.

²⁵ Rebecca Flemming, ‘Demiurge and Emperor’, in: *Galen and the World of Knowledge*, ed. by Christopher Gill, Tim Whitmarsh and John Wilkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 59-84;

Michael Grant, *History of Rome* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1978), pp. 289-299.

Image 5: The Twelve Tables



Source: https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.d8cd30c28618cd28cdd8623e3f62c357?rik=0ySip30IZNREvA&riu=http%3a%2f%2fwww.cultus.hk%2fhist5503A%2fimages%2fTABLE_6.jpg&ehk=py6zPqMjnz0%2bG8OUTAXeYzB%2bBfXHsHLZkj2TcjVdKmE%3d&risl=&pid=ImgRaw&r=0

I.2.6. Vedism / Brahmanism / Hinduism

The religions that arose in antiquity in the vicinity of the Indus River had a significant impact on state building processes and the emergence of organizations with management structures. The first of them was created as a result of the invasion of Aryans around 1500 BCE, as they started their expansion from Central Asia to India (today's Pakistan). Coming in waves, they partly destroyed the culture that had existed in these areas and partly merged their own with it; there is some truth in saying that “conquered India conquered its savage victor”.

It was then that the old Aryan beliefs²⁶ merged with the religion of the natives, which featured the motives of the rulers, who were also priests. They used the so-called “Vedic language” (the term originates from the name of the sacred books in which they were written), from which classical Sanskrit is derived.

Vedism had an extensive system of sacrifices and a pantheon of deities²⁷, although there are numerous indications of the theological concept of “oneness” of a single deity manifested in many forms. It is worth emphasizing that the sacrifices and tributes had a political character. The conquerors mingled partly with the conquered population to form a society of *varnas*, also called castes. The highest of them was the priestly one (*Brahmanas*), which indicates the high rank of religion in the emergence of society composed of the conquered and the conquering. The second *varna* was that of warriors (*Kshatriya*) and another *varna* (*Vajśja*) was composed of farmers, artisans, and merchants. There was a cast of service providers and servants (*Sudras*) below them. This division was based upon the mythological representation of Pra-man (Purusha), who was, in turn, identified with Prajapati, the Lord of Creation.

Brahmanism evolved from Vedic religion and accommodated some of the concepts and practices from non-Vedic South Asian sources. It is the religion from which Hinduism directly derives and in opposition to which Buddhism and Jainism arose²⁸. The cause of the crisis within Brahmanism was its excessive ritualization of religious acts and focus upon their “technical aspects”, which was devoid of deeper spirituality.

Hindu society has preserved many elements of the Vedic and Brahmin period over the centuries. Not all of them are clearly positive and the most famous of them, namely the division into *varna*, causes a lot of controversy because it perpetuates differences between people. Supporters, in turn, emphasize the positive sides of such “social organization”, indicating the fact that it contributed to professional specialization and the creation of a tradition in the field of management.

Hinduism had to fight for its “canonical territory” with Buddhism, which managed to briefly dominate India, and the central figure in this regard was Emperor Ashoka (268-227 BCE), a zealous promoter of Siddhartha Gautama’s teachings. In strengthening Hinduism, an important role was played by the reforms of the philosopher Adi Shankara (ca.788-820 CE)²⁹, the founder of the philosophical school Advaita Vedanta. Shankara managed to revive Hindu philosophy during its confrontation with Buddhism and Jainism. He was a supporter of the *advaita* doctrine³⁰

²⁶ Little is known, however, about the religious concepts of the Aryans.

²⁷ Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: Meridian, 1968), pp. 144-145.

²⁸ One could consider Brahmanism as a kind of “intermediate phase” of religious development, located between Vedism and Hinduism.

²⁹ Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 350.

³⁰ ‘Advaita Vedanta’, *The Spiritual Life* <<https://slife.org/advaita-vedanta/>> [accessed 12 February 2022].

(i.e. assuming brahman and atman are identical), which implied his criticism of dualism in this regard. He also believed that the world, like the phenomenon of “me”, are the manifestations of one god.

Image 6: Symbol of the Ultimate Reality, the Om (Aum)



Source: <https://brewminate.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/061920-06-History-Anicent-Hindu-Religion-Upanishad.jpg>

I.2.7. Buddhism

This ideological branch owes its name to the Sanskrit term *Buddha Dharma*, “The Teaching of the Awakened One”³¹. Buddhism, like Jainism, arose largely as a reaction to the “routinization” of Brahmanism. The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha Gautama (560-480 BCE), born in Lumbini in the Kapilavastu principality (now a part of Nepal) as a son of the ruler of a small state in northern India³². It is significant in this context that Siddhartha Gautama was related to the warriors (*Kshatriyas*)

³¹ Jane Hope and Borvin van Loon, *Introducing Buddha* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2006), pp. 58-60.

³² Geoffrey Parrinder, *The World's Living Religions* (London: Pan Books, 1974), pp. 72-88.

caste, and not to the Brahmanas, which was a clear violation of the monopoly of this latter caste on all the forms of religious activity. The resistance of Buddhism to the strict hierarchy of the Brahmin-Hindu society resulted in the religion's abandonment of the caste system. Buddhism expanded rapidly in the first few centuries, achieving significant missionary successes in the Far and Middle East, which was owed *inter alia* to a well-organized campaign of acquiring new members³³. It was less fortunate in its own birthplace, India, from which it was almost completely ousted.

The existence of monasteries in this religion was essential for strengthening state structures and developing management in antiquity. The formation of Buddhist orders (both male and female) had not only religious and cultural but also practical significance; in addition to the knowledge that they were willing to share, they organized medical aid for the population, thus becoming the pioneers of the healthcare system in antiquity. Buddhist monasteries and institutions had important administrative functions in countries dominated by this religion, and also an important role in the country's governance process. At the same time, Buddhists paid a lot of attention to an "appropriate moral attitude" that should be displayed in the exercise of leadership functions.

Image 7: Siddhartha Gautama



Source: https://farm4.staticflickr.com/3175/2659140692_74e29db46a_z.jpg

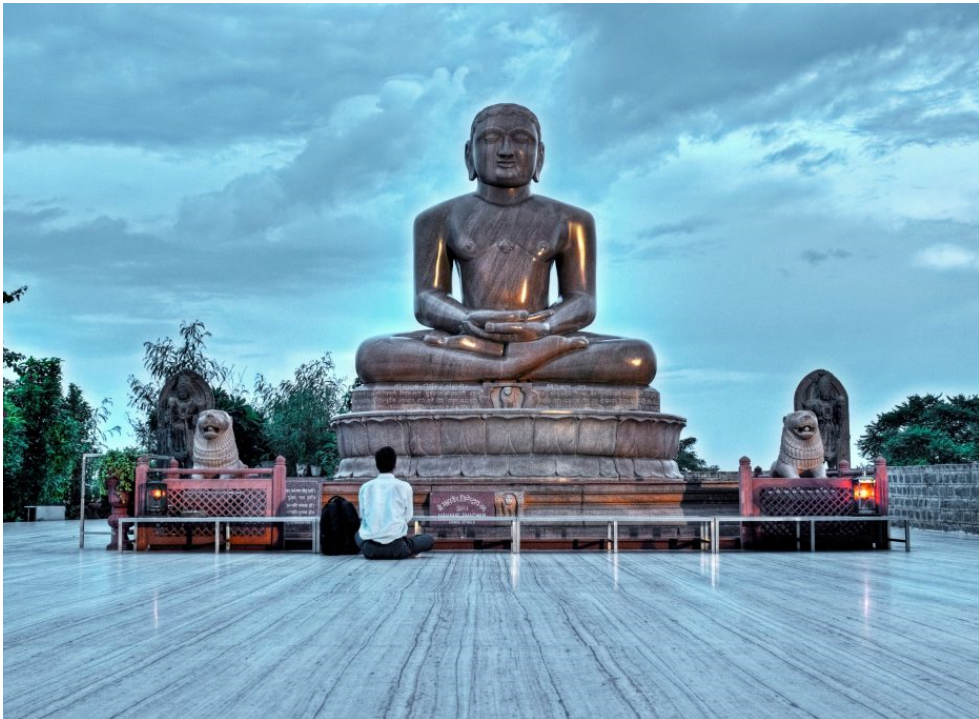
³³ Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (New York: Harper, 2001), pp. 3-173.

I.2.8. Jainism

This religion was, to some extent, related to Buddhism, as it developed out of protest against the “dictate of formulas and sacrifices” of Brahmanism. From the beginning of its existence, Jainism focused upon the liberation of an individual being from the burden of earthly life, striving for a state resembling the Hindu *moksha* or the Buddhist *nirvana*. The road to this goal is long and difficult, and it is connected with the need to maintain spiritual discipline (in the case of Jainism, this is called moral rigor), which is focused around monastic life³⁴. The five principles practiced in monasteries are:

- non-violence or non-injury (*ahinsa*), interpreted as protection of life;
- self-control of speech aimed at not saying that which “does not contain the truth”;
- respect for the property of another person;
- resignation from unnecessary goods; and
- refraining from the practices of “sinful sex”.

Image 8: Mahavira



Source: <https://www.zigya.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Lord-Maharavira.jpg>

³⁴ Monika Tworuschka and Udo Tworuschka, *Religionen der Welt in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1992), pp. 339-348.

An interesting feature of Jainism is the absence of a strict distinction between monastic and secular life, which, from the point of view of the theory of organization, was a kind of novelty. The orders also played the role of scientific and cultural centers.

I.2.9. Taoism

The origins of this religion go back to the 2nd and 3rd century BCE. Its founder (Lao Tzu, “Old Master”, born ca. 571 BCE) preached faith in the Tao, the “nature of all things” (also translated as “the way”). One can get closer to it by learning about the laws of nature, avoiding extremes and working on oneself³⁵. This is the source of the well-known Taoist maxim “the way is the goal”. It is also necessary to renounce desires (or at least a large part of them) and maintain a state of spiritual balance. Lao Tzu used the *yin* (female element) and the *yang* (male element) motifs known from Chinese philosophy, which are seen as the forces filling the universe, in his teachings. The goal of Taoism is to achieve a balance between them. Taoism has dealt with this “nature of the universe”, seeing it on a macroscale, albeit also recognizing the social dimension of the “cosmic order” as manifested in appropriate social relations. Peace and harmony, in place of the chaos of troubled times, was, and still is, the motto of this religion³⁶. It should be remembered that the times in which the Old Master lived were characterized by rivalries between Chinese states, which often waged wars with each other; it was the so-called “Time of Warring States” (ca. 475-221 BCE)³⁷. Lao Tzu adhered to and promoted the principle of *wu wei* (“inaction”) and “limited action” to help avoid extremes. The book *Tao Te Ching* has been credited with the claim that the best management of the state is guaranteed by the sage who heads it and the book contains a description of the postulated ideal of a ruler-sage.

While competing with Buddhism, Taoism presented itself as the “religion of China”, and the Old Master ended up in the pantheon of the gods while many old folk beliefs became a part of Taoism. In the end, it resulted in religious syncretism, and it is difficult to ascertain which religion was a borrower and which was a lender of certain ideas and beliefs. The influence of Taoism upon management was significant³⁸, it encouraged action and the Old Master underpinned it “metaphysically”. It should be added that, even today, the philosophy of Tao remains popular, also in management circles.

³⁵ Morgen Witzel, *A History of Management Thought* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 18-19.

³⁶ Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber, ‘Tao’, in: *The Rider Encyclopaedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, ed. by Stephan Schumacher and Goert Woerner (London: Rider, 1999), pp. 356-357.

³⁷ Chris Quan, ‘15 Facts about Warring States Period in China’, China Highlights, 22 November 2021 <https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/china-history/warring-states-period.htm?utm_content=cmp-true> [accessed 12 February 2023].

³⁸ Witzel, *A History of Management Thought*, pp. 18-19.

Image 9: Lao Tzu



Source: <https://i1.wp.com/channelingerik.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/lao-tzu.jpg?fit=1024,1024&ssl=1>

I.2.10. Confucianism

Another Chinese religion, Confucianism, played a significant role in the development of the administrative system and the creation of the “mental climate” of the country. Confucianism, which owes its name and doctrine to the person of Confucius (ca. 551-479 BCE), developed during the aforementioned period of the “dark ages”. Confucius referred to the basic obligations of society and indicated the role of social ethics in shaping state organization. Simultaneously, he attempted to personally influence the political spheres in quarrelling Chinese kingdoms by holding a ministerial function in one of them for some time. The basis of order was, in his opinion, morality. The family, perceived as the foundation of social life, played a great role in his teachings. Confucianism taught sacrifice for the country, society, and family in emergency situations, even to the point of self-sacrifice. He recommended using this concept to determine the place occupied by an individual in the social hierarchy. He also emphasized the importance of rituals.

An important role in the teachings of Confucius was played by the issues of mutual obligations between subjects and rulers, including officials' moral duty to work honestly. The latter group played a great role in the implementation of Confucius' recommendations; in a sense, they were, to a large extent, perceived as an army of state functionaries that should guard order in the state.

Image 10: Confucius



Source: https://media.istockphoto.com/photos/confucius-picture-id135014304?k=6&m=135014304&s=612x612&w=0&h=pbBcKvvgYViSZjP_QTvBkTStB7m_ei91crnhj9_L6zo=

Among the continuators of Confucius' thought, the figure of Mencius deserves attention. In particular, he formulated a concept that assumes the right of subjects to revolt against authority in a situation where the sovereign violates the main rules of exercising power.

One notes that Taoism and Confucianism appear to have a lot in common: in both cases, striving for social order is visible; however, Taoism perceives it more meta-physically, and Confucianism in more practical terms, seeing the plane of action as the restoration of order in the sphere of human relations. Both religions were, in antiquity, pro-state and supported groups in charge of state governance, recognizing the potential of a well-run administration³⁹.

I.2.11. Judaism

Ancient Judaism showed a great interest in the holy books and scriptures while maintaining a loose organizational structure⁴⁰. This religion, emphasizing monotheism, showed a significant tendency to codify the law⁴¹, which, regardless of the confessional and nation-creating significance (i.e. a “chosen people” acting partly according to principles unknown to non-Jews), had a great juristic significance. This rendered it necessary to develop procedures related to the enforcement of legal provisions. A specific group of people, namely the tribe of Levi, was destined for religious service. Its members served in the temple and performed other activities related to worship.

Image 11: Moses



Source: <https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.42efe66496e41415780b9157444e9ef7?rik=4zzl8zsC3N%2bg2A&pid=ImgRaw&r=0>

³⁹ David A. Wren, *The Evolution of Management Thought* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), pp. 14-15.

⁴⁰ Ethelbert Stauffer, *Jerusalem und Rom im Zeitalter Christi* (Bern: A. Francke Verlag, 1975), pp. 440-487.

⁴¹ Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Genesis of Justice* (New York: Werner Books, 2000), pp. 225-258.

Judaism has undergone changes over the course of its existence, especially due to the experience of the loss of independence and centuries of life in the diaspora. In practice, a significant role was, and still is, played by “outstanding personalities interpreting the scriptures”, that is, rabbis who enjoyed authority among their followers. Respect for books and science contributed to the development of education⁴². The ancient period was characterized by the centralization of worship in the temple in Jerusalem, but after the fall of the kingdom of Judah as a result of the military action of the Babylonians (the Assyrians had conquered and occupied Israel earlier), this center lost its importance. Although the temple was rebuilt after the end of the Babylonian exile, the country’s independence did not last long. Eventually, after the Great Jewish Revolt (66-73 CE) and the destruction of the second temple, this central place of the cult disappeared. Competitive groups within Judaism had already started to form and this tendency intensified even during the time of diaspora. The numerous contacts that were made then and thereafter as well as their excellent knowledge of cultures and languages meant that the members of this religious community became valued specialists in different kinds of management⁴³.

1.2.12. Christianity

Although this religion belongs to the belief systems which began to influence historical processes relatively late, it has played an important role in the development of administration and management systems. The very word “administration” is related to church language and derived from Latin *administrare*, which means “to be useful, helpful” and *ministrare*, “to serve”. It is worth noting that the word *ministrare* is associated with the word “minister,” which is widespread in the field of social life (hence the terms “prime minister” and “pastor”). Religion also played an important role in the emergence of political power structures. A special achievement of Christianity is also the formation of the “stratification ladder”, that is, hierarchy. The term “hierarchy” is derived etymologically from the Greek language used in the Church (*ιεραρχία*), and it consists of 2 parts: *ιερός*, “saint”, and *αρχή*, “beginning”, or “principle”. However, the word did not appear in classical Latin or Greek. The authorship of the word is ascribed to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who dealt with “angelic hierarchies.” He used the term “hierarchy” with two meanings: metaphysical (heavenly) and ecclesial (ecclesiastical). Gradually, the science of hierarchies found its place in secular areas, including management⁴⁴.

⁴² Christian Zentner, *Religionen der Welt* (München: Edition XXL GmbH, 2003), pp. 56-70.

⁴³ Arthur J. Wolak, *Religion and Contemporary Management. Moses as a Model for Effective Leadership* (London: Anthem Press, 2019), pp. 121-128.

⁴⁴ Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), pp. 449-451.

Image 12: Hierarchy of Angels by St. Dionysius



Source: <https://askangels-a8bd.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/angelic-hierarchy.jpg>

Christianity showed great creativity in developing administrative structures and the creation of a number of organizational forms, such as religious orders, associations and hermit groups living in isolation, which provided the Church with a substantial and loyal cadre of clergy. In the initial period of its existence, Christianity was an alternative to the inherently brutal order of the Roman world, which was based upon slavery and the exploitation of conquered territories. It attracted many people from the lower groups of the population (though not exclusively) and this led to the emergence of organizations practicing a community of property in early Christianity, which was a kind of primitive “communism”; this term, moreover, has an ecclesiastical provenance and means “community”. The situation changed as the importance of the Roman Catholic Church grew. Roman Catholicism was able to create a well-functioning church organization that survived persecution and proved attractive to Emperor Constantine (306-337 CE), to then become not only an ecclesiastical and political power, which largely abandoned its earlier ideals, but also an economic tycoon with a well-developed management apparatus.

I.3. The Civilizational Role of Ancient States

The emergence of states in antiquity was a difficult process, connected with numerous challenges; it was based upon experience that larger and stronger social structures could cope better with threats from both nature and competing human groups. In addition, bigger political entities rendered it possible to meet the needs of people and better develop specialized organizations.

While analyzing the facts related to the influence of religion upon the development of ancient states, it should be stated that religion contributed to the creation of a number of management structures useful for the emergence of governance systems. It happened, however, in a processual manner. Initially, poorly organized people formed temporary alliances with each other, which resulted in creating a sense of community (also in the religious meaning of the word), which, in turn, resulted in a willingness to undertake joint actions in the common interest. As the collective efforts of humans to improve living conditions increased, so did people's fitness and knowledge of nature as well as the ability to use script and count. It was also demonstrated in the field of mathematics and astronomy, which also had practical applications, for example, in agriculture. In this whole process, a very important role was played by religion, which was ubiquitous at that time, such as the fact that knowledge was the domain of priests.

Image 13: Joseph and Mary at the Census



Source: <https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/z/joseph-virgin-census-26909533.jpg>

The birth of the first ancient states was also a period of the formation of social stratification as well as of power centers, especially political, religious, military, and economic centers. It should be noted that some religions existing in antiquity had a strong influence on the social area in which they acted, and that fact is particularly visible in the case of the *varnas*, which had a significant impact upon the formation of the caste system in the area of “Ganges culture” and can be seen in India even today. Furthermore, many different concepts concerning social class divisions, such as those presented by Plato in *The State*, bear the traces of Vedic-Brahmin social philosophy.

The influence of religion was also evident in the domain of culture. Books like the Vedas, the Bible, Buddhist texts or the myths included in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* inspired people and had a significant impact upon their actions; for example, under the influence of some religions such social institutions like hospitals and schools were created and managed. Ancient belief systems provided strong impulses for the development of sacred as well as secular architecture and fueled urbanization.

Analyzing the process of creating states in antiquity and the role of religion in them allows us to understand better the phenomena taking place today. The significant role of the civilizational aspects of religion from those times can be found in the sphere of contemporary culture as well as in the area of politics and management.

II

Christianity and Economics

II.1. Early Christianity and the Middle Ages

Among the world's religions, Christianity is attributed a particularly large role in shaping the capitalist system. Not only ideological principles are relevant in this regard, but also the political, economic, and cultural principles which were imposed by European Christian countries upon other parts of the world during the time of colonialism and imperialism; these principles became particularly important during the rapid technical and industrial advancements of the 18th and 19th centuries.

This state of affairs may be surprising due to the fact that very early Christianity, focused upon escapism and awaiting a quick return of the Savior and the end of the world, practiced community of goods and did not consider accumulating riches on Earth important. With the passage of time, however, the members of this ecclesiastical community began to show an increasing interest in economic issues. Since the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion in the Roman Empire in 381 CE, its attitude towards wealth and economic life in general changed dramatically, and the Church began to desire and collect the riches of the world and gain political power⁴⁵.

As a result, economic activity in the Middle Ages was regulated by religion and the theological doctrine of Thomism played an essential role in this context. It was especially noticeable in banking, as Catholics were forbidden to charge interest on lent money. Limitations were also visible in the case of performing certain profession by Jews, for example, they were not allowed to join guilds and to engage in agriculture. Additionally, the activity of many orders in the Medieval Europe, such as the Cistercians and famous Templars, who were far ahead of their time in the organization of banking, agriculture, and resource management, deserves attention.

⁴⁵ David Humes, *David Hume's Political Essays* (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1953), pp. 39-63; Douglas Jacoby, 'Church History: 381 AD. Rome's Official Religion', *International Bible Teaching Ministry*, <https://www.douglasjacoby.com/church-history-381-ad-rome-s-official-religion/> [accessed on 3 June 2022];

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 409-626.

Image 14: Thomas Aquinas



Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/13754/saint-thomas-aquinas-by-carlo-crivelli/>

Despite some progressive aspects of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, it is difficult to ignore its role in maintaining the feudal system in Europe, which in many respects resembled slavery. The ideological sanctioning of this form of human exploitation led to numerous social tensions, which resulted in divisions within Christianity.

II.2. Doctrinal Changes in Christianity in Modern Times

A very important step towards the liberation of the economy from religion in Christian Europe was made by the Reformation⁴⁶. It was then that many Christians began to free themselves from the political and economic limitations established by the previously omnipotent organization of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages.

The change in the rhetoric regarding work can be noticed in the Reformation camp, such as in the statements of Martin Luther (1483-1546)⁴⁷. According to him, this work has a religious value and should be performed with due diligence and a positive attitude⁴⁸. Simultaneously, he emphasized that God does not like “lazy people”⁴⁹.

John Calvin’s (1509-1564) followers gained, in turn, even more possibilities of activity in the area of economics because he went further than Luther and revolutionized the approach of his church to wealth, which became (in the interpretation of his theology) a “positive value” and a kind of “determinant” of God’s grace⁵⁰. Max Weber saw religion as the “driving force” that led, in the Calvinist version of Christianity⁵¹, to the rise of capitalism⁵². In this context, his “teaching about predestination” seems to be specially important⁵³.

Weber indicated that, according to Calvin, God destines some people for salvation and sentences others to eternal damnation. From this point of view, gaining wealth by Christians should be seen as evidence of having “the grace of God”, a visible sign that these men are on the “right path” to heaven. People aspiring to salvation should be professionally active and seek opportunities for “the multiplication of talents”, demonstrating entrepreneurship, which was thus sanctioned religiously. This created opportunities for the bold business activities of this group, which had been previously constricted by the ideological restrictions of the medieval Catholic Church. Calvinism meant a kind of “mental revolution” which had its impact upon economic life. Simultaneously, the rational use of resources, including

⁴⁶ Harry E. Fosdick, *Great Voices of the Reformation* (New York: The Modern Library, 1952), pp. 96-122.

⁴⁷ Patrick Spät, ‘Martin Luther, der Vater des Arbeitsfetischs’, *Zeit Online*, 25 November 2016 <<https://www.zeit.de/karriere/2016-11/martin-luther-reformation-arbeit-kapitalismus>> [accessed on 10 October 2018].

⁴⁸ According to him, Protestantism in its various currents changed the perception of human work, departing from the understanding it in terms of a “punishment for eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” to “work as a means of sanctification of man”.

⁴⁹ Spät, ‘Martin Luther, der Vater des Arbeitsfetischs’, *Zeit Online*.

⁵⁰ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), pp. 47-99.

⁵¹ John H. Bratt, Charles Miller, Walter Lagerwey and Howard Rienstra, *Rise and Development of Calvinism: A Concise History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 9-25.

⁵² Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik* (Cologne: Anaconda, 2009), pp. 139-167;

James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution* (Greenwood Press, Publishers Westport, Connecticut 1972), pp. 30-31.

⁵³ This issue as well as the relationship between the ideological and religious, political, and economic transformations that took place in Europe in the 16th century, and then also influenced other parts of the world, was described by Max Weber in his 1904 book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

time and money, was of particular importance. The order to work and the prohibition of spending money on fun and other “earthly pleasures” led to the “original accumulation” of capital, which gave the supporters of the Evangelical Reformed Church and religious groups derived from it, such as the Puritans, an important competitive advantage against other religious groups.

Accidentally, in accordance with changes in civilization, a knightly way of life and thinking was transformed into a model of entrepreneurship in capitalism. In place of medieval “chivalrous virtues” such as bravery, loyalty and heroism, the new ones like diligence or reliability, which helped to support the develop of capitalism and met the needs of the bourgeoisie, appeared.

When considering the topic of the influence of ideology upon the formation of the Puritan ethos of American entrepreneurship, it is worth indicating a few key facts related to the initial period of colonizing the later United States of America. The Protestants who went there were largely influenced by the teachings of Calvin, which were often associated with heterodoxy within Protestantism itself, which fostered the alienation of this group and shaped its sense of “uniqueness”. Their departure to America was, as a rule, forced by persecution in their home countries, which meant that they saw this continent as “a land of salvation offered to them by God” (a new version of the Holy Land) and, simultaneously, as a place of a very difficult struggle for survival, while maintaining the awareness that, in earthly terms, they could be reliant in these struggles only upon their own strength. “God’s chosen ones” had to act pragmatically; their ideology rendered them self-confident and sanctioned their actions, but their activities were aimed at survival. Under these conditions, an ethos of the “entrepreneur-settlers”, supported by the trust in the supernatural aid of God, was created.

Image 15: John Calvin



Source: <https://shipoffools.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/john-calvin.png>

Max Weber's concept is not "the only valid one"⁵⁴ and does not convincingly explain⁵⁵ all the aspects of the development of the capitalist economy in relation to the Reformation. It has many critics⁵⁶, without going into details, it can be contradicted by the fact that the capitalist system appeared quickly also in the parts of Europe where the Catholic Church retained a powerful position, but where bourgeoisie was strong, such as in Northern Italy. Regardless of the validity of Weber's thesis, it can be suggested that the manner of business operation inspired by Calvinism contributed to the rise of *laissez faire* capitalism, accordingly to the principle that every man is the architect of his own fortune and should be entrepreneurial while refraining from transgressing the "natural law".

II.3. Contemporary "Christian Capitalists"

Christian financial organizations, powerful in the Middle Ages, have, in some cases, lost much of their importance. Nevertheless, some of them enjoy a considerable potential even now and continue to turnover large sums of money. In this case, it is worth noting that the administration of ecclesiastical structures requires sound organizational and financial management skills. A good example is the Catholic Church, with such prominent financial structures as the *Istituto per le Opere di Religione* (known as the Vatican Bank).

Additionally, other contemporary Christian churches conduct numerous financial operations and show great ingenuity in the field of fundraising; both Orthodox and Protestant churches can boast significant achievements in this field. In the latter group, companies from the area of the evangelical movement deserve particular attention. They conduct vigorous campaigns to sell religious items as well as create extensive networks of so-called "Christian businesses". They also distribute religious materials such as confessional literature. It should be remembered that traditional Christian churches have acquired the managerial and administrative skills to render them able to both take care of the level of their finances and conduct various

⁵⁴ Samuel Gregg, 'Why Max Weber Was Wrong', *Public Discourse*, 11 December 2013 <<https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/12/11099/#:~:text=The%20association%20of%20Protestantism%20with,new%20book%2C%20Tea%20Party%20Catholic.>> [accessed on 2 July 2022].

⁵⁵ "John Calvin was not Mr. Burns of *The Simpsons*. For Calvin, as for Luther, we obey the law out of *gratitude* not in order to obtain favor with God or even salvation. Christian obedience required Christian charity toward the poor, not avaricious capitalism but the Weber Thesis is just one of many caricatures of Calvin and the Calvinists that will not die not because they are true but because they fulfill a social function in certain groups by providing convenient bad guys to prop up lazy narratives." R. Scott Clark, 'The Weber Thesis is Still Wrong (Updated)', 25 June 2021 <<https://heidelblog.net/2021/06/the-weber-thesis-is-still-wrong/>> [accessed on 26 July 2022].

⁵⁶ 'Weber, Calvinism and the Spirit of Modern Capitalism', *tutor2u*, 17 July 2018 <<https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/sociology-weber-calvinism-and-spirit-of-modern-capitalism/>> [accessed on 27 July 2022].

types of operations using the human resources of their communities. Traditional Christian Churches are also acclaimed for their activity in the field of social work in many countries, such as running orphanages or caring for the disabled.

Table 1: 15 Richest Christian Leaders

Place in the ranking	Estimated wealth
1. Edir Macedo	\$1 billion
2. Pat Robertson	\$500 million
3. David Oyedepo	\$150 million
4. T.D. Jakes	\$147 million
5. Chris Oyakhilome	\$50 million
6. Benny Hinn	\$42 million
7. Joel Osteen	\$40 million
8. Creflo Dollar	\$27 million
9. Kenneth Copeland	\$25 million
10. Billy Graham	\$25 million
11. Rick Warren	\$25 million
12. Joyce Meyer	\$25 million
13. Ernest Angley	\$15 million
14. Juanita Bynum	\$10 million
15. Joseph Prince	\$5 million

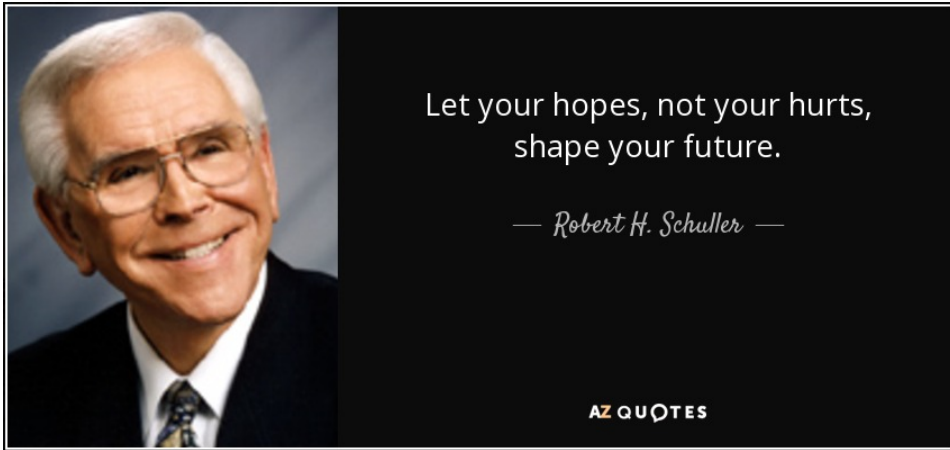
Source: Erika Marie, '15 "Religious" Leaders Who Are Filthy Rich', *The Richest*, 4 November 2016
 <<https://www.therichest.com/shocking/15-religious-leaders-who-are-filthy-rich/>>
 [accessed on 29 August 2023]

Contemporary Christianity, emphasizing the importance of economic success, often reflects the Calvinist "optimistic Christianity à la possibility thinking"⁵⁷. An example of the American variety of this type of religious group would be the pastors from the famous Schuller family, initiated by Robert H. Schuller (1926-2015), who was known for establishing the Crystal Cathedral and the "media evangelization" project, which was continued with some changes by his son Robert Anthony Schuller (born 1954), and now by grandson Robert Vernon Schuller (born 1981).

⁵⁷ Robert H. Schuller, *Power Thoughts* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), pp. 16-101; Norman V. Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking* (London: Vermilion, 1990), pp. 1-205.

There are also many groups of this type operating actively in South Korea and they have largely dominated the Christian community in this country. “Positive thinking” shows great interest in issues connected to management and entrepreneurship, identifying successes in this area with fulfilling God’s will.

Image 16: Robert H. Schuller



Source: <https://www.azquotes.com/picture-quotes/quote-let-your-hopes-not-your-hurts-shape-your-future-robert-h-schuller-26-22-84.jpg>

II.4. Other Selected Groups

In the context of discussions triggered by Weber’s concept of the relationship between Calvinism and the rise of capitalism⁵⁸, the theory of Werner Sombart also deserves attention. He saw the driving force of the birth of this type of economics not in Calvinism, but in Judaism understood in cultural-ethnic terms. The Jews were especially predestined to contribute to the arrival of capitalism because, as “nomadic people”, they were to be particularly mobile and perceive wealth as “God-given”, which encouraged them to become rich. These ideas were controversial. It is worth paying attention to the criticism expressed by Lujo Brentano; he accused Sombart of spreading anti-Semitic stereotypes. In addition, he referred to passages in the Old Testament and the Torah which indicate that God is “the sole owner of the earthly goods”.

⁵⁸ George Ritzer, *Enchanting a Disenchanted World* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2010), pp. 58-60; John V. Pickstone, *Ways of Knowing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) pp. 195-209; Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik*, pp. 139-167;

Also noteworthy is the theory of “middleman minorities”⁵⁹, developed by Hubert Blalock. According to him, migrant groups arriving in the countries of settlement meet with the negative attitudes of a significant part of the local population, which increases their sense of internal solidarity. Their members do not plan to stay permanently in the area to which they have come. Showing a great interest in economics, they focus their attention upon selected professions and the accumulation of capital. They also use family and ethnic ties in their economic activities. As a rule, middleman minorities are successful and stay in the countries they arrived in. According to Blalock, the examples of “intermediary minorities” can be Chinese in Asia (except China), Zoroastrians⁶⁰ in India or the aforementioned Jews in Europe or America⁶¹.

Referring to the relationship between religion and economics, it should be noted that there are also denominations like the Quakers whose members made business careers, although their ideologies did not seem to be conducive to that. To these groups, which were not very willingly accepted by the so-called mainstream of economics⁶², belonged, such patriarchs of entrepreneurship and management as Abraham Darby (1677-1717) and John Cadbury (1801-1889), who contributed significantly to the civilizational breakthrough in business leadership in Great Britain. From the ranks of the denominations in question came also, *inter alia*, Mary Parker Follett (1868-1933)⁶³, who is seen as the most important management thinker of the 20th century as well as Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915)⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ Edna Bonacich, ‘A Theory of Middleman Minorities’, *American Sociological Review*, 38: 5 (1973), 583-594 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228270882_A_Theory_of_Middleman_Minorities> [accessed on 12 August 2023].

⁶⁰ One of them was Feroze Jehangir Gandhi (1912-1960), a husband of the prime minister of India Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi (1917-1984).

⁶¹ ‘Edna Blalock’s Article: A Theory of Middlemen Minorities’, *cram* <<https://www.cram.com/essay/Edna-Blalocks-Article-A-Theory-Of-Middleman/PK7XXC53GZKW>> [accessed on 27 July 2022].

⁶² Economic activity was often the only opportunity for them to reach a higher position in society.

⁶³ *Mary Parker Follet. The Prophet of Management*, ed. by Pauline Graham (Washington, DC: Beard Books, 2003) pp. 35-281;

Mary Parker Follett, *Dynamic Administration: Collected Papers* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941); Mary Parker Follett, *The New State* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

⁶⁴ Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 2006).

Contemporary Non-Christian World Religions and their Impact upon Economics

III.1. Hinduism

This religion, originating from Vedism and Brahmanism, plays an important role in the world, even though it is not involved in intensive missionary activities nowadays. It does not have a uniform organizational structure, but rather more or less autonomous denominational subsystems. Hinduism has paid much attention to combining spiritual and physical exercises for religious and health purposes throughout its history, which led, among others, to the development of yogic systems.

Yoga plays an important role in the Hindu way of life today as a so-called “export product” of modern India. However, although yoga practices have become a permanent feature of Western culture in the meantime and a great number of people engage in these kinds of exercises, they have lost much of their spiritual depth and often resemble more exotic gymnastics than a sophisticated kind of “awareness raising”.

Hinduism, which is the religion of about a quarter of the world’s population, has a strong economic impact. It is very much against ruthless competition; from the point of view of this religion, profit is only one of the many motives for action rather than the most important one⁶⁵. It is this religious belief that underlies the concept of action in

⁶⁵ “The Rig-Vedic hymns portray the world as a place where human beings are expected to enjoy life. The main religious activity is ‘yajna’ (sacrifice for others). If the sacrifice is correctly performed, God is obliged to help. Thus mankind is assured of a happy life, and a happier after-life. If an organisation sacrifices its profits for the sake of the welfare of the society, it is destined to gain profits. The expenditure in the publicity campaign gives the momentary benefits; as the same expenditure for society’s welfare gives long term gains. It creates the goodwill for the organisation among people who benefited in particular and in the society as a large. This goodwill pays dividends especially in the time of crisis, when

which a holistic approach to the environment, including plants, animals, and humans, is very important. This kind of sustainable development must take into account the harmony of the world⁶⁶. This is important also in the case of management. The contemporary Hinduism caste system plays a significant role in this regard because it determines, to a large extent, the “specialization” in the domain of performed activities, such as those of merchants as well as contacts between them in the form of social networks and a kind of “work ethos”⁶⁷, strengthened by faith in the “karmic conditioning” of one’s own profession. There is a frequent tendency in India to connect running family businesses with the caste system. Combining professional activity with family life influences the emergence of interpersonal relations and managerial practices, which are different than those seen in large corporations. Regardless of religious references, a large number of Indian businessmen are able to make a good use of the availability of information and software as well as defend their interests in negotiations well.

Gandhi’s legacy⁶⁸ also plays an important role in India, and the idea of “fighting for freedom with the help of economics”, which was a part of the “fight for justice without using violence”, deserves a special attention in this context; the examples of it can be the refusal to pay the salt tax to the British Empire and the initiative to produce traditional costumes using traditional spinning wheels so as to gain economic independence.

the organisation is in need of help. ‘Sangathan Sukta’ presents a perspective of excellence for society, where every member is willing to sacrifice his gains for the well-being of others. Thus every member of society gets his lower level needs fulfilled, which leads to building of higher moral values for all. Thus slowly we attain a level of excellence where all remain happy and healthier. The Vedic concepts of growth are based on self-management and self-discipline. Accordingly everyone is expected to follow his Swa-Dharma and continuously make sustained efforts for self-growth as well as for the growth of society.” Balvir Talwar and A.K. Sharma, ‘Business Excellent Enshrined in Vedic (Hindu) Philosophy, *Singapore Management Review*, 1 Jan 2004 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270162993_Business_Excellence_Enshrined_in_Vedic_Hindu_Philosophy> [accessed on 19 July 2022].

⁶⁶ In this context, the positive attitude of Hinduism towards ecological issues deserves attention.

⁶⁷ “The Arthashastra: The end does not justify the means (...) The book bases the art of governance on the two pillars of Nyaya (justice) and dharma (ethics) and explained at that time what is now propounded as the organisational justice theory and the study of ethics. This treatise, which is about statecraft, economic policy and military strategy laid down many principles that influence today’s business and political practices. Kautilya thought there should be a strong government with a strong leader, and that the leader should increase the wealth of the state and his own power. Part of the manner in which that can be accomplished is for the leader to master the four sciences: state leadership, economics, the Vedas and philosophy. This philosophy about state leadership moves over into corporate leadership, promoting strong leadership at the top of an organisation. He also promoted the idea of international trade. His concept involved the idea of comparative advantage, anticipating Smith by 2000 years. Arthashastra believed that imports were as important as exports.” Anna Pinilla, ‘Hinduism and Business; old patterns for new perspectives’, *Atwal Financial*, 27 April 2020 <<https://www.atwalfinancial.com/our-insights/hinduism-globalised-business-old-patterns-new-perspectives-anna-pinilla/>> [accessed on 19 July 2022].

⁶⁸ Cyril Northcote Parkinson, *East and West* (New York: New American Library, 1963), p. 232.

Table 2: The Most-Followed World Religions

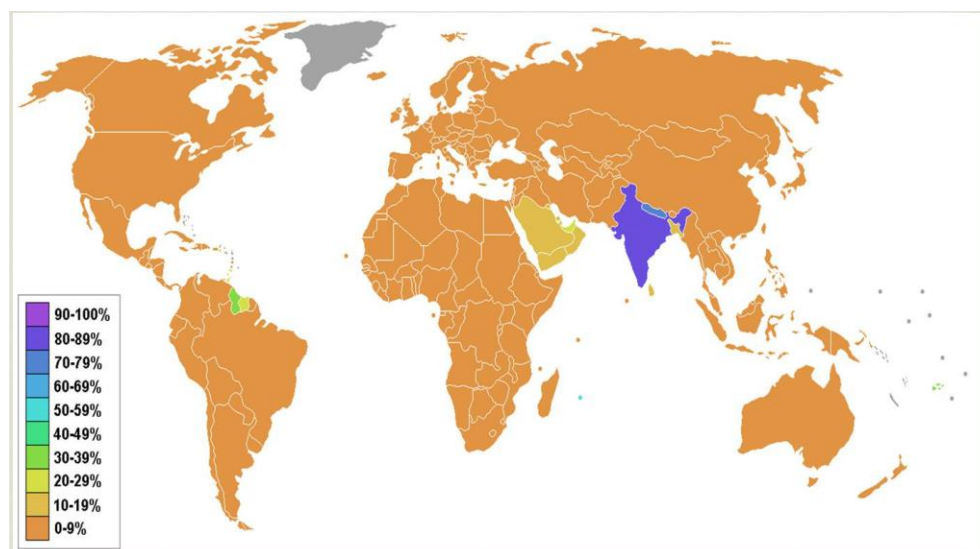
Religion	Followers	% of global population
Christianity	2.4 billion	33%
Islam	1.8 billion	24.1%
Secular/atheist/non-religious	1.2 billion	16%
Hinduism	1.15 billion	15%
Buddhism	521 million	7%

Source: ‘Mind-Blowing Statistics About Christianity You Need to Know’, *Holyart.com*

<<https://www.holyart.com/blog/mind-blowing-statistics-christianity-need-know/>>

[accessed on 29 August 2023]

Hinduism has found its commercial form of expression also in the form of Bollywood films, in which one can find a lot of religious elements. The cultural importance of this industry is also considerable. Another interesting element of “Indian capitalism” is the production of the cheapest car in the world in India (Tata Nano – \$3,056)⁶⁹, which bears the hallmarks of a “people’s car”. The Indian economic system finds many new inspirations to be creative and vital. A clear evidence of good intellectual resource management may be, in this context, the rapid development of the Indian IT sector.

Map 2: Contemporary Hinduism

Source: <https://shorturl.at/rzU26>

⁶⁹ ‘The Top 10 Cheapest Cars in The World’, *The Richest*, 19 December 2012 <<https://www.therichest.com/auto/the-top-10-cheapest-cars-in-the-world/#:~:text=The%20Indian%20company%20called%20Tata%20Motors%20manufactures%20the,a%20top%20speed%20of%20105%20kilometers%20per%20hour.>> [accessed on 1 August 2022].

III.2. Buddhism

III.2.1. Main Doctrinal Branches

Buddhism expanded rapidly in the first few centuries of its existence and achieved significant missionary successes in the Far and Middle East⁷⁰. The most important branches that developed in Buddhism include:

- 1) *Hīnayāna* or “small vehicle”⁷¹. This name indicates the fact that, according to the teachings of the supporters of this concept, only monks living in holiness can achieve the state of “leaving the circle of birth and death”, which means *nirvana*. It is an exclusive school, in which a special role is attributed to the priesthood.
- 2) *Mahāyāna* or “great vehicle”⁷². This name indicates the possibility of the salvation of many. The countries where it has the largest numbers of followers are China and Korea. Within the frameworks of *Mahāyāna*, Zen Buddhism, popular nowadays in the West, arose. In this school, meditation techniques play an especially significant role and Bodhidharma, who was active in China around AD 528, is considered a key figure.

The followers of Buddhism⁷³, as well as those of Indian religions and Jainism, should be vegetarians; in practice, however, meat is eaten in many traditionally Buddhist countries. Despite many similarities, not only has Buddhism managed to develop its own original doctrine, but also a meditation system that differs from the Indian one⁷⁴; Zen practices deserve special attention because of the impression they make on “Westerners”. Fighting the ego is an essential characteristic of this doctrinal school. It uses sitting meditation, *zazen*, connected with breathing exercises. Zen masters indicate the impossibility of describing reality using logical categories. Because of this, during meditation, *koans* are used; these are questions without rational answers, allowing destruction of the accepted structures of inference and rise to higher levels of consciousness. The goal of these practices is the achievement of “enlightenment”⁷⁵.

⁷⁰ Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber, ‘Buddhism’, in: *The Rider Encyclopaedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, ed. by Stephan Schumacher and Goert Woerner (London: Rider, 1999), pp. 50-55.

⁷¹ Hope and van Loon, *Introducing Buddha*, pp. 51-53.

⁷² “After the Buddha’s enlightenment, his first utterance of truth was, ‘All living beings have Buddhahood within them.’ This is the essence of Mahayana Buddhism.” *Ch’an. Complimentary Copy* (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1989), p. 10.

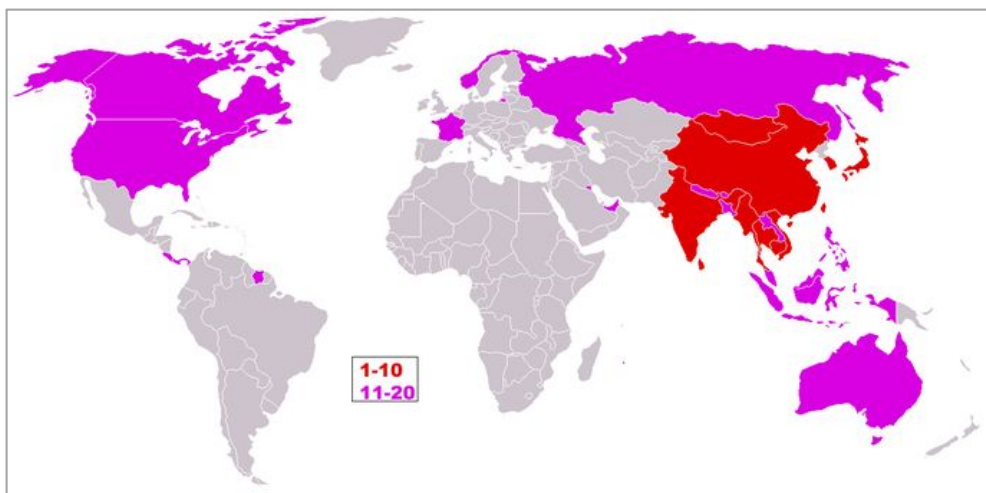
⁷³ Buddhism resembles Hinduism in many ways: in it, and also in all the religions derived from Vedism, there is a belief in karma and the “wheel of life and death” – the aforementioned *samsara*, which means the “cycle of incarnations” which takes place according to karmic conditions.

⁷⁴ Sermei Khensur Lobsang Tharchin, *Methods of achieving the paths: stages of philosophical and ethical development according to the Madhyamika Svatantrika School of Buddhism* (Howell, NJ: Mahayana Sutra and Tantric Center of Howell 1981), pp. 3-59.

The Zen Teaching of Rinzai [The Record of Rinzai], trans. by Irmgard Schloegl (Berkeley, CA: Shambhala Publications, in association with the Buddhist Society, London, 1976), pp. 1-52.

⁷⁵ In this context, two concepts appear: *satori* and *kesio*. “Satori is dropping the false, entering into the real; just being your ordinary self, your true nature. Another name for Satori is Kensho, which means

Map 3: Top 20 Countries with Most Buddhists



Source: <https://i.pining.com/736x/80/7c/f3/807cf3f00804970fcd269738469992c9--buddhists-maps.jpg>

Zen is famous for the use of controversial techniques aimed at “breaking” thought sequences and “logical-egoistic mental infrastructure” in disciples⁷⁶. Despite this, Zen should not be reduced solely to its extreme, controversial techniques. The management of feelings is an important aspect of the practice of this religion, but not an end in itself; it is a significant “starting point” for achieving the higher stages of development. Meditation practices involve resisting violent feelings and managing one’s own energy. Anger, which drives the karmic mechanisms of cause and effect, is perceived by Buddhism especially negatively.⁷⁷

In this religion, mantras, derived from Vedism, are used. They should protect against negative cognitive content and emotions evoked by it. It is interesting to re-search the phenomenon of “death from sacrifice”, or, in other words “altruistic suicide”, in Buddhism. This happens when the followers of this religion, usually monks, bring about their own death through specific practices of refraining from eating and drinking during meditation. Due to physical conditions in the surrounding environment, their bodies turn into mummies. Such practices take place for the benefit of a community threatened by catastrophic risks such as famine.

‘seeing into one’s true nature’ – Ken means to see and sho means nature. But the fact remains that Zen is a product of Satori. That is to say, no satori, no Zen. Even Buddha’s brother Ananda spent unrelenting forty years in the search of Satori to finally realise Zen. This does not necessarily means that it takes forty years to achieve Satori, it can just come to you one day or may take its own time.” Sonali Bansal, ‘Satori – The Zen Concept of Enlightenment and Self-realisation’, *Fractal Enlightenment* <<https://fractalenlightenment.com/34882/spirituality/satori-the-zen-concept-of-enlightenment-and-self-realisation>> [accessed on 27 July 2022].

⁷⁶ Paul Reps, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* (Aylesbury: Penguin Books, 1982), pp. 17-86.

⁷⁷ Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, pp. 69-110.

Image 17: Monk Burning in Protest against the Vietnam War



Source: <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-burning-monk-1963-small.jpg>

III.2.2. Beliefs and Market

As noted above, a very important goal of human activities in Buddhism is to combat the negative ego, the “selfish I”, which stands in the way of spiritual development, and which also has material components. According to Buddhists, as a part of their activities, which can be called “work” in a broader sense of this word, people should strive to use their potential, that is, their spiritual, intellectual, and somatic resources.

An important role is played in Buddhism by understanding the market differently than in capitalism, namely as something which is not only a place of the exchange of goods, but which must take into account the benefit of nature and the interests of the future generations of all beings. According to Buddhists, it is not maximizing profits at any cost, but the good of mankind and the whole world that should be the main goal of economic activity.

Buddhists believe that the “possession of something” and the use of material goods within moral limits enforced by their religion and in a way that does not threaten spiritual development (that is, in a way that does not cause dependence upon material

goods) is allowed, but Buddhists condemn overconsumption and consumerism and believe that they pose a threat to spiritual development as well as to the environment⁷⁸, the possession of things can be deceptive, instead generosity is an essential quality in social life. In the case of economic activity, cooperation with other people is fundamental, which can be seen, for example, in the agriculture sector; the development of the appropriate attitude towards food as a source of energy necessary for life should be, according to Buddhists, duly respected.

Table 3: Details of the Nine Domains of Gross National Happiness in Bhutan

Domains	Definition
Living Standards	Level of material comfort as measured by income, the conditions of financial security, housing and asset ownership.
Education	Knowledge, values, skills, and formal and informal education across age levels.
Health	Condition of the human body and mind to have a holistic healthily lifestyle in both mental and physical states.
Cultural	Diversity and resilience of cultural norms, ethos and festivals across the country and across age groups.
Community Vitality	Attempts to focus upon the strengths and weaknesses of relationships and interaction within communities. Gathering information on social cohesion among family members and neighbors, and on practices like volunteering.
Time Use	Harmonious work-life balance.
Psychological Wellbeing	Spirituality, reflective cognitive evaluations such as life satisfaction, and affective reactions to life events such as positive and negative emotions.
Ecological Diversity	Measuring people's perceptions and evaluations of the environmental conditions of their neighborhood and assessing eco-friendly behavioral patterns.
Good Governance	Evaluating the level of participation in government decisions at the local level and the presence of various rights and freedoms. Also assessing the level of efficacy, honesty and quality within government.

Source: Sriram Balasubramanian and Paul Cashin, 'Gross National Happiness ad Macroeconomic Indicators in the Kingdom of Bhutan', *International Monetary Fund Working Papers*, 17 January 2019, p. 12 <<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2019/01/17/Gross-National-Happiness-and-Macroeconomic-Indicators-in-the-Kingdom-of-Bhutan-46460>> [accessed on 29 August 2023].

The strength of Buddhism seems to be hidden in its good organization and tendency to be "perfect" in conducting certain activities. Ethics plays an important role in this⁷⁹.. Buddhism considers the issue of a successful working life in the context of karmic relationships. Prosperity resulting from economic success should not be the goal of human activity as such. This does not mean, however, that one should remain

⁷⁸ Syya, 'What Businesses Can Learn From Buddhism', *Medium.com*, 4 Aug 2020 <<https://medium.com/change-your-mind/what-businesses-can-learn-from-buddhism-c8f21b1a365e>> [accessed on 22 July 2022].

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

idle; one must perform their duties conscientiously and in a manner that is as close to perfection as possible. It is this quality that makes people consider practicing Buddhists very good workers⁸⁰.

In the case of management, preference is given to such forms that are aimed at caring for employees and their good treatment. Buddhism seeks to combine the pursuit of positive goals in economic activity while maintaining a good atmosphere at work and taking care of the proper development of employees for the role of management. This religion also aims to maintain harmony in the world, which implies a concern for the environment.

Emblematic of the Buddhist concept of “the economic purpose of human activity” is the replacing of gross national income with “gross national happiness” in Bhutan. This indicates the need for a deeper philosophical reflection on how the economic activity of contemporary people corresponds to the needs of the world⁸¹.

III.3. Jainism

Jainism is the third religion to evolve out of Vedism⁸². One can find in its theology, as in others stemming from the same religious root, elements such as the concept of karma or striving for liberation from the circle of birth and death. In practicing asceticism, the Jains usually use less codified forms than the Buddhists, which may be the result of the influence of Hinduism upon the former religion. In the field of spiritual development, a very important goal of the believers of Jainism is to reach *Kevala jñāna* (“complete understanding”).

Due to the differences in the interpretation of the principle of *ahimsa*, Jainism can be divided into two branches:

- radical (*Digambara* or “Sky-Clad”) and
- moderate (*Śvētāmbara* or “White-Robed”).

The followers of the first try to avoid any situation that might cause them to kill a living being, knowingly or unknowingly, for example, accidentally trampling on insects. It is for this reason that the monks of this branch resign from wearing any clothes and attempt to avoid any situation that might possibly threaten other living creatures which they could cause because of their lack of care. Reluctance to wear clothes is also related to the fact that clothes are made of plants, and the monks of *Digambara* do not want to contribute to their destruction. *Śvētāmbara* followers are more reserved: they avoid extremes and do not avoid wearing clothes.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ Disinfo’s Last Resort, ‘Buddhist Economics Sounds Pretty Sane’, *tumblr.com*, 20 November 2018 <<https://thewideninggyre.tumblr.com/post/180325445733/buddhist-economics-sounds-pretty-sane>> [accessed on 22 July 2022].

⁸² Together with Hinduism and Buddhism.

The doctrinal differences do not stop there. As regards sex, the Śvētāmbara have a more positive attitude than Digambara. This has much to do with their beliefs about Mahavira, the founder of Jainism; the Śvētāmbara believe that he was married whereas the Digambara believe that he was living in celibacy. The Digambara also have more rigid rules of monastic life. It should be noted that, among them, only males can be monks and attain “liberation”, according to their conviction, women have no chance to achieve it. By contrast, the Śvētāmbara believe that women can achieve *moksha* just like men.

The differences between the two doctrinal branches of Jainism can also be seen in the case of worship: the icons of the Svetambara used for cult purposes are more “alive,” that is, more brightly colored, as well as contain more symbols related to mortal life, such as crowns and “always-open eyes” (without lids).

Noteworthy is the Jains’ practice of “voluntary death” (euthanasia by refusal to eat food) in order to obtain liberation from the “wheel of birth and death”. This seems to correspond with the aforementioned concept of “noble death” in Buddhism (evoking associations with consciously undertaken euthanasia) or the Gnostic “endura”, practiced by the Cathars. In the case of Buddhism, however, altruistic motives seem to play a greater role.

Many Jain monks wear mouthguards to prohibit inhaling insects or other very small living creatures. It should be noted that Jainism is characterized by an extremely strict adherence to *ahimsa*, which is manifested in the fact that not only do its followers refrain from eating any food of animal origin, but also some plants, such as potatoes.

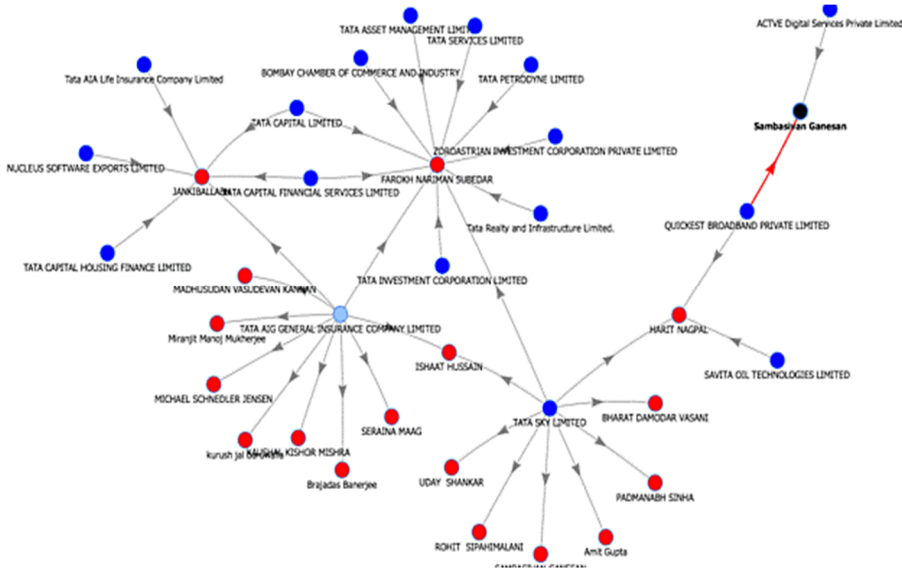
The followers of Jainism show a considerable interest in issues related to economics and management⁸³. They take great care to become independent of tangible items as well as try not to harm anyone. Jains believe that religion and economics can converge, recognizing that the contemporary world (especially because of technical development) has, on the one hand, a tendency to create opportunity for material gains whilst, on the other hand, create the danger of “forfeiting one’s soul”. To avoid this, it is necessary to develop economic activities based upon positive values, striving for “multiplying the common good for humanity” and making efforts to ensure people can live in peace and prosperity.

An interesting concept of sustainable development in the spirit of this religion was developed by Ācharya Mahapragya. He indicated, *inter alia*, the need to use resources wisely in accordance with the values of Jainism. The goal is not to be an immediate success, but to be active in the long term and for the good of the whole world.

⁸³ The followers of Jainism show a remarkable degree of attention to business and management activity; not only in India, but also in other parts of the world, e.g. in Canada, the Jain minorities have played an important role in business and management circles.

Strong family ties, typical for this religion, play an important role in their successful business. A significant factor increasing Jains' interest in the field of business is the fact that their forebears were members of a merchant caste. They attach a great importance to education,⁸⁴ and can boast a long record of caring about it; that, in turn, significantly broadens their possibilities of conducting effective business operations.

Image 18: Company Network of the Jain International Trade Organization



Source: <https://www.tofler.in/jain-international-trade-organisation/company/U74999MH2007NPL168975/network>

Nowadays, Jains belong to the most educated and wealthiest religious groups in India. Simultaneously, their religion forbids them from consuming too much of the fruits of their labor; they should be content only with the necessary amounts. Seth and Jainm write:

Economics has propagated for more wants in our lives, often equating it with happier and satisfied lives. However, the economics of Jainism has a different take on the subject. It does not talk about the dispossession of resources, but shows like in a mirror that the society cannot live peacefully while mindlessly expanding its needs, either.

⁸⁴ They show particular interest in subjects connected with law.

Hence, the economics of Jainism prescribes the principles of limiting desires and wants, while using fair and standard means to earn wealth and maintaining a definite limit to the accumulation of wealth. These principles have the potential to help every person attain peace and happiness while ensuring higher economic development for the state.⁸⁵

Image 19: Prince Charles Visiting a Jain Temple in Potters Bar (2015)



Source: https://media.gettyimages.com/id/461950644/de/foto/prince-charles-prince-of-wales-is-anointed-on-the-forehead-and-given-a-sandal-wood-garland.jpg?s=1024x1024&w=gj&k=20&c=oo8j635ueQ8yWZ66x_UdT0h04bbxIQiObn62T-rA0Uk=

The fact that they should strive to use their property for the benefit of all people means that Jains donate a significant portion of what they possess to their religious community (and thus, cover the costs of building temples, schools, libraries, and animal shelters) and to charity work. Jainism has about 5 million followers in the world, most of whom live in India, and it is estimated that about 62% of the total

⁸⁵ Payal Seth and Palakh Jainm 'Insights from the Economics of Jainism', *The Hindu BusinessLine*, 20 May 2022 <<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/insights-from-the-economics-of-jainism/article65440279.ece#:~:text=Economics%20has%20propagated%20for%20more%20wants%20in%20our,cannot%20live%20peacefully%20while%20mindlessly%20expanding%20its%20needs.> [accessed on 26 July August 2022].

amount of philanthropy in India is provided by this religion⁸⁶. Significantly, the wealthy members of this religious group have formed an organization of serious importance: the Jain International Trade Organization⁸⁷.

III.4. Islam

III.4.1. Origins and Development

Muslims belong, alongside Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus, to the most numerous religious groups in the world. Islam was founded in the 7th century by the religious reformer of Arabic origin, Muhammad ibn Abdullah (ca. 570-632). He began his career as a fatherless half-orphan and, when he was 6, his mother died as well. His maternal uncle, the merchant Abu Talib⁸⁸, was charged with his upbringing and Muhammad was also introduced to his profession. When the future founder of Islam was 25 years old, he married a wealthy widow much older than him, Khadijah⁸⁹. During her lifetime, he did not marry any other woman, despite the prevailing polygamy in the western parts of Saudi Arabia where he lived⁹⁰. His hometown, Mecca, was a famous place of pilgrimage of the pre-Muslim Arab polytheistic religion;⁹¹ the cult was associated there with the Kaaba stone. The local population had contacts with the followers of Judaism and Christianity, which most likely influenced the beliefs of Muhammad.

⁸⁶ ‘Economics of Jainism’, *UPSC Exam Notes* <<https://upscexamnotes.com/upsc-article.php?article=economics-of-jainism>> [accessed on 15 July 2022].

⁸⁷ “The Jain International Trade Organization (JITO) was founded in 2007 in India as a global organization made up of visionary Jain industrialists, business persons and professionals. JITO USA was founded in 2017, as an extension of the initiatives and services of the parent organization, in the United States. JITO is a multi-stakeholder community of successful Jain business entrepreneurs and professionals working together for the common purpose of growth, economic empowerment and social service.” ‘JITO USA and JITO INDIA International Collaboration’, *jitousa.org* <<https://www.jitousa.org/#:~:text=The%20Jain%20International%20Trade%20Organization%20%28JITO%29%20was%20founded,of%20the%20parent%20organization%2C%20in%20the%20United%20States.>>> [accessed on 15 July 2022].

⁸⁸ Abdul Waheed Khan, *The Life of Prophet Muhammad* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: International Islamic Publishing House, 2002), p. 23.

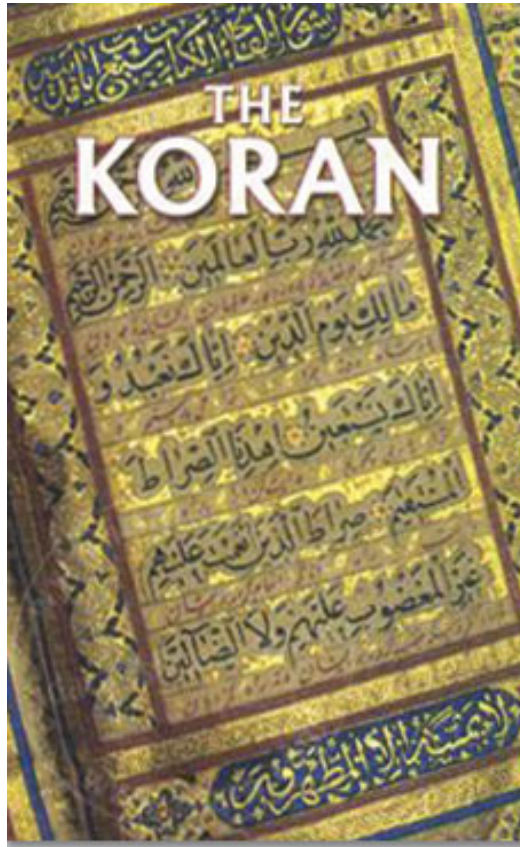
⁸⁹ She was older him by 10 to 15 years.

⁹⁰ After the death of Khadijah in 619, Muhammad had 12 more wives.

⁹¹ “Arab polytheism, the dominant belief system, was based on the belief in deities and other supernatural beings such as djinn. Gods and goddesses were worshipped at local shrines, such as the Kaaba in Mecca. Some scholars postulate that Allah may have been one of the gods of the Meccan religion to whom the shrine was dedicated, although it seems he had little relevance in the religion. Many of the physical descriptions of the pre-Islamic gods are traced to idols, especially near the Kaaba, which is believed to have contained up to 360 of them.” ‘8.3: Culture and Religion in Pre-Islamic Arabic’, *LibreTexts Humanities* <[https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_Early_World_Civilizations_\(Lumen\)/Ch._07_The_Rise_and_Spread_of_Islam/08.3%3A_Culture_and_Religion_in_Pre-Islamic_Arabia](https://human.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Book%3A_Early_World_Civilizations_(Lumen)/Ch._07_The_Rise_and_Spread_of_Islam/08.3%3A_Culture_and_Religion_in_Pre-Islamic_Arabia)> [accessed on 13 August 2023].

After experiencing apparitions at the approximate age of 40, Muhammad commenced preaching the principles of a new religion, based upon monotheism. Significant for the development of his doctrine were his “visions in the desert”, in which the angel Gabriel appeared and announced that Muhammad was God’s chosen messenger. Muhammed proclaimed himself the last prophet of mankind and began to build the kingdom of God (Allah) on earth. Muhammad managed to unite the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula under his leadership. The Arabs venerate his flight to Medina from Mecca, where he had gained supporters, as a great event; this flight happened after the most influential people in Mecca rejected his teachings and due to isolation and increasing danger, the prophet was forced to abandon his hometown. This took place in 622 and went down in history as the *hijra*; this date is the beginning of the Muslim calendar⁹².

Image 20: The Koran



Source: https://quranwahadith.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/koran_MH_Shakir_eng_big.jpg

⁹² Barnaby Rogerson, *The Prophet Muhammad: A Biography* (New Jersey: HiddenSpring, 2003), pp. 27-210.

Muhammad was met with a friendly reception in Medina, which was competing with Mecca for influence. After expanding his movement and strengthening his forces, in 630 he began his successful conquests, during which his forces captured Mecca. The united tribes of the Arabs managed to make significant progress: they conquered Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Iran, and North Africa, and even threatened Europe by capturing Spain and attempting to subjugate even further areas. After a series of victories, their march was stopped by Charles Martel, who defeated them on a battlefield near Poitiers in 732.

The so-called “golden age” of Islam began with the accession of the Abbasid family, descended from Muhammad Abu Talib’s uncle, to the throne of the Caliphate. In the 13th century, the area of today’s Iraq was conquered by the Mongols, who converted to Islam, and the Mamluk Turks captured Egypt, claiming the continuity of the Abbasid caliphate. They were defeated in 1517 by the Ottoman Turks, whose sultans were simultaneously caliphs; the Young Turk Revolution ended this practice in 1924. In the Ottoman state, the concept of expansion in the name of the Koran was alive; many times it caused a real danger to European countries, led to the occupation of many traditionally Christian territories, and forced Islamization on the areas conquered by the Great Porta. The Egyptian king Farouk (1920-1965) attempted to revive the idea of the caliphate, but without success. After he lost the throne in 1952, the concept of the caliphate no longer had any actual importance in terms of a central religious and political power in Islam.

III.4.2. Beliefs

The religion founded by Muhammad is rigorously monotheistic, meaning that only God (Allah) should be worshipped and making any likenesses is forbidden so as to prohibit idolatry. Some figures from Judaism and Christianity (such as Moses or John the Baptist) have been recognized by Islam as worthy of respect, and Jesus has been recognized as a prophet and Mary as one of the wisest women in the world.

The basis of the religious doctrine of Islam is the Koran (“recitation” in Arabic), a written “message” of God’s will to mankind. This “Holy Book of Islam” was created after the death of Muhammad, who did not leave any written documents; nor did he clearly specify who should ascend to power after him.

The Holy Book of Islam fulfils a lot of functions. Apart from providing religious knowledge and legal regulations, it also serves as a kind of teaching aid for learning reading, writing, and acquiring the foundations of religious knowledge, evidenced by how it is used in Koranic schools. The second source of religious knowledge in Islam is *sunnah* (“tradition”). From this, the name of the dominant religious branch in Islam, Sunni Islam, was coined. The basis of the practice of Islam is the observance of the five “pillars”:

- Faith: the declaration that “There is no god but God” and “Muhammad is the messenger of God”.
- Prayer: one should pray five times a day with their face turned towards Mecca, at dawn, at noon, in the afternoon, at sunset, and after sunset.⁹³ The holy day is Friday and on this day, noon prayer should take place in a mosque, very often divided into male and female sections.
- Almsgiving or giving donations to the poor; especially important is sharing “temporal goods” during the month of Ramadan.
- Fasting: the faithful refrain from eating, drinking and sexual contact from sunrise to sunset in the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, Ramadan.
- Pilgrimage to Mecca: it should be completed at least once in a lifetime. Only serious financial problems or illness can be accepted as a reason to abandon pilgrimage⁹⁴.

Islam tries to reconcile belief in destiny with the human right to free choice. There is also a *sui generis* ambivalence in the case of moral issues: on the one hand, the need for good deeds and mercy is emphasized, on the other, in some Muslim teachings, there are elements of the Old Testament threads of retribution such as expressed in the words: “eye for eye, tooth for tooth”.

The Koran commands adult men to marry, which is understood more sensually than Christians, and so bodily pleasures are paid a proper attention in this context. Men are allowed to have no more than four wives, but also concubines and female slaves in undetermined number. A man can easily divorce his wife, although he must provide her with proper means should that occur. In more orthodox Islamic countries, women must cover their faces in public places, often cannot access the educational system and do not enjoy the same privileges as men. There is no single central authority in Islam, which would have the right to make decisions on matters important to the Muslim world. In Islam, it is strictly forbidden, among other things, to use intoxicating substances such as wine, to gamble and to consume certain foods, including pork. Muslims believe in resurrection after death and paradise is imagined in a very earthly way, with gourmet food, music, and *houris* (beautiful virgins). Circumcision is also practiced.

There are two main religious branches in Islam: Sunnism (boasting the majority of Islam followers) and Shiism (represented by the minority of Muslims)⁹⁵. The primary difference between these doctrines is the Shia belief in the imam, a religious

⁹³ Before prayer, one needs to wash one’s hands, face, and legs; this procedure is similar to the ritual washing in Judaism.

⁹⁴ Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding Islam* (Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1961), pp. 13-42; ‘The Five Pillars of Islam’, in: *Essential Teachings of Islam*, ed. by Kerry Brown and Martin Palmer (London: Arrow Books, 1987), pp. 88-89;

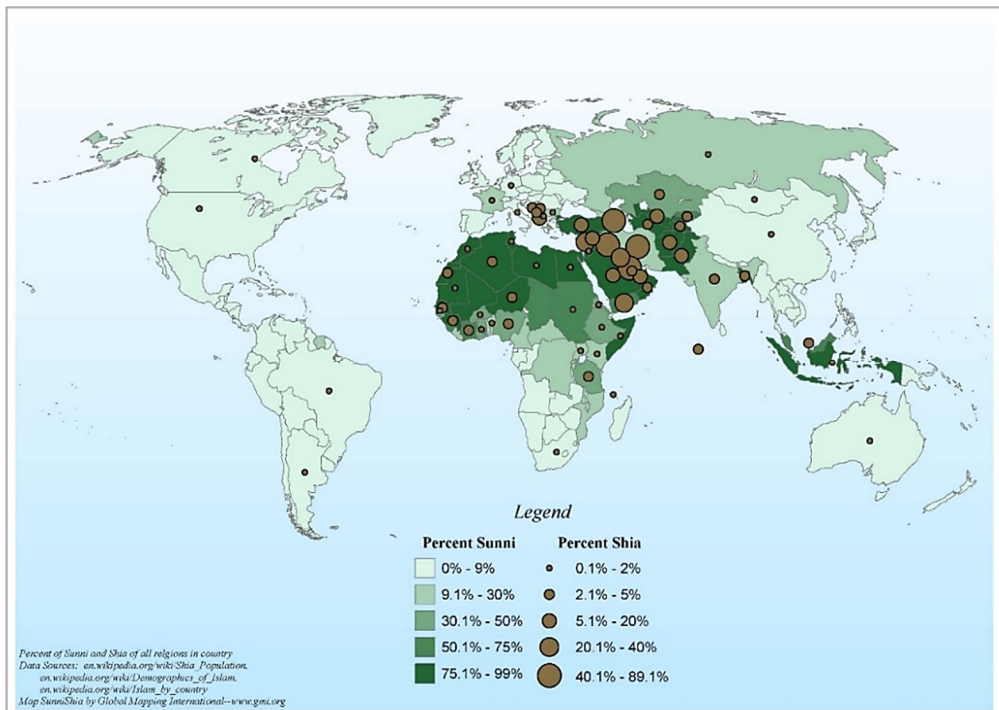
Xavier de Planhol, *Le Monde Islamique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), pp. 12-31.

⁹⁵ Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 73-112.

leader who seems to be a kind of a successor to Muhammad; the first of them was Ali. Shia doctrine states that only the members of the lineage of Muhammad may be imams; in fact, this privilege is reserved for the descendant of his daughter Fatima and his son-in-law Ali (656-661). For this reason, the Shia Muslims only recognize the first 12 imams and believe that the “last imam” will come to establish the “Islamic Kingdom of Peace”. Shia Muslims dominate in terms of numbers in Iran and Iraq and are relatively numerous in Syria and Lebanon.

There is also a mystical branch, Sufism⁹⁶, which includes the cult of saints; it has followers particularly in North Africa. This religious branch is associated with the outstanding Arabic thinker Al-Ghazali (died 1111), who successfully combined the elements of mysticism with the truths of Muslim religion.

Map 4: Worldwide Distribution of Sunni and Shia Muslims



Source: https://www.missioninfobank.org/mib/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=3549

⁹⁶ The followers of Sufism are associated with “whirling dervishes”, an image created under the influence of the Mevlevi order. “In meditation, man reaches his ultimate status as the living dead. The Sufi motto is ‘die before death and resurrect now.’ With a wrecked body, a blown mind, a broken heart, a shattered ego, and a perplexed soul, one discovers oneself as the Being of all beings and the carries all beings within oneself.” Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, *Samadhi with Open Eyes* (New Lebanon, NY: Sufi Order Publications, 1978), p.15.

An interesting group in Islam, which combines elements of Sunnism, Shiism, Sufism, and even local folk cults from pre-Islamic times, is Alevism⁹⁷. This group can be seen as a cultural conglomerate, typical of such regions as Anatolia and Azerbaijan⁹⁸. The creation of Alevism was also influenced by the activity of Bektashi Order, which was established in the 13th and 14th centuries under the influence of Shiism and Sufism⁹⁹. Today, Alevis live mainly in Turkey, where they constitute about 20 to 30 percent of the population.

From the very beginning, the controversy regarding the “holy war” issue has been present in Islam. This religion divides the world into two areas: Dar Al Islam (House of Islam) and Dar Al Harb (House of War). There are many interpretations of the concept of holy war, from literal to militaristic to symbolic, the latter of which is based the need for spiritual development. Despite the fact that the majority of interpretations are moderate, there are also extreme interpretations in Islam today, in the form of the so-called integralism, whose adherents try to impose the principles of their system of beliefs by force. Despite the fact that intolerant tendencies in Islam are visible, moderate currents promoting the principle of religious tolerance are also noteworthy.

III.4.2. Economics and Management

In the first centuries of its existence, Islam seriously contributed to the economic development of the countries in which it was present. The know-how such as mathematics and writing disseminated by Muslims was particularly useful in the case of trade, and so were production techniques or administrative skills, providing business with opportunities to operate effectively. The development of specialized organizations in these areas was also influenced by Islam. Later, conservative forces in this religion began to dominate, which negatively influenced the development of Muslim countries, including economics and management. Saleem, Malik, and Khattak explain¹⁰⁰:

⁹⁷ Attention should be drawn to the “Turkish character” of this group; in this religious system, one can find archaic indigenous folk elements of Turkish peoples’ beliefs, including shamanism.

⁹⁸ One can see, for example, the influences of Oghuz-Turkmen tribes upon this religion.

⁹⁹ It played an important role in the formation of the ideological attitude of the Janissaries.

¹⁰⁰ Zafar Saleem, Muhammed Tahir Malik and Dr Sajid Rahman Khattak, ‘Principles of Effective Management According to Quran and Sunnah’, *Al-Idah*, 33 (2016), 102-110 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354848458_Principles_of_Effective_Management_according_to_Quran_102> [accessed on 10 October 2022];

“Islamic Concept of Management:

- The basis for Islamic Management is the Al-Qurah and the Al-Sunnah.
- Islamic Management is the right way of managing people and organization.
- Practicing the principles of Islamic Management enables leaders and managers to achieve unity among the followers/members of the organization quickly and this will enhances quality performance.

One and most important pillar of social life is the management which settles the different and shared interest of different individuals in most effective way. The only difference between the world of animals and mankind is the management of shared and different interest of individuals in proper manner. Management is necessary and is at the top when some people gather. Islam also gives due importance to management in every walk of life. The importance of management can be seen in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who stated that 'Nothing is permissible for three people who are together unless they make one of themselves chief. Islamic management means the management of resources and humans on such) principles based upon the teachings of Quran and Sunnah for achieving long term and short term goals in effective manner. Management through Islamic perspective is considered as an ideological management. According to the teaching of Islam, management is process plan, which can organise, control and lead the efforts of different members of the organisation in such a way to achieve organisational objectives effectively. Islamic management guides managers according to Islamic principles in order to manage organisation effectively. Management starts with setting organisational goals and objectives, ethics and the code of conduct for the organisation, vision and mission of the organisation, policy of decision making, and strategies for managing and handling different issues.

A significant limitation of economic activity is the prohibition of charging interest on borrowed money, which restrains the activities of Muslim banks¹⁰¹. The economic activity of followers of Islam is organized around an ethical system derived

Principles of Islamic Management:

1. Honesty; 2. Efficiency; 3. Patriotism; 4. Right man in the right place; 5. Discipline; 6. Division of labor; 7. Unity of command and unity of direction; 8. Centralization and decentralization; 9. Preference to the organizational interest; 10. Remuneration; 11. Economy; 12. Justice for all; 13. United efforts; 14. Dignity of labor; 15. Exemption, 16. Accountability, 17. Tawakkul -The act of relying upon something or someone - to place faith or confidence in Allah (usually).

Characteristics of Islamic Management 1. Basic foundation of Islamic Management is the Quran and Sunnah. 2. Original model of IM is Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his companions. 3. Only economic development is not the final target of IM. 4. Activities aimed at welfare in the life hereafter. 5. Employees should maintain cordial relationship and team spirit. 6. Accountability is twofold: i) to immediate boss and ii) Almighty Allah 7. Manager considers himself as a vicegerent of Allah. 8. Property is thought to be trusted by Allah to the users and the managers. 9. Decisions are made through consultation (Mashwara). 10. The manager does not have any greed to misuse the power of the post. 11. There must be prevailing peace, development and other benefits. 12. IM is applicable to personal, familial and social, economic and political organizations. 13. Here hypocrisy, forgery, activities adverse to religion and morality are not tolerated. 14. Management is thought to be a universal concept. 15. There is freedom of thinking and expression. 16. Competition is a common strategy in good deeds." Azgar Ali Mohammad, 'Management Principles in Holy Quran', azgaralimd.blogspot.com, 1 January 2013 <<https://azgaralimd.blogspot.com/2013/01/management-principles-in-holy-quran.html>> [accessed 12 December 2022].

¹⁰¹ 'What is Islamic economics', *Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance* <[https://www.islamic-banking.com/explore/islamic-economic-thought/what-islamic-economics#:~:text=Central%20to%20Islamic%20economics%20and,as%20riba\)%20is%20not%20allowed.](https://www.islamic-banking.com/explore/islamic-economic-thought/what-islamic-economics#:~:text=Central%20to%20Islamic%20economics%20and,as%20riba)%20is%20not%20allowed.)> [accessed on 15 July 2022].

from the Koran and the tradition of Muslim communities and there is a principle of accountability to Allah for actions taken in this area. Islam attaches a significant importance to the conditions created by the state for the organization, animation, and control of the economy¹⁰², this includes the administration and justice system.

Islam gives due importance to work and sees it as obligatory for all individuals who are mentally and physically capable. Work results in attaining equilibrium in personal and social life and it is indispensable for fulfilling human needs.

Although Islam recognizes private property and the existence of a market, it nevertheless indicates the necessity of submitting them to the will of Allah. This religion advocates the transparent nature of economic activities, and the proper functioning of a society depends upon the efficient functioning of an economic system. Islamic management varies depending upon the country in which it is used. This applies, to a large extent, to the role of women in economic life and at work; in some Muslim countries, there are some “progressive” tendencies to extend women’s “privileges”, such as the right to drive a car in Saudi Arabia. The situation in this regard is not sufficiently transparent. It is hard to avoid the impression that not only religion, but also politics and tradition, play an important role in this case.

It is worth noting an intensive activity of entrepreneurs and management from Islamic countries in the contemporary world. Among the particularly successful, one can mention high society members from the Middle East; an interesting example in this context is the Shāh Karim al-Husayni (Aga Khan IV), who, as well as an important religious figure (the imam and the head of Nizaris)¹⁰³, is also one of the richest people in the world.

III.5. Sikhism

III.5.1. Origins and Development

Sikhism occupies a special place on the religious map of India; as a result of attempting to combine the doctrinal elements of Hinduism and Islam, it has a complicated history, cultural role, and political importance. Sikhism was established at the end of 15th century in the Punjab. Although Nanak (1469-1538) is seen as its founder, the basic assumptions of Sikhism had already been formulated by Kabir Das (1440-1518), who, coming from a Muslim family, became a disciple of an Indian guru Ramananda (ca. 1400-1470) and arrived at the conclusion that the “truth” can be found in all the religions of the world. According to this concept, he claimed that there is only one God, who is worshipped under different names (Allah, Rama, Krishna, and so on)

¹⁰² *ibid.*

¹⁰³ A subgroup in Shia Islam whose teaching differs from the belief in “twelve imams”, otherwise common in this branch of Islam.

by various religious groups. Nanak, coming from Indian circles, accepted and developed the foundations of Kabir's concept and created a corresponding religious doctrine. However, before he was ready for this step, he had to follow the difficult path of religious search and moral improvement. In connection with this, Nanak withdrew himself from a secular life, leaving his wife and two sons. He lived an ascetic life and travelled extensively, visiting many holy places like Benares and Mecca¹⁰⁴.

In the course of his spiritual search, Nanak allegedly experienced a vision in which God offered him a cup of nectar (*amrita*) and ordered him to undertake a mission of great importance for the salvation of mankind, which was to promote a universal religion. It should "abolish the differences between Hinduism and Islam". The belief in the supernatural way of transmitting the revelations to Nanak by the heavenly powers has been of great importance for his followers.

The proclamation of the principles of a universal denomination created a lot of interest in the religiously diversified Punjab. In the organization he founded, Nanak became the guru and his disciples were called "Sikhs" (from the Sanskrit word *śiṣya*, meaning "disciple"), which gave the religion its name. The doctrine of this new ideological direction implied a rigorous monotheism, which indicates a strong influence of Islam. In the spirit of Muslim religion, the essence of God was also defined as a force which is creative, personal, and transcendent in relation to the world. The links between the Sikh understanding of God and the Islamic one may be indicated, for example, by the fact that Nanak wrote a morning prayer (*japji*), reminiscent of Islamic calls to Allah that Muslims are obliged to utter daily. It begins with the words: "There is only one God, Almighty and Immortal, Creator of All Things". However, in the face of this perception of the Supreme Being, doubts around the limitations of free will arose. Sikhism adopted the Hindu belief in reincarnation, related to the conviction that future human life is dependent upon karma. Sikhism considers ascetic practices and yoga exercises useless.

The influences of Muslim and Indian people on Sikhism are strong in the sphere of cult and customs. Sikhs are allowed, for example, to consume meat with the exception of pork and beef; these prohibitions constitute a clear evidence of the influence of Islam (in the case of pig meat) and of Hinduism (in relation to cow meat)¹⁰⁵.

In its beginning, Sikh religion introduced revolutionary elements of social doctrine, which include the rejection of the caste system, the recognition of the equality of men and women before God, and the prohibition of burning widows on the funeral pyre (*sati* or *suttee* as it is called in English).

¹⁰⁴ This brings the biography of Buddha to mind.

¹⁰⁵ "Many Sikhs are vegetarian but Sikhs believe that the decision to eat meat is an individual choice. All food served in the Gurdwara is vegetarian. In this way Sikhs can offer hospitality to anyone and no one will be offended by being given food they cannot eat." 'Ethical food consumption (Recommended Sikh Diet)', *sikhismguide.net* <<https://www.sikhismguide.net/sikhism-food-and-diet/#:~:text=Many%20Sikhs%20are%20vegetarian%20but%20Sikhs%20believe%20that,offended%20by%20being%20given%20food%20they%20cannot%20eat>> [accessed on 27 July 2022].

Image 21: Guru Nanak



Source: <https://browngirlmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/nank.jpg>

The position of gurus was, for a long time, of great importance in Sikhism. According to the original beliefs of this community, without the guidance of gurus, “karmic liberation” cannot be achieved, as gurus explain the nature of everything to their disciples and show them the correct course of action. Successive teachers decided the doctrinal face of this religion and the development of its typical practices. One of the most important decisions was the construction of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, initiated by the fourth guru and completed by the fifth. From the time of the fifth guru onwards, this function became hereditary.

III.5.2. Organization and Spirituality

The organizational forms of Sikh groups developed largely during the wars conducted with their enemies, mostly Muslims. The fiercest fights between the followers of this religion and the Islamic Mughal Empire occurred during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (1618-1707), famous for his religious fanaticism and cruelty. At his behest, the centers of Sikhism were destroyed and the Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) was killed. Because of these tragic experiences, his son, Guru Gobind Singh (assassinated in 1708), reorganized the movement of Sikhs and converted it into a kind of military order. As part of these steps, a defensive group (*khalsa*) capable of facing its enemies was established. He introduced, among other things, an initiation ceremony, emphasizing the union of believers with their religion, common brotherhood, and the duty to defend the faith until death. Every male follower was given the name “Singh” (lion) and the women “Kaur” (princess). In addition, an oath was taken by the believers, obliging them to preserve a number of rules. These include: the prohibition of shaving hair and beard (*kes*), obligation to carry a steel comb (*kangha*), steel dagger (*kirpan*), to wear a steel bracelet on the right wrist and short, knee-length trousers (*kaccha*). All of these should symbolize that the caste system has lost its importance and, simultaneously, they became a kind of hallmark of Sikhs, who can be recognized by their distinctive beards and long hair hidden under a turban¹⁰⁶.

The succession in the transmission of gurus’ dignity was broken when the sons of Govind died earlier than their father. Since then, the dignity of the gurus has been identified with the Holy Book of this group itself, called now Granth Sahib (Noble Book of the Sikhs), and consisting of texts attributed to the most important personalities of this religious movement like Kabir, Ramananda, Jayadeva or Namdev. The Holy Book is kept in Amritsar, where it was placed in 1604.

Sikhs are now not only a religious group, but also the ethnic one, aware of their own diversity from other nations. It is the result of a long process of the self-development of a young religion, which began already with the emphasis placed by the first gurus on the special role of Sikhs in the Punjab and on overcoming the “Indian – Muslim” dichotomy. New elements related to faith, liturgy, and culture which appeared over time influenced both the national consciousness of this group as well as the political situation in this region¹⁰⁷. One of the manifestations of this process is the

¹⁰⁶ “When Sikhism was still being formed, in the 15th-18th century, only representatives of the higher castes could wear a turban. But since the most important value in Sikhism is the equality of all people, all adherents of this religion have received the right to show off in a turban. But not everyone has the right to choose the color and size.” ‘Why do the people of India wear a turban? We reveal the secret of a spectacular headdress’, *pictolic* <<https://pictolic.com/article/why-do-the-people-of-india-wear-a-turban-we-reveal-the-secret-of-a-spectacular-headdress>> [accessed on 12 July 2022].

¹⁰⁷ Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, *The Sikhs: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp. 67-151.

formation in the early 19th century of the independent Sikh state under the leadership of Ranjit Singh (1792-1839)¹⁰⁸. It resisted, although without success, the colonial attempts of the East India Company. There were bloody clashes between the adherents of Nanak and Great Britain. Despite this, eventually the defeated Sikhs maintained fairly good relations with the British Empire and even served in its army, in which they gained a reputation of brave soldiers. The Sikhs' Punjab government showed loyalty to the British Empire during World War II, which was in contrast to the policy of the Indian Congress. It can be assumed that this loyal attitude of Sikhs towards Great Britain was largely related to their difficult geopolitical situation surrounded by hostile Muslims and Indian people, which forced this group to seek allies.

Image 22: Traditional Dress and Ceremonial Attire of Sikhs



Source: [https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/C-P7H5Xtzk5W3wV9RHm4qHzdf20=/2000x1331/filters:fill\(auto,1\)/GettyImages-946615268-5ad8f514a18d9e00363714bf.jpg](https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/C-P7H5Xtzk5W3wV9RHm4qHzdf20=/2000x1331/filters:fill(auto,1)/GettyImages-946615268-5ad8f514a18d9e00363714bf.jpg)

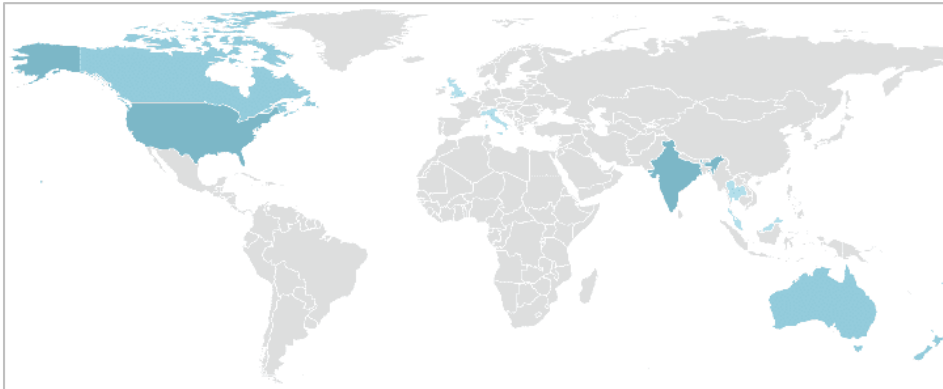
After Pakistan captured part of the Punjab in 1957, accompanied by bloody clashes, many Sikhs had to leave the areas they inhabited, which caused many human tragedies. There were also new attempts to declare the independence of the Indian part of the Punjab from Delhi and create a Sikh state. The result was even more violence on both sides and no resolution to conflict was found. The occupation of

¹⁰⁸ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs 1739-1768* (Lahore: Forman Christian College, 1944), pp. 102-272.

the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the Indian army, sent there by then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, became particularly symbolic. In response, two Sikh extremists who belonged to her personal guard assassinated her on 31st October 1984.

Due to the difficult political and economic situation in the Punjab, many supporters of Sikhism live outside this territory. Sikhism has about 23 or 24 million followers in the world, spread across 19 countries, and while the majority of them live in India, there are also large populations in the United States and Great Britain.

Map 5: Worldwide Distribution of Sikhism



Source: <https://cdn.worlddata.info/graphs/religion/map-sikhismus-720.png>

III.5.3. Economics and Management

The key to understanding Sikhs' attitude towards economics and management is their theological concept of "borrowed property". Sikhs believe that human life has been granted to them as an opportunity for spiritual advancement by the grace of God and all should be consequently subordinated to the purpose of pursuing the path of this very development. Simultaneously, Sikhism recognizes that everything that a person has at their disposal originates from God and belongs to Him alone. A person comes "naked" into the world at the moment of their birth and leaves this world "naked", without any goods, at the moment of their death. The property which humans accumulate during their lifetime is therefore "entrusted" to them. Such attitudes towards property like greed, unnecessary hoarding or excessive waste of resources disturb the economic system and harm the most vulnerable members of society. People have a duty to make a proper use of this gift which they have received, to reasonably increase their property, and to share it with those who are in need as well as to use this property for the good of the whole community¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁹ This imposes certain obligations on people; the most important is to share the goods they have with the poor. Sikhism attaches a great importance to diligent work and progress is possible in various ways.

Economic issues are related to the idea of freedom, which features strongly in this religion. Perhaps it is because of this that the members of this religious group willingly establish small family businesses, as the feeling of independence and the possibility of preserving own cultural identity renders their work more meaningful.

Useful in economic activity is the use of meditation techniques, typical for this group. Sikhs' spiritual practices strengthen them mentally and allow them to better withstand stressful situations and overwork. They also improve concentration and the ability to respond adequately in difficult situations.

The tendency to reject the escapist forms of religiosity as well as the abandonment of the aggressive forms of gaining new followers have contributed to the successes of Sikhism. They also appreciate the importance of education, especially important in regard to their business activity¹¹⁰.

The principles learned from community practice are transferred to economic life, fueling Sikh entrepreneurship. Their tolerance has also played a significant role and contributed to the business "openness" of Sikhs, enabling them to treat people from outside their own milieu well. Their diligence, modesty, and courage attributed to them is notable, and undoubtedly positive is the appreciation of the role of women by this group.

Despite a dramatic history and political tensions, Sikhism has managed to keep its own original character while maintaining relatively good relations with the society of India. An example of this can be the fact that a member of this community, Manmohan Singh (born in 1932 in Punjab), held the post of the prime minister between 2004 and 2014.

The community has managed to consolidate its national identity, prosper in business and develop interesting forms of management, especially in the small business sector. Simultaneously, Sikhs are attempting, although not always successfully, to promote the idea of understanding and reconciliation between religions. A peculiar reason for irony is that they were sometimes confused with Muslim extremists due to their way of dressing, which has led occasionally to their persecution after 11th September 2001.

It is not only about obtaining certain goods as a result of performed activities, but also about fulfilling human destiny and working for the benefit of society.

¹¹⁰ "The emphasis is on education, rational thinking, long term planning, modest consumption, high investment, self-employment, and employment generation. In all the pursuits of economic well-being, the guiding principle has to be meditation, honest work and sharing with others the fruit of hard labor." Charan Singh, 'Religion and Economic Growth: Elements from Sikhism', *Sikh Philosophy Network Working Papers*, 2016, <<https://www.sikhphilosophy.net/resources/religion-and-economic-growth-elements-from-sikhism.6/>> [accessed on 18 July 2022].

III.6. Bahá'í

III.6.1. Origins and Development

Bahá'í is a religion that emerged in the 19th century. It is one of the youngest religious movements with a clearly “universal” claim. To be precise, Bahá'í is a religion that developed from Babism, whose founder was Sayyed ‘Alí Muḥammad Shírází, born in Shiraz, Iran, in 1819¹¹¹. On 22nd May 1844 he proclaimed himself as a “prophet after Muhammad” and the *Baba* (“gate”). The main assumptions of his teaching include the faith in a transcendent God, the unity of mankind and humanitarianism, manifested in charity and mysticism. Baba also foretold the coming of the Messiah. These of beliefs caused a negative reaction in the Shia clergy and provoked the persecution of the prophet and his followers. As a result, Baba was fatally shot in 1850 and his supporters were repressed¹¹².

After his death, an increasingly important role in the Bahá'í community was played by Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí Núrí (1817-1892), known also as Bahá'u'lláh (the glory of God). This resulted in the hostility of the religious establishment and the authorities of the Ottoman Empire. He was thrown into prison in 1852, and there he experienced prophetic raptures. He managed to save his life with the help of Western diplomats and was exiled to Baghdad. The next place of his stay was the Kurdish province of Silêmanî, where he remained for two years and intensely practiced prayers and meditations as a dervish.

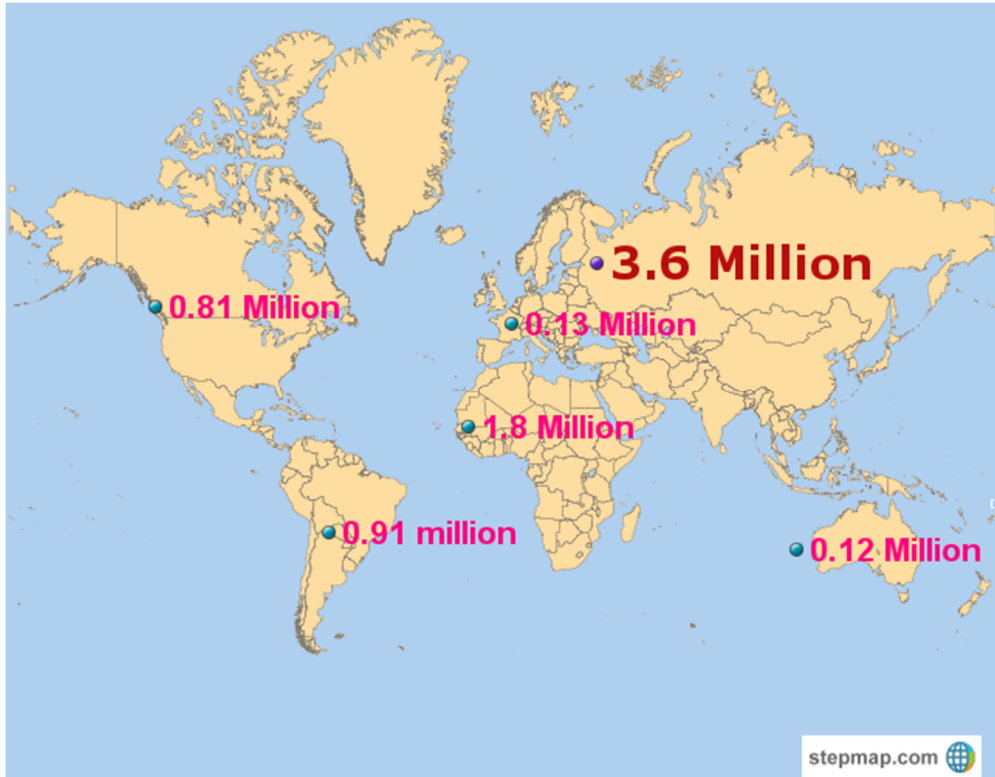
In 1862 he published *The Book of Certainty*, in which he presented the idea of a “progressive revelation”. Upon his return to Baghdad, he soon gained recognition and influence, prompting the Persian consul in the city, concerned about his popularity, to act. As a result of this, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Istanbul. Before his departure on 8th April 1863, he proclaimed himself the “messenger of God”, the Messiah announced by Baba. Further news about him emerged in 1866 when he proclaimed himself publicly as the greatest religious leader of his time.

Finally, Bahá'u'lláh was sent to Acre, a fortress in today's Israel. During his stay there, he continued to develop his teachings, preaching the reconciliation of religions and announcing the “unity of mankind”. In 1873, he compiled his work entitled *The*

¹¹¹ “In a troubled time and place – Shiraz, Persia in 1844 – a young merchant and mystic made a startling announcement: that he brought the world a new message from God.” Rainn Wilson, ‘What Is the Baha’i Faith?’, *bahaiteachings.org* <[¹¹² Babism as such has been reduced to a few thousand followers, dispersed in small groups. The rest ended up in the Baha'u'allah group, which was found to be more resistant to the passage of time.](https://bahaiteachings.org/bahai-faith/#:~:text=The%20Baha'i%20teachings%20promote,led%20communities%20and%20welcome%20everyone.> [accessed on 13 August 2022].</p>
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Most Holy Book¹¹³, containing the teachings of the group. Bahá'u'lláh remained at the center of the new religion in Haifa, which still exists in Israel today, until his death on 29th May 1892.

Map 6: Worldwide Distribution of Bahá'í Followers



Source: <https://www.stepmap.com/map/Bahai-Followers-1219885.png>

Power in the structures of this religion was seized by the eldest son of Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí Núrí, Abdu’l-Bahá (1844-1921), who enjoyed the freedom of movement that came after the Young Turkish Revolution, which allowed him to travel. During this time, Bahá’ism was spreading around the world and gathering followers¹¹⁴, especially in North America and Europe. In 1921, Abdu’l-Bahá died. The next

¹¹³ Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí Núrí, *The Most Holy Book*, trans. by Earl E. Elder and William McE. Miller (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1961) <<http://freebahais.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Kitab-i-Aqdas-The-Most-Holy-Book-Elder-Miller-Translation.pdf>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

¹¹⁴ Mírzá Ḥusayn ‘Alí Núrí, ‘The Call of the Divine Beloved: Selected Mystical Works of Bahá’u’lláh’, trans. by Shoghi Effendi, *bahai.org* <<https://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/call-divine-beloved/call-divine-beloved.pdf?7f78fdcd>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

leader of the Bahá'ís was his grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957)¹¹⁵, and it was under his leadership that this religion expanded in many countries. He also officially completed the process of translating the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Since 1963, the movement has been managed by a collective body called the House of Justice¹¹⁶, based in Haifa. The Bahá'ís claim they have around 5 million followers worldwide. In Iran, the country of its origin, this religion is subjected to repression. Its symbol is a nine-pointed star.

III.6.2. Doctrine and Theological Concepts

Bahá'í is a monotheistic religion (that is, there is only one God, the eternal Creator of the world) and followers believe in the immortality of the soul. Temporal life and the following one “in the underworld” is treated as a journey to the land of God-granted freedom. Hell and heaven are understood in this religion symbolically as distance from or closeness to God. The Bahá'ís believe that a certain rapprochement with God can be achieved already in earthly life. They reject intense ascetic practices, begging as well as living in splendor. Racism and all forms of prejudice are condemned. According to their website:

Prejudice of all kinds, whether religious, racial, patriotic or political is destructive of divine foundations in man. All the warfare and bloodshed in human history have been the outcome of prejudice. This earth is one home and nativity. God has created mankind with equal endowment and right to live upon the earth. As a city is the home of all its inhabitants, although each may have his individual place or residence therein, so the earth's surface is one wide native land or home for all races of humankind¹¹⁷.

The Baha'is believe that God does not present Himself to humankind “all at once”, but progressively and circularly. There are visible traces of a specific concept of the evolution of religion: humankind is developing, therefore it is necessary to raise religion to a higher level. Furthermore, the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are not the last, but they are the most up-to-date at the moment. The community he founded should contribute to peace and harmony between existing religions. Rituals do not

¹¹⁵ von Glasenapp, *Die nichtchristlichen Religionen*, pp. 60-62.

¹¹⁶ “Unlike many religions of the past, Baha'is have the original writings of Baha'u'llah, his son and successor, Abdu'l-Baha — as well as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, Shoghi Effendi, and, since 1963, the Universal House of Justice, the nine-member democratically-elected global governing body of the Baha'i Faith. Baha'is rely on and revere those inspiring writings and see them as the source for humanity's continual guidance. They have been translated into hundreds of languages, including tribal and indigenous ones, to make them available to everyone.” Wilson, ‘What Is the Baha'i Faith?’, *bahaiteachings.org*

¹¹⁷ ‘Principles of the Bahá'í Faith’, *bahai.com* < <https://bahai.com/principles.html> > [accessed on 15 July 2022].

have a significant meaning for Baha'is, who should concentrate in their practices on developing a proper, positive attitude towards God. They gather together in democratically led communities in special sacred buildings, but also, if the situation requires it, in private apartments. The burden of the traditions of other religions is viewed negatively by Bahá'ís.

Image 23: Bahá'í Garden with Shrine of Bab in Haifa, Israel



Source: https://media.istockphoto.com/photos/view-on-beautiful-bahai-garden-with-shrine-of-bab-haifa-israel-picture-id1049785122?k=6&m=1049785122&s=170667a&w=0&h=mOzlhD6Mrl5ZKptI_2mtTbNu1PsfWqqxTXzP8KApczk=

The Bahá'ís have no clergy. Confession is prohibited as a degrading practice and monastic life has been rejected as well. The Bahá'ís are also prohibited from such forms of burial that involving burning corpses; the human body, according to this group, is a “temple” and should not be destroyed. It is interesting that they believe that faith and science cannot contradict each other.

The concept of economics in this religion assumes that the members of this organization are advised to perform work which is useful and for the good of humankind and it is understood as an indispensable element of spirituality¹¹⁸, perhaps

¹¹⁸ “Among the results of the manifestation of spiritual forces will be that the human world will adapt itself to a new social form, the justice of God will become manifest throughout human affairs and

as important for spiritual development as prayer. The economic projects of the Bahá'ís, for example in agriculture¹¹⁹, and allow their communities to conduct activity. It is also worth emphasizing that this religion influenced many areas of the world's life, attempting to contribute to promoting peace in the world, improving the economic situation of poor social groups or fighting illiteracy¹²⁰. The Bahá'ís are active in the field of charity work.

This religion does not have very sophisticated forms of management¹²¹, but those that exist are characterized by humanitarianism and social justice. Nonetheless, the quick increase in the number of members is forcing the leadership of this religion to search for new organizational solutions. This promotes the development of new management concepts which increase the effectiveness of the activity of this religion.

human equality will be universally established. The poor will receive a great bestowal and the rich attain eternal happiness. For although at the present time the rich enjoy the greatest luxury and comfort, they are nevertheless deprived of eternal happiness; for eternal happiness is contingent upon giving and the poor are everywhere in the state of abject need. Through the manifestation of God's great equity the poor of the world will be rewarded and assisted fully and there will be a readjustment in the economic conditions of mankind so that in the future there will not be the abnormally rich nor the abject poor. The rich will enjoy the privilege of this new economic condition as well as the poor, for owing to certain provision and restriction they will not be able to accumulate so much as to be burdened by its management, while the poor will be relieved from the stress of want and misery." 'Principles of the Bahá'í Faith', *bahai.com*

¹¹⁹ David Langness, 'The Bahá'í Economic System Starts with the Farmer', *bahaiteachings.org*, 28 March 2016 <[¹²⁰ "Cooperation of the Baha'i International Community with UN agencies in social and economic development projects is already taking place in some countries. The ways and means of a substantially increased collaboration is now being explored against the background of a growing Baha'i involvement in this area. It is expected that this will include, i.a., information exchange, co-financing and the sharing of technical expertise.](https://bahaiteachings.org/bahai-economic-system-starts-with-the-farmer/#:~:text=Since%20so%20many%20people%20around,primary%20importance%20to%20every%20person.> [accessed on 15 July 2022].</p>
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Baha'i sponsored projects, using the approach to development indicated above, and drawing fully on the practical experiences and technical knowledge generated over the last few decades within the UN system, should increasingly be able to show interesting examples of participatory, sustainable and replicable development. The methodologies generated will, the Baha'i International Community expects, contribute to the ongoing efforts in the United Nations and other development agencies to evolve effective development approaches with lasting beneficial and equitable impact." 'Social and Economic Development: The Baha'i Contribution', *bic.org*, <https://www.bic.org/statements/social-and-economic-development-bahai-contribution> [accessed on 12 December 2022].

¹²¹ David Langness, 'Uniting Labor and Management', *bahaiteachings.org*, 7 September 2020 <<https://bahaiteachings.org/uniting-labor-management/>> [accessed on 15 July 2022].

IV

Emergence and Activity of Eastern Religious Groups in the West

IV.1. Presence of Eastern Religions in the West

For a very long time the philosophical and religious thought of the East and the meditation techniques connected with it have fascinated people of the West due to their perceived exoticism and a different perspective on reality. In addition, interest of the latter in Eastern costumes, social life, and mentality has been growing. Noteworthy is the influence of oriental ideologies upon Christianity, as a result of which various syncretistic religious groups, for example, medieval “heterodox” movements such as the Manichaeans or the Cathars, were formed¹²². The first contacts of Europeans with the belief systems of the East like Zoroastrianism, Vedic religions or Islam took place in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. During this period there was a significant transfer of knowledge from different centers of civilization to Christian Europe. Muslims acted as a kind of transmission belt of culture, although other religious movements also played an important role.

During the Enlightenment, countries considered “exotic” from the European point of view, such as China, Japan, or Turkey, were very popular in Europe. It was expressed, amongst other ways, in architecture through the erection of “Eastern-style” pagodas on the private lands of prominent people. Furthermore, intellectuals showed interest in Eastern thought, for example, Gottfried Leibniz admired Confucianism. This interest was fueled by the transfer of knowledge and culture, although it also resulted in tensions and misunderstandings. The transfer in question had a great impact upon Europe, and, through the development of the colonial system and imperialism, also on the other parts of the world. The influence of eastern religions, especially Islam, was evident above all in architecture and literature.

¹²² They were influenced by Gnosticism.

In the 19th century, information began to circulate faster due to the significant technical progress in this period; the number of people traveling to and learning about distant countries and their cultures increased. At this time, the knowledge of the teachings of such religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, Shintoism, or Islam was of particular interest for Europeans. Symptoms of fascination with them were noticeable in the work of many Western thinkers, whose representatives may be found in literature and philosophy, such as Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)¹²³ or Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). The Prime Minister of France, Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929), also showed a great interest in Buddhism and other Eastern religions.

Parallel to this phenomenon, the “pseudoscience” of Theosophy, which drew upon Eastern religions, developed. Asia, especially India, caught the attention of Theosophists, the most famous of whom was Yelena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), who founded the Theosophical Society in 1875.

Image 24: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky

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“Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached “reality”; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya [illusion]. ”

— Helena Petrovna Blavatsky



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/05/eb/b3/05ebb3420a1163b1935ba23b0b23068c.jpg>

¹²³ Hans Melderis, *Raum-Zeit-Mythos. Richard Wagner und die modernen Naturwissenschaften* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), p. 120; Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy* Volume II (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), pp. 588-590.

Among the many fields of science open to new influences from the East, psychology occupied a significant position. It should be added that contacts with the distant corners of the world were not limited only to the presence of Westerners there, but also involved exchange in the opposite direction, that is, the fact that, more and more often, the inhabitants of distant, Eastern countries also reached Europe and America. One of them was Abbé José Custódio de Faria (1746-1819), who was born in India and had ancestors amongst the indigenous population¹²⁴. He became famous for his achievements in the field of hypnosis, for which he was nicknamed “the founder of dynamic psychiatry”. He was the first practitioner to see the relationship between suggestion and hypnosis. Faria indirectly influenced Ambroise-August Liébault (1823-1904), the founder of the Nancy School, who, in turn, is considered a pioneer of modern hypnotherapy. The continuator of Faria’s thought was Émile Coué (1857-1926), who can be called, without exaggeration, a great propagator of self-suggestion and self-hypnosis. Although Coué was not an overly religious person, his techniques resembled those of Eastern religions, such as reciting mantras¹²⁵.

IV.2. Far Eastern Inspirations in Psychology and Psychiatry

A significant influence of Far Eastern religions¹²⁶ was visible in the new branches of knowledge such as religious studies and anthropology¹²⁷, which have, ever since their inception, been interested in Eastern beliefs. This group also included psychology, which was looking for new sources of inspiration. A notable “influenced” representative of this discipline is William James (1842-1910). Considered one of the main figures of American pragmatism, James found his way to the Theosophical Society Adyar during his confessional peregrinations.

James is also regarded as one of the founders of the psychology of religion; this branch of psychology examines the regularity of the functioning of religion both in individual and social dimensions. It examines, amongst other things, phenomena such as ecstasy, faith and unbelief, conversions, guilt, and states experienced during expiatory practices, and inexplicable phenomena such as stigmata, levitation, or glossolalia¹²⁸.

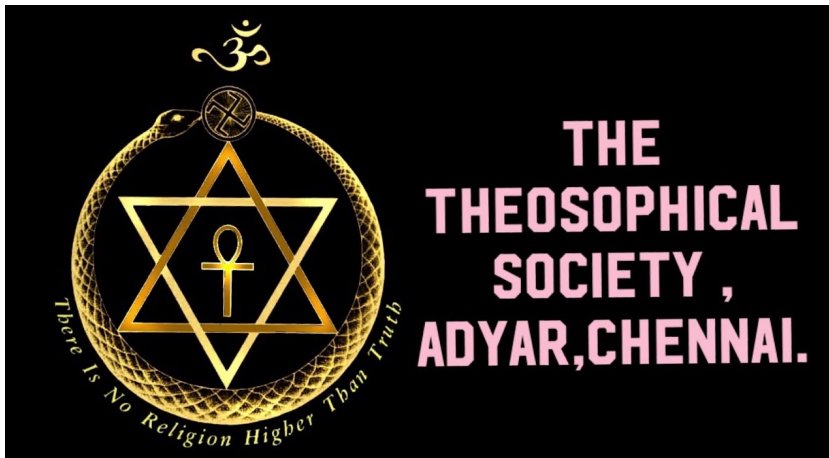
¹²⁴ In order to understand the path of the evolution of his views, it should be mentioned that his parents, after having obtained the annulment of their marriage, devoted themselves to a spiritual career: his mother joined the monastery, and his father became a priest.

¹²⁵ ‘Coué et la Religion’, *Méthode Coué*, 6 June 2018 <<https://www.methodecoue.com/coue-et-la-religion/>> [accessed on 27 August 2022].

¹²⁶ That is, religions that developed in the geographic Far East, such as Buddhism. In contrast, Islam could be considered a religion from the Middle East.

¹²⁷ Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 37-42.

¹²⁸ The phenomena that are particularly frequently studied include the forms of faith and the states of ecstasy or guilt; see: Ian Wilson, *The Bleeding Mind: An investigation into the mysterious phenomenon*

Image 25: The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Chennai

Source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/csxVd3tZhDA/maxresdefault.jpg>

A significant interest in Eastern religions was evident in psychoanalysis, especially in the case of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)¹²⁹, whose concepts included, apart from those of the themes of archetypes, references to Buddhism and Taoism.¹³⁰ He used the elements of the knowledge of these Far Eastern religions both in his theories and in specific therapeutic activities¹³¹. Mehrrens writes:

The doctor... values religious ideas and attitudes, so far as they prove helpful, as therapeutic systems, and singles out the Buddha in particular, the essence of whose teaching is deliverance from suffering through the maximum development of consciousness, as one of the supreme helpers on the road to salva-

of stigmata (London: Paladin / Grafton Books, 1949), pp. 78-179; or Gilbert Keith Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), pp. 78-179.

¹²⁹ "A great interest in the sciences of the East showed Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Such religion played an important role in his conception, incl. in the case of broadly understood spirituality, archetypes and alchemy; an interest in the Orient turned out to be important in his conceptions in particular in Buddhism and Taoism, although there is no shortage of evidence that Jung was also interested in other 'Chinese religions'". Henghao Liang, 'Jung and Chinese Religions: Buddhism and Taoism', *Pastoral Psychology*, 61:5-6 (2012) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/2576355_12_Jung_and_Chinese_Religions_Buddhism_and_Taoism> [accessed on 20 August 2022];

Carl Gustav Jung, *The Psychology of the Transference* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 121-158.

¹³⁰ Erich Fromm, *The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), pp. 11-95.

¹³¹ Elżbieta Trafiałek, 'Education towards demographic old age', in: *Ekonomiczny, socjalny, ekologiczny kontekst współczesnych problemów międzynarodowych* (Winnica: Instytut Ekonomiczny Ukrainy, 2010), pp. 304-318;

Paweł Zieliński, 'The Studies on Relaxation in Polish Pedagogics, Practice and Theory in Systems of Education', *Pedagogical Journal of Association of Educational Sciences*, 9:2 (2014), 101-110.

*tion. From ancient times, physicians have sought a panacea, a medicina catholica, and their persistent efforts have unconsciously brought them nearer to the central ideas of the religion and philosophy of the East*¹³².

Also among psychiatrists, there were the researchers of phenomena related to the religions of the Far East¹³³. One representative is Ian Stevenson (1918-2007), a professor of psychiatry at the University of Virginia, who studied the phenomenon of memories from “previous incarnations” in 3,000 children, suggesting reincarnation.

IV.3. The East in Western Culture

IV.3.1. Before World War II

Spectacular meetings with representatives contributed to the knowledge of the religions and civilization of the East. A significant event in this area that *de facto* started the era of the “expansion” of Far East religions in the West was the Parliament of World’s Religions Conference, held in 1893 in Chicago on the occasion of the World’s Columbian Exposition, also known as The Chicago World’s Fair. As a part of this event, religions hitherto little known in the Western world were presented by practitioners.

Image 26: Parliament of the World’s Religions, Chicago, 1893



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/736x/9a/23/bd/9a23bd16d50b41d75fef4657c0bfde3d--worlds-fair-expo.jpg>

¹³² Sue Mehrrens, ‘Jung on the Instincts and the Religious Impulse’, *Jungian Center for the Spiritual Sciences* <<https://jungiancenter.org/jung-on-the-instincts-and-the-religious-impulse/>> [accessed on 20 August 2022].

See also: Alan Watts, *Psychotherapy, East & West* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), pp. 15-33; Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967) pp. 10-20.

¹³³ Heinz Schott and Rainer Tölle, *Geschichte der Psychiatrie* (München: C.H. Beck, 2006), pp. 232-234.

It should be noted that, until the Conference of the Parliament of World's Religions in Chicago, groups following Far Eastern traditions had not shown any major missionary tendencies, refraining from attempts to gain followers beyond the countries from where the religions originated. This was largely related to the soteriological and eschatological concepts of these religions, assuming the "karmic destiny", the acceptance of which was necessary to become their followers. After the Conference, more and more "Far Eastern teachers" started to come to Western countries and gained supporters of their religious concepts there. This concerned, amongst other things, martial arts, meditation, and yoga techniques. That meant not only publicity, but also earning opportunities both in the broadly understood health sector as well as, in the case of martial arts masters, as trainers in military and police forces. The "secret knowledge" associated with the Far East also fascinated the Nazis, who sought their "roots" in this region of the world; their imaginations were stimulated by the symbolic of Vedic religions, whose meaning, however, they completely distorted¹³⁴.

IV.3.2. After 1945

The post-war period proved to be a time of rapid dissemination of the cultural elements of the spiritual heritage of the East. More and more often, the inhabitants of distant, eastern countries also reached Europe and America. The attitudes of Japanese and other Asian nations to death and suffering, different than the Western way of thinking about these issues, prompted the Americans and Europeans to investigate the reasons for this manner of perceiving these matters. It would be no exaggeration to say that the contact with the richness of Asian civilizations changed the perception of the people living in the West. The disintegration of the colonial world's system accelerated this process, indicating that the East had a lot to offer to the West in terms of culture.

An important aspect of these mutual contacts was economics; for example, a former enemy of the United States and other Western countries, Japan, joined the group of the most economically-developed countries in the world and was supported on the road to this goal by US organizational specialists, which led, among other things, to the creation of Total Quality Management (TQM¹³⁵) by William Edwards Deming (1900-1993)¹³⁶. Deming's concept has been called *kaizen* ("change for the better")

¹³⁴ An example is Heinrich Himmler, who considered himself the incarnation of the German king Henry the Fowler (ca. 876-2 July 936).

¹³⁵ William Lazonick, 'The Fragility of the US. Economy', in: *The Third Globalization*, ed. by Dan Breznitz and John Zysman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 239;

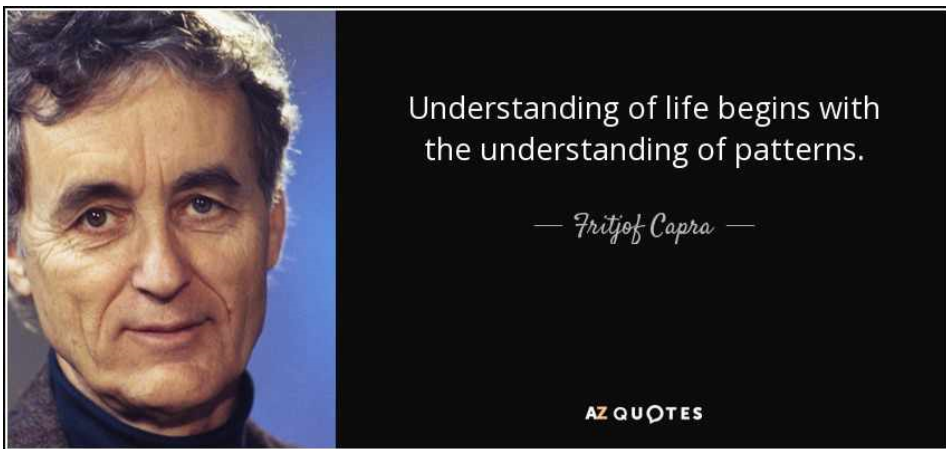
See also: Peter F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York: Harper Business, 1993), pp. 196-197.

¹³⁶ The creation of this concept was greatly influenced by the fact that, in 1950, he was invited to Japan as an expert by General Douglas MacArthur, who was *de facto* managing Japan on behalf of the United States government.

in Japan. It is a management concept that places a great emphasis upon the quality of work, productivity, and customer satisfaction with products. In a cultural sense, it was based upon the traditional Japanese philosophy of life, especially on the idea of the "daily effort" for the company¹³⁷.

The religions of the Far East were also an important source of inspiration for psychotherapy, an example of which is Gestalt psychotherapy of Fritz Perls (1893-1970), but also for other sciences, especially physics; Fritjof Capra, referring to the Buddhist and Taoist sources of inspiration, formulated his famous concepts of "paradigm" in this spiritual context¹³⁸.

Image 27: Fritjof Capra



Source: <https://www.inspiringquotes.us/image/author/Top-25-Quotes-By-Fritjof-Capra-Of-60-A-Z-Quotes.jpg>

In the post-war period, literature and film played an increasingly important role in spreading the cultures of the East. The great political importance of them was also associated with the period of the Cold War tensions between the East and the West. A new wave of interest in the East emerged in the time of the Vietnam War. The peace movement and protests against the involvement of the United States in this conflict became stronger under the influence of images broadcast by the media, in which, for example, Buddhist monks burned themselves in protest against the injustice and atrocities of war in their country (see image 17). This kind of self-immolation shocked the public in many parts of the world.

¹³⁷ *Kaizen* is used on a large scale in the plants of the Toyota Motor Corporation. People who adhere to its principles are full of dedication to the company and readiness to act for its good. In practice, it was found to be very useful in implementing the economic concepts of Japanese companies. It has been connected with many other forms of activity: with concern for health, "life counselling", and "taking care of psychophysical well-being". It is a form of "humanizing the workplace", through which it is possible to achieve a greater efficiency of the work of the crew and motivate them to greater effort.

¹³⁸ Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), pp. 11-15.

IV.4. Problems with Religious Terminology

IV.4.1. Controversy about the Term “Sect”

The analysis of Hindu doctrines as well as of other Eastern religions indicates the incompatibility of the traditional Western conceptual apparatus to describe the theological phenomenon of the Far East. This is clearly visible in the case of the “avatar” concept, which is based upon the belief that when humankind is plunging into sins, God’s emanations appear on Earth with the intention of its moral cure. The avatars do not have to be human, they can also be animals or fish. The most famous avatars of Vishnu are Rama and Krishna. This concept has inspired a number of religious figures claiming that they are “divine emanations”.

A lot of misunderstandings and inaccuracies have arisen around the terminology applied to the different types of religious organizations. According to widespread opinion, “sects” are supposed to be dangerous, posing a threat to the societies in which they act. Practice shows that this is not always the case. Although they are religious organizations, often relatively young, whose members are characterized by intolerance and fanaticism, similar phenomena can also be noticed in large and older, more established religious communities.

Recognizing that religious organizations evolve, Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch distinguished between churches and sects. Churches, according to them, are large organizations with formal, bureaucratic structures as well as a religious hierarchy. Sects are relatively small and proclaim to be the discoverers of the “true way” they follow; they are alienated from their surroundings and strongly criticize existing churches. In general, sects have few or no official activists. In most cases, all their members enjoy equal rights. Only a small fraction of the sect’s members is born in them; most of them are converts¹³⁹. Weber and Troeltsch state that, in the case of sects, direct communication, that is face-to-face meetings and discussions between members, plays an important role¹⁴⁰.

Troeltsch was also of the opinion that churches accept the existence of social order, and sects, characterized by a spontaneous emergence, are mostly composed of people who are in conflict with the existing status quo, meaning that they are opposed to the existing socio-political order. In his deliberations on the essence of sects, Gustav Mensching distinguished such characteristic features of them as:

- the charismatic nature of the leadership, ascribing the specific attributes of holiness to itself;

¹³⁹ Giddens and Sutton, *Essential Concepts in Sociology*, p. 748.

¹⁴⁰ José Luis López-Aranguren, *Human Communication* (Verona: Officine Grafiche Arnoldo Mondadori, 1967) pp. 54-79.

- an uncompromising attitude of the members towards the external world and the axiological systems prevailing in it; and
- the necessity to declare one’s joining the ranks of a sect as a condition for admission to it, which means voluntary participation.

Howard Becker distinguished, additionally, two extra types of religious organizations: “denominations” and “cults”. A denomination is a sect that “cooled down”, lost the features of a contesting group and became institutionalized. The sects that survived a sufficient time became denominations. Cults resemble sects, but they have different features. They are more “loosely” organized and composed of people who reject the values of the outside world¹⁴¹. They focus upon individual experience, bringing like-minded “individualists” together around a common cause. People do not join a cult, but rather follow specific theories and the prescribed ways of behavior. Members are generally allowed to maintain contact with other religions. As in sects, cults are organized around the figures of the leaders. Examples of cults can be Transcendental Meditation, spiritism or astrology.

Table 4: Key Characteristics of Religious Organizations

Criteria	Church	Denomination	Sect	Cult
Membership size	Largest	Medium	Smallest	Medium
Membership base	Middle classes	Working classes, ethnic minorities	Working classes, ethnic minorities	Middle classes
Commitment levels	Low commitment, inclusive membership	Higher commitment than church, more Exclusive membership	Highest commitment, very exclusive membership	Low commitment (pick and mix), very inclusive membership
Monopoly of Truth	Yes	No	Yes	No
Organisational form	Formal, bureaucratic, hierarchical, professional paid clergy.	Formal, bureaucratic, hierarchical, Professional paid clergy	Hierarchical, organised around charismatic leader	Loose knit networks, client- customer relations
Relation to state/	Close, allied	Separate	Sometimes in conflict	Generally apolitical
Relation to mainstream society	Accepts mainstream values	Accepts mainstream values	Rejects mainstream values	Accepts mainstream values
Examples	The Church of England	Methodism	Branch Davidians	Transcendental Meditation

These are ideal-types. many real-world examples of organisations will not fit exactly into every row. For example, some sects may appeal exclusively to white people, and some may have middle class members. j

Source: <https://revisesociology.com/ezoimgfmt/i0.wp.com/revisesociology.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/churches-denominations-sects-cults.png?resize=800%2C533&ssl=1&ezimgfmt=ng:webp/ngcb1> [accessed on 31 August 2023]

¹⁴¹ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), pp. 471-472.

The nomenclature found in religious studies often focuses upon Christian organizations, forgetting about the existence of other cultural circles that have a different way of perceiving the world, and create religious structures that do not have a simple equivalent in the Judeo-Christian world. This leads to numerous misunderstandings, irritations and, more or less consciously undertaken attempts to depreciate different non-European religious organizations. One example is the many schools of Zen Buddhism which described themselves as “sects”, but not in the negative meaning of this word, but according to the criteria of so-called “common sense”.

IV.4.2. “New Religious Movements” / “Young Religions”

Due to the ideological burden of the concept of “sect”, after World War II, alternative nomenclature forms free of ideological connotations were created in the Western world. They became particularly relevant when, due to the acceleration of the globalization process, the frequency and scope of cultural contacts between individual circles increased, which resulted in the birth of numerous religious syncretistic groups. It was under these conditions that the Anglo-Saxon term “new religious movement” arose. This concept was born in Japan, where, after the capitulation in 1945, hitherto unknown religious groups appeared. They were collectively referred to as *shinshūkyō*. The translation of this concept into the Western languages caused a lot of linguistic controversy, but the term “new religious movement” won in the end. Soon, a discussion as to what time limits should be adopted and from which point in history we can talk about new religious movements started; one possible proposal was the rise of Bahá’í Faith (the second half of the 19th century) or the beginning of Sikhism (17th century).

In response to the needs of time, the concept of “young religions”¹⁴² in reference to the term “new religious movement” gained popularity in German-speaking cultures. The authorship of this concept is attributed to Friedrich Wilhelm Haack, who, acting as an Evangelical specialist for sects (*Sektenbeauftragte*) in Bavaria, was supposed to have “created” the concept in 1974. He wanted to replace it with the term “young sect” (*Jugendsekte*), which became fashionable in West Germany at the beginning of the 1970s. Both concepts were meant primarily for those religious organizations that became popular among young people, including such organizations as the Unification Church or Hare Krishna. Due to the fact that these groups currently have a large crowd of older followers, a more adequate term to describe them seems to be the aforementioned Anglo-Saxon “new religious movements”. It allows a more structured discussion about religious organizations.

A special role among the new religious movements is played by “psychosects”. Although the term “sect”, which appears in the second part of the name, is controversial, there is currently no serious alternative for it in the literature.

¹⁴² German: *Jugendreligionen*.

IV.5. First Contemporary “Cultural Transmitters” from the East to the West

IV.5.1. Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1834-1886) is considered an important figure in the area of presenting Far East wisdom in the West. He was a Hindu mystic born in a poor Brahman family in Bengal as Gadadhar Chatterjee. The object of his special cult was the goddess Kali. In about 1855, he became a devotee of Kali and lived until his death at a cult temple associated with her in Dakshineswar, in today’s Kolkata. Ramakrishna searched for mystical states related to practicing the spiritual exercises of other religions, mainly Islam and Christianity. As the result of this, he recognized that “all religions are true” and came even closer to God presenting a tolerant attitude towards other faiths¹⁴³. Ruth writes:

Ramakrishna found that Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam all move towards the same God or divine, though using different ways. ‘So many religions, so many paths to reach one and the same goal,’ namely to experience God or Divine. Ramakrishna further said, ‘All scriptures, the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras seek Him alone and no one else.’ The Vedic phrase ‘Truth is one; only is called by different names,’ became a stock phrase to express Ramakrishna’s inclusivism¹⁴⁴.

Ramakrishna avoided the stereotypical career of a priest, not caring for earthly goods and teaching only a small group of disciples. He founded, before his death in 1886, a religious organization named after him, the Ramakrishna Order, which was aimed at deepening the monastic life of his followers.

Ramakrishna gained interest and recognition in the West because of his deep religious commitment and tolerance. Despite his overwhelmingly negative stance on any attempt to convert others, he played the role of a kind of “spiritual Hindu ambassador in the Western world” (although he was not physically there), who showed the positive sides of his religion. After his death, a disciple of his, Vivekananda, became his successor¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴³ Ramakrishna Paramahansa, *Tales and Parables of Sri Ramakrishna* (Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2012), pp. 20-57.

¹⁴⁴ Ruth, ‘Top 10 Facts about Sri Ramakrishna’, *Discover Walks Blog*, 29 April 2022 <[¹⁴⁵ In 1897 he founded, as a continuator of Ramakrishna, the Ramakrishna Mission \(RKM\). Earlier, in 1886, he set up the Ramakrishna Math organization, which dealt with the administrative side of the Ramakrishna Order.](https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/india/top-10-facts-about-sri-ramakrishna/#:~:text=The%20main%20aim%20of%20each%20human%20being%20is,same%20goal%2C%E2%80%9D%20namely%20to%20experience%20God%20or%20Divine.> [accessed on 20 August 2022].</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Image 28: Ramakrishna Paramahansa



Source: <https://imgeng.jagran.com/images/2020/feb/Ramakrishna-Jayanti-Jagran1582455217251.jpg>

Ramakrishna, regardless of his role as “ambassador”, managed to make a significant impact upon Indian religious and cultural systems; the clear traces of his influence can be found in the teachings of Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884), who, having adopted some elements of Christianity and Hindu practices, accepted the concepts of “all religions as true”, the principles of “Hindu polytheism” as well as “the worship of God” as Mother (Kali).

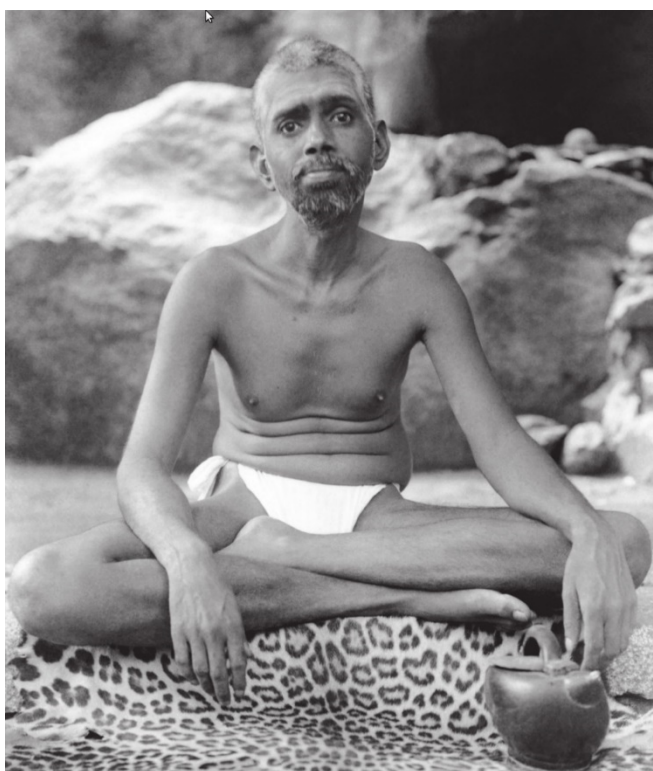
The community of the influential disciples of Ramakrishna also included, among others, Mahendranath Gupta (1854-1932), a Hindu mystic and an early teacher of Paramahansa Yogananda.

IV.5.2. Ramana Maharshi

Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950) was born in a Tamil-speaking Brahmana family in Tiruchuzhi as Venkataraman Iyer and he was considered a kind of “bridge between religions”. His mystical experiences were largely related to “holy” Mount Arunachala and the temple situated next to it, just like those of Ramakrishna, who, after finding his “holy place”, remained there until his death.

The ashram he founded grew to include a number of institutions that rendered life in it easier, like a library, a post office, and a hospital that Venkataraman himself used towards the end of his life. The title and name of Bhagavan Raman Maharshi was given to Venkataraman by the guru Kavyakantha Sri Ganapati Sastri in 1907. Sri Raman Maharshi's popularity in the West began in the second decade of the 20th century due to the release of the articles about him in the *International Psychic Gazette* by Frank Humprey in 1913 as well as the publication of Paul Brunton's book *A Search in Sacred India*; the author of this work visited Sri Raman Maharshi in 1931. Some consternation was caused by the guru's tendency to remain silent, which some interpreted as a manifestation of his eccentricity.

Image 29: Ramana Maharshi



Source: <https://archive.arunachala.org/ramana/images/ramana-30s-lg.jpg>

Over time, Venkataraman grew in popularity, and adepts interested in his teachings arrived in his place of residence; some of them considered him an avatar of Shiva. Publications that presented Sri Raman Maharshi to Western readers also played an important role¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁶ Arthur Osborne, *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words* (Tiruvannamalai: Sri Ramanasramam, 2002), pp. 1-58.

The group of the Western religious thinkers influenced by Ramana Maharshi includes, among others, Thomas Merton, Andrew Harvey, Georg Feuerstein, Eckhart Tolle, and Ken Wilbur.

IV.5.3. Swami Vivekananda

In the development of “positive Hinduism”, a significant role was played by the aforementioned Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), anointed as his successor by Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Before his death, Ramakrishna transferred his “spiritual authority” over the Order of Swami Vivekananda, who promoted his concepts and techniques for spiritual development as well as social work and education. This contributed to the revival of Hinduism and an increase in its influence upon the West. Vivekananda attended the Parliament of World’s Religions Conference in Chicago in 1893.

He was a good promoter and organizer of Vedanta Movement, which developed largely due to his activity in the West. Vivekananda’s progressive views on many issues deserve attention. He thought that the solution to the problem of poverty lay in science and technology and suggested a wide use of Western science and technology to start an industrial revolution in India.

Image 30: Swami Vivekananda



Source: <https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.GLzMAqq-owZgchiYY5HJnQHafj?w=284&h=213&c=7&r=0&o=5&dpr=1.1&pid=1.7>

Vivekananda emphasized the importance of education in various aspects of life. According to him, illiteracy is particularly harmful as it deprives people of the possibility of taking full part in society and availing themselves of the opportunities that exist. He noticed inequalities in the treatment of genders, and he also emphasized the importance of women’s education.

Vivekananda attempted to reconcile traditional Hindu beliefs, especially, in the case of karma, with attitudes that help to solve contemporary problems. For example, he highlighted the importance of “social responsibility”, arguing that its lack in higher social classes is responsible for the widespread poverty and backwardness in India.

IV.5.4. Sri Aurobindo Ghose

Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950) was one of the most creative and influential Hindus who have attempted to present their religious beliefs in a form attractive and acceptable to Westerners. Although Aurobindo was brought up in the European tradition (he studied at Cambridge)¹⁴⁷, he felt a strong connection with India. He joined the nationalist movement for some time, and was even imprisoned (1908-1909) for participation in it, but his interest in religion overwhelmed any political aspirations. Then, he came to the conclusion that India, with all the richness of its culture and spiritual life, should offer humankind its spiritual treasures. Aurobindo was convinced that his task was to show India’s spiritual achievements and to “unlock” the path of human development. In a theological sense, he believed that the supreme being in the spiritual hierarchy is Brahman, the Absolute, a being beyond all descriptions. He is both transcendent to the world and immanent in it. Brahman creates the deepest and secret reality of man. One can find his divine nature in man through the rejection of the “wheel of ignorance” and abandoning the bonds with selfish habits, strivings, desires, or passions that are hidden under the surface of existence.

Aurobindo believed in evolutionary changes that would lead humankind to a higher state¹⁴⁸. In his opinion, it is necessary to raise the degree of the evolutionary development of mankind¹⁴⁹, and he saw his task as helping humankind to reach these “higher phases of development” and unblocking the path leading to the Divine. The essential goal, from his point of view, is to transform the entire existence of humankind in such a way that it becomes “conscious” and is “an efficient instrument of divine life on Earth”, it is not sufficient for just a few people to achieve higher states. Aurobindo drew upon the legacy of yoga, considering its purpose to be a gradual and evolutionary connection with “divine unity”¹⁵⁰: in order to make a mental transformation, one must subordinate the strength of the body, vitality and mentality to the soul in order to establish contact with the “divine element” and initiate a spiritual transformation.

Apart from the matters of the evolution of an individual’s soul, Aurobindo taught about social evolution. It appears to be related to the evolution of “individual souls” as a result of individual efforts. He was convinced that, as humankind achieves spiritual progress, it will discover new opportunities to improve its existence.

¹⁴⁷ Parkinson, *East and West*, p. 233.

¹⁴⁸ Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 2005), pp. 856-887.

¹⁴⁹ Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 456-478.

¹⁵⁰ Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Aspiration*, in: the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education November 1975 (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1975), pp. 4-13.

Image 31: Aurobindo Ghose



Source: <https://images.assettype.com/freepressjournal%2Fimport%2F2015%2F11%2Flead-14.jpg?auto=format%2Ccompress&w=1200>

Aurobindo was a talented poet who was able to express his thoughts as allegories. His acquaintanceship with Paris-born Mirra Alfassa (1878-1973), known as Mother, played an important role in the development of Aurobindo's organizational vision. She visited his ashram for the first time on 29th March 1914, and in 1920 she settled there permanently. In her youth, Alfassa was fascinated by the occult. She became the master's spiritual partner and, when he retired from active organizational life, she led the movement¹⁵¹. After Aurobindo's death, her position strengthened even more and she became the undisputed leader of the movement.

Image 32: Mirra Alfassa



Source: <https://schoolofpeacefvg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/mother.jpg>

¹⁵¹ Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa, *Our Many Selves: Practical Yogic Psychology* (Delhi: Lotus Press, 2003), pp. 11-230.

In 1952 “Mother” founded an institution called Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, renamed Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in 1959. In 1968 she established what is sometimes called Auroville, a kind of utopian community. Etymologically, the ending of the name is related to the French *ville* (village or city), and the first part of the name *aurore* means “dawn” in French and refers to the surname of the movement leader.

Aurobindo and his activity had an impact upon many areas of socio-economic life not only in India, but also in other parts of the world. In recognition of his merits, 1972 was declared the year of Aurobindo by the UNESCO. The influence of his ideology is noticeable particularly in the economic life of India; the pharmaceutical concern Aurobindo Pharma Limited, a major player in the international pharmaceutical market, not only bears his name, but also admits to being inspired by his thought. He had influence upon management¹⁵² and pedagogy as well as psychology. Indra Sen (1903-1994), one of his disciples, stressed the meaning of “psychology” of his guru and was the author of the book *Integral Psychology* published in 1986¹⁵³. Aurobindo also had impact upon the “human potential movement”, influencing Michael Murphy. He also inspired a prominent figure in the transpersonal psychology movement, Ken Wilber, and a religious leader in the person of Chinmoy.

IV.5.5. Paramahansa Yogananda

Paramahansa Yogananda, born Mukunda Lal Ghosh (1893-1952), was a Hindu guru. He spent a large part of his life (32 years) in the United States teaching yoga and organizing the structures of his movement. Activity in the field of presenting Hindu culture earned him the honor of being “Father of Yoga” in the West. Yogananda came to the USA in 1920. First he lived in Boston, and then, from 1925 to 1952 in Los Angeles, where he died and was buried. During his stay in the USA, he contributed to the creation of 100 yoga centers. During his public appearances, he drew attention to the similarities and uniqueness of the original teachings of Jesus Christ and of Krishna.

¹⁵² “AuroLeadership strives to help managers develop and fully express their inner potential, to realise that the root causes of all problems lie within, and only a change in attitudes, values and consciousness can bring about a lasting solution. AuroLeadership conducts research in the field of business management. With spiritual philosophy and psychology as a base, it aims to develop, demonstrate and validate new and alternative systems of transforming attitudes and values. Striving to be a centre of excellence for an integral approach to management, AuroLeadership is building a network of experienced trainers, from both academia and industry, who are strongly oriented towards a deeper vision while being fully responsive to present day industry needs. AuroLeadership organises conferences, seminars, workshops and training programmes, and publishes books and journals on the future evolution of management. It is also working on modules for e-learning and training.” ‘Leadership and Management’, *Sri Aurobindo Society* <<https://aurosociety.org/society/index/Leadership-and-Management>> [accessed 16 August 2022].

¹⁵³ Another disciple of Aurobindo, Babaji Maharaj (1908-1998), developed a method called “Nama Japa”, consisting in reciting “Ma, Ma, Ma...” possibly alluding to the beginning of the word “mother”.

He brought into being something resembling a monastic order, and he travelled and taught. In 1946 he published his book *Autobiography of a Yogi*¹⁵⁴, which was a bestseller, with over 4 million copies sold. The slogan “plain living and high thinking” he used was catchy and rendered him as well as his yoga techniques popular.

Image 33: Paramahansa Yogananda



Source: https://assets.yogananda.org/_1280xAUTO_crop_center-center_90/PY-1947-PY-4710-19-01-C.jpg

¹⁵⁴ Paramhansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *freespiritualbooks.com* <<https://www.freespiritualebooks.com/uploads/5/0/5/8/50589505/autobiography-of-a-yogi.pdf>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

The activity of Yogananda left permanent traces on his followers; interest in his teachings was shown not only by average Americans, but also by prominent people, for example, Steve Jobs¹⁵⁵. He writes:

It happened in the autumn of 2011. Apple co-founder and legendary business leader Steve Jobs had passed away on 5th October of that year. At the memorial service of Jobs, hundreds of influential leaders from all walks of life were introduced to Hindu spiritual guru Paramahansa Yogananda and his seminal book 'Autobiography of a Yogi'.

It was one of Jobs' last wishes that everyone who attended his memorial services left with a copy of the book. Salesforce.com CEO Marc Benioff in an interview revealed this to share what he saw as Jobs' deep, though sometimes hidden, spirituality¹⁵⁶.

Yogananda's Self-Realization Fellowship currently includes over 500 temples and centers.

IV.5.6. Jiddu Krishnamurti

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) came into the world in Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh, in a middle-class Indian family. He was named after the god Krishna. His father, Jiddu Narainiah, was an official in the colonial British administration. When Krishnamurti was ten, his mother died. In 1909 he was "discovered" as a messiah by the famous clairvoyant Charles Webster Leadbeater¹⁵⁷, a member of the Theosophical Society, and as a prophetic "World Teacher". As a consequence, this organization took care of raising Krishnamurti and of his brother, Nitya. The father of the siblings initially agreed, but later wanted to have his children back and sued the Theosophists. However, he lost the court case. Krishnamurti (along with his brother Nitya) was brought to England by Annie Besant¹⁵⁸, the president of the Theosophical Society.

¹⁵⁵ "Jobs' Hindu leanings can be traced back to his early life when he got himself admitted into college with all his parents' hard-earned money and finally dropped out. As he admits in his Stanford University commencement address in 2005: 'It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it.' ISKCON or Krishna consciousness stoked Jobs' interest in Eastern spirituality. In 1973, he travelled to India to study Hindu philosophy under the popular guru Neem Karoli Baba. Ultimately, as we know, Jobs turned to Buddhism for spiritual succor. However, Yogananda's remained his companion for most Jobs' life." Subhamoy Das, 'Steve Jobs and Hinduism: The Hidden Spiritual Side of the Late Apple CEO', *Learn Religions* <<https://www.learnreligions.com/steve-jobs-and-hinduism-1770-109#:~:text=Apple%20co-founder%20and%20legendary%20business%20leader%20Steve%20Jobs,and%20his%20seminal%20book%20Autobiography%20of%20a%20Yogi.>> [accessed on 19 August 2022].

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Webster Leadbeater became particularly well known after finding himself at the center of a number of homosexual scandals.

¹⁵⁸ Annie Besant, *Theosophy* (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack Dodge Publishing Co, 1912), pp. 67-72;

In 1911 the Theosophists founded The Order of the Star in the East to prepare the world for the revelation of the Messiah; meanwhile, Krishnamurti was educated and prepared to fulfil this mission. For a long time, Krishnamurti attempted to fulfil the hopes placed in him by the leaders of Theosophical Society, but he began to have doubts as to the truthfulness of their predictions. The death of his brother Nitya, who died, contrary to the Theosophists' predictions, of tuberculosis in 1927 increased his skepticism about this group's "prophesies". The dramatic change came in 1929, when Krishnamurti declared that he was not the expected World Teacher and dissolved the Order of the Star. After the break with the Theosophists, he directed his interests to philosophy, psychology, meditation and what can be described today as "changing society through increasing its mental qualifications". His supporters organized structures which created opportunities for commercial dissemination of his teachings, distributing Krishnamurti's books and other writings translated into many languages as well as audio and audio-video recordings of his voice, and also organizing discussions and talks; the Star Publishing Trust (SPT) deserves attention in this context¹⁵⁹.

Despite the occasional criticism of Krishnamurti's behavior, mainly for "draining the pockets of his followers", he managed to maintain the authority of a teacher who had a lot to offer to the world. This philosopher believed that the causes of human problems are negative mental states resulting from the existence of the ego¹⁶⁰, which demonstrates the influence of Buddhism¹⁶¹.

Krishnamurti devoted a significant attention to solving problems and conflicts and he indicated the relationship between the mental states of people and wars¹⁶². He

Emanuel Swedenborg, *Concerning The Divine Providence* (London: The Swedenborg Society: London, 1925), pp. 285-319.

¹⁵⁹ Krishnamurti gained a lot of public attention owing to his love affair with Rosalind Edith Rajagopal (née Rosalind Edith Williams, 1903-1996), who was married to his partner in charge of the above-mentioned Star Publishing Trust, Desikacharya Rajagopal. The sensationalism of this relationship was rendered possible by the revelations of the daughter of Rosalind and Desikacharya Rajagopal, Radha Rajagopal Sloss, in the book *Lives in the Shadow with J. Krishnamurti*, published in 1999.

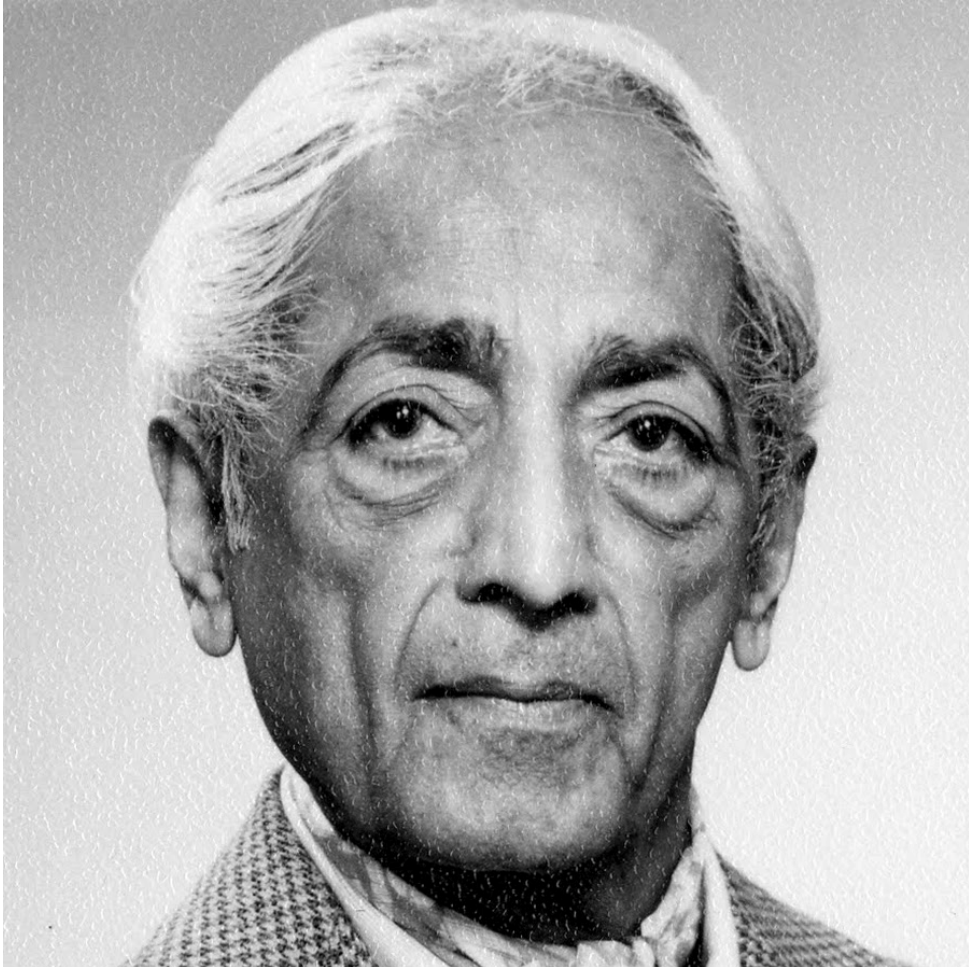
¹⁶⁰ Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known* (Alresford, England: Krishnamurti Foundation, 1969), pp. 19-45.

¹⁶¹ His philosophy was characterized by a profound humanism geared towards moral and mental growth: "Jiddu Krishnamurti didn't deny growth or change, in fact he applauded it. But meaningful growth and real material change without the all too frequent unfortunate side effects cannot be produced by just ensuring young people acquire knowledge and skills, and teaching them to conform to the strictures and demands of society in order to get on in life. In emphasising the latter, parents may comfort themselves that they are helping their children have material security, and schools may congratulate themselves on their examination results, but in Krishnamurti's view they are only adding to the sorrows and violence of the world." Scott H. Forbes, 'Jiddu Krishnamurti and his insights into education', *infed.org*, 30 May 2000 <<https://infed.org/mobi/jiddu-krishnamurti-and-his-insights-into-education/>> [accessed on 16 August 2022].

¹⁶² "Krishnamurti's self-reflective nature and teachings went so far as to blame world conflicts on the lack of self-understanding; because to understand the self is to understand the world: Humans are all the same in their physical makeup and share similar desires, fears, and anxieties as any and all other human beings, regardless of ethnic, religious, political, social or geographic background. He reminded

was an opponent of methods such as repeating mantras; according to him, one can repeat “coca-cola, coca-cola” just as well.

Image 34: Jiddu Krishnamurti



Source : https://yt3.ggpht.com/a/AATXAJxcXvsG_JkaZs7wTzd7N1vr0CXFHGdfJ7CzbG=s900-c-k-c0xffffff-no-rj-mo

his followers that we are all human first and not Indian, American, European, Asian, or Hindu, Muslim, or Christian.

Krishnamurti, therefore, saw a paradox: To become *one*, in terms of a world community that can peacefully coexist together, the individual must separate from the herd; turn away from conventional thought; and come to see that we are all connected – not physically or categorically – but by our internal, metaphysical similarities.

Krishnamurti brought his revolutionary thought to people largely by his public speaking. His talks are more available today more than ever, thanks to the Internet and advances in audio and visual media.” Kent Thune, ‘Jiddu Krishnamurti’, *The Financial Philosopher* <<https://www.thefinancialphilosopher.com/jiddu-krishnamurti.html>> [accessed on 16 August 2022].

He dealt with the issue of education, which, according to him, was not only about imparting knowledge¹⁶³. As he wrote himself:

There is no freedom at the end of compulsion; the outcome of compulsion is compulsion. If you dominate a child, compel him to fit into a pattern, however idealistic, will he be free at the end of it? If we want to bring about a true revolution in education, there must obviously be freedom at the very beginning, which means that both the parent and the teacher must be concerned with freedom and not with how to help the child to become this or that¹⁶⁴.

Krishnamurti took a negative stance against compulsion in upbringing¹⁶⁵. He emphasized the value of religious formation in educators, indicating the role of “religiosity without a specific confession”, associated with a spiritual philosophical formation. Despite his skepticism towards religious cults, he gained a large group of followers who remain faithful to his teachings even after his death.

IV.5.7. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki

Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki (1870-1966) was born as the fifth and youngest son of a doctor in an impoverished family with samurai traditions. Due to the death of his parents (his father, Ryojun Suzuki, died when Teitaro was 17 and his mother died when he was 19), he had to become self-sufficient relatively early in life. His knowledge of the English language helped him to survive, as he earned money by tutoring. Despite unfavorable circumstances, he managed, largely owing to the financial support of his older brothers, to study in Tokyo and obtain education in linguistics and literature at Waseda University, and then also in philosophy at the University of Tokyo. He also began a religious search, turning to Buddhism and acquainting himself with its open form and diverse traditions.

Suzuki also started to translate Buddhist texts into English, which enabled him to establish cooperation with important people, including Paul Carus, whom he helped in preparing sacred texts for printing. As a result, he became a private assistant of Carus, accompanied him during his stay in the USA in 1887, and participated in significant events such as the aforementioned World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893¹⁶⁶. In 1908 Suzuki returned to Japan via London and Paris, where he gave lectures.

¹⁶³ Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Education as Service* (Chicago: The Rajput Press, 1912);

Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Freedom from the Known* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1969).

¹⁶⁴ Forbes, ‘Jiddu Krishnamurti and his insights into education’, *infed.org*.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*.

¹⁶⁶ “Like many religious traditions, Zen Buddhism points to a truth that cannot be pinned down or described in words. It uses paradox, insult, and other language-twisting techniques to gesture at something beyond words. Zen koans, for example, are intentionally irrational. (A monk asks, ‘What is Buddha?’ and his teacher responds, ‘Three pounds of flax’.) But Prohl notes that this also means the language of ‘Zen’ is easy to co-opt for various ends. ‘Anything can be proclaimed “Zen,” she writes, ‘including the arts of

In the Land of the Rising Sun, Suzuki continued his earlier religious practices, in which he had achieved *satori*, before his departure to America, and received the nickname “Daisetsu” from his master Soen. Living near his master’s monastery, he devoted himself to his linguistic interests. In 1911 Suzuki married Beatrice Erskine Lane (1878-1939), a resident of the United States and a Theosophist¹⁶⁷. The marriage to Beatrice Lane contributed to Suzuki’s interest in Theosophy¹⁶⁸; he became an active member of the Theosophical Society Adyar and a co-founder of the branch of this organization at the Tokyo International Lodge, of which he became the chairman. After the death of his master, Suzuki took up the professorship of Buddhist philosophy at Ōtani University in 1921. In addition, he founded, again in collaboration with his wife, the Eastern Buddhist Society, which dealt with Mahayana-Buddhism and the English-language scholarly journal *The Eastern Buddhist*. In the period preceding the Second World War, Suzuki was active in the field of religious dialogue in the World Congress of Faiths, organized in 1936 by Francis Younghusband and held at University College London.

Suzuki spent World War II in “retirement”, which some of his supporters refer to as “internal emigration”. The death of his wife in 1939 certainly made him reduce the intensity of his activity. The occupation of Japan by Americans rendered it possible for him to be reached by his sympathizers from the USA, who knew his earlier works¹⁶⁹. This enabled him to start teaching, as he leveraged his popularity already gained in the West. After World II, Suzuki taught in the West; among others places, in the years 1952-1957, he lived and taught at Columbia University in New York. Before his death in Tokyo in 1966, he gained a considerable popularity in Asia and in the West. Nevertheless, he still had his detractors, criticizing some of the “ideological accretions” of theosophical doctrine in his teaching as controversial¹⁷⁰.

archery, dieting, falling in love, becoming an emotionally balanced manager or CEO, or living a stress-free, joyful life.” Livia Gershon, ‘D.T. Suzuki’s Very American Zen’, *JSTOR Daily*, 16 October 2020 <<https://daily.jstor.org/d-t-suzukis-very-american-zen/>> [accessed on 17 August 2022].

¹⁶⁷ “Beatrice was a graduate of Radcliffe College and a Theosophist who had been a disciple of William James, Josiah Royce, and George Herbert Palmer.” ‘Beatrice Erskine Lane Suzuki’, *Find a Grave*, <<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13963700/beatrice-erskine-suzuki>> [accessed on 31 August 2022].

¹⁶⁸ The master’s life was not without controversy: probably as a result of this marriage to a Theosophist, his teachings began to follow the Theosophist ideological direction and lost their original character.

¹⁶⁹ “Suzuki spent the war quietly in Kamakura. Beatrice had died in 1939, and Suzuki, now in his seventies, had stopped teaching, although he continued to publish regularly in Japanese journals. Soon after the war, several eager young American Occupation officials familiar with his works went to Kamakura to pay respects to the old man in his retirement and encouraged him to reenter the cultural milieu. Among these men were Philip Kapleau and Richard DeMartino, both of whom (as Zen priest and psychologist, respectively) became leading figures in the popularization of Zen in the postwar era.” Alan Cunningham, ‘D.T. Suzuki: A Biographical Summary’ *Association for Asian Studies*, 2015 <<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/d-t-suzuki-a-biographical-summary/>> [accessed on 3 September 2022].

¹⁷⁰ Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism. Edited with an introduction by Edward Conze*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 151-276.

Serious accusations are also formulated against him in the context of his relatively “uncritical” attitude towards Japanese militarism, or even supporting it. On the other hand, Suzuki was one of the few who, knowing the East and the West, undertook a critical assessment of the cultural processes which led to World War II. Suzuki also became a kind of “face” of Buddhism in the West, actively promoting it and making its content appear in art, philosophy, science, and even, at least in a rudimentary form, in pop culture. Suzuki successfully introduced Buddhist teachings to the West-erner by presenting the texts of this religion in a methodical and accurate manner.

Image 35: Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki



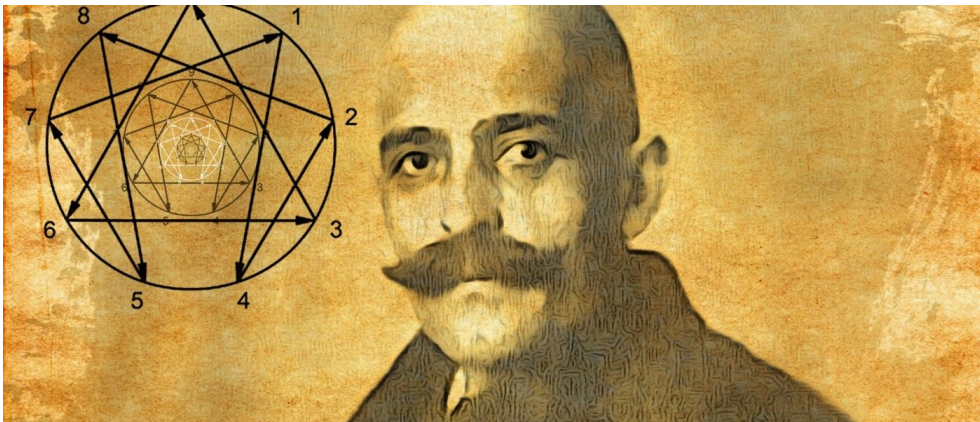
Source : <https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.484aa99b72fcbf2ff35d315c56419a1c?rik=BpRsJBKW6LkVYA&riu=http%3a%2f%2fwww.librosbudistas.com%2fimg%2fautores%2fDTSUZUKI1.jpg&chk=AjLXTrU13Ha%2bJL1NBA9eS4r2qE2ayFQgeef%2bJuYN4v0%3d&risl=&pid=ImgRaw&r=0>

In the context of Suzuki’s activities, the figure of Edward Conze (1904-1979) should be mentioned. He translated, commented, and spread the teachings of Buddhism as well as played an important role in promoting the credo of this religion in the West. Born in London as the son of a German diplomat (descended from a family of industrialists), he studied in Germany and did his doctorate with Max Scheler. As a communist supporter, he emigrated to Great Britain after taking power in Germany by the Nazis; later, he became a Buddhist and collaborated with Suzuki.

IV.5.8. George Ivanovich Gurdjieff

There are no exact data regarding the circumstances of the birth of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff, although he was probably born in Alexandropol about 1877. His origin is also not entirely certain; it is assumed that his father, who died during the “Turkish genocide”, was Greek and his mother was Armenian. The youth years of Gurdjieff were supposedly full of adventure and dramatic events, which are difficult to separate from narratives he told about himself and his life. Supposedly he meant to, among other things, become an Orthodox clergyman, but this did not happen. He spread numerous stories about himself to enhance his image, including adventures stories set in Tibet. It is highly probable that Gurdjieff, living in the Caucasus, could have easier come into contact with many religions, including Sufi Islam¹⁷¹. Regardless of the controversy Gurdjieff aroused with his stories, a strong feature of his personality was his ability to learn from others.

Image 36: George Ivanovich Gurdjieff



Source : <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/69/c6/69c66e026f7a44f7a0d4d9cde6edc2c3.jpg>

In the face of the takeover of power in Russia by the communists, Gurdjieff left the country, travelling via Turkey to the West. He stayed in Great Britain, Germany, the United States, and France, where he remained until his death in 1949. Relatively

¹⁷¹ “The Sufis use other forms of concentrative meditation, some of which, in some aspects, appear quite similar to those of Zen and Yoga. Dhikrs are verbal repetition exercises. The first line of the Koran is quite often used for this purpose. (...) A student of George Gurdjieff writes of meditating on a series of dots on a piece of paper. The dervishes repeat the phrase ‘Ya hud’ in a way similar to the Yoga mantra and the Zen koan Mu, and also repeat stories over and over in their minds, as Zen Buddhists do with the koan.” Robert Ornstein, “‘Turning Off’ Awareness”, in: *On the Psychology of Meditation*, ed. by Claudio Naranjo and Robert Ornstein (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), pp. 157-158. Also see: Inayat Khan, *Samadhi with Open Eyes*, pp. 157-158.

quickly, Gurdjieff managed to gather a group of followers, whom he helped as a kind of “master” in their self-improvement. In this context, he founded the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Georgia in 1919, and in 1922 he re-opened it in France, at Fontainebleau. Gurdjieff attracted public attention due to his unconventional methods of teaching and won many disciples. His collaboration with people associated with art was a notably strong point of his activity, which allowed the “master from the Caucasus” to gain influence in artistic circles.

Gurdjieff’s system connected various elements of the teachings of the Far East, Sufism and Theosophy. He saw himself as a person connecting the traditions of the East and the West, as a person who wanted to combine “the knowledge of the West with the wisdom of the East.”¹⁷² Gurdjieff claimed that people cannot perceive reality in their current state because they do not possess consciousness¹⁷³, but rather live in a state of a hypnotic “waking sleep”, from which he attempted to wake them up with his procedures¹⁷⁴.

An essential component of his practices was “sacred dance”, taken from Sufism¹⁷⁵, which is, in the true sense of the word, the quintessence of movement. It was connected with Gurdjieff’s teaching about vibrations at different levels of consciousness. Ornstein writes:

*The Mevlevi (whirling dervishes) are perhaps the best known in the West. They perform a dance involving spinning and the repetition of phrases. George Gurdjieff, who was trained by dervishes, explains their dance as an exercise for the brain based upon repetition. Indres Shah writes of these orders: “The so-called dancing dervishes accomplish trance and ecstatic phenomena through monotonous repetition circumambulations, and this is marked in the Maulavi order, most popular in Turkey.” The dance of the dervishes involves both the repetition of physical movements and the concurrent repetition of sounds*¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷² Peter Brook, Jean-Claude Carriere and Jerzy Grotowski, *Georg Iwanowitsch Gurdjieff* (Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2001), pp. 9-111.

¹⁷³ For Gurdjieff, conscience was very important; in his opinion, it is common to all people and is rooted in the subconscious.

¹⁷⁴ Jeanne de Salzmann, *The Reality of Being: The Fourth Way Of Gurdjieff* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2010), pp. 155-292.

¹⁷⁵ “The Sufis make similar use of repetitive movements. Manuals for Sufi practice do not exist in any readily available form, as they for Yoga and for Zen. The Sufis hold that the techniques must be administered, and the time, place, and state of the student must be taken into account. Publication of the details of their practice would lead to faulty applications of the exercises. A technique such as meditation, for instance, is held to be useful only at a specific stage of development, and persistence in any technique after the appropriate period might be a waste of time or even harmful.” Ornstein, “‘Turning Off’ Awareness”, in: *On the Psychology of Meditation*, ed. by Naranjo and Ornstein, p. 155.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.156.

Music played an important role in the spiritual development which Gurdjieff promoted. He composed both alone and in collaboration with others, such as Thomas de Hartmann. The rich repertoire of Gurdjieff includes pieces influenced by Caucasian and Central Asian folk music¹⁷⁷.

Image 37: Gurdjieff's Sacred Dance



Source: https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.6cdeb33d8f81297f475846ff53c0f4fb?rik=RD9NyQs%2ffbtciQ&riu=http%3a%2f%2ftanmanho.com%2fimages%2fmovements%2fjivangroup%2f__hr_OldRedEnneagram16.jpg&chk=7FgJWK2kl2EzHDqTSw%2bQfzHKYwhVQC1K6SagzFfBx3I%3d&risl=&pid=ImgRaw&r=0

A characteristic feature of his practice was the geometric figure of the “Enneagram of Personality” (from the Greek ἐννέα, “nine” and γράμμα, “something written” or “drawn”), which symbolized the human psyche and represented a typology of nine personality types that are related to each other. Gurdjieff combined the elements of this symbolism with “sacred dance”. His disciples had to endure not only

¹⁷⁷ Carole Cusack, ‘G.I. Gurdjieff on Health and Healing: Hypnotism, Fasting, Drugs, Diet, Labour and Spiritual Exercise’, *ResearchGate* <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343536650_G_I_Gurdjieff_on_Health_and_Healing_Hypnotism_Fasting_Drugs_Diet_Labour_and_Spiritual_Exercise> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

hard physical work and dance exercises¹⁷⁸, but various “psychological games”, whereby Gurdjieff created states of tension with an “unexpected and frustrating” solution.

Gurdjieff indicated that the existing religious and para-religious forms have lost their original meaning, which renders it possible to become independent from them and to devote oneself to constructive practices that he represented¹⁷⁹. He believed that his teachings create the Fourth Way, a sort of “synthesis” of the three earlier ways: the way of yoga (thought), of monk (feeling), and of *fakir* (body). He encouraged his disciples to engage in self-observation by using “shocking practices”, such as stopping abruptly while dancing¹⁸⁰.

After the death of their master in 1949, some follows moved to Subuh, founded by Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo (1901-1987) in Indonesia¹⁸¹. Many others have organized themselves into autonomous groups and preserve the legacy of Gurdjieff’s teaching.

¹⁷⁸ Gurdjieff considered manual work to be particularly valuable.

¹⁷⁹ Gurdjieff sometimes called his belief system “esoteric Christianity.”

¹⁸⁰ Kathleen Riordan, ‘Gurdjieff’, in: *Transpersonal Psychologies*, ed. by Charles Tart (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 281-328.

¹⁸¹ Jacob Needleman, *The New Religions* (New York: Pocket Books, 1972), pp. 107-127.

New Religious Movements that Grew out of Eastern Religions

V.I. Doctrine and Forms of Religiousness

V.I.I. Chinmoy

Sri Chinmoy Kumar Ghose (1931-2007) was an Indian-born disciple of Aurobindo. He proclaimed the possibility of maximizing human achievement through special meditation techniques. Chinmoy arrived in New York in 1964 and remained in this city until his death in 2007. An important role in his teaching was played by the “love and devotion to God in spirit”, by modesty as well as by Bhakti Yoga. He chose the “middle path”, in which people can transform negative qualities like evil thoughts and feelings into positive ones, eradicating the negative from themselves, which is what prevents them from achieving the state of unity with God. He advocated resigning from competition in favor of becoming a better person.

In his opinion, existing religions describe the Supreme Being in a variety of ways, but, essentially, this is the same Being in a number of manifestations. According to him, God can take many forms and shapes and He cannot be “described according to a specific formula”¹⁸².

Because of this, Chinmoy did not concentrate upon doctrinal inquiry, but upon practical spiritual development. The most important part of this guru’s teaching was meditation, the ultimate goal of which was achieving the connection with the Supreme Power (God), in which man finds infinite peace and joy¹⁸³.

An important role in his doctrine was aiming to achieve the “state of universal consciousness”. After joining the movement, the disciples receive new names. They are obliged to worship the person of Chinmoy and to obey the orders and prohibitions

¹⁸² Hans Gasper, Joachim Müller and Friederike Valentin, ‘Sri Chinmoy’, *Lexikon der Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1994), pp. 1012-1014.

¹⁸³ Sri Chinmoy, *The Wisdom of Sri Chinmoy* (San Diego, CA: Blu Dove Press, 2000), pp. 74-89.

imposed upon them by him, for example, to refrain from using any types of drugs, including alcohol and nicotine, and to practice vegetarianism. In the area of sexual life, he recommended refraining from any activity or at least limiting it¹⁸⁴.

Table 5: Estimated Wealth of Some Religious Leaders from the “New Religious Groups”

Religious leaders	Estimated wealth
Sri Chinmoy	\$1.6 million
Avdhoot Baba Shivanandji Maharaj	\$6 million
Baba Ramdev	\$230 million
Acharya Balkrishna	\$1.4 billion
Shinji Takahashi	\$3 million
Mata Amritanandamayi	\$230 million
Ayedole Oritsejafor	\$19 million
Uebert Angel	\$40 million
Irene Tshifhiwa	\$35 million
Valdemiro Santiago	\$220 million
Dalai Lama	\$150 million

Source: Krystle Richardson, ‘Meet the Wealthiest Religious Leaders in the World’, *History A2Z*, 20 May, 2023 <<https://www.history-a2z.com/meet-the-wealthiest-religious-leaders-in-the-world/53?xcmg=1>> [accessed on 29 August 2023]

Chinmoy claimed that he was bestowed a superhuman power, for example, he was alleged to be able to lift extremely heavy objects or paint pictures at an inhuman pace (100,000 a year), which would confirm his great spiritual abilities. He was eager to present himself as a supporter of peace and a person interested in the “good of the world”, for this reason, he organized various events such as concerts or conferences, which promoted solving the problems of the planet as well as harmony in human relations. He presented himself as a man of many talents, namely, as a poet and the advocate of music, yoga, dance, and sport activity, especially such disciplines as weightlifting, running, and tennis.

From 1970 Chinmoy led peace meditations at the United Nations, which made him quite popular. He willingly showed himself in the company of prominent acquaintances and friends. He was in the position to attract such followers as Carlos

¹⁸⁴ Ulrich Rausch, *Sekten* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1999), pp. 119-120.

Santana, John McLaughlin, Narada Michael Walden, Roberta Flack, Clarence Clemons, and Boris Grebenshchikov¹⁸⁵. He had contacts with many prominent personalities including Princess Diana, John Paul II, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Mother Teresa. Regardless of his commitment to peace, he was also sometimes criticized for strictly controlling his followers and violating their personal freedom. Today, the Chinmoy movement has approximately 7,000 members.

Image 38: Chinmoy Kumar Ghose and Mikhail Gorbachev



Source: <https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-IqJhGrsFV2A/WWOB59fXNSI/AAAAAAAAABt4/K2-Sengs4-EJxXSqL4Pv5OrfWFQwtn1cACLcBGAs/s320/sri-chinmoy-gorbachev.jpg>

V.1.2. Sathya Sai Baba

The religious mission of Sathyanarayana Raju (1926-2011) from Puttaparthi, India, began on 8th March 1940. On this day, fourteen-year-old Sathyanarayana Raju was bitten by a scorpion.¹⁸⁶ During the following few days, he floated between coma and trance. The “turning point” came on 23rd May 1940, when Sathyanarayana Raju

¹⁸⁵ He is widely considered to be the “founding father” of Russian rock music.

¹⁸⁶ At least, this version seems most likely. Officially, he “suddenly felt a stinging pain”.

felt his “divinity”. He announced that he was the incarnation of the late guru Sai Baba of Shirdi and called himself Sai Baba¹⁸⁷. After that, he began to gather disciples. Gradually, their number increased, and so did the group’s financial resources, which rendered building the temples and hospitals of this religious movement possible¹⁸⁸. In 1961 Sai Baba proclaimed the “Sathya-Sai Era” to establish the “Sai religions” on 1st October 1976. The central point of Sai Baba’s teaching about himself is his claim to be an avatar of God.

Considering himself to be the incarnations of the divine power¹⁸⁹, Sai Baba created a kind of syncretistic system in which the elements of many religions are reinterpreted in a way that suits the guru. In this way, he used the symbolism of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam. According to him, the main achievement of Christianity was “nailing the ego to the cross”.

Sai Baba developed a religious organization in which not only was he the main ideologist, but also the person who was worshipped as if he were a deity. His disciples were required to meditate daily, study the works of the master, and practice charity. They chanted mantras and, while meditating, focused their attention upon the images of God; in this respect, there is a certain freedom of choice between the images of Sai Baba, Jesus, or Krishna. In the “inner circle”, Kundalini meditation (belonging to tantric yoga) is practiced, which supposedly causes the development of paranormal forces in those who practice it. Some of the ex-members of Sai Baba’s group complained about ill-treatment, including bizarre sexual practices, for example, the guru is said to have rubbed oils into their genitals.

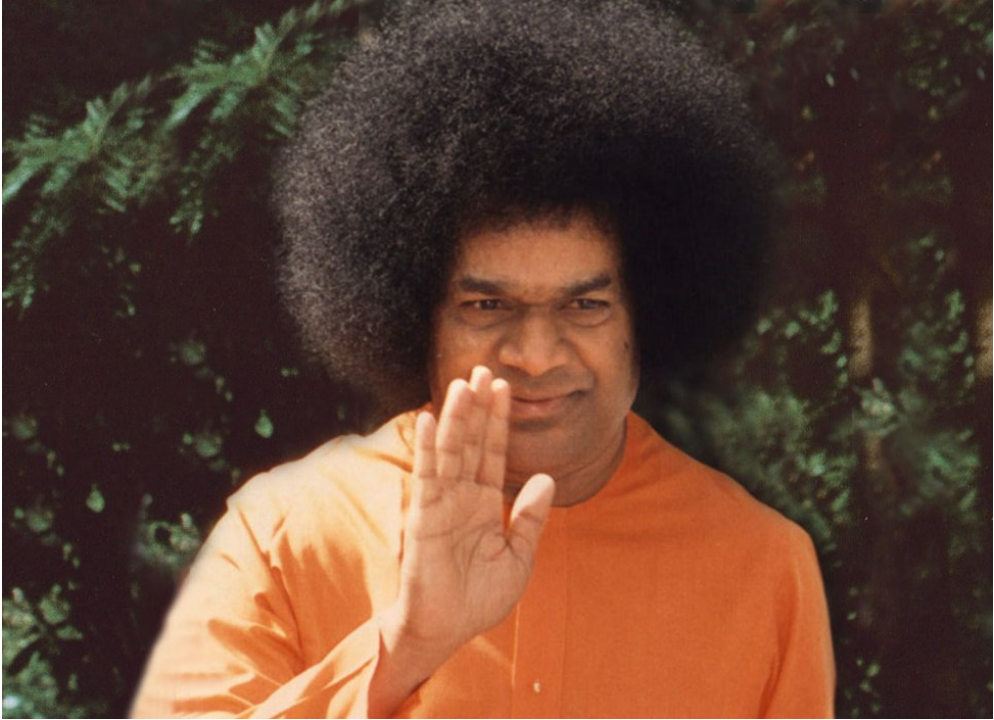
The “divine guru” wanted to be seen as a benefactor and organized charity events. Projects included a water project in the desert region of Anantapur in 1995 and the erection of a hospital in Bangalore in 2001. He also claimed to perform numerous miracles as the demonstrations of his powers. He used these kinds of practices to win new believers and keep the ones who already had been acquired. Despite the fact that he repeatedly expressed his conviction about own power, he refused to subject himself to independent scientific research that could verify the authenticity of the miracles he had claimed to perform.

¹⁸⁷ Sai means “divine mother” and Baba “divine father”, which is a reference to the female (Shaka) and male (Shiva) strength.

¹⁸⁸ For example, on 23rd November 1950, Sai Baba established his movement’s center at the Prashanti Nilayam Ashram (“the place of supreme peace”), which included, in addition to the temple, a hospital, a school, and a kind of hotel for guests.

¹⁸⁹ Sai Baba claimed that, in 1963, he had serious health problems (cerebral hemorrhages and heart attacks), which he cured himself of owing to his “divine powers”. In the decades that followed, the property of Sai Baba’s organization grew with new groups of followers in different parts of the world and mandirs (temples).

Image 39: Sathyanarayana Raju (Sai Baba)



Source: <https://img.lagaceta.com.ar/fotos/notas/2011/4/30/43349425-2826542.jpg>

In the last years of his life, Sai Baba's limited his public activity, mainly due to his deteriorating health. He died in 2011, contrary to his own claims that he would pass away as a 96-year-old man in 2022. He also announced that he would be reborn as Prema Sai in order to fulfil his mission to the end.

Sai Baba's movement has founded numerous daughter organizations such as Spirituality or Education in Human Values. The Sai Baba group in Italy was very active in the seventies and eighties, and from this country came the long-time head of the European structures of Sai Baba movement, Antonio Craxi, the brother of Bettino Craxi, the former Italian prime minister in the period from 1983 to 1987.

V.1.3. Kelsang Gyatso

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso (1931-2022), a Buddhist monk, founded a religious organization called New Kadampa Tradition-International Kadampa Buddhist Union (NKT-IKBU) in 1991. He adopted many elements from Tibetan Buddhism, but in a moderate manner.

Geshe Kelsang's movement has sometimes been accused of creating a cult around the master, showing fanaticism and an excessive zeal in recruiting new members as well as of using group pressure. There is a significant emphasis on meditation practices in this group. The main ones of them are *Lamrim* (Stages of the Path to Enlightenment), *Lojong* (Mind Training) and *Vajrayana Mahamudra* (Supreme Tantra Yoga techniques); the role of "spiritual guides" is especially important.

Image 40: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso



Source: <https://meditationinorangecounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Geshe-Kelsang-Gyatso.jpg>

The analysis of the group's teachings shows that they do not significantly differ from the mainstream Buddhism; there are such elements as karma and reincarnation, *ahimsa*, understanding the Four Noble Truths, practicing moral discipline, and so on. Meditation practices play an important role in this group, and so do such topics as the nature of the mind, the preciousness of human life, death, "becoming a compassionate bodhisattva" and, finally, attaining Buddhahood"¹⁹⁰. This group has approximately 1,300 centers in the world.

V.1.4. Osho

Rajneesh Chandra Mohan (Bhagwan Osho) was born in a merchant family, which belonged to the Jain community in India, on 11th December 1931. After practicing meditation exercises, he proclaimed his enlightenment on 21st March 1953, claiming the *bhagwan* status for himself, and then studied philosophy and psychology at Rajpur Sanskrit College. The culmination of these processes was Rajneesh Chandra

¹⁹⁰ Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Understanding the Mind* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007), pp. 53-74.

Mohan's appointment as a professor of philosophy at Jabalpur University, where he soon became famous for his provocative attacks on recognized Hindu authorities, including Mahatma Gandhi. The academic activity was not sufficient for him and he started a career of a "spiritual teacher", focused upon therapeutic activities. In 1969 he founded a meditation center in Mumbai. In the meantime, Osho gained more and more followers. In 1974 an ashram in Poona was built by his movement and next to it a big therapeutic center developed.

In 1981 the group moved its headquarters to Antelope, Oregon, in the US, where he became involved in political games and attempted to gain a considerable influence, for example, his group wanted to rename the city of Antelope to Rajneeshpura, which sparked numerous protests. Between 1981 and 1984, the Osho group attempted to transform the town into a "city of new people" by developing infrastructure, but internal disagreements in the group and a hostile attitude on the part of the American public led to the collapse of the project in 1985, a split in the movement (Osho's wife, who was charged with attempting to poison political enemies, played a negative role in this affair) and the expulsion of Bhagwan Osho from the country in 1986¹⁹¹. He then returned to Poona, India, where he died in 1990.

Image 41: Bhagwan Osho



Source: <https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.ac64cb916edc616ff0af3070810b0d13?rik=7JJUGjtMgptqOg&riu=http%3a%2f%2fwww.gurufilm.ch%2fImages%2fPresse%2fBhagwan-Garden.jpg&ehk=wBJ6bVZeOXyiG%2bINssZQsNj0gfVpCMRb8WvpHSMjFJ0%3d&risl=&pid=ImgRaw&r=0>

¹⁹¹ Sue Appleton, *Was Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh poisoned by Ronald Reagan's America?* (Cologne: The Rebel Publishing House, 1986), pp. 11-84.

Osho became popular in Western circles. According to him, all people are divine in nature, but this part of their nature is deformed by the social pressures connected with competitive conditions that prevail in the world. He also believed that the aim of religion is to free people from oppressive bonds, including those restricting sexual behavior. The latter point in particular attracted the Western seekers of “truth” and “liberation”. In order to reach the higher stages of development, the ego had to be destroyed; this postulate, at least in the initial version, resembled traditional Far East teachings, such as those of Buddhism. Bhagwan, however, combined it with the concept of the need for a “free flow of sexual energy”, which meant a departure from traditional morality, accompanied by the demonstrative rejection of traditional Christian values; that resulted in great tensions between him and his followers on the one side, and the supporters of traditional values from the West and East on the other¹⁹².

Since Osho’s death, his followers have lost their ideological zeal and concentrated upon promoting therapeutic activities and demonstrating, simultaneously, considerable business acumen. The combination of a kind of “moral anarchism” with anti-capitalist and provocative rhetoric fostered the success of Osho movement.

V.1.5. Hare Krishna

Hare Krishna is a group which originated from Vishnai Hinduism. The group’s full name is the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. It was founded in 1966 in the United States by *bhaktivedanda* (*bhakti*, “teacher”) Swami Prabhupada (1896-1977)¹⁹³.

The founder of Hare Krishna movement, Abhay Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta, was born in Calcutta in 1896. Before starting his “religious way” in 1959, he led a secular existence, founded a family, and earned his living in a small pharmaceutical company. He was already under the influence of the guru Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati at that time and, having retired, he resigned from secular life and became a *sannyasi*¹⁹⁴, following in the footsteps of many Hindus, beginning a period of deepening spiritual development and teaching. As part of his “new identity”, he assumed the name of Swami Prabhupada. He also showed considerable organizational talent, promoting his teachings on a large scale. Most significantly, he founded the Hare Krishna movement (International Society for Krishna Consciousness – ISKCON) in

¹⁹² Kirk Braun, *The Unwelcome Society* (West Linn, OR: Scout Creek Press, 1994), pp. 7-99.

¹⁹³ Swami Prabhupada, *The Nectar of Devotion* (Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1970), p. 3-15.

¹⁹⁴ *Sannyasi* is a way of life determined by spiritual interests and practices, and it often dominates the last phase of Hindu life. After fulfilling their earthly duties, they leave their families and devote themselves to religious practice.

1966 in New York, and this movement has been developing dynamically ever since. Referring to his teachings¹⁹⁵, he propagated the principles of Vaishnavism in the version useful in the West. The organization he founded has achieved significant missionary successes, gathering mostly young people from different social backgrounds in different countries. Prabhupada died in Vrindavan, India, in 1977, but his movement is still active.

The aim of the spiritual exercises in Hare Krishna is to break free from the bondage of matter. In the purpose to achieve this goal, disciples should eat only vegetarian food produced and prepared by the group, abstain from sexual activity¹⁹⁶, worship the guru, read recommended scriptures, participate in the group's ceremonies, and chant the mantras. In addition, they are committed to selling literature and other materials, asking for alms, and "missioning".

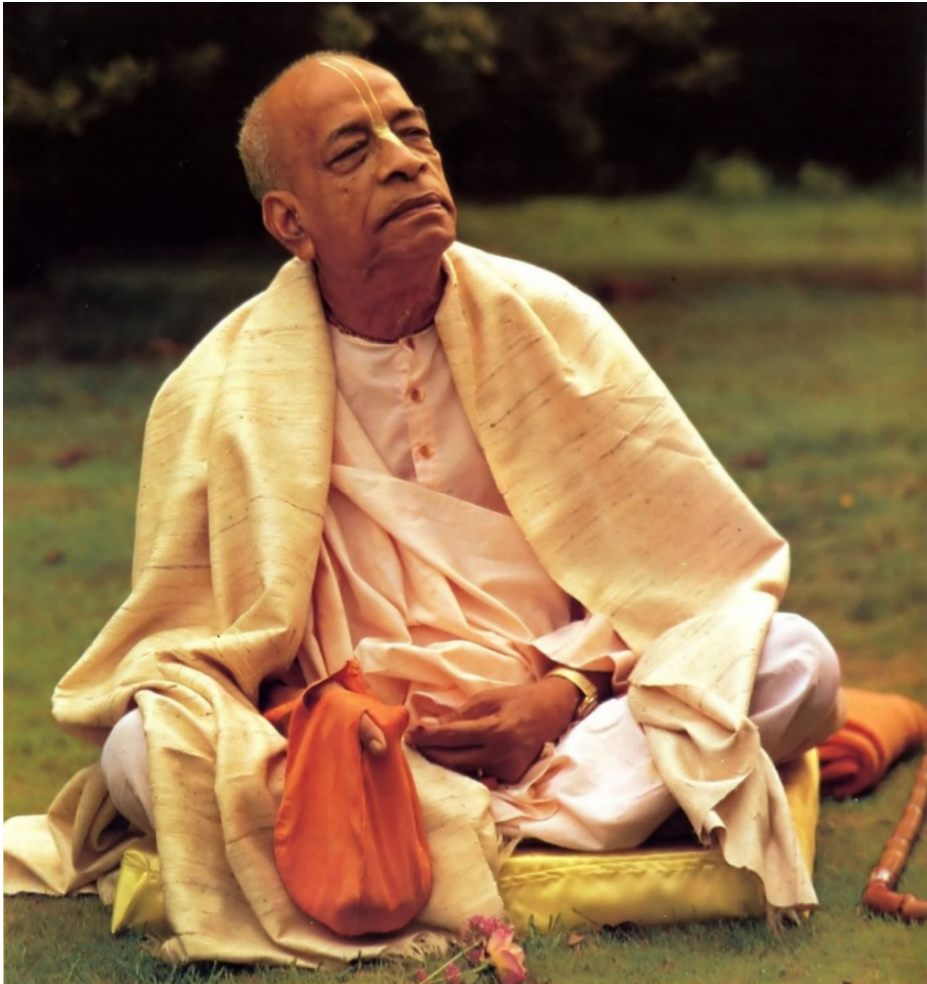
The Hare Krishna movement has believed in the possibility of "acceleration" in the process of salvation, the so-called "shortcuts", owing to intensive mediation and implementing the principles of this religious group¹⁹⁷. According to Prabhupada, what we see as the material world is the "manifestation of the inferior energy" of God that was sent by Him at the time of creation. The guru questioned evolution, claiming that all living things appeared the moment the universe was brought into existence. Therefore, the Higher Force rules over everything created, but there is an "autonomous" mechanism that resembles karma. It is determined by good or bad deeds.

¹⁹⁵ Swami Prabhupada, *Bhakti-Yoga* (Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1994), pp. 2-82; Swami Prabhupada, *The Bhagavad Gita* (Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1998), pp. 8-42; Swami Prabhupada, *The Path to Perfection* (Los Angeles: The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 2005), pp. 28-119.

¹⁹⁶ Prabhupada taught that marriage according to religious laws is a form of limiting a person's sexual life. His recommendations regarding restraint in satisfying one's sexual needs are unambiguous: sex is an obstacle to reaching higher stages of development. The ideal is to resign from your sexual life altogether; marriage is only the "lesser evil". He mentions maintaining sexual activity as an obstacle to reaching higher stages of development in addition to eating meat or getting intoxicated, for example, by consuming coffee or alcohol. He believed that "spiritual realization and sexual experience do not go hand in hand". On the other hand, the concept of man as "master of his fate" seems to Prabhupada to be an illusion. Much more he is "imprisoned" in the material world. It proves that people locked in "illusions" are unable to perceive the true nature of Being. In the case of "ego", the Hare Krishna approach shows similarities to the position of Buddhism. *Maya* ("illusion") is, according to Prabhupada, the "veil" that renders it impossible to see the true essence of Being.

¹⁹⁷ Acquiring deep, hidden from the eyes of laymen – and, therefore, secret – knowledge is connected with the figure of the spiritual master (guru), without whose help it is impossible to acquire higher levels of initiation, and, especially, information about the state of one's present earthly condition. Without the mediation of this character bearing more or less divine qualities, it is impossible to get out of the vicious circle of one's own weakness and imperfection. The master person (guru) seems to be acting in good faith and almost helps to overcome the effects of karmic imperfections – in fact, by taking control of the process of "improvement", which is also "healing", he gains powerful power over adepts who recognize his authority. There are numerous dangers associated with exercising this power, including threats to the mental and physical health of adepts.

Image 42: Swami Prabhupada



Source: <https://storage.ning.com/topology/rest/1.0/file/get/3674214314?profile=original>

The Hare Krishna movement shows a lot of interest in organizational matters, approaching them not in a theoretical, but in a practical way. Disciples are sent to collect donations, which they do with zeal. They also consider it important to organize meatless meals for the followers of Bhaktivedanta and those not belonging to the Hare Krishna.

The members of the group have long been recognized for their distinctive orange robes, chanting (mostly the Hara Krishna mantra), and dance. This movement was made famous by George Harrison, who even devoted a refrain in a piece of music to the chant: “Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare”.

Image 43: Hare Krishna Dance



Source: https://back2godhead.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/110_1976_11-02-27-2.jpg

V.1.6. Sant Mat

The origins of this group can be traced back to the activities of Shiv Dayal Singh (1818-1878), who, in 1861, became the leader of a religious assembly in Ayra that worshipped Radhasoami Satsanga (“Lord of the Soul”), a deity he proclaimed as the “Supreme”. Among the most important principles he preached was the worship of God and the “enlightened master,” the guru. Under the influence of Islam, he rejected idolatry as well as the caste system.

Within this group, there were splits over time, as a result of which Sant Mat (“teaching of saints”) was formed. Two gurus in particular contributed to the foundation of the organization in its present shape: Kirpal Sing (1894-1974) and Thakar Singh (1929-2005); the latter is considered to be its founder. In this group, a central role is played by the concept of monism, where the world (spiritual and material) is a kind of “emanation” of God and returns to God periodically. In a meditative sense, the goal is to hear the “divine tone” and see the “divine light”, which is to render what they consider liberation possible. The human soul consists, according to the teachings of Sant Mat, of “layers” or “levels”. One can speak of, for example, the physical, spiritual (astral) and “super-causal” levels; the highest level of the soul is that in which it is “free”. In order to reach this state, one must obey the guru’s instructions. It is forbidden to consume alcohol and nicotine in the group and the members are also committed to vegetarianism. The adept who joins the group is given a new name, containing “holy words” (*Simran*), which are the “divine impulses of life”. Due to the importance of this undertaking, the choice of names and their official “passing on” is an activity reserved only for the leaders of the movement.

Meditation practices imposed upon children in Sant Mat have been controversial. They were derived directly from the concept of “divine tone” and “divine light”. Newborns had their right ear plugged and eyes blindfolded so that they could hear the divine tone and see the divine light before being prevented from it by disturbances from the outside world around them. Although this group has officially withdrawn from these practices by now, there are widespread suspicions that they are still being followed unofficially.

The organization has adapted well to modern times, with its influence reaching many countries, and has “survived” the death of its founder in 2005, with members actively working to expand the organization.

Image 44: Sant Thakar Singh



Source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/zy0IwAPemtQ/hqdefault.jpg>

V.1.7. Transcendental Meditation

The founder of Transcendental Meditation (TM) is Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918-2008)¹⁹⁸. This organization was established in 1958 and, as well as many other groups with Hindu influence discussed in this chapter, was extremely effective both in terms of its culture-forming impact and its influence upon a wide range of psychologists and psychotherapists in the 1960s. In the 1960s and 1970s, the hallmark of TM was, as its name suggests, meditation. There are two goals of this practice:

¹⁹⁸ The nickname Maharshi meant “the great sage”.

it is about individual help with self-realization (at the micro level) and, more universally, at the meta level, to bring peace to the world and achieve a state of prosperity for mankind. Ornstein explains:

There is no doubt that Mantram Yoga, including ‘Transcendental Meditation’, is a very convenient form of meditation. Like in breathing exercises, it is quite easy to produce and attend to a silent word, anywhere and at any time. Since there is no special posture required, the arduous training for sitting in a lotus position is unnecessary. If the essential component of the meditation involves concentration upon an unchanging stimulus, then ‘Transcendental Meditation’ as well as other forms of Mantram Yoga, can be said to possess this essence¹⁹⁹.

Maharishi claimed that these goals could be achieved by disseminating the contemplative techniques he postulated. According to him, they bring individuals specific and measurable benefits in the form of enhancing the efficiency of activities, reducing stress and allowing individuals to be successful²⁰⁰. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi emphasized the existence of a “transcendent reality” in which there are unfathomable layers of creativity. Adepts were given mantras that they should repeat twice a day for approximately 20 minutes. At the peak of its success, the organization attracted media attention and could boast of gaining such prominent followers as Donovan, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Mia Farrow, and Clint Eastwood were also among those interested in TM.

Despite the fact that TM had its peak long ago and Maharshi died in 2008, the group he founded is still active, and there is a large number of people in the world meditating according to its recommendations. In several states of America, over a million people have practiced his exercises; they have been used, among others, in the training of civil aviation personnel, teachers and the employees of private enterprises as well as in the rehabilitation and resocialization of prisoners.

V.1.8. Ānanda Mārga

The Society for the Advancement of the Way of Supreme Happiness (known as Ānanda Mārga) was established by Bengali Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (1921-1990)²⁰¹, who assumed the name of Shree Anandamurti (Highly Noble Form of Happiness) and required an almost divine reverence from their followers. Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar used the elements of tantric yoga for his needs. The nature of his organization brings

¹⁹⁹ Ornstein, “‘Turning Off’ Awareness”, in: *On the Psychology of Meditation*, ed. by Naranjo and Ornstein, p. 151;

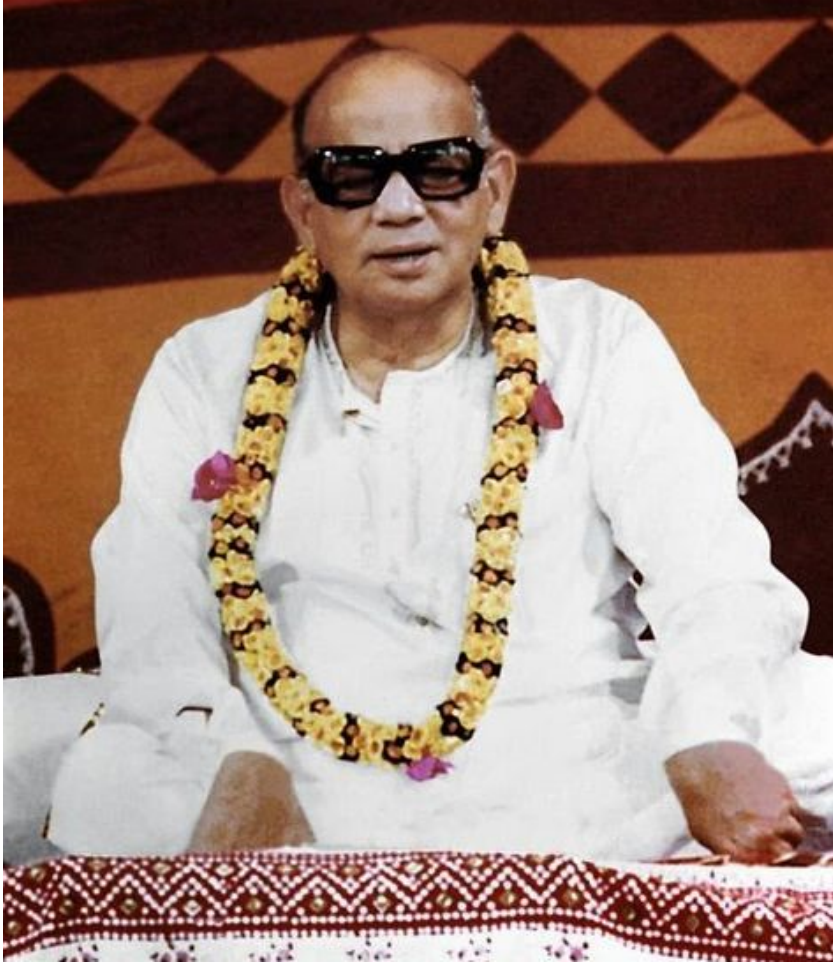
Candace Pert, *Molecules of Emotions* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1997), pp. 251-278.

²⁰⁰ Harold H. Bloomfield, Michael Peter Cain and Dennis T. Jaffe, *TM: Discovering Inner Energy and Overcoming Stress* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1975), pp. 10-228.

²⁰¹ Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar was considered a controversial figure; he was recognized as a public enemy by Indira Gandhi and sentenced to prison. Released on bail, he hurriedly left for Germany.

to mind a military order²⁰². The leader enjoyed complete power, and he could even require the faithful to sacrifice their life if necessary; however, this element lost its importance after the death of its founder, although traces of the atmosphere of blind obedience remain²⁰³.

Image 45: Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/474x/0e/46/d0/0e46d0871cf9c8506d657a0574c90275.jpg>

²⁰² Thomas Schweer, *Die Heilsversprecher. Der Kampf der Sekten um die Seelen* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1996), pp. 36-64.

²⁰³ PROUT – Progressive Utilization Theory is the theory devised by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar: “It is a complete and thorough socio-economic proposal, a different alternative to the capitalist and communist models, which have largely proved unable to meet the basic needs of all human beings. PROUT is the practical application, to a social level, of all ethical and spiritual principles of Ānanda Mārga.” ‘Socio Economic Theory’, *ananda-marga.com* <<https://ananda-marga.com.ar/en/socio-economia-teoria/>> [accessed on 16 August 2022].

At the top of the group hierarchy, there are *sadvipras* (“new moralists”). The majority of the faithful live in marriages and perform secular professions while supporting the community, mainly financially. The centers are home to activists who are celibate and dedicated to working for the group (“Local full timer”)²⁰⁴. Above them, there are *acarya* (spiritual teachers). They wear characteristic clothes: white pants and a white belt, while the rest of the outfit is orange. The main tasks of these activist groups include selecting mantras for novice adepts and meditation, who wear orange outfits. Ānanda Marga promotes “new humanism” by maintaining many organizations through which it can influence public opinion and proclaim its ideas. Worldwide the organization has about 2.5 million believers, most of whom live in India.

V.1.9. Brahma Kumaris

The Brahma Kumaris (meaning “Daughters of Brahma”) was created by Lekh Raj (1876-1969), also known as Brahma Baba. Coming from Hyderabad in Pakistan, he initially worked as a diamond dealer and, afterwards, founded this religious group in 1937. He did so under the influence of the “revelation” he had experienced: two Hindu deities, Vishnu and Shiva, appeared to him, which made him feel like their “embodiment”. An important step in the development of the Brahma Kumaris was re-establishing the organization as the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University in 1952 in Mount Abu, Rajasthan; the previous location of this institution was Karachi.

²⁰⁴ “PROUT principles:

[...] Freedom: Individuals should have complete freedom to acquire knowledge and to express their ideas, their creative potential and inner aspirations. Such intellectual and spiritual freedom will strengthen the community. Only actions that clearly harm the social and collective welfare must be controlled. For example, the accumulation of material goods by some, results in the deprivation of many others and it should not be allowed.

Cultural Diversity: PROUT encourages the protection and development of culture, language, history and regional traditions. To achieve social justice and a healthy social order, individual and cultural diversity should be respected and encouraged.

The Rights of Women: PROUT supports the fight against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women’s rights. PROUT’s goal is the coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women. PROUT seeks the economic, social and spiritual empowerment of women around the world.

Science and Technology: Scientific knowledge and technology are potential assets of humanity. With proper use of these tools, the physical difficulties of life could be terminated and attain a greater knowledge about the nature of the material world and our spiritual dimension. However, the development and use of scientific knowledge should be guided by spiritual, ethical and neo-humanist values and should be directed morally. Otherwise, science and technology are used with the logic of power and personal gain, resulting in destruction and exploitation.

World Government: PROUT proposes the creation of a system of a global government that defends the rights globally. With a constitution and a common penal code the fundamental rights of all individuals and nations will be guaranteed, and thus solve regional and international conflicts. While the economy is decentralized, it is more advantageous to have a central political system.” *ibid.*

The Brahma Kumaris explain in their text *A Narrative of Love*²⁰⁵:

Through exploring the power of love in practice, we can begin to heal ourselves and our planet; through leading and governing with love, can we transcend the self-interests of the individual, group, and even nation; and, by acting in love, can we work together in building a better world. We must foster love that encompasses all.

Emphasizing the feminine element in the science and practice of the movement gives it a distinctly feminine character. Lekh Raj taught that the world's history consists of repeating cycles of 5,000 years. He is considered to be Brahma, “creator of the New World” and “first man of the New Era”, through whom Siva transmits the “total knowledge”. The following periods last 1,250 years each, and their names refer to the symbolism of metals: the iron, copper, silver, and gold periods come and pass in turn. The Brahma Kumaris operate during the transitional period leading up to the “golden age” and believe that its members are already “living in this golden age” while the rest of the world is waiting for “cleansing”.

Image 46: Brahma Kumaris Festival



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/736x/77/b3/7b/77b37b8ce5534f7484dbd05b05fca195.jpg>

²⁰⁵ ‘A Narrative of Love’, *Brahma Kumaris* <<https://www.brahmakumaris.org/wisdom/a-narrative-of-love>> [accessed on 7 October 2022].

This group also proclaims, showing catastrophic tendencies, that the existing world will perish in the depths of destruction by the explosions of nuclear weapons. Only then will it be possible to enter the golden period. The adepts are encouraged to renounce sex, meat, and alcohol. Everyone is responsible, upon the basis of the functioning karmic law, for what they do²⁰⁶.

Meditation practices focus upon the “third eye” in the center of the forehead; this teaching can also be found in other religions with Eastern backgrounds. Characteristic of the Brahma Kumaris is the body-soul dualism. The goal is to overcome “body awareness” through “soul awareness”²⁰⁷.

V.1.10. The Divine Light Mission

The Divine Light Mission is an organization founded in Delhi, India, as a result of the activities of Sri Hans Ji Maharaj (1890-1966), whose purpose was to provide mankind with the “divine light”²⁰⁸. After his death, the leadership of the group was ascended to by his son Prem Pal Singh Rabat, who is known as Maharaj Ji (born 1957). In 1975, a split in the movement occurred; the mother of Maharaja Ji, together with her eldest son, Bal Bhagwan Ji, staged a successful coup in the Indian part of the Divine Light Mission. Maharaja Ji, however, was in a position to keep control of the organization in the West.

As a result of the division, the name of the Divine Light Mission was changed in the early 1980s: the Western part of this organization has been known since that time as Elan Vital, and the Indian part as the Spiritual Life Society. Maharaj Ji, famous for his lavish lifestyle and “dictatorial tendencies”, attaches importance to meditation techniques although they are very eccentric in his version. According to the teachings of

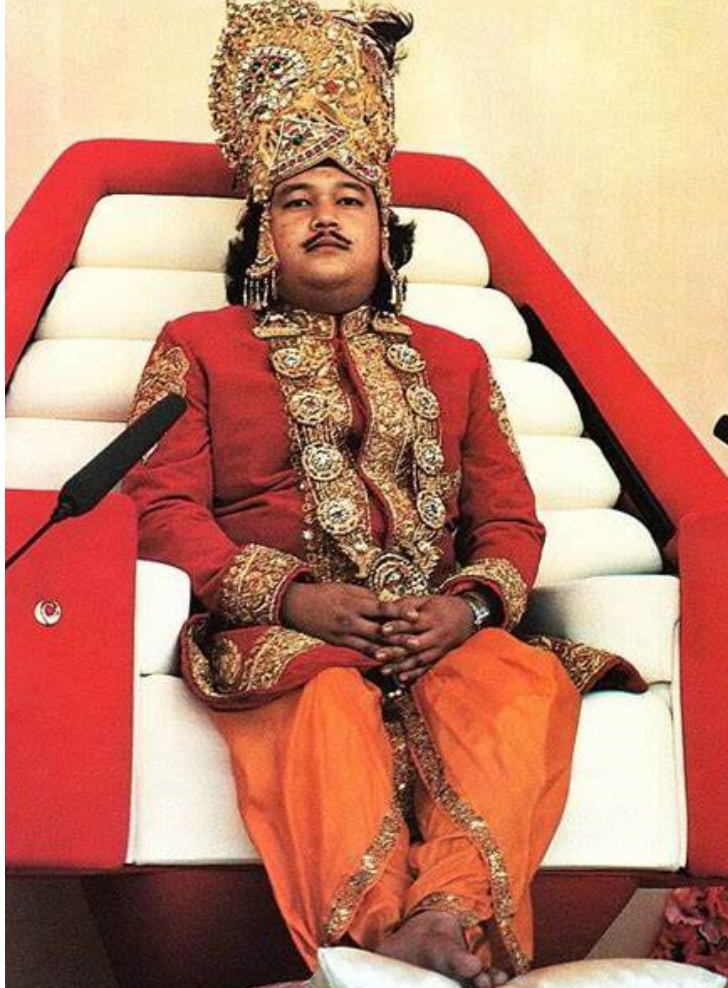
²⁰⁶ Anthea Church, *Practical Meditation* (London: Brahma Kumaris Information Services Publications, 1985), pp. 7-57.

²⁰⁷ “Stress Management Course: Apart from the Rajyoga course, the Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya offers several courses that promote positive values and help people discover and use their latent powers. In addition to the institution’s centres, these courses are conducted at the place of work of the participants, including in hospitals, schools, prisons and offices of private and public firms.” Brahma Kumaris Institution, ‘Products and Services’, *Indiamart* <<https://www.indiamart.com/brahma-kumaris-institution/>> [accessed on 17 August 2022].

²⁰⁸ “Derived from Buddhism and the Sikh religion, The Devine Light Mission originated in India and soon spread to the United States. Maharaj’s father, Indian born Shri Hans Maharaj Ji (Elliot 4), originated the Divine Light Mission in the 1920.” ‘Divine Light Mission’, *MegaEssays.com* <<https://www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/28932.html>> [accessed on 10 December 2022]; “The mission had its roots in the Sant Mat tradition of northern India. This Sikh-based religion emphasises a cosmic sound current that sustains all life and teaches meditation techniques that allow initiates to experience this inner current and, thereby, gain spiritual liberation. Shri Hans Ji Maharaj, the initiator of both the Advait Mat and Radhasoami branches of Sant Mat, established the Divine Light Mission in about 1960 in India.” ‘Divine Light Mission’, *Encyclopedia.com* <<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/legal-and-political-magazines/divine-light-mission>> [accessed on 9 October 2022].

this movement, God is “Cosmic Energy”²⁰⁹. His cognition, conditioned by freeing oneself of the “illusion of the world” and acquiring the appropriate knowledge, signifies salvation. Much emphasis is placed in his organization upon spiritual techniques, especially upon repeating the mantra *Hamsa* and *Soham* and upon touching with fingers and setting the tongue in a certain position, which is supposed to evoke specific sensory feelings.

Image 47: Maharaj Ji



Source: https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.zPXWpicWGM0F6n9eJU_7CwHaJz?pid=ImgDet&rs=1

²⁰⁹ “The educational methodology of Unity School is derived from that developed by the Waldorf School movement, though the Unity School is not itself a Waldorf School. Unity School offers a creative approach to learning the arts and sciences so that the student develops within himself a reverence for life and for work.” ‘What is Divine Light Mission About?’, *prem-rawat-bio.org* <https://prem-rawat-bio.org/dlm_pubs/pamphlets/about_dlm.html> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

The disciples are forbidden to consume alcohol and nicotine and should refrain from sexual activity. The members of the group live in residential communities where the order of the day must be strictly adhered to. The guru's lectures and "enjoying" his presence are of great importance. The purpose of the spiritual exercises is to see the "divine light" and to experience God's presence. One of the most distinctive elements of the Divine Light Mission meditation is the mantra "om", of Hindu origin. The frequent use of the color blue by adepts is also associated with this religious group.

V.1.11. Divine Light Zentrum

The Divine Light Zentrum is an organization entirely separate from the Divine Light Mission. The credo of this group is an ideological mix of Hindu and Christian elements, created by Swami Omkarananda (1929-2000). This monk, invited by his supporters to Switzerland in 1965, was arrested as a result of the controversy surrounding the construction of the group's centers and expelled from the country. As a result, Omkarananda operated only in Germany and Austria²¹⁰.

V.1.12. Philip Kapleau

The future "master of Zen" was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in the United States in 1912. He studied law and worked as a court reporter, and his career included a post of an Allied court reporter during the trials of Nazi criminals in Nuremberg after World War II, as well as covering the course of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East's sessions. During the latter, he noticed the differences in mentality and behavior between Europeans and Japanese. This encouraged him to make himself acquainted with the cultural sources and he was especially deeply impressed by Zen Buddhism. This experience made him rethink his life attitude and look for the values that could provide him with stability in life and give his existence a positive direction. He began to study Zen and he trained with Soen Nakagawa, Daiun Harada, and Hakuun Yasutani, obtaining, according to him, the appropriate levels of initiation. After disagreements with Yasutani in 1967, he returned to the United States, where he promoted Zen Buddhism in a version adapted to the mentality of Westerners.

He also established a center in Rochester and had an impact in other parts of the US, in Canada, and eventually also in Eastern Europe. The techniques he used were acceptable to Westerners and his initiatives to spread Zen Buddhism among them had positive results.

²¹⁰ 'Indian sect leader Swami Omkarananda dies at 70', *swissinfo.ch*, 6 January 2000 <<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/indian-sect-leader-swami-omkarananda-dies-at-70/1398254>> [accessed on 28 August 2023];

Hans-Otto Wiebus, *Lexikon Jugendkulte* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1995), p. 69.

Image 48: Philip Kapleau



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/90/79/80/9079806b07e59663b7e6cb942d9be1b7.png>

Apart from the controversy which arose about the “orthodoxy” of his transmission of the *Dharma*, Kapleau had undoubtedly merits in promoting Zen Buddhism in the area where it had so far been little known²¹¹. It should be added that this work was done both in an ideological and organizational sense by an American, and not, as it generally used to be, by “visitors” from the Far East. As a result, Kapleau faced a considerable cultural challenge.

Dying in 2004, he left behind a group of disciples and sympathizers ready to continue the master’s work, spreading the idea of “the dawn of Buddhism in the West”.

V.1.13. Lu Sheng-Yen

Lu Sheng-Yen, born in 1945 in Chiayi County, Taiwan, is the founder and “spiritual master” of the True Buddhist School, bearing the traces of religious syncretism. The master describes himself as “the living Buddha Lian Sheng”. Lu had a mystical experience in 1969 and in 1982 he considered his education complete and decided

²¹¹ Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), pp. 23-88.

to establish his own religious organization, gathering a group of his followers around him. He went with his followers to the USA and he was also active in Taiwan in the following years²¹².

Lu's teachings do not require renouncing meat consumption, nor do they even prohibit the consumption of alcohol; however, there are some limitations: in the case of animals, one should be sure that they were not killed specifically for the consumer; a special prayer is all that is necessary before eating such meat. In the case of alcohol, a small amount is allowed. These teachings are controversial among Buddhists around the world as well as within the group itself. Sheng-Yen also uses elements of yoga in his meditation practices, which are divided into "levels" that enable the observation of disciples' progress.

Image 49: Lu Sheng-Yen



Source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/Ugco0d0LrzY/maxresdefault.jpg>

Lu Sheng-Yen also faced some problems as a result of supporting some US politicians with illegal donations. This led, in the case of Governor Gary Locke in 1998, to criticizing Lu's conduct publicly. Sheng-Yen is called *tulku* by his disciples, which is the name of a reincarnated spiritual teacher, and which refers to the alleged recognition of his orthodoxy by the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan authorities; however, everything indicates that they distance themselves from this master's boisterous statements.

²¹² Lu Sheng-Yen married Lian Hsiang, who is a Buddhist Grand Master herself, known as "Grand Madam Lu".

Formulated by Sheng-Yen in 1992, ways to protect the spiritual environment include means to “purify the mind”, which enables society to be “cleansed”²¹³. This, in turn, will help to protect the environment. The True Buddhist School shows great interest in the subject of sustainable development, as broadly understood²¹⁴. The teachings of this community about this issue are formulated into the following four points: 1) purifying the mind by treating others with compassion; 2) avoiding energy loss by reducing littering and environmental pollution; 3) not wasting resources; and 4) exercising the mind and body.

The True Buddhist School claims that it has about five million members, scattered all over the world. It is known for selling materials for religious practice in the form of videos, CDs, books, and other worship items.

V.1.14. Ahmadiyya

Ahmadiyya is a religious movement founded by Mirs Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)²¹⁵ from Punjab. In 1899 he proclaimed himself a *mahdi* (prophet)²¹⁶ as well as a Jewish and Christian messiah, which may testify to the influence of various religions upon the formation of his teachings. The ambitions of the leader of the movement went further: according to his own claims, he was a universal prophet who abolished the existing religious divisions. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad considered himself the savior of mankind sent by God. He also believed that he knew the true story of Jesus. According to Ahmad, Christ survived the crucifixion and then stayed in Kashmir²¹⁷ Chaudhry writes:

Hazrat Ahmad as announced that Jesus as was undoubtedly put on the cross, but did not die there. On the contrary, he became unconscious because of grievous pain and injuries, and was taken down from the cross through the efforts of some of his supporters and sympathisers among the government officials. It was a common practice in those days to break the legs of the crucified persons and to cause their bodies to hang upon the cross for several days, so that there would be no possibility of the person remaining alive. The body of Jesus as was taken down without his bones being broken, even though the

²¹³ Lu Sheng-Yen, *Establishing Global Ethics* (2011) <https://www.shengyen.org/freebook/pdf/Establishing_Global_Ethics.pdf> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

²¹⁴ ‘Lu Sheng Yen’, *Buddhism Guide* <<https://buddhism-guide.com/lu-sheng-yen/>> [accessed on 12 December 2022].

²¹⁵ The founder of Ahmadiyya had prominent aristocratic family connections, including his ancestors included Mirza Hadi Baig, who lived in the 16th century, and was considered the founder of the city of Qadian in Punjab.

²¹⁶ In orthodox Islam beliefs, Muhammad was the last prophet sent by God.

²¹⁷ In his opinion, Jesus Christ survived the crucifixion and came to India to continue his mission, after which he died in Kashmir.

soldiers broke the bones of the other two criminals that were upon crosses close by. His body was handed over to his followers, who laid him in a cave and applied some ointment and herbs to his injuries. Jesus as recovered from his injuries after three days and then set out to deliver his message to the other tribes of Israel. He lived to the age of 120 and died a natural death in Srinagar, Kashmir in India, after completing his mission. From subsequent research, Hazrat Ahmad as also traced his tomb to Khanyar, Srinagar where it can still be visited²¹⁸.

Image 50: Olaf Scholz and Niels Annen Visiting Fazl-e-Omar Mosque in Hamburg, 30th June 2014



Source: https://ahmadiyya.de/typo3temp/fl_realurl_image/2007-olaf-scholz-001-90.jpg

The supporters of Ahmad consider themselves to be “the only true Muslims”, although the orthodox Islamic world treats them as heretics²¹⁹. This grouping managed to spread the vision of Islam as a religion of peace in Western countries²²⁰. The efforts of Ahmadiyya to show respect for the law of the countries in which they live

²¹⁸ Rashid Ahmad Chaudhry, *Stories from Early Ahmadiyyat* (Farnham, UK: Islam International Publications Ltd, 2017), pp. 31-32.

²¹⁹ Gasper, Müller and Valentin, ‘Ahmadiya-Bewegung’, *Lexikon der Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1994), p. 27.

²²⁰ Hadayatullah Hübsch, *Religion des Friedens* (Frankfurt: Verlag Der Islam, 1993), pp. 17-32; Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, *Islam und Menschenrechte* (Frankfurt: Verlag Der Islam, 1993), pp. 3-16; Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, *Judentum, Christentum und Islam* (Frankfurt: Verlag Der Islam, 1993), pp. 10-23.

are noteworthy. They like to invite famous personalities to the openings of their temples, for example, at the opening ceremony of the mosque in Hamburg on 19th September 2014, Olaf Scholz, the acting mayor and later the chancellor of Germany, was present²²¹.

V.1.15. The Nation of Islam

The founder of the Nation of Islam, established in 1930, is Wallace Fard Muhammad. After he disappeared in around 1934, the power in this organization was ascended to by Elijah Muhammad (1930-1975). He enjoyed almost divine veneration, which was not in line with the teachings of orthodox Islam.

Image 51: Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X



Source: <https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.F6fWXEKO-vh9Q-iRxvf29gHaFs?pid=ImgDet&rs=1>

This organization initially manifested the tendency to so-called “black exclusivism”, involving *inter alia* operating within a homogeneous racial circle of “African-Americans”, preaching racist theses and striving for the creation of a separatist “homeland state” for the black population in North America. The religious practices of this group assumed behavior in accordance with the Muslim code of conduct,

²²¹ AspektedesIslam, *Bürgermeister Olaf Scholz bei der Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat KdÖR Hamburg*, online video recording, YouTube, 19 September 2014 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIrHthT-GUx4>> [accessed on 1 July 2022].

prescribed prayers (five times a day) and resigning from some culinary dishes and Western customs. Radical black activist Malcolm X was associated with this group, albeit only for some time. He was murdered in 1965 by the members of the Nation of Islam after his departure from the group²²². Another famous figure associated with this movement was the multiple boxing world champion Muhamad Ali.

After the death of Elijah Muhammad in 1975, his son, Warith Deen Mohammed, took power. The group lost much of its predecessor's ideological focus (such as rhetoric like "white devils") and brought the organization ideologically closer to Sunni Islam, changing its name to the American Society of Muslims. Not everyone liked these changes and there was a split in 1977 when the discontented returned to the former name of the Nation of Islam, under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan. Farrakhan has gained negative attention for his anti-Semitic statements; he is also infamous for his interest in Dianetics, the controversial method of the Church of Scientology²²³.

Image 52: Louis Farrakhan



Source: https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.LQaDi54QGzYVQ4qcSNe_TgHaFS?pid=ImgDet&rs=1

²²² John R. Howard, 'The Making of a Black Muslim', in: *Sociological Realities: A Guide to the Study of Society*, ed. by Irving Louis Horowitz and Mary Symons Strong (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 106-112.

²²³ One can attain the "state of Clear": "The Clear is an unaberrated person. He is rational in that he forms the best possible solutions he can on the data he has and from his viewpoint. He obtains the maximum pleasure for the organism, present and future, as well as for the subjects along the other dynamics. The Clear has no engrams which can be restimulated to throw out the correctness of computation by entering hidden and false data onto it. No aberration." Laffayette Ronald Hubbard, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* (Copenhagen: New Era, 2007), p. 135.

V.2. Involvement of Religious Groups of Eastern Origin in Economic Life and Management

V.2.1. First Wave Groups

Most religious groups from the East originally showed no interest in economics and management as academic disciplines. They were able to organize themselves fairly well and secured the flow of money they needed, largely from their disciples, although a frequent phenomenon was the selling of literature promoting meditation techniques. Often, money was earned for certain services provided by disciples and sympathizers. Some of the groups also engage in charity.

There are many indications that the first groups that brought Eastern knowledge with them adapted themselves well to the standards prevailing in the Western countries. Religious groups of all kinds were then expected to be modest and devoted to their religious purposes. For this reason, “first wave” groups avoided discussing economic issues. There were exceptions to this rule, especially in the case of relatively small syncretistic groups, which combined various religious elements and arose around eccentric gurus. One example of the leaders of such groups is Gurdjieff, who was criticized for his allegedly excessive interest in financial matters. There was not, however, an activity aimed at the development of economic or management theories, but rather concern for the leader’s own welfare. It can also be reliably suggested that religious groups from the East needed some basic management skills in order to create organizational structures and exist in a new territory. Their Western sympathizers were also important in this case. When the history of yoga development is analyzed in this context, one notices a great dynamism in acquiring new disciples, for example, in the case of Paramahansa Yogananda, which was accompanied by a significant quantitative development of the newly established centers.

V.2.2. Second Wave Groups

The situation changed with the time. The religious groups which came to the West after WWII often paid more attention to money-making and organization. For example, the Chinmoy movement, although it has not had a direct impact upon management as an academic discipline, was attractive to businessmen and people in leadership positions in society, who benefitted from the increasing level of self-organization it taught. The influence of Chinmoy was, therefore, an example of a “soft” impact upon people from management circles.

Some Eastern groups used the paradoxical practice of “fighting materialism with materialism”. The technique comprised showing extremely lavishly-exaggerated wealth and was practiced, in the Osho movement, among others; a good example

that has gone down in history is the fact that a guru of this group travelled in a fleet of exclusive limousines. Officially, the point was to show contempt for earthly enslaving goods, and the guru himself was not concerned with economics, but with “giving happiness” to his disciples.

Other religious groups hope to present a religion as a serious force dealing with solving socio-political and economic problems, including the Brahma Kumaris. The teaching of this organization is based upon the need to recognize the change in the world’s expectations towards leadership. It emphasizes, among other things, the struggle with issues such as “the meaning of the importance of self”, “integrity”, and “sustainability”²²⁴.

The Brahma Kumaris have manifested ambitions reaching far beyond the boundaries set by traditionally understood religious groups, demonstrated for example by The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, which emphasizes the importance of family, community and institutions. The Brahma Kumaris explain²²⁵:

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University is acknowledged by many as an organisation, and a community. But for those within the community, the definitions are multiple and complex, sometimes overlapping one with the other. For example, murlis (BK daily teachings) often define the social group as a family, a hospital, a university and a clan. What is proposed by this group can also be described as a grouping preaching / school of yoga, an organisation, an institution and a spiritual community.

The Brahma Kumaris most senior level members are identified as students, sisters and God’s children. For functional purposes, they accept the title of Administrative Heads, understanding the one Spiritual Head to be the Supreme Soul. The Brahma Kumaris administration is hierarchical and command-oriented, which stems from the ideal of servant leadership.

In some groups, one can see the links between politics and management; one of them is Ānanda Mārga. The PROUT organization, founded by this group, pays a lot of attention to the term “economic democracy”. This concept includes content such as education, cooperative enterprises, local government natural resources as well as “environmental management”.

²²⁴ “To be a leader today means something entirely different from what it used to mean a few years ago. Today it is very clear that leadership begins from the self. Because it takes inner strength to stand by one’s beliefs, and to commit to integrity and values in times of shifting sands. First and foremost, leadership is the art of self- sustainability. Only those who have tapped the resources within can pave the path for achieving a vision.” ‘Self-Managing Leadership’, *Brahma Kumaris* <https://www.brahmakumaris.com/literature/gyan/jeevan_shaili-gyan/self-managing-leadership/> [accessed on 17 August 2022].

²²⁵ ‘The Organisation’, *Brahma Kumaris History and Research* <<http://brahmakumarisresearch.org/organisation-overview>> [accessed on 17 August 2022].

A significant role in social science has been played by Ānanda Mārga with its concept of collective decisions, the implementation of which, however, requires the fulfilment of certain conditions, which, in turn, include an appropriate level of education in an appropriate socio-economic context and moral integrity.

Some Eastern groups managed to gain great popularity and influence in the West, for example, Maharishi attempted to create a powerful meditation movement that has influenced politics and society and has its own economic dimension. It influences the development of the tradition of the meditation techniques he propagates in almost all areas of life. Particularly noteworthy is Transcendental Meditation in education (also known as Consciousness-Based Education), which is also related to management in accordance with the M. Okhla Industrial Development Authority (Noida), located in the Gautam Buddha Nagar district of the Indian state Uttar Pradesh. This institution offers courses in management at bachelor, master, and post graduate diploma levels.

Image 53: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and the Beatles in India



Source: <https://pyxis.nymag.com/v1/imgs/969/0ae/19e722609f71c0e3067fdc18ab0e4a1964-07-transcendental-meditation-beatles-mah.rsquare.w700.jpg>

The goal of Sai Baba was what can be described as the rebuilding of Indian society and the recovery of the Indian economy. For this reason, Sai Baba was very interested in economic affairs, which were mainly connected with the situation in India. In his opinion, economics should be related to values and based upon them. U.S. Rao writes:

Proclaiming his mission of Dharmasthapana that is the restoration of righteousness on earth, Sai Baba repeatedly emphasised that his main concern is to improve the situation in India, as India is to demonstrate the whole world an example of righteousness and prosperity based upon it. It might explain why Sai Baba never left India to go abroad except on one occasion when he visited Africa in 1968.

Although Sai Baba proclaimed his mission as early as in 1940, it is still unclear what time intervals are implied when we can expect the coming of the Golden Age of peace and prosperity. Sometimes Sai Baba mentions some changes for the better, but his words are often rather vague and simply contradict each other. Below there are a number of statements by Sai Baba written down by his ardent American follower J. Hislop and published in his books²²⁶.

Sai Baba saw the dangers of seeking profit at all costs. Simultaneously, he was of the opinion that there are interrelationships between motivation, commitment, and morality²²⁷. He referred to the experience of ancient India, seeing it as an inspiration for the modern economy. Sai Baba indicated that a significant part of management issues can be reduced to self-management²²⁸. References to Total Quality Management and reengineering appearing in his teachings are primarily intended to connect with the ancient positive qualities of India. The Department of Management Studies at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Science was founded to disseminate Sai Baba's views on economics²²⁹.

²²⁶ U.S. Rao, 'Sri Sathya Sai Principles on Business Management', *Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust* <<https://www.srisathyasai.org/pages/sai-article-by-rao-6.html>> [accessed on 13 September 2022].

²²⁷ Sai Baba, describing the ideal of a manager, indicated the need for his piety, conscientiousness and devotion to the good of the group, and used the following words: "The manager should regard work in an organization as an offering to GOD, and this will give maximum satisfaction to his own conscience. Managers should conduct themselves complying with the dictates of their conscience, understand the purpose of business, and thereby satisfy customers and community. Selfish people are not leaders. Only those who are selfless and do not transgress the codes of morality and integrity are leaders." *ibid*.

²²⁸ "Character is very important for managerial excellence, but it is being ignored in today's society. The characteristic features of an effective manager include:

- dedication of their work to God;
- 'communication with the heart' and good behaviour and
- focusing upon the 'present time'.

Managers with Integrity and Character – Need of the hour." *ibid*.

²²⁹ "We need today leaders with integrity and character. Therefore, the aim of management institutes should be to produce such leaders. Their courses should be based on Indian culture and values. Along with other courses in remaining aspects of management viz., production, accounts, finance and personnel, we should have a strong base in 'Indian ethos and values'. We should concentrate on meeting the

The Nation of Islam showed an interest in economics for largely political reasons. The long-time leader of this movement, Elijah Muhammad, wanted to be able to create an appropriate economic infrastructure. He needed capital and to acquire it, he forced the members to save money at the expense of their own needs and hand this money over to headquarters. This can be seen on the example of the so-called Three-Year Economic Plan, introduced in 1964. The Three-Year Economic Plan became the focal point of the “fight for the black economy”. As part of its implementation, the NOI community was asked by its leadership to save and donate between one-tenth and one-third of their income as a kind of “capital accumulation”²³⁰. This radical way of creating capital may seem shocking; the Black people belonging to the Nation of Islam were encouraged (or forced) to live in a drastic austerity, for example, to eat only one meal a day. Radical approaches to the issue of “getting rich” have made some researchers associate their views on economics with “Protestant ethics” (the concept made well-known by Max Weber); hence, the principles of the Nation of Islam are called “Protestant Ethics Muslims”.²³¹

Nevertheless, the austerities had a significant positive effect in the form of raised capital and the fact that the economy of this group began to develop. Initiatives were taken to increase business opportunities²³². In the section of the Black community of the United States grouped around the Nation of Islam, financial institutions (banks), farms, small family businesses, and schools were established. The goal was to create an autonomous economic system in the USA that, by promoting Blacks, created conditions for their social development. At the peak of its success²³³, this movement

basic needs of our country. Our programs should be based on our resources and on our practical ability to achieve the goals. We have also to combine morality with spirituality in business and other spheres. In our Institute, we should turn out Masters in Man Management (MMM). Our students should develop a broad outlook and prepare themselves to serve the society with sincerity and dedication. They must set an example in morality and bring credit to the country by their work and their contribution to the development of the nation.” *ibid.*

²³⁰ Nafeesa Muhammad, ‘The Nation of Islam’s Economic Program, 1934-1975’, *Blackpast*, 1 April 2020 <<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/the-nation-of-islams-economic-program-1934-1975/>> [accessed on 7 October 2022].

²³¹ Howard, ‘The Making of a Black Muslim’, in: *Sociological Realities: A Guide to the Study of Society*, ed. by Horowitz and Strong, p. 109.

²³² “In the mid-1960s, the NOI purchased and developed farms in Michigan, Alabama and Georgia that provided fresh meat and vegetables for its growing number of urban supermarkets. Despite opposition from local whites in the South, including Ku Klux Klan members who poisoned or shot cattle and attempted to sabotage crops, these NOI farms provided meat and produce delivered by a fleet of NOI trucks, and, at one point, an airplane, to NOI stores. As such the NOI had created the first black-owned national food production and distribution network, a longstanding dream of black nationalist organizations”. Muhammad, ‘The Nation of Islam’s Economic Program, 1934-1975’, *Blackpast*.

²³³ “In January, 1973, the NOI gained a controlling interest in the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company. This South Side Chicago bank expanded under NOI management to hold over \$10 million in assets and employ more than 500 people by 1975. This ‘bank for the black man’, as Elijah Muhammad called it, reflected now decades-old capital accumulation practices by the NOI and indicated that the Nation was one of the wealthiest black organizations in the United States”. *ibid.*

managed to create a strong economic potential by cultivating a kind of autarky²³⁴. However, corruption and nepotism were a problem in the Nation of Islam. Muhammad explains:

In 1958, for example, the NOI operated a dry-cleaning plant located at 608 East 63rd Street in Chicago. The plant was managed by Herbert Muhammad, one of Elijah Muhammad's sons and directly employed five NOI members full time. Although the plant had two NOI delivery trucks, non-NOI members also were employed, often using their own vehicles to assist in the pickup and delivery of dry cleaning in exchange for a 35% commission on merchandise collected from and distributed to customers²³⁵.

The end of the Nation of Islam's business ambitions came after the death of Elijah Muhammad, when his son, Warith Deen Mohammed, following the line of "normalization" and departing from extremes, decided to abandon the Nation of Islam economic program. The above-mentioned problems with corruption probably played an important role in this decision²³⁶. Farrakhan managed to win some of Elijah Muhammad's followers who were dissatisfied with the changes introduced by his son and wanted to return to the original ideology of the group. Farrakhan also wanted to re-activate earlier economic concepts; in this matter, his achievements are relatively moderate.

²³⁴ "NOI's activities in the year of Elijah Muhammad's death looked impressive – the organization employed over 11,000 people and achieved annual revenue of around \$30 million per year. All NOI assets at that time were approximately \$80 million". *ibid.*

²³⁵ *ibid.*

²³⁶ "The NOI's economic program declined after Elijah Muhammad's death. Wallace D. Muhammad, Muhammad's son, began to dissolve the NOI's business enterprises due to mismanagement". *ibid.*

VI

Psychosects and their Business Activity

VI.1. Specificity of Psychosects

The groups classified as “psychosects” have been established relatively recently and are characterized by a great interest in the issues of healing activities, broadly understood, in the field of mental health and offering a wide range of services in the area of “improving” psychophysical skills, including help in achieving supernatural “properties” and “powers”. While in the case of most of the new religious movements, mental healing is a kind of by-product of their activities, in the case of psychosects, it seems to be their primary goal. The membership of this kind of religious organization causes various kinds of addiction in the followers. The final goal is often to shape an individual so that they perceive their participation as the realization of the “cosmic work of saving the world”, in which they themselves are sanctified, drawing from the treasury of wisdom of the leader. The “sacralization of therapeutic practices” seems to be a logical implication of the main assumptions of the psychosect, and so is ascribing in them a great role to various methods of “consciousness expansion”, which, from their point of view, is a form of a “holy process of healing”. Apart from charging followers with various fees for education or forcing them to perform what is often, in fact, slave labor, a significant source of income for psychosects is the sale of various types of “sacramentals”, that is, literature, the symbolic objects of worship, and other devices which help in spiritual development or in curing ailments. In order to multiply their profits, these organizations seek to create a kind of “internal market” by obliging their followers to purchase certain items necessary for participation in worship and by encouraging them to buy and use them. Alongside this, psychosects also create “external markets” for people who are not their members.

Attention should be paid to an insidious way of gaining followers by psychosects. This often happens under the guise of various courses of concentration or meditation. Participants are often not informed that they are dealing with a religious or pseudo-religious organization. This is in a strong contradiction to the elementary right of

every human being to know about the advantages and disadvantages of taking up offers in the field of “psychotherapy”. The healing practices of a psychosect can be a source of concern due to their lack of professional standards of “mental services”, and, therefore, the fact that they create health-threatening conditions in the clients who use them. The social dimension of the practices applied by psychosects is also visible while analyzing the situation of the aggrieved state of people who, in their naivety and without adequate information, decided to take the risk of contacts with suspicious healers.

Among the biggest “classic” psychosects, the Church of Scientology, Eckankar and Erhard Seminar Training deserve special attention.

VI.2. Eckankar

Eckankar was created by the American Paul Twitchell (1908-1971), known for his vivid imagination and ability to gain the attention of many people. He claimed that he dealt with religion already as a child when his grandmother sent him to Paris to be taught by guru Sudar Singh, a fact was denied by his family.

During his doctrinal research, he was a disciple of the founder of Scientology, Laffayette Ronald Hubbard, with whom he also parted ways. Subsequently, Twitchell became “doctrinally independent”, declaring himself a spiritual master and gathering a crowd of believers around himself. He claimed to have contacts with the spirit of a Tibetan master, Rebarzar Tarzs, the existence of whom is doubted. This inspired him to establish the Eckankar organization. The name “Eckankar” was the fruit of Twitchell’s linguistic exploration within Sikh terms; it is supposed to mean “co-worker with God”.

The long list of persons who were posthumously added by Twitchell to the Eckankar (ECK) “list of masters” include, among others, Jesus Christ and St. Paul, Pythagoras, Phidias, Plato, Aristotle, and Francis of Assisi. From the very beginning, this group has believed in soul travel and the karmic system that governs it. Eckankar refers to the Sikh concept of “sound’s peregrinations”, which are cyclical. The perception of it is extremely important and valuable for spiritual development; it can be “perceived” in silence as “light in the third eye” or as a tone of sound. According to Twitchell, the Sikh masters Nanak and Kabir as well as the teachers of Sant Mat paved the way of masters, which Twitchell also followed.

In Eckankar, it is recommended to eradicate the five “passions”: anger, greed, lust, attachment (to people and possessions), and vanity. On the one hand, this group is based upon monism; on the other hand, it has adopted an “interactionist dualism” resembling the philosophy of Descartes. A major role in the case of the therapeutic activity of this group is played by the belief that the soul, associated with awareness,

can live in the body “autonomously”, while moving freely in the “universal reality”. The soul (true self), as a result of appropriate exercises, can eradicate the elements of its material entanglement, in a way “take them off”, just like taking off clothes. An extremely important and “spectacular” practice in Eckankar is experiencing the state of leaving the body, but it must take place in the company of the “inner master”. This group claims it is possible to attain “liberation” during a single life; it could even happen in two years providing that the group’s recommendations are followed carefully. The purpose of the spiritual exercises is to make the soul “return to the path to the divine source”, which should ultimately lead practitioners to become “co-workers with God”, connected with the name of this religious group. Corresponding with the concept of “freeing the spirit” is the belief that, periodically, a “liberated” soul may travel into space. According to the teachings of Eckankar, to cut ties with earthly “anchors” is by no means easy, nor is it automatic; it requires an arduous and strenuous exercise under proper spiritual guidance. For this purpose, Eckankar adepts should gather at meetings called *satsang* and devote themselves to appropriate meditative and contemplative practices in order to prepare for “release”²³⁷.

The repertoire of “spiritual improvement” of this group includes various techniques derived from yoga, mainly meditation on sound and light. In this practice, mantric techniques, including the special mantra “Hu”, which incidentally was used by the Sufis, are used. It is also recommended to study the “holy books”, cultivate one’s own spirituality and use affirmation. “Soul travels” in space, during which the followers were to accompany Twitchell (and then his successors) and endeavor the “administration” of their own karmic burdens, thus avoiding the dangers in earthly life, became legendary. The prospect of rapidly improving one’s karmic condition was found to be a good advertising gimmick, but it meant that Eckankar came under fire from the representatives of Far Eastern religions.

The techniques used by Twitchell and his successors were meant to bring about an improvement in the mental state of disciples as a result of the action of meditation mechanisms known and examined from a physiological point of view; in many cases, they might have caused irreparable losses²³⁸.

²³⁷ Paul Twitchell, *Eckankar: The Key to Secret Worlds* (San Diego, CA: Illuminated World Press, 1969), pp. 139-192.

²³⁸ Paul Twitchell, *The Spiritual Notebook* (Minneapolis: Eckankar, 2000), pp. 73-91; “Members are routinely called by telephone or met in public to feel them out as being potential threats to their organization. It is not uncommon for Resas and his to drive hundreds of miles to check out threatening members and reduce them to feeble participants in the party line or suffer excommunication. Members who are of various professions are put under the microscope whether their respective profession is a threat to the organization. The most singled out are public servants, politicians, lawyers and doctors; those who have access to resources to put Eckankar under the scrutinizing microscope for the general public to view with clarity. The reason the public has never read in detail any of the major court cases placed in motion in relation to Eckankar is evidence has been cleverly suppressed either through

Image 54: Paul Twitchell



Source: <https://images.gr-assets.com/authors/1453639124p8/44866.jpg>

Another important element of spiritual practices in Eckankar is writing down dreams and “pondering” on them. According to the teachings of the group, they can be a gate to soul travel and allow one to reach a higher state of consciousness. A further practice is departing from the awareness of “leaving the body” in favor of the feeling of “God’s love”; the follower should be able to see themselves as a “pure soul” and not as a person who “has” a soul.

legal motion or gray area loopholes to cover critical glaring evidence. Witnesses have been threatened and attacked with voracity to wear them down and make them terrified to provide substantial evidence of illegalities and attack against the reputations and credibility of evidence. Numerous gag orders have been filed to shut up witnesses.” ‘Eckankar review: Spiritual and business fraud’, *Complaints Board*, 15 June 2013 <<https://www.complaintsboard.com/eckankar-spiritual-and-business-fraud-c674534>> [accessed on 25 August 2023].

The Master is respected in this group but is not an unequivocally accepted leader. The leader, therefore, is not the subject of any particular personal worship, but a “Living ECK Master”²³⁹. This doctrinal trait has probably saved this grouping from disintegration in the course of personal disputes that took place during the leadership term of Darwin Gross, who assumed the position after Twitchell's death. This culminated in his “act of renegotiation”, that is, in his formal withdrawal from Eckankar in 1981²⁴⁰. The acting leader since 1981 is Harald Klemp²⁴¹.

Despite Eckankar's official rejection of proselyte-acquiring activities (only those who are “ripe” for accepting science are to be admitted to the membership), this organization conducts missionary activities, also on the Internet²⁴². The Eckankar headquarters are in Chanhassen, Minnesota.

VI.3. Erhard Seminars Training

The creator of EST (Erhard Seminars Training) is John Paul Rosenberg, a used car dealer born in Philadelphia in 1935, who started his psychological business in San Francisco in 1971. In his ideological and therapeutic program, Rosenberg combined various concepts, mainly techniques taken from yoga, hypnosis and zen²⁴³. The name of the organization he founded is related to the persons of Werner Heisenberg and Ludwig Erhard, who Rosenberg “discovered” in 1960 while reading an article. Before he could develop the technical base of his “spiritual exercises”, he had become a low-rank manager and specialized in encyclopedia sales. During this

²³⁹ Eckankar does not recognize gender equality; this organization claims that it is only a man that can be the LEM as Soul. According to this group, in the physical world, only the atom structure of a male body makes it possible to become a spiritual leader, and personal destiny in this aspect is determined before birth.

²⁴⁰ Gross initially made a staggering career in the organization, by becoming Eckankar champion after only a two-year membership. However, he was forced to leave his office over a quarrel over the right to use the title of “master”. After a court battle, Eckankar managed to deprive Gross of the right to use this title; Gross himself later became the leader of a group known as the Ancient Teachings of the Masters.

²⁴¹ “Since 1981, he has been the spiritual leader for tens of thousands of people in over 120 countries who subscribe to a powerful spiritual study program for members of Eckankar. This includes written discourses, spiritual exercises to experiment with, and the opportunity to join a Satsang (spiritual study) class. As the MAHANTA, he has the ability to work inwardly with his spiritual students. People all around the world report direct experiences with him through dreams and contemplation.” ‘Sri Harold Klemp, the Mahanta, the Living ECK Master’, *Eckankar: The Path to Spiritual Freedom* <<https://www.eckankar.org/eck-master/sri-harold-klemp/>> [accessed on 20 October 2022].

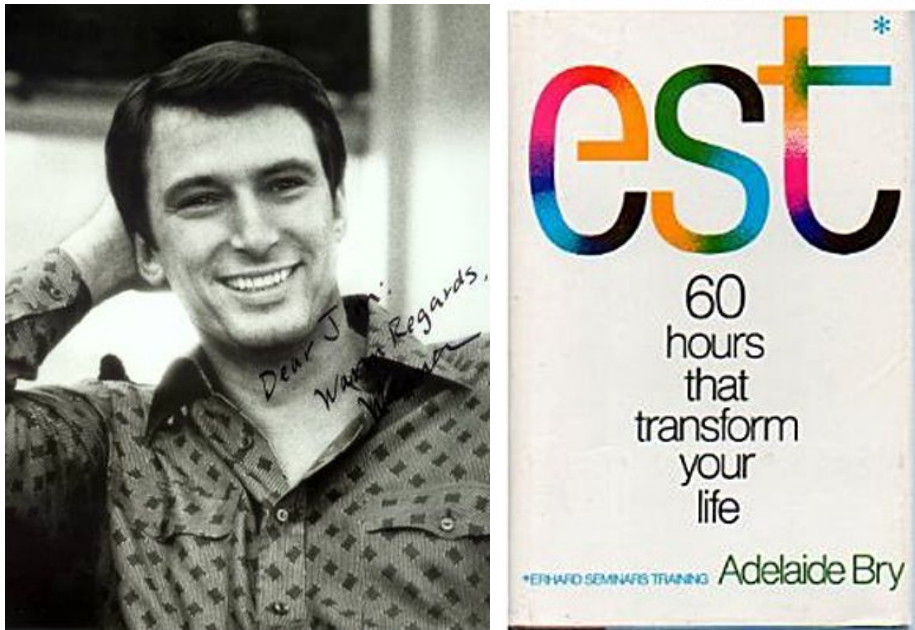
²⁴² “Eckankar does not attempt to evangelize the world by aggressively converting individuals to their religion. They do not actively proselytize. However, they do advertise their presence and distribute literature to interested persons”. ‘Eckankar’, *European American Evangelistic Crusades* <<https://www.eaec.org/cults/eckankar.htm>> [accessed on 20 October 2022].

²⁴³ Adelaide Bry, *60 Hours That Transform Your Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 31-35.

time, he also abandoned his wife and four children. Rosenberg gained his real success in the construction and promotion of the program called Erhard Seminar Training. His ability to create his own image and his ruthlessness played a large role in this endeavor. Rosenberg was also famous for accusing the Church of Scientology of stealing his techniques.

According to Rosenberg himself, his methods of spiritual improvement have allowed him to achieve stunning results. The goal is to attain “the state of divinity” in lifetime. One should treat one’s fate as a challenge and suppress the feeling being a victim or loser. He encouraged creation of a positive and energetic approach to life in his activities. During the courses, participants were solving problems, attempting to “find themselves”, and achieve the state of “enlightenment”²⁴⁴.

Image 55: John Paul Rosenberg



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/d3/d9/5c/d3d95c6b40bdc7fcfff6fc420e540ae.jpg>

Rosenberg combined his techniques with aggressive marketing and “life aid”; it is estimated that around 500,000 people in 132 countries participated in seminars worldwide between 1971 and 1981. Like scientology, EST has created many subordinate organizations, such as Landmark Education, which obtained the rights to Erhard’s methods.

²⁴⁴ Luke Rhinehart, *The Book of est* (Boca Raton, Florida: Hypnotic I Media LLC, 2010) <<https://avalonlibrary.net/ebooks/Luke%20Rhinehart%20-%20The%20Book%20of%20est.pdf>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

VI.4. Church of Scientology

VI.4.1. Origins and Development

Scientology is one of the most controversial religious groups of our times. It is accused of greed, harassment, brain washing, purification programs²⁴⁵, creating psychological addiction by harmful psychotherapeutic practices, breaking up families, separating its members from the outside world, and ruthless practices in its fight against opponents. Extremely shocking stories are reported, especially by the former members of this confessional group and organizations associated with the victims of sects criticize Scientology. Various pieces of evidence repeatedly come to light and support these allegations, accompanied by public outcry²⁴⁶.

The history of Scientology is linked to Lafayette Ronald Hubbard. His biography, as well as everything connected with him, gives rise to a lot of controversy. He was born in Tilden, Nebraska, USA, on 13th March 1911 and spent the first few years of his life on his grandfather's farm. According to Scientology, between the age of 14 and 18, he visited many places important for various religions in Asia and other places. It is likely that he met the priests of different religions during these journeys, although these actions are shrouded in mystery.

In the 1920s Hubbard likely studied for several semesters at George Washington University in Washington, but there is no proof that he graduated. In this period of his life, he got married twice; each time, the marriage ended in divorce²⁴⁷. As a young man, Hubbard earned a living by writing novels about the Wild West, crime fiction, and, from 1938, science fiction. He was not very successful in the field of literature, although one of his novels has been filmed. During World War II, he served, like his father, in the Navy and, according to Scientology, performed "heroic deeds", during which he was allegedly wounded. However, this information also cannot be confirmed by independent sources. Regardless of his allegedly heroic deeds, after the end of the war, Hubbard became interested in the occult and joined the Californian branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis, an organization influenced by the well-known Satanist Aleister Crowley²⁴⁸.

After that, he commenced the creation of his own concept of science, which was meant to replace both psychiatry and psychology by providing "effective weapons" in the fight against mental disorders. This "wonderful souls technology", called

²⁴⁵ Lafayette Ronald Hubbard, *Clear Body Clear Mind* (Copenhagen: New Era, 2002), pp. 3-153.

²⁴⁶ 'Is scientology a dangerous cult?', *Irish Times*, 28 April 2008 <<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/is-scientology-a-dangerous-cult-1.917839>> [accessed on 25 August 2023];

Renate Hartwig, *Scientology. Ich klage an!* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1994), pp. 59-96.

²⁴⁷ Peter Köpf, *Scientology*, (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1995), p.12.

²⁴⁸ Heide-Marie Cammans, *Okkultismus* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1998) pp. 126-134.

“dianetics” by Hubbard (from the Greek *dia*, meaning “through”, and *nous* meaning “spirit”, “thinking” or “mind”), formed the basis of his doctrinal system. Hubbard presented his ideas in the book published in 1950 and titled *Dianetics. The Modern Science of Health*, which became *de facto* a handbook of these “healing procedures”²⁴⁹. Hubbard’s great hopes for the recognition of his ideas by the scientific community did not materialize: the “therapeutically techniques” which he proposed in order to improve the state of human consciousness evoked only concern and reservation among psychiatric and psychological circles. His concept was, however, considerably attractive for so-called “ordinary people” interested in improving their state of health and intellectual abilities rejected the metaphysical theories of traditional religious groups²⁵⁰. The book was sold in large numbers, but it did not bring its author significant profits.

Disappointed with the negative reception of his revelations disclosed in *Dianetics* by scientific circles, Hubbard created a kind of “superstructure” called “Scientology” (from the Latin *scientia*, “knowledge”, and the Greek *logos*, “word”), which gave the Church of Scientology its name²⁵¹. It was the beginning of a new Scientological religion. Hubbard’s organization was registered in California in 1954 and it developed rapidly both in terms of the number of its members as well as in its finances. In 1959 the Church of Scientology bought a manor house in Saint Hill in East Grinstead, England, and converted it into its headquarters. There was also a change in Hubbard’s personal life; in 1952 he got married again, this time to Mary Sue Whip, who played a significant role in the structures of his organization. In 1968 Hubbard had to leave Great Britain due to problems with the state authorities caused by the controversial actions of Scientologists. Because Scientology had similar problems in many other countries, its creator decided to transfer the management of the Church of Scientology to its private fleet, which made it possible to avoid paying taxes²⁵².

Despite the benefits of this solution, the tendency of the organization’s authorities to return to its country of origin prevailed, and the new headquarters were established in Clearwater, Florida in 1976. During this time, Hubbard’s legal situation was getting increasingly complicated: in 1978 he was sentenced in France *in absentia* to four years of imprisonment without suspension for fraud, and other trials were also conducted against him. Additionally, he probably had serious health problems.

²⁴⁹ Winthrop S. Hudson and John Corrigan, *Religion in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1987), pp. 400-402.

²⁵⁰ Hans Jürgen Eysenck and Carl Sargent, *Explaining of the Unexplained: Mysteries of the Paranormal* (London: Book Club Associates, 1982), pp. 133-154.

²⁵¹ ‘What is the difference between Scientology and Dianetics?’, *Scientology* <<https://www.scientology.org/faq/background-and-basic-principles/what-is-the-difference-between-scientology-and-dianetics.html>> [accessed on 24 November 2020].

²⁵² Wiebus, *Lexikon Jugendkulte*, p. 190.

Hubbard avoided contact with media, likely because of the fact that admitting weakness in public was not in keeping with his image of the religious leader, to whom his followers attributed “superhuman powers”²⁵³. There were also signs that he was losing control over Scientology structures to an ever greater degree. He made his last public appearance in 1980 and the following years of his life were spent in complete isolation. It is claimed that Hubbard died on 27th January 1986, although the circumstances of his demise were strange because the information of his death was released by the Church of Scientology three days later, when his body had already been cremated.

The claims of Church authorities that he “discarded his body” did not contribute to transparency surrounding Hubbard’s death, and contradict the record on his death certificate that he died of a stroke. After Hubbard’s death, David Miscavige became the head of the highest Scientological structures, the Religious Technology Center. A significant source of his power is the ownership of the copyright to Hubbard’s publication and therapeutic techniques. He made significant changes to the activities of the Church by refraining from publicizing the parts of Hubbard’s doctrine which were closely connected with science fiction. This new direction caused dissatisfaction amongst some of the members. However, Miscavige managed to cope effectively with his opponents and, after the new strategy gave the Church of Scientology major financial benefits, was able to strengthen his position as leader.

VI.4.2. Ideology

The doctrine of Hubbard’s religious organization consists of two parts: 1) Dianetics; and 2) Scientology. Dianetics is a “science” which deals with the human spirit, unpleasant feelings, somatic disease symptoms, mental ailments, and the various forms of the treatment of diseases. Scientology, in turn, explores the relationship of human knowledge to infinity. According to the ideology of this group, which is the basis of both parts of the doctrines of this Church, man is an immortal spirit, a “thetan”, living in the MEST²⁵⁴, which is an environment composed of matter, energy, space, and time. This creature lost its original state of perfection, allowing itself to be led by unknown reactions from “engrams” (impressions) that can be derived from “previous” existences; this belief is obviously taken from the religions of the Far East.

Scientology distinguishes, after its founder Hubbard, between the two types of mind: 1) the analytical one (which is responsible for “standard operations” in the area of receiving and properly classifying stimuli from the environment, for solving

²⁵³ Bent Corydon, *L.R. Hubbard – Messiah or Madman?* (Secacus, NJ: Lyle Stuart Publishing House, 1992), pp. 19-253.

²⁵⁴ Acronym for the words “matter”, “energy”, “space”, and “time”.

problems as well as for thinking (awareness); and 2) the reactive mind, which acts at the moments of the “reduction or loss of consciousness” and traumatic experiences, such as when an individual suffers.

To help a thetan regain their unspoiled nature, the negative impressions must be found and eliminated through the help of Dianetics. As a result, “spiritual health”, which is related to bodily well-being, can be achieved. It is worth noting that the application of the methods of the Church of Scientology should contribute to the elimination of professions such as a psychiatrist²⁵⁵, psychologist, or even a medical doctor²⁵⁶.

The search for engrams takes place during a series of meetings called auditing, which consist of replying to a set of questions; this process resembles certain forms of psychotherapy and very detailed reports are required. Hubbard recommended that an “E-Meter”, a device that works like a lie detector by measuring the tension on the skin surface, should be used in these meetings. In addition, Scientologists also use other methods, similar to the techniques of hypnosis, which are referred by their opponents as “brainwashing”. The purpose of these techniques is to make the mind “clear”²⁵⁷. The attainment of this state means that persons are freed from “active and potential” mental diseases and aberrations²⁵⁸; however, this is not the final goal of the “cure”, but only an intermediate step in the right direction. The next goal on the path of return to perfection of human nature is an “operating thetan”. It is “clear” who has reached the state of release from the “slavery chain” of matter, energy, space and time: they can supposedly carry heavy objects such as cars, communicate with animals, or read books on other continents.

There are currently fifteen levels of this state, understood as the stages of advancement, eight of which can be attained. The achievement of the “highest levels of perfection” is connected with the great fame and respect from members of the Church of Scientology. Such people are hidden from the eyes of the public, who might wish to put their “supernatural powers” to the test. It is worth adding that a thetan receives new “theological revelations” from the Church, according to their achieved progress. For example, at the third level (an operating thetan number three), course participants learn that many millions of years ago, the evil space warlord Xenu transferred a great number of inhabitants of other planets (thetans) to the earth and murdered them (they were destroyed in volcanoes by using hydrogen weapons). All those who attempted to detect this crime were killed; only Ron Hubbard avoided annihilation, which allowed Xenu to be punished, that is, put in an electrically charged box and placed in an unknown mountain in the west of the North American continent.

²⁵⁵ David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002), pp. 109-129.

²⁵⁶ Gasper, Müller and Valentin, *Lexikon der Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen*, p. 964.

²⁵⁷ Hubbard, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, pp. 381-478.

²⁵⁸ Köpf, *Scientology*, p. 54.

Image 56: E-Meter



Source: https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.UGIHxuH2j8b9TEbA2BYA_QHaFj?pid=ImgDet&rs=1

Scientology, which extends the strands of thought contained in Dianetics, is somewhat like the “metaphysical base” of Hubbard’s organization. It is understood as the way to salvation, putting the rescue of the immortal soul in the center of its attention. Yet this doctrine does not include a definite concept of God. Hubbard’s statements on this point show similarity to Asian religions, especially Buddhism. The goal of understanding God will be achieved, according to Scientologists, by attaining a high state of perfection. The highest being is referred to as the Infinity or the Eighth Dynamic. The hierarchy of dynamics is presented as follows: the first is the individual’s survival of the Self as a person as long as possible; the second, referred as creativity, subsists in work to secure a future for itself and to extend the species; the third means survival instinct, defined as connections with friends, company, nation or race; the fourth takes the form of the sense of belonging to the human species and striving for experiences by mankind²⁵⁹; the fifth is a form of interest in the essence of life, and includes all its biological forms, even animals and plants; the sixth can be defined as the above-mentioned physical universe. The seventh (Spiritual Dynamic) means striving for survival through ideas or

²⁵⁹ Hubbard, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, pp. 41-45.

concepts; the eighth (Infinity) is, as it is mentioned above, commonly understood as the Supreme Being (Creator)²⁶⁰.

The set of rituals of the Church of Scientology is relatively limited. These include a “ceremony of baptism”, connected with giving a name, a wedding based upon the motive of understanding each other in the course of life, and the funeral, visualizing the transfer of an immortal thetan to another form of existence²⁶¹. Clergy, according to this confessional group, are auditors, known as “students”, who provide course participants with advice and help them to gain “spiritual freedom”. It should be added that E-Meter is used as the object of worship²⁶².

VI.4.3. Organization of the Church Structures

The Church of Scientology attaches great importance to obtaining the legal status of a recognized religion. Nevertheless, in some countries, like France or India, it has not succeeded, due to the fact that the group is often considered a kind of a large “service company”, offering courses, literature and various accessories, and seeking profits, which contradicts the image of a pious religious group.

The Church of Scientology is organized in centralized and undemocratic ways. Its “supreme leader” is, after the death of Ronald Hubbard, David Miscavige. It is difficult to resist the impression that this “super Scientologist” is attributed superhuman qualities that entitle him to make arbitrary decisions on behalf of the entire organization by the members of the Church. There is also a clear hierarchy of functions connected with a high position of the auditors, who conduct the “auditing” process.

This well-developed structure helps the Church of Scientology to conduct effective management activity. A strong role is played in this context by the Religious Technology Center (RTC), led by Miscavige himself. The following organizations are subordinate to the RTC: the Watchdog Committee (including international leaders), based in Los Angeles, the Church of Scientology International (responsible for media activity and ideology), and the International Association of Scientologists (responsible for financial management). Even more organizations are subordinate to these, for example, SEA ORG (Sea Organization), which is responsible for educating the most outstanding management groups, and the Celebrity Center, caring for famous personalities such as Tom Cruise, John Travolta or Julia Migenes, and the Finance Police, who deal with financial discipline. In addition to the official structures of the Church of Scientology, there are many operating organizations linked to it and giving the impression that this religious group has many interesting

²⁶⁰ ‘The Eight Dynamics’, *Scientology.org* <<https://www.scientology.org/what-is-scientology/basic-principles-of-scientology/eight-dynamics.html>> [accessed on 25 August 2023].

²⁶¹ Phuya Anuman Rajadhon, *Popular Buddhism in Siam and Other Essays on Thai Studies* (Bangkok: Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation, 1986), pp. 179-193.

²⁶² Gasper, Müller and Valentin, *Lexikon der Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen*, p. 965.

“connections” with the world of science, and has significant proposals for solving various problems of the world that can be implemented in all the areas of human life. These parascientological formations include, among others, the Association for Better Living and Education (ABLE), the World Institute of Scientology Enterprises (WISE), Narconon or Applied Scholastics. In some countries, there are also various committees for investigating human rights abuses or the use of psychiatry in an inhumane manner as well as institutions promoting the use of Hubbard’s teaching methods²⁶³.

VI.4.4. Business Activity

From the very beginning, the leadership of this group has been assigned a major role to the financial profitability of its activities. Hubbard is credited with the famous phrase: “Make money. Make more money. Make other people make money”²⁶⁴. Even if he did not utter these words, they reflect the philosophy of his organization well, as scientologists look for followers who are able to pay a lot of for the services offered by this religious organization.

A particularly important form of the activity of this Church is offering public courses to improve a person’s “psychological condition”. Among the groups targeted with these proposals are the members of this organization as well as sympathizers and people interested in “miraculous healing techniques”. For this reason, among the course participants are those who seek help and cure for their mental ailments as well as those who try to attain the higher forms of individual development. The “services” of the Church of Scientology are expensive. Initially their prices seem to be relatively low, but, as a rule, subsequent courses become more and more expensive. One of the consequences is that people affected by it perform slave work for this Church and there are also known cases of suicide connected to this work.

This organization has developed a number of strategies in order to successfully acquire new potential course participants. One of the most common of them is the “catch for a test”²⁶⁵. This technique is related to the “examination of the psychosomatic condition” of interested persons to whom the Church activists propose about 200 questions²⁶⁶, some of which concern personal matters, and then the people who answer these questions are informed that their condition is worrying and that they are at risk of various health dangers. Simultaneously with this bad news, good news is given to them, namely, that the Church of Scientology is ready to help them, therefore they should take part in the courses offered to them by this organization.

²⁶³ Wiebus, *Lexikon Jugendkulte*, pp. 217-226.

²⁶⁴ ‘Scientology Lies’, *Scientology Lies* <<https://www.scientology-lies.com/quote.html/>> [accessed on 13 November 2020].

²⁶⁵ Schweer, *Die Heilsversprecher: Der Kampf der Sekten um die Seelen*, p.152.

²⁶⁶ An example test can be found online.

The adherents of Hubbard's ideas attach a great importance to advertising. The presence of celebrities like John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Chick Corea, Priscilla Presley, Shirley Mac Laine, Sharon Stone, and Kirstie Alley in the Church of Scientology proves its popularity and draws public attention to this organization. This has allowed the group the opportunity to improve its image because, despite the apparent adherence of Scientologists to progressive and democratic slogans such as the equality of all people and the right to religious freedom, their ruthless way of dealing with opponents²⁶⁷, the financial exploitation of the course participants and many accusations of mental and physical abuses of them give this denomination a bad name in the world.

Furthermore, the organization shows great cunning in its activity, refraining from attempts to convert directly. Instead, it offers its services in the area of "psychotherapy"²⁶⁸. Additionally, they conduct "religious advertising" in a professional manner, taking advantage of the frustrations of the 21st century. Regardless, however, of the attempts to explain the reasons for the success of the Church of Scientology, the number of participants in various courses organized by it is, above all, evidence that the legend of the "superman" still proves to be a good business today, allowing Scientology to monetize peoples' hopes for perfection. The number of the members of this organization in the world is estimated at approximately 10 million.

VI.4.5. Interest in Management

The Church of Scientology claims that it can effectively manage its large and profitable organization well by itself²⁶⁹. However, it is difficult to keep silent about the fact that its methods are highly controversial and that its successes are achieved due to the ruthless exploitation of its followers and supporters²⁷⁰. An important role in producing the mechanisms of dependence upon the Church of Scientology is played by the isolation of the "patients" from other forms of help, and the negative, or even openly hostile, attitude of this religious group towards psychiatry and psychology. As a consequence, the adepts are deprived of the possibility of using other forms of help. Simultaneously, the Church of Scientology has a highly effective instrument in the form of a "perfect confession", which is practiced with the help of the aforementioned "E-meter". People connected to this device, which detects physiological changes such as skin tension, are asked by the auditor about the cause of their mental state for a very long time and persuaded to change their attitude. This

²⁶⁷ According to Hubbard, they should be fought by any means. His position on the matter was related to the belief that "evil" thetans (opponents) persecute the Church of Scientology.

²⁶⁸ Scientific techniques also used outside this community, e.g. in the Nation of Islam movement, in which they are practiced without formally embracing Scientology ideology.

²⁶⁹ Hartwig, *Scientology. Ich klage an!*, pp. 111-241.

²⁷⁰ Giddens, *Sociology*, pp. 701-702.

means that if “resistance” exists, the auditor asks additional questions to discover the cause of the subject’s nervousness and “work on it” until the tensions disappear. In other words, controlling skin tension and changes in it after asking certain questions allows auditors to identify problems and remove them. The detailed reports of such sessions are made, and that means that a lot of personal information, often intimate in character, is acquired. This, in turn, results in the possibility of blackmail and Scientologists have repeatedly been accused of it by the ex-members of this organization.

The Church of Scientology has shown interest in managers for two basic reasons: firstly, managers have a sufficient amount of money to pay for courses, and secondly, managers are often confronted with mental problems related to exposure to long-term stress as a result of their professional life. Managers suffer from neuroses, psychosomatic diseases, and the symptoms of burnout as well as from alcoholism or drug addiction comparably more than other professional groups.

But it is not only managers who require therapeutic help that find themselves in the ranks of Scientologists. There is also a relatively large group of representatives of these circles who want to improve their effectiveness in the performance of their work. They want to think faster, understand more, and be able to use better strategies. They feel better when they attend Scientologists’ courses. Other managers and businessmen find this organization to be a group that creates a feeling of community, which they desire in the time of “struggle for survival”. In addition, they establish contacts with each other, which is important in achieving success in their professional life. Another factor is the ideology of the “superman – businessman” who can successfully cope with all situations, which is disseminated by the Church. This manner of action corresponds to the teachings of the Church, and its ambition to transform unhappy people, troubled by engrams, into extraordinary beings with supernatural powers.

Dealing with management staff in courses and “therapeutic practices” does not cover the entire program of the activities of the Church of Scientology in this regard. This organization has shown great interest in the development of management theories, for example, for this purpose, the “Hubbard Management System” was created. This community also shows a great deal of interest in “doing business” directly and in a variety of ways: multiplying the Church’s money, for example, by investing in real estate or through own business initiatives selling courses, literature, biochemical products, and “therapy equipment”, they help to popularize the science of Scientologists. Additionally, effective marketing practices and sophisticated propaganda are not without significance. This shows that the activities of this religious organization are not limited only to its spiritual and therapeutic issues, but also have a significant commercial dimension.

VII

New religious movements of Christian origin

VII.1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church

VII.1.1. Origins and Development

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is derived from the American version of the 19th century chiliastic “Advent Awakening”, also known, after its main ideologist, as the “Miller movement” (Millerism). One of the basic assumptions of it was the interpretation of biblical prophecies, indicating a specific date, 22nd October 1844, as the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ to Earth, an interpretation generally considered outrageous by the wider public. This prophecy caused quite a stir, and subsequently huge disappointment when the announced event did not occur within the specified time. After failed attempts to “postpone the date of this event”, a division in the ranks of Miller’s followers resulted in the emergence of several different groups. The most prominent of them, albeit not very numerous at first, was the one formed around Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) and her husband, James Springer White, whose members also included people such as Hiram Edson, John Nevins Andrews, and Joseph Bates. From this group, the Seventh-day Adventist Church developed.

This group did not reject Miller’s version of “signs and dates”, but reinterpreted it. Its members recognized that in 1844 Christ began “cleansing the heavenly sanctuary” (understood as the main point of salvation), a process that is temporally indefinite and assumes the form of a trial of sinful mankind. This event was to precede the coming of the Lord and was connected with the proclamation of the three-angelic message calling for correction. Due to this interpretation of a biblical prophecy, the fact that Advent did not occur on 22nd October 1844 in a visible form was fully understandable.

Soon, the young religious community also became interested in the matter of keeping Saturday as the Sabbath day, which became one of the characteristic elements of this movement. After a relatively long period of cementing their doctrine, the group around Ellen G. White adopted the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA Church) in 1860 and, on 21st May 1863, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was established. In the new community, socio-moral issues raised increasing interest. This group has, from the beginning of its existence, adopted a progressive approach to social injustice. It engaged itself in eliminating racial inequalities, including slavery, and has played a constructive role fighting the discriminating of women and promoting human dignity and freedom. The SDA Church has also shaped a positive social attitude, characterized by loyalty and respect towards the state as well. It is also known for adhering to the biblical command to serve others and to promoting the idea of peace, indicating the need for toleration towards other people²⁷¹.

Image 57: James and Ellen G. White



Source: https://www.adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/13._James_White_and_Ellen_G._White_circa_1864.width-1600-scaled-1100x1031.jpg

²⁷¹ George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-Day Adventists* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004), pp. 28-139;
War. Four Christian Views, ed. by Robert G. Clouse (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1981), pp. 81-97.

This movement condemns alcohol consumption as well as of all kinds of stimulants and drugs as a sin. Simultaneously, this group recognizes human health as a precious value that everyone should protect. In 1863 Ellen G. White formulated the principles of the health reform program, which she repeated in 1865. As a result, a sanatorium in Battle Creek was established in 1866, which gave rise to the long-term activity of this group in the field of combating drug addictions and promoting a healthy lifestyle. It was important in prohibiting the consumption of meat from “unclean” animals such as pork and encouraging people to follow a meat-free diet. John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) played a major role in organizing this sanatorium, and, despite his later departure from the SDA Church, he introduced a number of important innovations in the spirit of this religious community. Hayward explains:

John Harvey Kellogg was one of the most powerful, colourful, and controversial figures in Seventh-day Adventist history, and he played a prominent role in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century America. His influence was derived, in part, from his early friendship with and financial support from James and Ellen White. It was also derived from the Adventist Church’s strong advocacy of health, which provided Kellogg with a platform for his own iconoclastic views on the topic. As time went on, however, his beliefs, temperament, and domineering personality clashed with the Adventist Church leadership and led to his break with the denomination. Nonetheless, his direct influence was still felt among Adventists long after his official break with the Church, for Adventists continued to be guests and to work at the Battle Creek Sanatorium²⁷².

The Seventh-day Adventists have been extremely active in promoting the consumption of healthy products. John Harvey Kellogg worked in this area together with his brother, William Keith Kellogg (1860-1951). In 1906 the latter founded a factory producing healthy food, which became, over time, one of the most famous and respected companies of this kind in history. He did this in order to implement the concept of this religious organization and to protect human health through proper nutrition.

The activity of the Adventists, especially of the Kellogg’s family, has a big impact on the US population as well as on many other in different countries. They were at the forefront of the “food revolution” at the time of their founding, and they combined it with their “health crusade”. This resulted in not only significant successes in its health care, peace or social justice aims, but also in the areas of management and finance²⁷³.

²⁷² James L. Hayward, ‘Kellogg, John Harvey (1852–1943)’, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, 29 January 2020 <<https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=89LQ>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

²⁷³ “Kellogg permanently changed the eating habits of Americans through his inventions of flaked cereal and a form of peanut butter. His invention of meat substitutes made from nuts and legumes provided

VII.1.2. Religious Doctrine

The ideological assumptions of Seventh-day Adventists largely coincide with the agenda of the main Protestant groups, but they contain doctrinal elements that distinguish this religion from the rest of Christianity. This group adopts the position of Trinitarianism and recognizes the Bible as the only source of religious knowledge. Original sin is understood by Seventh-day Adventists according to the literal biblical description and they oppose its allegorical interpretation. An important element of this group's teaching is a belief in the mortality of the soul, as a result of which they reject the concept of the "life after life", but believe in the resurrection²⁷⁴.

According to them, Jesus, through his death, offered atonement for original sin and reconciled humankind with God. This church preaches the freedom of will, opposing the predestination proclaimed by John Calvin. Only adults are baptized in this religious community. Adventists also teach that, in heaven, there is a sanctuary created by God in which Jesus plays the role of the high priest. Service in it consists of the constant intercession through Christ before God in favor of people²⁷⁵.

Adventists reject the concept of eternal hell, believing that the forces of evil will be destroyed with their followers²⁷⁶. They are convinced that, after cleansing the Earth by the cosmic fire, it will become a place of perfect life, where God will dwell

vegetarians with tasty, nutritious alternatives to the use of meat in the diet. As vegetarianism became more popular in culture due to concerns over health, animal rights, and the environment, Kellogg's dietary innovations continued to grow in relevance. He was one of the first health reformers to recognize the dangers of obesity to health, and appealed to a growing sedentary population to control not only what they ate but also how much". *ibid*.

²⁷⁴ "Adventists affirm the infallibility of Scripture. They believe in the doctrine of the Trinity and the full deity (and humanity) of Jesus Christ. Although differences exist among Adventist denominations, the majority affirm Saturday as the Sabbath day of rest and worship. Adventists believe Sabbath observance is essential for awaiting the return of Jesus Christ. The second coming of Christ is one of the core doctrines of the Adventist faith; consequently, it receives much prominence in the denomination's belief. Although Adventists deny that any-one currently possesses the mark of the beast (Rev. 13), there will come a 'time of testing' wherein the counterfeit Sabbath will be enforced, and all those who continue in disobedience to the seventh-day Sabbath will receive the mark of the beast. The majority believe the wicked will not suffer eternally but will be annihilated and that the dead are not conscious between death and the resurrection (soul sleep). Baptism is by immersion of adults. There is strict abstention from alcohol, caffeinated beverages, and tobacco". Ron J. Bigalke, 'Seventh-Day Adventist Church' in: *The Essential Handbook of Denominations and Ministries*, ed. by George Kurian and Sarah Day (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2017) <https://www.academia.edu/49055112/Seventh_Day_Adventist_Church> [accessed on 10 December 2022];

Jonatan Dunkel, *The Apocalypse* (Grantham, UK: Stanborough Press, 2016), pp. 13-145.

²⁷⁵ "Our pioneers spoke to issues that mattered to people in society. They supported current causes. Their focus was the last-day gospel message to the world, but they also knew justice and good living were real concerns that needed to be addressed in practical ways. They brought a Jesus-centred and biblically principled focus to the issues of slavery and alcohol. Meeting practical needs from a "God perspective" is why our denomination started schools and hospitals". Glenn Townsend, 'Society Impact', *Seventh-day Adventist Church Inter-American Division*, 14 February 2022 <<https://interamerica.org/2022/02/society-impact/>> [accessed on 21 November 2022].

²⁷⁶ Glúder Quispe, *The Apocalypse in Seventh-Day Adventist Interpretation* (Lima: Peruvian Union University, 2013), pp. 199-262.

with the people, reigning over the world forever, after the destruction of pain and death. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ellen G. White enjoys the status of a prophet; her numerous texts are published and studied²⁷⁷.

The attitude of Adventists to military service is negative. They recommend that it should be avoided and people called to it should seek alternative forms of fulfilling it, such as by working in the health service or in sanitary departments without having to carry or use weapons.

VII.1.3. Social, Educational, and Charity Activities

An important part of the SDA Church's activities is caring about marriage and family. The basic form of this is making their followers aware of the essence of family obligations and the ways of solving possible conflicts. This group has paid attention to the issue of violence in families, the victims of which have been their weakest members.

Adventists advocate the protection of the environment, treating it as a gift from God. However, they believe, in accordance with their prophetic-eschatological vision of the history of the world, that the true restoration of the environment will come only as a result of the fulfilment of biblical predictions. This group has made numerous efforts to convince the public about the need to abandon the exploitative form of economy of the Earth's riches. This issue is present in Adventist education programs and the Church's documents.²⁷⁸

Table 6: Number of Churches, Companies, and Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 2022

Churches	97,811
Companies	73,886
Church memberships	22,234,406
Total accessions	1,358,642

'Quick Statistics on the Seventh-day Adventist Church', *Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research*
 <<https://www.adventistarchives.org/quick-statistics-on-the-seventh-day-adventist-church>>
 [accessed on 25 August 2023]

The Church's strong media structures ensure an effective influence on public opinion, operating in 212 countries. Worldwide they include 60 publishing houses and branches, publishing 485 newspapers in 311 languages. The Church also has 1,496 broadcasting stations and 1,016 television stations as well as 16 media centers.

²⁷⁷ For example: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (London: New Covenant Publications International, 2020); or Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Silver Springs, MD: Better Living Publications, 1990).

²⁷⁸ "There are some Adventists who have found a public voice on domestic violence, climate change, and religious liberty, in many of the countries of the Pacific. It is good to be concerned about that which others are concerned. Hopefully, we can give a credible biblical perspective on the issues, based on personal action". Townsend, 'Society Impact', *Seventh-day Adventist Church Inter-American Division*.

Table 7: Ranking of the Achievement of Religious Groups in Earning University Degrees in % of the US Adult Population

Ranking	Religious groups	College degree in %
1.	Hindu	77
2.	Unitarian Universalist	67
3.	Jewish	59
4.	Anglican	59
5.	Episcopal Church	56
6.	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)	47
7.	Buddhists	47
8.	United Church of Christ	46
9.	Atheist	43
10.	Agnostic	42
11.	Orthodox Christen	40
12.	Muslim	39
13.	United Methodist Church	37
14.	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	36
15.	Presbyterian Church in America	33
16.	Mormon	33
17.	Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	32
18.	Seventh-day Adventists	28
19.	Catholics	26
20.	African Methodist Episcopal Church	21
21.	Church of the Nazarene	20
22.	National Baptist Convention	19
23.	Southern Baptism Convention	19
24.	Churches of Christ	18
25.	Assemblies of God	15
26.	Church of God in Christ	13
27.	Jehovah's Witness	12
28.	American Baptism Churches USA	12
29.	Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee)	11

Source: Caryle Murphy, 'The most and least educated U.S. religious groups', *Pew Research Center*, 4 November 2016 <<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2016/11/04/the-most-and-least-educated-u-s-religious-groups/>> [accessed on 28 August 2023]

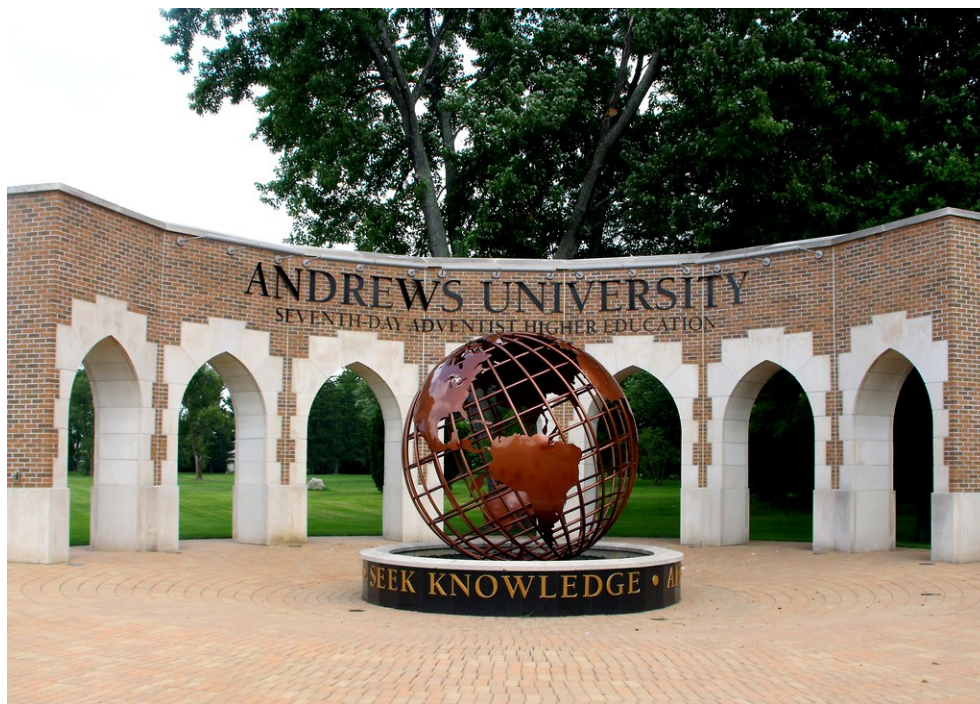
The educational achievements of the Adventists are significant: around the world, they have as many as 1,302,353 primary schools, 608,831 secondary schools, 12,462 worker-training institutions, 118 tertiary institutions and 15 orphanages and

children's homes. The SDA Church also has 117 colleges and universities²⁷⁹; the most famous are Andrews University in Berrien Spring, Michigan, which has a humanistic character, and Loma Linda University in Los Angeles, California, which specializes in natural, exact, and medical sciences²⁸⁰.

The Adventist healthcare system has 673 clinics and dispensaries, 227 hospitals and sanatoriums, 133 nursing homes and retirement centers. It employs 136,506 physicians and other medical personnel worldwide.

A significant role in providing practical help to those in need on behalf of the SDA Church is played by its charitable organization, ADRA. The Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA or ADRA International) was founded in 1956 and operates in 118 countries. In 2019 it conducted 1,180 projects, which were participated in by approximately 13,940,983 beneficiaries.

Image 58: Andrews University in Berrien Spring, Michigan, US



Source: https://c2.staticflickr.com/4/3741/19892502070_1fef003d73_b.jpg

²⁷⁹ 'List of Adventist Universities and Colleges', *adventistuniversities.com* <<https://adventistuniversities.com/adventist-universities/>> [accessed on 3 December 2022].

²⁸⁰ Ben Carson, a member of the SDA Church, is famous for conducting the first ever separation of conjoined twins joined at the back of their heads in 1987. He has also been active in the political arena and participated in the Republican primaries for the President of the United States in 2016 as well as being the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development from 2017 to 2021.

The attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to business activities and acquiring managerial skills is positive, and they themselves are usually effective in this role, as evidenced by the numerous public benefit organizations and private businesses they establish²⁸¹. Its members pay a tithe and they often emphasize that, in this way, they strike a certain “deal with God” that allows them to believe that the Creator supports them in activities aimed at obtaining profits.

Their approach to becoming rich is illustrated by a phrase attributed to Ellen G. White: “the desire to accumulate wealth is an original affection of our nature, implanted there by our heavenly Father for nobler ends”²⁸². According to it, Seventh-day Adventists are not only allowed to earn money, but also required to devote a significant part of it to pro-social activities²⁸³.

The SDA Church has 92,186 churches, 20,802 pastors, 323,072 active employees in total and as many as 21,556,837 baptized members worldwide²⁸⁴.

VII.2. Jehovah’s Witnesses

VII.2.1. Origins and Development

Jehovah’s Witnesses, like the Adventists, belong to the chiliastic movement focused upon waiting for the second coming of Christ to the Earth and the establishment of his Millennial Kingdom. This group grew out of the Bible Students movement, of which Charles Taze Russel (1852-1916), born in Pittsburgh, USA, in a Presbyterian family, was a founder and leader. From a young age on, he exhibited an interest in religious issues; as a result, he arrived at the conclusion that religious group to which his family belonged to was not the most appropriate for him. During his search for the “best” church, Russell contacted many Protestant religious communities; however, his interest did not last long with any of them. At that time, he

²⁸¹ “Adventists are active in business; in order to achieve greater efficiency in this, they cooperate with each other, as evidenced by organizations such as Adventists Doing Business.” ‘About Us’, *adventistsdoingbusiness.com* <<https://adventistsdoingbusiness.com/about-us/>> [accessed on 23 November 2022].

²⁸² Ellen G. White, ‘Counsels on Stewardship’, *EGW Writings*, first published in ‘The Review and Herald’, 1 March 1887 <<https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/22.872>> [accessed on 25 November 2022].

²⁸³ The group of prominent figures who grew up as Seventh-day Adventists or have been otherwise associated with this religious community includes: Prince, Malcolm X, Magic Johnson, Sojourner Truth, Angus T. Jones, Busta Rhymes, Kasey Chambers, DeVon Franklin, Little Richard, Brian McKnight, Greg Mothis, Heather Kuzmich, Chi McBride, Archie Moore, Joyce Bryant, Abel Kirui, Clifton Davis, Darwood Kaye, Priscah Jeptoo, Cesar Montano, Grace Daley, Edwin Correa and Fretzie. ‘Famous People You Didn’t Know Were Seventh-Day Adventists’, *Ranker*, 24 September 2021 <<https://www.ranker.com/list/famous-seventh-day-adventists/celebrity-lists>> [accessed on 12 December 2022].

²⁸⁴ ‘Seventh-day Adventist World Church Statistics 2020’, *adventist.org*, 13 January 2021 <<https://www.adventist.org/statistics/seventh-day-adventist-world-church-statistics-2020/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

became acquainted with the teachings of Congregationalists and Methodists as well as one of the Adventist groups that expected the end of the world in 1874. Although this prophecy did not materialize, the apocalyptic issue attracted Russell's attention and influenced the shaping of his other religious interests.

After a long search, Russel finally concluded that none of the existing Christian denominations suited him and he decided to establish his own one. As a result of this decision, Russell created a doctrinal system in which the elements of various ideological concepts were mixed, especially Judeo-Christian and Arian, and in which the issue of the end of the world played a central role. In 1879 he founded the journal "Zion's Watchtower", and, two years later in 1881, the "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania". The group that arose around him began to use the name of the "International Bible Students Association"²⁸⁵.

Russell expanded the circle of his followers rapidly as a result of vigorous propaganda campaigns using the achievements of contemporary scientific thought, such as film, to which he devoted a part of his own property to help finance. He also made missionary trips to many countries, including Russia, Palestine, Greece, Austria, Germany, Egypt, India, Japan, China, and the Philippines. His popularity was also influenced by his sensational and widely publicized predictions based upon statements taken from the Bible, according to which the end of the world was to occur in 1914.

Then, facing the fact this prophecy failed to materialize, the date of this event was moved to 1915, then to 1916, and finally to 1918. The end of the world dates added drama to the Bible Students movement, and the spectacular nature of some actions, such as preparation for the coming of Jesus in specific places, attracted the attention of a part of the public who was thirsty for sensation. Initially, Russell was accompanied in his religious activities by his wife, whom he divorced in 1907.

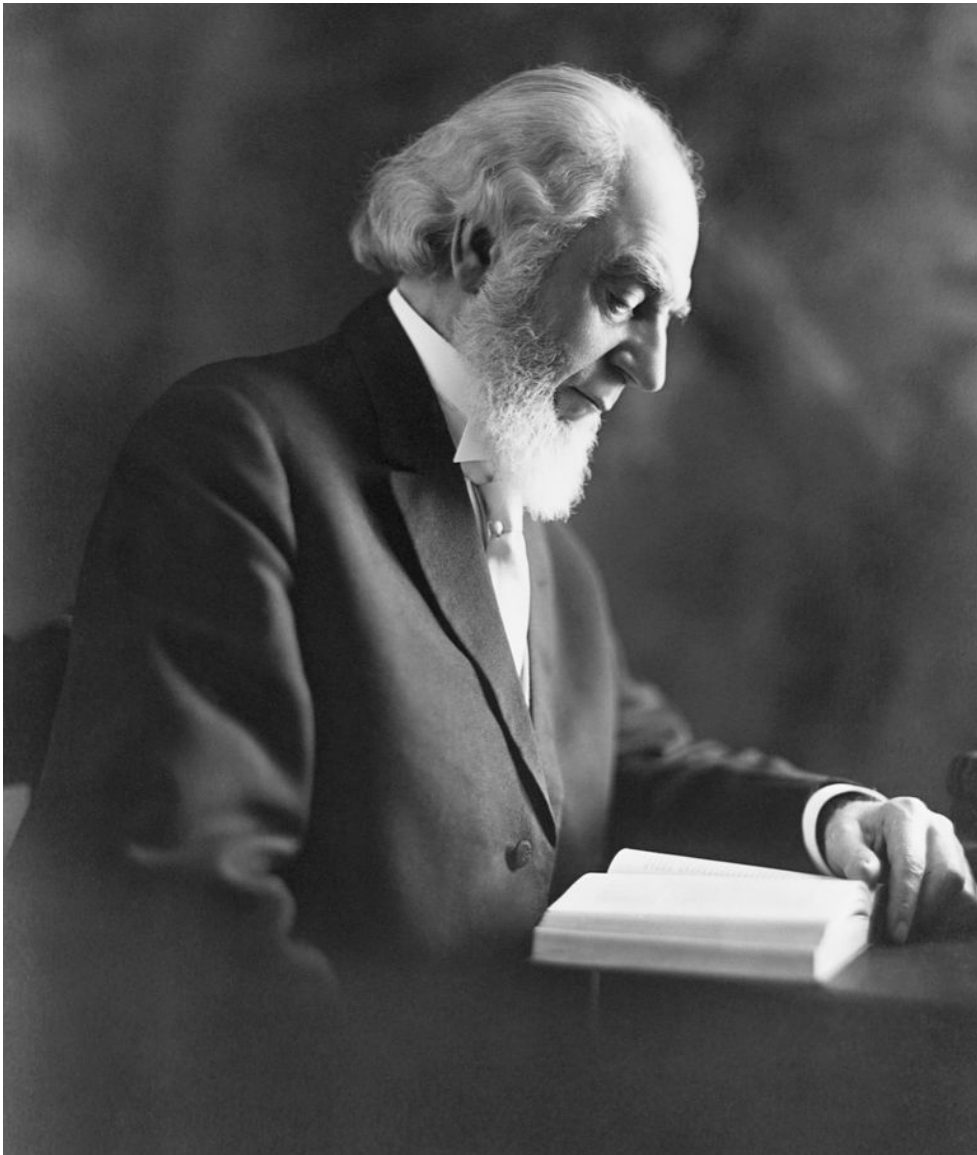
In the course of time, the group split into groups such as the Epiphany Bible Students Association and the Association of Free Bible Students. One of the religious organizations which emerged from Russelism and accused other groups of falsifying the teachings of their founder is today known as the Jehovah's Witnesses. The group was established in 1931 under the leadership of Joseph Franklin Rutherford (1860-1942)²⁸⁶. He was known for his ruthless way of managing the organization and introducing the principle of centralism. However, it cannot be denied that he showed

²⁸⁵ Charles Taze Russel, *The Divine Plan of the Ages, and the Corroborative Testimony of the Great Pyramid* (Copenhagen: International Bible Student Association, 1886), pp. 77-116.

²⁸⁶ "Jehovah's Witnesses had their modern-day start in the 1870's. At first, they were called Bible Students. But in 1931 they adopted the Scriptural name Jehovah's Witnesses. (Isaiah 43:10) From small beginnings the organization has grown to millions of Witnesses, who are busy preaching in more than 230 lands." 'How Jehovah's Witnesses Are Organized', *jw.org* <<https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/What-Does-God-Require-of-Us/How-Jehovahs-Witnesses-Are-Organized/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

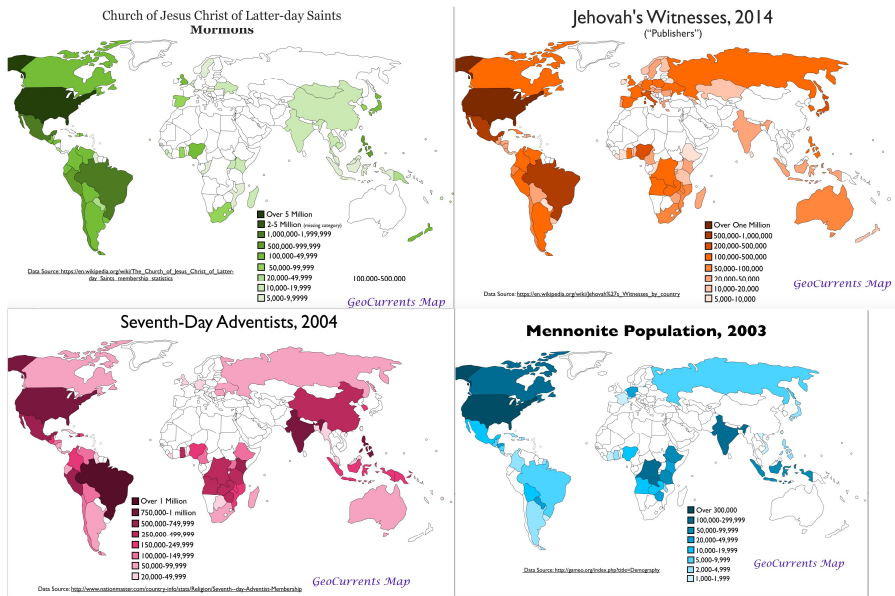
a certain degree of effectiveness. He was able to build up the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses by keeping discipline in it and forcing the followers to engage into significant missionary activity. Rutherford himself was a controversial figure, for example, he ordered the building of a palace for the Old Testament prophets in San Diego, California, in which he eventually settled.

Image 59: Charles Taze Russel



Source: [https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/fsL55CJ0GbxszhSN06Iu6RciwrM=/768x0/filters:no_upscale\(\):max_bytes\(150000\):strip_icc\(\)/Jehovah-Witness-Beliefs-GettyImages-615282788-58e659dc3df78c5162f176a6.jpg](https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/fsL55CJ0GbxszhSN06Iu6RciwrM=/768x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc()/Jehovah-Witness-Beliefs-GettyImages-615282788-58e659dc3df78c5162f176a6.jpg)

Map 7: Worldwide Distribution of Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, and Mennonites



Source: <https://www.reddit.com/media?url=https%3A%2F%2Fi.redd.it%2Fqxgayy4nth911.jpg>

VII.2.2. Religious Doctrine

The belief system of this organization refers in its ideological layer to Arianism, chiliasm, and some other branches of Judeo-Christianity. The name of the group, Jehovah's Witnesses, derives from the tetragram "YHWH", symbolizing the name of God. Jehovah's Witnesses are Antitrinitarians, thus, they reject the existence of the Holy Trinity. According to them, Jesus Christ is not the Son of God in the proper sense of the word, but a higher spiritual being, and the Holy Ghost is to be merely a depersonalized "power" of God. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross, but on a stake. An immortal soul, according to Jehovah's Witnesses, does not exist, nor does the hell and purgatory²⁸⁷. Jehovah's Witnesses also reject the state and its institutions as "Satan's invention" and often refer to themselves as "citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven". The members of this organization are also convinced that patriotic feelings are harmful and their religious beliefs prohibit them from participating in the political life of the country. Jehovah's Witnesses also refuse to do military service, showing a far-reaching determination in this regard. They practice the baptism of adults, which is an introductory rite allowing one

²⁸⁷ Joseph Franklin Rutherford, *Talking with the Dead* (Brooklyn, NY: International Bible Students Association, 1920), pp. 131-150.

to join this group. It is conducted by immersion, in rivers or baptismal fonts in Kingdom Halls prepared specially for this purpose. According to their doctrine, they do not recognize any sacraments, nor do they worship pictures, effigies, or any other images.

They oppose abortion and homosexuality as well as premarital and extra-marital sexual activity and it is forbidden to celebrate birthdays, Christmas, or Easter. The group also rejects the theory of evolution, claiming that the biblical description of the creation of the world must be understood literally. A central role in the eschatological concept is played by the idea of the Millennial Kingdom, which it is to come after Christ's victory over Satan.

Table 8: Self-Described Religious Identification of the Adult Population in the United States in 2022

Religious Affiliation	Percentage Composition of the US Population
Unaffiliated	26.8%
White evangelical Protestant	13.9%
White mainline Protestant	13.6%
White Catholic	13.6%
Hispanic Catholic	8.6%
Black Protestant	7.7%
Hispanic Protestant	3.5%
Other nonwhite Protestant	2.5%
Other nonwhite Catholic	1.9%
Jewish	1.9%
New Age religions	1.6%
Mormon	1.5%
Jehovah's Witness	1.1%
Buddhist	0.7%
Hindu	0,7%
Muslim	0.6%
Unitarian/Universalist	0.5%
Orthodox Christian	0.5%

Source: 'Self-described religious identification of the adult population in the United States in 2022', *statista*, 8 June 2023 <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/183817/religious-identification-of-adult-population/>> [accessed on 26 August 2023]

Especially essential in the eschatology of Jehovah's Witnesses was 1914 as it initiated, according to their teachings, a very important phase of Christ's fight against the devil when the latter was banned from heaven and cast down to Earth. Jehovah's Witnesses express this conviction as follows: Satan, thrown to the ground, is to be defeated at the Battle of Armageddon. Then, there is to be a thousand-year period of the Kingdom of Jehovah's Witnesses, the number of whom is 144,000. Only this

small flock will reside in heaven. Other righteous ones will attain “time-limited earthly life” in a Paradise established on Earth. In the last phase, there will be a common resurrection, followed by the “trial”, which will be an opportunity for those who will not have been able to take the side of the forces of the good until this moment to do so. Afterwards, the sinners will be annihilated.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have repeatedly announced consecutive dates for the end of the world. This was the case, for example, in 1975. Every time when these announcements failed to be fulfilled, it caused a huge disappointment among the membership, which manifested itself in mass desertions of members. The leadership learned from this and has ceased to formulate precise dates for the “end of the world”, however, it still emphasizes that it will come “soon”.

An integral feature of the doctrine of Jehovah’s Witnesses is its exclusivity, that is, the belief that, in principle, salvation can only be obtained through their religious organization. The only exception are those people who were unable to join them “for objective reasons”, such as because they lived in antiquity²⁸⁸.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are prohibited from consuming blood in any form, and that commandment stops them from receiving blood transfusions and undergoing organ transplantations²⁸⁹.

VII.2.3. Organization

The group has a well-developed and dynamic organization. The headquarters are in Brooklyn, New York. It is there that the most important decisions are made as well as its texts edited and censored, to be then translated into different languages and distributed to individual countries; this system of total censorship allows one to guarantee a complete “purity of the doctrine” in publications. It should be added that neither books nor magazines are signed by their authors’ surnames, but are published anonymously. These practices foster the doctrinal “orthodoxy” of this group, making it impossible to create any interpretation controversy²⁹⁰.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 70-82.

²⁸⁹ “Jehovah’s Witnesses are not allowed to:

- Receive a blood transfusion, even in a life-threatening medical emergency.
- Donate blood.
- Receive artificial insemination using any semen other than their husbands. Using semen that’s not the husband is an offense equal to adultery. For an unmarried woman to undergo artificial insemination is considered fornication.
- Donate sperm cells or eggs.
- Be a surrogate.”

‘A list of Jehovah’s Witness Rules You won’t Believe Are Real’, *JW Answers* <<https://jwanswers.com/a-list-of-jehovahs-witness-rules-you-wont-believe-are-real/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

²⁹⁰ “Our organization publishes and distributes hundreds of millions of Bibles and other publications every year without charge. We build and maintain Kingdom Halls and branch offices. We support

The missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses receive a long and intense training to enable them to converse with a variety of people. However, training is usually not a preparation for interviews with "the unrepentant enemies of truth", which converts should avoid. The members of this group refer to scientific discoveries if they are convenient to them, but this does not change their generally negative position towards science.

Image 60: The Watchtower



Source: <https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/15230404/watchtower.jpg>

Jehovah's Witnesses engage in intense missionary work in an attempt to win new followers²⁹¹. In their view, they provide these people with "a chance to be saved",

thousands of Bethelites and missionaries, and we provide relief aid in times of disaster. So you may wonder, 'How is all of this financed?'

We do not tithe, charge dues, or take up collections. Although the costs of supporting our evangelizing work are high, we do not solicit money. Over a century ago, the second issue of the *Watchtower* magazine stated that we believe we have Jehovah as our backer and that we "will never beg nor petition men for support"—and we never have!—Matthew 10:8.

Our activities are supported by voluntary donations. Many people appreciate our Bible educational work and donate towards it. The Witnesses themselves happily contribute their time, energy, funds, and other resources to the doing of God's will in all the earth. (1 Chronicles 29:9) At the Kingdom Hall and at our assemblies and conventions, there are contribution boxes where those who wish to make donations may do so. Or donations can be made through our website, jw.org. For the most part, the moneys received come from those of modest means, much like the needy widow Jesus spoke so well of who put two small coins into the temple treasury chest." 'How Is Our Worldwide Work Financed?', [jw.org](https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/jehovahs-will/worldwide-work-financed/) <<https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/jehovahs-will/worldwide-work-financed/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

²⁹¹ The group of prominent figures who grew up as Jehovah's Witnesses or have been otherwise associated with this religious community includes: Serena and Venus Williams, Michelle Rodriguez, Donald Glover, Prince, Michael Jackson, Janet Jackson, Damon, Marlon and Shawn Wayans, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Geri Halliwell, Terrence Howard, The Notorious B.I.G., Naomi Campbell, Patti Smith, Dave Mustaine, Sherri Shepherd, Jill Scott, Jarule, Selena, Xzibit, Coco Rocha, Larry Graham, George

but when those prospective converts prove impossible to be converted in any way, the members of the organization should avoid contacts with them. In the case of serious misconduct, members can be expelled²⁹².

Despite the escapist overtones of their doctrine, Jehovah's Witnesses often display entrepreneurial attitudes towards economy and run their own businesses. This may be related to the desire to remain "among own people" and to avoid the "outside world". Regardless of the reasons for their economic activity, they enjoy the opinion of honest and trustworthy businessmen, regardless of who they have business relations with.

VII.3. The Unification Church and its Business and Political Connections

VII.3.1. Origins and Development

Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Unification Church, was born the son of a peasant in the North Korean province of North P'yŏngan on 25th February 1920. His family converted to Christianity in 1930, joining the Presbyterian Church²⁹³. Perhaps it was the atmosphere of the religious searches in his home which accompanied this a change of confession that made young Moon interested in religious matters; he himself claimed that, from childhood on, he was characterized by piety and zeal in search for the truth. His religious vocation was determined by the experience he had during meditating on a mountain during Easter 1936, when, according to his own account, Jesus appeared to him and order him to complete the work of salvation he had begun and to establish the Kingdom of Heaven. After some initial hesitation and consternation, the future "savior of the world" accepted his destiny, although this was not the end of his spiritual struggle; he continued it for nine more years, during which he led a dialogue with ghosts and acquired "charismatic qualities". Parallel to his paranormal experiences, Moon led a normal civic life: he graduated from high

Benson, Lou Whitaker, and Kid Gavilán. '28 Famous People Who Were or Currently are Jehovah's Witnesses', *Ranker*, 1 December 2020 <<https://www.ranker.com/list/famous-jehovahs-witnesses/celebrity-lists>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

²⁹² "Fast Facts – Worldwide

239 – Lands where Jehovah's Witnesses worship

8,699,048 – Jehovah's Witnesses

5,666,996 – Free home Bible courses conducted

19,721,672 – Attendance at the annual Memorial of Christ's death

117,960 – Congregations"

'Fast Facts – Worldwide', *jw.org* <<https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/worldwide/>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

²⁹³ Frederick Sontag, *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1977) <<https://kingsavenue.org/download/sun-myung-moon-the-unification-church/>> [accessed on 23 March 2022], pp. 17-35.

school and studied electronics in Japan for several terms, although he did not graduate. Before leaving his homeland, he had also established contacts with various religious groups.

Having returned to Korea after World War II, Moon went to its northern part, occupied by the troops of the Soviet army, and began to engage in religious activities. At first, everything went well; he gained a group of supporters and married Sun Kil Choi. In 1946 he joined the “Order of Israel”, a religious group whose leader considered himself a messiah.

In 1947 Moon was arrested and sentenced to five years in a labor camp for espionage. Moon spent about three years in prison and he was released in 1950 by troops fighting for South Korea. It seems that his unpleasant experiences gained from contacts with the penitentiary system of North Korea became a cause of his great hatred of communism, which is perhaps why the fight against the “socialist camp” became one of the guiding motives of the ideology of the Unification Church²⁹⁴.

On 1st May 1954, Moon established the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity in Seoul, also known as the Unification Church. The ambitions of this new church as well as its leaders were high. In the following years, the Church developed dynamically. There was also a change in Moon’s private life: in 1960 he got married, as a 40-year-old man, to 18-year-old Hak Ja Han, who remained his wife till his death. This wedding had a religious significance for the supporters of the Unification Church and was described as the “Lamb’s Wedding”. According to them, it was to initiate a new era in the history of mankind.

VII.3.2. Religious Doctrine

The doctrine of the Unification Church is based upon Moon’s prophecies, written in the Divine Principles by Hyo Won Eu, which are intended to overshadow all existing holy books. The information transmitted from Heung Jin, his son, who died tragically in 1984, has also played an important role. The teaching of this group was influenced by the religious currents present in Korea: Taoism, Buddhism, Shamanism, Christianity, and Theosophy. It is no coincidence that the central role in Moon’s ideology is played by the patriarchal family, which is respected in Asian countries. According to the assumptions of the Unification Church, the divine plan was to create a “perfect human family”. The perfect man and the perfect woman were to become a divine substance by uniting with each other. Moon taught that Satan sexually seduced Eve, and that Adam could only have an “unclean” relationship with her as

²⁹⁴ During this time, there was a rapid ideological emancipation and the emergence of organizational structures of the movement under his leadership. This process was additionally reinforced by the negative reception of Moon’s idea by other denominations. During his imprisonment, he was expelled from the Korean Presbyterian Church because his group was far from the standards recognized by ecclesial organizations operating within the “orthodox Christianity”.

a result. This caused people to have devilish blood in their veins, which prompts them to act evilly. To change this situation, one has to make the perfect man “raise” the perfect woman. This couple, as the new parents of mankind, Adam and Eve, beget perfect children, thus creating a perfect family. Of course, the honorable role of the progenitor of the pure line of mankind was assumed by Moon himself, and his last wife, Hak-Ja Han, became the perfect woman. It should be added that the obligation to beget as many reborn members of the human family as possible was taken to heart by this couple so much that the fruit of this union was as many as 13 children.

Image 61: Sun Myung Moon and His Wife, Hak Ja Han



Source: https://www.ctvnews.ca/polopoly_fs/1.940296.1346638290!/httpImage/image.Jpeg_gen/derivatives/landscape_960/image.jpeg

Moon taught that Jesus’ weakness lay in the fact that he was unmarried, because of which he was unable to initiate a perfect line of mankind²⁹⁵. The founder of the Unification Church did not make this mistake, and not only achieved perfection himself, but, by establishing a clean family, he became “the new Israel”, bringing

²⁹⁵ “After the Fall ... according to the *Divine Principle*, God gave man another chance by sending Jesus. But Jesus failed him. Before he could marry and raise pure children, the purpose of his mission, he was crucified. Moon contends that this is why the Jews have suffered for almost two thousand years. They have been punished for failing to recognise the true Christ.

This is why the Unification Church now regards South Korea as the new Holy Land, being the spiritual home of its Messiah who has come to vanquish Satan and restore Heaven on Earth. The Moonies believe that it is their task to save the world, to help build the Heavenly Kingdom. It astonished me that the rest of the world were so slow to see this obvious truth”. ‘How Well Do You Know Your Moon?’ *tumblr.com*, 2018 <<https://howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com/post/168647798688/when-you-holy-salt-a-room-it-is-important-to>> [accessed on 25 November 2022].

salvation to mankind; he was, therefore, higher in the hierarchy of the spiritual world than Christ. Moon appointed the regents of the Kingdom of Heaven from among his sons and the highest dignity was given to Heung Jin, who was to initiate the connection of the material and spiritual world and received the title of “Lord of Heaven”.

Jesus, after admitting his mistake (not being married), became Moon’s assistant. In describing the heavenly order, Moon “connected” the world around himself and the family he founded. The answer to the question of how to save mankind was, for him, mass adoptions of newly married couples, which provoked the vivid protests of public opinion concerned about the threat to the personal freedom of people participating in these practices. The candidates for spouses are determined by the senior members of the Unification Church, and it often happens that future families meet on their wedding day for the first time ever. Wedding ceremonies, which usually involve many couples, are preceded by a long period of preparation and conducted as single events together with the adoption of the spouses by Moon and his wife, who represent God. After this double ceremony, marriage and adoption, an eight-week period of sexual abstinence is obligatory for the young couple. When it is over, sexual intercourse is allowed, but only for the purpose of procreation. This is in accordance with Moon’s concept of reducing marriage largely to the reproductive function²⁹⁶.

Image 62: Moon’s Cult



Source: <https://www.spiritwatch.org/44925422.cached.jpg>

²⁹⁶ Gaser, Muller and Valentin, ‘Moon-Bewegung’, *Lexikon der Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen*, pp. 703-710.

Cult activity in the Unification Church is related to the person of the leader and his relatives. Their photos and images are visible everywhere. The so-called “holy salt” is stored in a bottle and used to protect against Satan. A small amount of soil from The Holy Land (that is, from Korea) also plays an important role, symbolizing paradise. The main holidays of this group are: New Year, “Birthday of the Real Parents” (6th January), and “Wedding of the Real Parents” (16th March).

Moon’s favorite method of “reaching” various environments, especially those associated with intellectual life, as well as improving the image of the Unification Church, is by establishing façade organizations, through which the “savior of the world” establishes various contacts that are valuable to him. The mechanisms of influencing and gaining the followers are extensive²⁹⁷ and include, apart from using the media, “offering institutional help” (such as in the form of courses, etc.), “making friends” with characters from “the front pages of newspapers,” and also “individual influences”.

VII.3.3. Economic Activities

In 1959 Moon started to run his business by establishing the Yehowa Shotgun weapons and machinery factory, which initially produced air guns, then other types of weapons and equipment with military use were added. According to *The Spiritual Life*:

In South Korea, the Tongil Group was founded in 1963 by Sun Myung Moon as a non-profit organization which would provide revenue for the movement. Its core focus was manufacturing, but, in the 1970s and 1980s, it expanded by founding or acquiring businesses in pharmaceuticals, tourism, and publishing. In the 1990s, the Tongil Group suffered as a result of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. By 2004, it was losing money and was \$3.6 billion in debt. In 2005, Moon’s son, Kook-jin Moon, was appointed the chairman of the Tongil Group. Among the Tongil Group’s chief holdings, there are: The Ilwha Company, which produces ginseng and related products; Ilshin Stone, active in the market of building materials; and Tongil Heavy Industries, which supplies machine parts including hardware for the South Korean military. The Tongil Group funds the Tongil Foundation, which supports Unification movement projects including schools and the Little Angels Children’s Folk Ballet of Korea.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Steven Hassan, *Ausbruch aus dem Bann der Sekten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993), pp. 33-65.

²⁹⁸ ‘Unification Church’, *The Spiritual Life* <<https://slife.org/unification-church/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

The establishment of Yehowa Shotgun initiated the construction of the financial empire of the Unification Church. The group attaches a great importance to earning money, assigning this activity a religious significance; in their view, it is taking money from the forces of hell.²⁹⁹ The activity of the Unification Church was not limited to the religious and economic sectors; by establishing various organizations promoting its ideas, such as, for example, the International Federation for World Peace and Unification (IFWU), it extended its range of influence³⁰⁰.

The missionary activity of the Unification Church in Korea and abroad in the 1960s was fostered by the time of rebellion and anxiety in the West and the corresponding environment of searching for the new and exotic. These trends were associated with various philosophical, social, and political concepts, often mutually entwined. In 1965,

Moon travelled to 40 countries, including the USA³⁰¹, where he met, owing to the efforts of the South Korean Embassy, with former President Eisenhower. This was a visible sign of recognition from the influential political circles of the United States of the anti-communist attitude of the Unification Church. Regardless of the manipulation behind this meeting, it was a visible sign of the growing importance of this religious movement. Encouraged by the this success, Moon moved with his family to the USA and settled in the state of New York in 1972. He continued to maintain good relations with American politicians; his meeting with President Nixon during the Watergate scandal could be spectacular evidence of this and so was the constant development of the economic power of the Unification Church, which allowed him to influence various areas of political and social life of many countries.

Among the most important events in terms of increase in the possessions of the Unification Church, one should note not only the fact that it acquired the hotel The New Yorker with 2,100 beds, but also that it has built an extensive media empire. *The Spiritual Life* gives further detail:

²⁹⁹ “Master Marine, a shipbuilding and fishing company in Alabama; International Seafood of Kodiak, Alaska; and True World Foods, which runs a major portion of the sushi trade in the US. In 2011 Master Marine opened a factory in Las Vegas, Nevada, to manufacture a 27-foot pleasure boat designed by Moon.” *ibid*;

Eileen Barker, ‘The Unification Church: A Kaleidoscopic Introduction’, *Society Register*, 2:2 (2018), pp. 38-41 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330112465_THE_UNIFICATION_CHURCH_A_KALEIDOSCOPIC_INTRODUCTION> [accessed on 27 December 2022].

³⁰⁰ “Family Federation for World Peace and Unification is a diverse organization with members of different races and different political affiliations. While many people refer to us as the ‘Unification Church’, our mission is to bring the world together as one family under God. In times like these, we need to come together, both right and left, under the banner of peace and unity. We are stronger together and must not let our differences divide us”. “‘The Unification Church’: Who We Are’, *CISION PR Newswire*, 14 September 2021 <<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-unification-church-who-we-are-301377078.html>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

³⁰¹ Hudson and Corrigan, *Religion in America*, p. 399.

*News World Communications is an international news media corporation. It was founded in New York City, in 1976, by Sun Myung Moon. Its first two newspapers, The News World (later, renamed the New York City Tribune) and the Spanish-language Noticias del Mundo, were published in New York from 1976 until the early 1990s. In 1982, The New York Times described News World as 'the newspaper unit of the Unification Church.' Moon's son Hyun Jin Moon is its chairman of the board. News World Communications owns United Press International, The World and I, Tiempos del Mundo (Latin America), The Segye Ilbo (South Korea), The Sekai Nippo (Japan), The Zambezi Times (South Africa), and The Middle East Times (Egypt). Until 2008, it had published the Washington, D.C.-based newsmagazine Insight on the News. Until 2010, it had owned The Washington Times. On 2nd November, 2010, Sun Myung Moon and a group of former Times editors purchased the paper from News World. AmericanLife TV cable television network was formerly owned by the Unification movement.*³⁰²

Moon's zeal to hoard material goods brought him into conflict with the American judiciary. In 1982 he was sentenced to 13 months in prison for tax fraud.

The fight against communism was of great importance for the Unification Church. According to Moon, a Third World War was necessary to defeat the "devilish forces" identified with this political system³⁰³. This concept was changed in the face of transformations taking place in the USSR. After meeting with Gorbachev in 1990, which took place during a conference organized in Moscow by Moon on the role of the media (it should be remembered that the Unification Church is a tycoon in this respect), the leader of the economically-weakened Soviet state counted on Western investments, while the founder of the Unification Church declared that World War III had just been won. This was not the only case of a strange interpretation of his own prophecies; it was similar to when he announced that the Kingdom of Heaven would be established in 1981, but then in 1980, he changed his own statements on the matter and announced that his prophecy be fulfilled only after a further 21-year period of preparation. Due to the strong emphasis on anti-communism, the disappearance of the socialist bloc led to the creation of a vacuum in the black and white image of the world of the organization founded by Moon, which is associated with both an identity crisis due to the lack of a visible enemy, necessary for this type of organizations, as well as the weakening support of conservative US political circles for the Unification Church. What was also controversial was the claim that, while Korea (Moon's own country) was the chosen one and destined to accomplish great deeds in the work of salvation, the USA was assigned a role of a servant guarding its security.

³⁰² 'Unification Church', *The Spiritual Life*.

³⁰³ Barker, 'The Unification Church: A Kaleidoscopic Introduction', pp. 33-37.

Moon was particularly fond of many politicians close to lobby groups, for example, of the Bush clan. It is not unthinkable that the companies run by the Unification Church mediate in various business operations which, due to their unofficial nature, require “masking” and use state aid, if necessary. The last major “acquisition” of the Unification Church was the acceptance of the controversial former Catholic Archbishop of Lusaka, Emmanuele Milingo (born 1930), who came into conflict with the Catholic Church authorities because of his unorthodox exorcisms. When he was suspended, he established contacts with the “savior of the world” and in 2001 participated in a mass wedding as a groom; at the age of 71, he married a 43-year-old Korean woman named Marie Sung. Although the archbishop later returned briefly “to the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church,” he eventually left its ranks permanently, and, after ordaining new bishops unauthorized by the Vatican, was excommunicated in 2006. The “Milingo Affair” did not significantly change the situation of the Unification Church; a more important act in its history was the formal handover by Moon of the leadership of this organization to his son Heung Jin Moon in 2008. Despite this, the “savior of the world” remained the central figure of this group until his death in 2012.

The Unification Church deserves attention both because of the financial empire it has built as well as its ability to create its own image. Moon managed to create good relations with the American establishment, despite the fact that his teachings were controversial³⁰⁴ and represented a completely different concept of religiosity from that of mainstream Christian churches in America. Moreover, he himself wanted to be considered as a “divine figure” and he also attributed aspects of divinity to his family. Simultaneously, Moon occupied the position of a media mogul and seemed to be skillfully making use of this fact, which may bring to mind people like Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi. There is no doubt, however, that neither of the latter nor any of the other “oligarchs” has a crowd as dedicated, with minds filled with fantasies and ready for the highest sacrifices, as Moon did. While analyzing his teachings, one may be astonished by the ease with which he moved from the earlier Cold War rhetoric and spreading the vision of atomic destruction to the later presentation of himself in the pose of a “dove of peace”. Taking all this into account, it is difficult to resist the reflection that the links between the media and the political, economic, and religious spheres, which occur in the case of the Unification Church, significantly violate the principle of transparency in public life and threaten the functioning of democratic mechanisms.

After Moon’s death, Hak Ja Han formally ascended to power in the Unification Church. She strives to continue her husband’s line, presenting her organization as

³⁰⁴ Sontag, *Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church*, pp. 97-118.

particularly committed to empowering the family in today's world as well as being active in activities for world peace. This has not, however, prevented divisions in the Unification Church, in which the sons of the "savior couple"³⁰⁵, who founded their own apostate religious organization, play a significant role. The Unification Church membership varies between one and two million.

VII.4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

VII.4.1. Origins and Development

Mormonism is often referred to as the "American confession"; this claim seems to be justified as this religion was founded in the United States of America and, from the beginning of its existence, has assigned a special role to the American continent in the "divine work of salvation". Its founder, Joseph Smith (1805-1844), was born in Sharon, Vermont, as a son of Joseph Smith Snr. and Lucy Mack Smith. He was brought up in a large and godly, though quite confessionally indecisive, family; the future religious leader had nine brothers and sisters. In 1829 Smith began to proclaim himself as a God-sent prophet³⁰⁶. He had his first experiences at the age of 14, which he claimed as "visions", when it was "revealed" to him by supernatural forces (including God the Father and Jesus Christ) that, in God's eyes, all existing religions are "disgusting". By this time, most of Smith's family had joined the Presbyterians, and he was sympathetic to the Methodists. The next supernatural contacts with the messengers from the afterlife took place in 1823, when Moroni, the son of the prophet Mormon³⁰⁷, appeared to him, preparing him for a religious mission, and then on 22nd September 1827, Moroni handed thin golden tablets over to him, the contents of which were to be translated. The work on them commissioned to Smith by the Supernatural Power gave rise to the "Book of Mormon". The date of the formation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is assumed to be 1830 because it was in this year that Smith began his public activity³⁰⁸. The time of the formation of this group can be associated with the chiliastic revival that occurred in the United States in the first half of the 19th century.

³⁰⁵ "After the Rev. Moon died in 2012, his church split apart. Two of his sons established a new congregation. Their followers are eagerly awaiting the end times. And they are armed." Tom Dunkel, 'Locked and Loaded for the Lord', *The Washington Post*, 21 May 2018 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/style/wp/2018/05/21/feature/two-sons-of-rev-moon-have-split-from-his-church-and-their-followers-are-armed/>> [accessed on 25 November 2022].

³⁰⁶ Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. VII.

³⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁰⁸ Hudson and Corrigan, *Religion in America*, p. 191.

The pattern of “receiving” messages during the formation of Mormonism was relatively simple, even schematic: the main recipient of the “revelation” was Smith himself and through him, the key elements of the teaching of this group were to be communicated to the world; “prophecies” and “testimonies” from others were merely to confirm the teachings of Smith himself. The fact that there were repeated apparitions in this group that legitimized each other was supposed to be a proof of divine intervention and confirmation of the special role played by “the prophet Joseph” and his associates in the “divine plan of salvation”.

Smith’s activities provoked a very violent reaction amongst the US public because his teachings differed from what could be considered as “standard” at that time. The revelations, an integral part of the Mormon doctrine, generated resentments in traditional Christian groups in the United States from the very beginning. This is hardly surprising, since the teachings of Smith meant, in practice, nothing less than the claim that the majority of Christianity lacks the “key elements of truth”, meaning that it was *de facto* “out of date” because “the real prophecy” was revealed to the Mormons. The situation worsened, taking the form of open hatred, when Mormons went beyond the limits of soteriological and eschatological searches and questioned one of the fundamental pillars of Christian morality, namely, monogamous marriage, as well as proposed the concept of the abolition of slavery. The negative feelings of traditional Christian groups were magnified by the zeal with which Mormon leaders began to practice polygamy. To the American population, many of whose members were slaveowners, Smith’s teachings (especially concerning polygamy) seemed highly immoral and caused a great deal of outrage, which led to armed clashes. For this reason, the newly established community often had to change its location. It should be noted, however, that, although Smith had a negative attitude towards slavery, his successors adopted a less negative position in this regard.

On 27th June 1844, Smith died as a result of being lynched by the crowd who stormed the prison where he was kept after his arrest. After his death, there were struggles for leadership and one of the contenders was the son of the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and his namesake, Joseph Smith III (1832-1914). Ultimately the power over most Mormons was taken by Brigham Young (1801-1877), who led the majority of the group in conflict with the local population to the area of today’s Utah, where the religious community led by him managed to establish an economically thriving enclave. The second, minority group of Mormons, led by Smith “the younger”, Joseph Smith III, established the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He settled down with his followers in the Midwest of the United States. Their headquarters are in Navoo and the number of supporters of this confession is approximately 350,000. They rejected polygamy and some of the foundational beliefs of the majority of Mormons, which led to an improvement in their relationship with the local population.

VII.4.2. Religious Doctrine

Mormons believe that, after the fall of the Tower of Babel, one of the tribes of Israel, led by Joseph, arrived in America, which was the “Promised Land”. After his crucifixion, Jesus Christ also appeared there and called twelve apostles. The end of the “chosen people” came in 384, when they were defeated by the Lamanites, unbelievers, who were punished with dark skin for abandoning the true faith, referring most probably to Native Americans.

The holy books of the Mormons include, in addition to the specifically translated Bible, the so-called Book of Mormon³⁰⁹, which takes a very high position in the hierarchy of the sacred texts of this community. Moreover, two more of Smith’s publications are of a great importance: the Book of Doctrine and the Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.

Holy Trinity is understood as three separate Persons³¹⁰, with God the Father and Jesus Christ, the latter of whom conceived of in a bodily manner. Due to the controversial nature of the doctrine about God, Mormons are accused of not being orthodox Trinitarians. They also believe in the prenatal existence of the human soul and they indicate a different character of the “spiritual” body and the “earthly” body.

Marriage is very important for Mormons; they believe that a marital bond is accepted not only for the duration of an earthly life, but also for that of the eternal one. Polygamy played a very important role at the beginning of the Mormon movement. It was officially abolished by the Mormons in 1890 for a very pragmatic reason: the group wanted to join the United States of America with their territory becoming a federal state. Efforts in this regard were successful in 1896, although, in the doctrinal sense of “prophecy,” the opinion of J. Smith on this case has never been officially declared erroneous.

³⁰⁹ “The Book of Mormon takes place in the ancient Americas and, like the Bible, was written by Jesus’s followers. It teaches His gospel and testifies of Him. As you live the teachings found in the Book of Mormon, you can find peace and truth.” ‘The Book of Mormon’, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* <<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/believe/book-of-mormon>> [10 December 2022].

³¹⁰ “The Holy Trinity is the term many Christian religions use to describe God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. Latter-day Saints believe very strongly in all three, but we don’t believe they’re all the same person. We do believe they are one in purpose. Their purpose is to help us achieve true joy, in this life and in the life to come (which we also believe in).” ‘All Our Beliefs Center on Jesus Christ’, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* <<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/comeuntochrist/believe>> [accessed on 10 December 2022];

On the Holy Spirit: “Mormonism teaches that the Holy Ghost, also known as the Holy Spirit or Spirit, is the third member of the Godhead. The Holy Ghost is a spirit, and does not have a body of flesh and bones like God the Father and Jesus Christ do. Although the Holy Ghost can only be in one location at a time, His influence can be felt everywhere”. ‘Holy Ghost Mormonism’, *Understanding Mormonism*, <https://www.understandingmormonism.org/holy_ghost_mormonism> [accessed on 25 August 2023].

Mormons practice baptism for both the living and the dead, performing the latter vicariously so that those who did not come into contact with the doctrine of this grouping while alive can still be saved. To do this, they collect a significant amount of data on the deceased. As a result of the implementation of this concept, the Church has the largest collection of genealogical data in the world, the Family History Library, based in Salt Lake City, in Utah³¹¹. In this facility, one can find documents collected by the Church in the course of its search to obtain data needed for these “baptisms of the dead”, mainly birth, marriage and death certificates. The Church also renders its collections available to people outside its ranks, for example, to those looking for information about the deceased members of their families.

Mormons attach a great importance to health, forbidding their faithful to consume coffee, tea, tobacco, and alcohol, including lower-alcohol drinks such as beer; in this respect, they are similar to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Mormons practice a tithe of ten percent of personal income. In the Book of Mormon, one can find traces of the interest in the subject of social divisions and the search for the causes of their formation. In this context, mixing social and religious issues is clearly visible.

Image 63: The Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah, US



Source: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/d4/b6/54/d4b65449dfed32600f0cdf26f32f4a1d.jpg>

³¹¹ ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* <<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/learn/about-us?lang=eng>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

VII.4.3. Organization

Mormons exhibit considerable discipline in their religious life and their church organization is hierarchical: it is led by a council of 12 apostles and a president, who is described as a “prophet”, and his advisers.³¹² The apostles themselves choose their successors. After the president’s death, the oldest apostle in office assumes the office.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints aims to make sure all its male believers join the ranks of its priests (this resembles the concept of “common priesthood”). They distinguish between two types of priesthood: priesthood according to Aaron, whereby men preach the “gospel of penance” and perform baptism rite; and priesthood according to Melchizedek, which gives the right to govern the Church and perform important rites, including the “gifts of the Holy Spirit”. The priesthood of Melchizedek is considered to be a higher degree of initiation.

There is no gender equality among the Mormons; women are not allowed to serve in the Church offices. On the other hand, they are more progressive in terms of “racial equality”, since 1978, the non-white followers of Mormonism can be ordained, made possible by each president of the organization “receiving revelations”. Similar situations of “correcting” one’s own ideological line had occurred before, and the most notable example in this respect was the abolition of polygamy.

Every young man belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is also committed to “missionary work” for two years. As part of this work, young men are sent to other countries, learning the languages spoken there and making themselves acquainted with the cultures prevailing there. In this way, they gain significant knowledge about different cultures as well as the ability to acquire new followers.

VII.4.4. Economic and Political Significance

Mormons were, for a long time, deprived of the possibility of effective participation in political life and perceived by a large part of American society as “suspects,” secretive polygamists and *sui generis* “freaks”. In this situation, the members of the Church concentrated on providing their community with the best possible living conditions. From the beginning of its existence, they have also attached a great importance to hygiene and “progressive architecture”, taking into account not only

³¹² “Do Latter-day Saints believe in modern-day prophets?”

Yes. The Church is governed today by apostles, reflecting the way Jesus organized His Church in biblical times. Three apostles constitute the First Presidency (consisting of the president, or prophet of the Church, and his two counselors), and together with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, they have responsibility to lead the Church worldwide and serve as special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each is accepted by Church members in a prophetic role corresponding to the apostles in the Bible.’ ‘Latter-day Saints 101: What Church Members Believe’, *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* <<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/latter-day-saints-101>> [10 December 2022].

the needs of the present moment, but also those of the future. Salt Lake City has become a special “testing ground for creative ideas”, and as a result, the Mormons have managed to create agglomerations adapted to the growing needs of the population.

Table 9: Top Mormon Colleges and Universities

1.	Brigham Young University-Hawaii
2.	Dixie State University
3.	Snow College
4.	LDS Business College
5.	Brigham Young University-Idaho
6.	Utah Valley University
7.	Utah State University
8.	Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions
9.	Brigham Young University-Provo
10.	Mountain View Seminary
11.	University of Utah
12.	Weber State University
13.	Southern Virginia University
14.	Westminster College
15.	Salt Lake Community College
16.	Southern Utah University
17.	Eastern Arizona College
18.	Utah Tech University
19.	Provo Missionary Training Center
20.	Ensign College

Source: Lucia, ‘Top Mormon Colleges And Universities’, *Betastudies*, 3 November 2022 <<https://betastudies.com/top-mormon-colleges-and-universities/>> [accessed on 29 August 2023]

Mormons have dealt with matters of business from the very beginning. The ethos of the colonists, forced to live in difficult conditions, played a significant role in this and in cultivating an economy largely based upon autarky. During this time, a specific cult of entrepreneurship and overcoming difficulties arose, promoting behavior that would lead to later economic success. The Church also played a prominent role in solving social and economic problems. The Mormon-dominated state of Utah achieved a lot in terms of order, hygiene, and social safety. An important factor is that the Church has a disciplined and professional staff; in this respect, it is difficult to overestimate the role of educating a host of missionaries who, after completing their service, return to civilian life and use the experience gained for their own well-being and for their ecclesiastical community. The feeling of a kind of “political-cultural” alienation prompted many Mormons to seek compensation in the economic field: the acquired comprehensive education, going beyond “standard theological

training” and containing many psychological and cultural elements necessary for work, proved to be key.

Mormons are also ready to support the business activity of their fellows in faith. This phenomenon occurs in many religious communities for different reasons. For example, one can observe a kind of “economic compensation” amongst minorities who feel discriminated against: as they lack access to some of the higher state functions, they worker harder and are more successful in the domain of business and private capital. This “economic compensation” could also be observed amongst the Puritans in England, whose repression prompted them to actively participate in the process of creating capitalism during the Industrial Revolution. Today such attitudes can be encountered, often also in communities which themselves resign from being active within the existing state structures; an example of this is the New Apostolic Church in Germany. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is thriving, and it has considerable material resources acquired through tithing and its economic activities. This translates, to a large extent, into its political influence: the state of Utah, inhabited by Mormons, is completely under the control of this group.

Table 10: 15 Richest Churches in the World

Ranking	Church organizations	Estimated wealth
1.	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	\$100
2.	Catholic Church in Germany	\$26 billion
3.	Catholic Church in Australia	\$20.5 billion
4.	Seventh-day Adventists (United States)	\$15.6 billion
5.	Church of England	\$11.97 billion
6.	Trinity Church (Episcopal)	\$6 billion
7.	The Vatican (Part of the Catholic Church)	\$4 billion
8.	Episcopal Church (USA)	\$2.4 billion
9.	Opus Dei (Part of the Catholic Church)	\$2 billion
10.	Catholic Church in the Philippines	\$2 billion
11.	Church of Scientology	\$2 billion
12.	Kenneth Copeland Ministries	\$1 billion
13.	Protestant Church of Germany	\$1 billion
14.	Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris	\$1 billion
15.	Basilica of the Sacred Heart located in the University of Notre Dame, Indiana	no data

Source: Venic Nyanchama, '15 richest churches in the world 2021', *tuko*, 28 November 2022
 <<https://www.tuko.co.ke/365971-15-richest-churches-world-2021.html>> [accessed on 28.09.2023]

Mormonism has also gained influence outside Utah. It should be remembered that the Church organization encourages its faithful to be successful; a significant emphasis here is upon economics, in which tithing probably plays the role as well as

the cooperation of companies owned by Mormons, in which the Church participates in various forms.

The elements of Mormon teaching and customs are often echoed in the works of their specialists in the field of management, developed in the course of their struggle for survival as a “community of saints” as well as business and missionary activities; it is in the circles of this religious group that the concept of “organizational culture” has largely developed. Among the most outstanding Mormon specialists in this field, Kim Sterling Cameron and Robert E. Quinn should be mentioned. They made a significant contribution to the development of management, dealing with, among other things, organizational effectiveness.

Currently Mormons show an increased interest in the subject of business and management, distinguishing themselves from other religious communities. They have been very successful in this field both in a practical sense, running a significant number of successful enterprises, and in the aforementioned management theory. Some well-known Mormon businesses include:

- JetBlue (USA)
- JetAzul (Brazil) (airline, founded by David Neeleman).
- Marriott International, Inc. (hotel chain, founded by J. Willard Marriott)
- WordPress Corporation (computer software, co-founded by Alan Ashton)
- 1-800-Contacts (contact lens company, founded by Jonathan C. Coon)
- Bain Capital (financial sector, founded by Willard Mitt Romney)
- Black & Decker Corporation (power tool manufacturing company, founded by Nolan D. Archibald)
- Franklin Covey Company (management training company, founded by Stephen R. Covey and Hyrum W. Smith)
- Huntman Corporation (chemical concern), founded by Jon Meade Huntsman
- SkyWest Airlines (Airline company, founded by Ralph Atkin)
- Nu Skin Enterprises (marketing company, founded by Blake M. Roney)³¹³.

After Mormons “grew into” the landscape of leading American religious groups, they also achieved success in the political life of the United States. A specific culmination of this was the presidential election in 2012, when the counter-candidate for the re-election of Barack Obama was a follower of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Willard Mitt Romney (born in 1947), who was the governor of Massachusetts from 2003 to 2007. For the first time, the followers of Mormonism managed to gain the favor of a large part of the conservative public opinion in the United States, which, representing a wide range of traditional Christian churches, including the evangelical ones, had long been hostile to the “exotic denomination”

³¹³ ‘Businesses that are owned by Latter-day Saints and the Church’, *Moroni Channel*, 7 June 2016 <<https://www.moronichannel.org/entertainment/mormon-lifestyle/businesses-that-are-owned-by-latter-day-saints-and-the-church/>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

of Mormons. Although Romney did not achieve an election victory, his nomination as a candidate for the highest state office on behalf of the Republican Party was a remarkable achievement and success for this businessman, politician, and the activist of the Mormon Church. It should also be indicated that he behaved in a responsible manner during the reign of President Trump, belonging to those Republicans who did not support his proclaimed concept of “stolen elections”.

Table 11: The 10 Richest Mormons in the World

Number	Name	Estimated wealth
1.	James L. Sorenson	\$3.4 billion
2.	Sid Bass	\$1.9 billion
3.	J. Willard (Bill) Marriott	\$1.9 billion
4.	Richard Marriott	\$1.8 billion
5.	Richard Taylor Peery	\$1.7 billion
6.	Roger W. Sant	\$1.7 billion
7.	Jim Jannard	\$1.7 billion
8.	Jon Huntsman	\$1 billion
9.	Carlos Wizard Martins	\$1 billion
10.	David Neeleman	\$400 million

Source: Lily Wordsmith, ‘The 10 Richest Mormons in the World’, *Money Inc*, 3 April 2023 <<https://moneyinc.com/richest-mormons/>> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

Despite the significant “opening up” of Mormons, this group is treated by other religious organizations classified as “mainstream Christianity” with a certain amount of reserve and suspicion. What is not without significance here (regardless of the aforementioned cultural and doctrinal specificity of Mormonism), is the fact that it uses symbolism reminiscent of the Masons³¹⁴. Researchers also pay attention to the “mystery” of Mormons, visible in ceremonies, in the prohibition of talking about rituals, and in the necessity to keep various “Church secrets”.

³¹⁴ “Some early Latter-day Saints were Masons. Heber C. Kimball, Hyrum Smith, and others belonged to Masonic lodges in the 1820s, and Joseph Smith joined the fraternity in March 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois. Soon after he became a Mason, Joseph introduced the temple endowment. There are some similarities between Masonic ceremonies and the endowment, but there are also stark differences in their content and intent.” ‘Masonry’, *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, <<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/masonry?lang=eng>> [accessed on 28 August 2023];

“The roots of Mormonism definitely seem to lie somewhat in Freemasonry but it is important to note that many different groups use similar imagery and rituals. The most important thing to realize is that Joseph Smith took from many different sources to create what became Mormonism and the Church of Latter Day Saints. The parallels of Mormonism and Freemasonry are not a strong argument to be used in apologetics unless followed with hard facts about the differences between Protestant beliefs and Mormon beliefs.” ‘The Masonic Roots of the Cult of the Latter Day Saints, Mormonism’. *Disintr*, 19 April 2019 <<https://disintr.com/2019/04/19/the-masonic-roots-of-the-cult-of-the-latter-day-saints-mormonism/>> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

VII.5. New Apostolic Church

This religious organization originates from the Catholic Apostolic communes³¹⁵ which were influenced by the British chiliastic movement related to Millerism³¹⁶. A number of them were founded in Germany. The ideological basis of this religious group was the conviction that Christ's Second Coming (the Parousia) would take place soon. In anticipation of this, they wanted to return to the early Christian tradition of having a college consisting of 12 apostles. According to this idea, a dozen apostles was chosen. However, when they began, in the course of time, to die and the foretold eschatological event did not take place, consternations arose.

Image 64: Albury Conference



Source: <https://www.nak-info.de/images/175nfamy-konferenz-960.jpg>

Most of the members of the Catholic Apostolic group decided not to choose new apostles. However, Heinrich Geyer (1818-1896) in Germany opted for a different solution. After he attempted to appoint a new apostle, he was excommunicated and left the Catholic Apostolic Church with his followers in 1863. The events of 1863 were named the Hamburg Schism because of the place where they happened. Although Geyer himself quickly ceased to play a significant role among his supporters, the New Apostolic Church originated from this group. In 1906 the new community adopted the name of the New Apostolic Church³¹⁷. Singer explains further:

³¹⁵ Edward Irving (1792-1834) is considered a main founder of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

³¹⁶ Margaret Thaler Singer with Janja Lalich, *Sekten: Wie Menschen ihre Freiheit verlieren und wieder gewinnen können*, trans. by Gabriele Kudy (Heidelberg: Carl-Auer-Systeme Verlag, 1997), pp. 60-69.

³¹⁷ "Some members of the Catholic Apostolic Church in North Germany began to be concerned about the survival of the church when six of its 12 apostles had died by 1860. They rallied around Heinrich Geyer, who believed that the deceased apostles should be replaced by new ones; when he began to choose such successors, he was excommunicated by the parent body. The dissenters organized the Universal Christian Apostolic Mission whose name was changed to the New Apostolic Church in 1906." 'New Apostolic Church', *Encyclopedia.com* <<https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/new-apostolic-church>> [accessed 24 November 2022].

Due to the revival in the 1830s in Great Britain, many people turned to prayers. Soon after, in 1832, the Catholic Apostolic Church was formed and the apostles were ordained. However, a disagreement, historically known as the ‘Hamburg Schism’, arose due to different individual interpretations over the Holy Scripture and calling new apostles. The Hamburg Schism led to the formation of the New Apostolic Church in 1863. On the other side of the globe, German immigrants founded the first New Apostolic Church in 1872 in Chicago in the United States of America³¹⁸.

After the death of the last member of the college, the Catholic Apostolic group was unable to celebrate the sacraments due to the refusal to appoint more apostles to replace the dead. The consequence of this state of affairs was the gradual disappearance of this group. Where it has still survived, it uses the sacraments celebrated in other Christian churches. Geyer’s group, however, saw a further “expansion” of the concept of the apostolate and a strong development of its missionary activity. The New Apostolic Church still stands on the ground of chiliasm, believing in the coming of the millennial kingdom of Christ, which is associated with the conviction that there will be two resurrections: the first of the righteous and the general one at the Last Judgment. The group recognizes three sacraments: baptism, the Lord’s Supper (in the form of receiving the communion wafer) and “sealing” by the laying of hands on the baptized; through this last ceremony, the followers are not only assured that they will enter heaven, but also that they will receive divine grace in their earthly life. There are, generally, three church services a week. Blessings are given on the occasions of sacraments and confirmation, weddings, and wedding anniversaries.

Table 12: Number of Members, Congregations, and Ministers of the New Apostolic Church in 2022

Continent	Members	Congregations	Ministers
Africa	8,113,091	47,822	204,098
America	231,419	1,281	6,372
Asia	454,138	3,392	6,690
Europa	439,447	2,316	17,100
Australia, Oceania	140,398	851	7,109
Total	9,378,493	55,662	241,369

Source: ‘Die Neuapostolische Kirche in Deutschland’, *Neuapostolische Kirche in Deutschland* <<https://www.nak.de/kirche#:~:text=Die%20Neuapostolische%20Kirche%20z%C3%A4hlt%20%C3%BCber,Prozent%20in%20Australien%20beziehungsweise%20Ozeanien.>> [accessed on 29 August 2023].

³¹⁸ Marie Singer, ‘What You Should Know About Apostolic Church’, *Market Business News*, 3 January 2021 <<https://marketbusinessnews.com/about-apostolitic-church/255217/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

The New Apostolic community sees its purpose primarily in waiting for the fulfilment of biblical predictions and forbids its members to participate in the socio-political life of the countries in which they live. The members of the Church devote a considerable attention to organizational matters, treating them as a “common good”. According to the Church:

The New Apostolic Church does not levy any church taxes or other obligatory contributions, but is rather financed by the voluntary donations of its members. Donations can be placed anonymously into the offering boxes in the local congregations or transferred to an account of the Church.

By far the largest portion of revenues are applied to the construction and maintenance of church buildings and thus directly benefit the local congregations. The Church endeavours to manage with as small an administrative staff as possible. The funds are applied exclusively to the execution of Church-related projects. Revenues and expenditures are audited by external professionals.

Pastoral and organisational duties in the congregations and districts are performed on a voluntary basis. Where such commitments necessarily become a fulltime activity—for example, at the level of the Apostle ministry – they become paid positions.

All acts and blessings that are dispensed in the Church, such as baptisms, wedding blessings, or funerals are performed free of charge.³¹⁹

The New Apostolic Church has, according to its own estimates, 9.38 million believers in the world³²⁰.

One can notice a positive attitude towards work and entrepreneurship among the members of this community, which has attracted a number of people with their own businesses. In Germany, the Würth family³²¹ is one of the most significant in this respect³²².

³¹⁹ ‘Means to an end: finances’, *New Apostolic Church International* <<https://nak.org/en/church/finances>> [accessed on 19 November 2022].

³²⁰ “The New Apostolic Church is a community that spans the globe: it incorporates some 9.38 million members in nearly 200 countries of the world (as of 31 December 2022). About 86 per cent of the Church’s members live on the African continent, while 4.8 per cent live in Asia, 4.7 per cent in Europe, 2.5 per cent in North, Central, and South America, and 1.5 per cent in Asia and Oceania. The Church’s more than 55,000 congregations are served by a good 240,000 ministers. That is around 142,000 priestly ministers and approximately 99,000 Deacons under the leadership of 358 Apostles.” ‘NAC worldwide: the key figures’, *New Apostolic Church International* <<https://nak.org/en/church/factsfigures>> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

³²¹ Christian Puffe, ‘„Beten und Arbeiten“ als Lebensmaxime’, *NAktuell*, 19 October 2004 <<http://www.naktuell.de/1004/1004004.html>> [accessed on 20 November 2022].

³²² In 2023, Forbes listed Reinhold Würth and his family in fifth place in its ranking of the richest Germans. His fortune is estimated at \$16.6 billion. ‘Das sind die zehn reichsten Deutschen’, *Handelsblatt*, 15 February 2023 <<https://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/ranking-2023-das-sind-die-zehn-reichsten-deutschen/25730214.html>> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

Image 65: The New Apostolic Church in Hamburg



Source: Archives of the Institute of Education and European Integration in Hamburg.
Photo taken by Caroline Janik

VII.6. The Lectorium Rosicrucianum

The Lectorium Rosicrucianum, which uses the symbols of a triangle and a cross, was founded in Harlem, the Netherlands³²³ in 1924 by Jan van Rijckenborgh (1896-1968),³²⁴ who was influenced by Theosophy and Gnosticism. The group's goal was to revive Protestantism in the spirit of the Renaissance; John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), considered to be the founder of modern pedagogy, was supposedly influenced by this concept³²⁵. An important role in the doctrine of this group is the concept of people chosen to transmit to mankind the mysteries of existence, endowed with energy and special qualities, and delegated by extraterrestrial bodies, or “messengers of light”. The name of the organization refers to the legendary figure of Christianus

³²³ Other dates for this event, e.g. 1935, are also given.

³²⁴ His real name was Jan Leene. “After the death of Z.W. Leene in 1938, Jan Leene and H. J. Leene Stok-Huizer continued with the work. Using their pen names Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, they published many books and over the decades built an international spiritual school.” ‘History of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum’, *Lectorium Rosicrucianum International School of the Golden Rosycross* <<https://www.goldenrosycross.ie/history>> [accessed on 5 December 2022].

³²⁵ Rene Descartes (1596-1650) has also been associated with the ideology of the “historical Rosicrucian”.

Rosencreutz, who allegedly lived sometime between the years 1378-1484; this fictional character was created by Evangelical theologian Johannes Valentinus Andreae (1586-1654)³²⁶. The ideal represented by Rosencreutz disappeared and reappeared in different historical epochs and ideologies, including Christian and the Masonic movements. Over time, it has lost its original meaning, assuming different ideological features.

The contemporary Lectorium Rosicrucianum was founded in accordance with in the Theosophical and Gnostic tradition. According to their website:

The Lectorium Rosicrucianum (LRC) is a gnostic spiritual school. The aim of this school is to achieve the original Christian initiation path of transfiguration.”³²⁷ This religious group believes that man is undergoing cycles of re-births. The goal promoted by the Lectorium Rosicrucianum is to “break” this line of reincarnation by the appropriate transfiguration of the atomic structure of our body.³²⁸

At the bottom of the organization of the LRC, there are self-financed town centers, subject to national structures.³²⁹ “Structure: the basic organizational unit is a self-financing town center, reporting to the national board. One or more town centres are attached to a conference centre, where retreats or ‘conferences’ are held monthly”³³⁰. Information on the size of this group is not clear; it is estimated that the number of their members may range from 11,000 to 40,000. The strongest structures of this organization are in the Netherlands, Germany, and Brazil. After the death of Jan Leene, the governing board is in charge of the LRC³³¹.

Even though the Lectorium Rosicrucianum does not show any particular interest in economic issues, it seems to have considerable material resources at its disposal. This may result from the close relations of the authorities of this organization with its members, who are subtly motivated to provide it with appropriate amounts of money³³².

³²⁶ Walter Schmidt, *Botschaften aus der Jenseits?* (Stuttgart: Quell, 1998), pp. 53-81.

³²⁷ ‘Goal of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum’, *Lectorium Rosicrucianum International School of the Golden Rosycross* <<https://www.goldenrosycross.ie/goal-of-the-lectorium-rosicrucianum>> [accessed on 25 November 2022].

³²⁸ “The aim of this school is to achieve the original Christian initiation path of transfiguration. The pupils of the LRC are those who have a yearning for a spiritual renewal of life.” *ibid.* [accessed on 5 December 2022].

³²⁹ Plasticrosecross, ‘An overview of Lectorium Rosicrucianum’, *reddit* <https://www.reddit.com/r/cults/comments/8gyiut/an_overview_of_lectorium_rosicrucianum/> [accessed on 20 November 2022].

³³⁰ *ibid.*

³³¹ *ibid.*

³³² “Pupils pay a monthly fee comparable to the local gym membership, and vow to: be (ovo-lacto or stricter) vegetarian, not smoke, not drink alcohol, not use drugs, not wear leather items other than shoes, and not belong to any other spiritual or religious group. If they belong or belonged to one at the time of

It is worth mentioning that the Lectorium Rosicrucianum underwent divisions; for example, after the death of van Rijckenborgh in 1968, a group under the leadership of his son, Henk Leene, called the “Esoteric Community of Sivas”, seceded. Other famous Rosicrucian organizations are Ordo Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (Order of Rose of Ruby and Cross of Gold) or Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antiqua (FRA).

Image 66: Symbol of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum



Source: https://4.bp.blogspot.com/_Jt0L0mAf6QQ/TP6nmJaKQkI/AAAAAAAAAEM/Auv8pII0eow/w1200-h630-p-k-no-nu/36736_403535024754_367604764754_4411155_171915_n.jpg

joining, they must commit formal written apostasy and submit proof to governing bodies. In the past, the group at various times forbade tea, coffee, television, and certain medications, and mandated a day of fasting. Higher level pupils also donate to a collection plate at certain times, and everyone must participate to meet extra costs, even if they don't agree to the expenditure.

To progress, pupils must attend their local temple one (set) weekend per month and at least a set number of weekend-long retreats. The number of retreats per year increases with a person's progression, starting from 3 per year and hitting 12 per year. Leeway in attendance is subject to justification". *ibid.* [accessed on 23 November 2022].

VII.7. The Universal Life

This group was created around Gabriele Wittek (born 1933). The beginning of her “road” was in 1970, as she had a paranormal experience where she supposedly saw the astral body of her deceased mother. This encouraged her to carry out an intense “spiritual search”. As a consequence, she recognized that she had been called by Jesus to be his “messenger³³³” and she gathered supporters around her. From 1980 she considered herself a person remaining in close relations with God (*Prophetin der Jetztzeit*), and, in the mid-1980s, she named her organization “Universal Life” (*Universelles Leben*).³³⁴ Its mission, apart from the promotion of “messages”, includes the promotion of primitive Christianity. Wittek’s teachings also included elements of esotericism containing the threads of the Far East religions combined with the apocalyptic. As explained on the group’s website:

The Universal Life is the universal stream of life, which goes out from the eternal Father and which Jesus of Nazareth taught us and lived as an example for us. (...) The Son of God came to us human beings from the universal stream of life. He was a prophet of God, the proclaimer of God, His Father, just like all prophets who came before and after Him. (...)

*On the cross, Jesus of Nazareth became the victor and, thus, the Redeemer of all people and souls. With His inner strength and His faithfulness to God, His heavenly Father, He defeated the desire and the will of the demons to dissolve God’s All-creation. He is the Christ of God, who came from the heavenly Father to us human beings, and for us human beings.*³³⁵

One can find in this ideological conglomerate of Wittek teachings on reincarnation, karma and the criticism of the Christian churches. The idea of the redemption of humankind proclaimed by her differs from the traditional one; as a result of his

³³³ “Followers of Jesus of Nazareth do not form external communities in the traditional sense, where spokespeople are at the head of the community and where members of the community turn into lemmings. The following of Jesus of Nazareth rests on the common bond of people who get along well, because they are a part of the Free Spirit. Jesus of Nazareth taught us people according to the following: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Again and again we are asked where such free communities are located. For those who seek an open and free community, we advise the following: If you know anyone of like mind, then you can simply and easily meet every now and then to pray together and for a spiritual exchange, in order to learn from one another and grow and mature spiritually.” ‘Where Can You Inform Yourself on/About/Regarding the Message of the Free Spirit?’, *Das Universelle Leben Aller Kulturen Weltweit e.V.* <<https://universelles-leben.org/en/learn-more/>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

³³⁴ Previously, it was called *Heimholungswerk Jesu Christi* (“The Work of Returning to Jesus Christ”).

³³⁵ ‘The Worldwide Original Christian Stream – Original Christians in the Following of Jesus of Nazareth, the Free Cosmic Spirit’, *Das Universelle Leben Aller Kulturen Weltweit e.V.* <<https://universelles-leben.org/en/>> [accessed on 3 December 2022].

death, Christ should abolish the bad karma of mankind (*das Menschenkarma getilig*), but each human being must personally deserve salvation. According to Wittek, the Bible is full of falsehoods. Regardless of her skeptical attitude towards the Scriptures, some parts of it are treated with respect; one of them is the Sermon on the Mount, regarded as completely trustworthy³³⁶.

Image 67: Gabriele Wittek



Source: <https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.bPRwZkCvLCVjqa8kYl2PggAAAA?pid=ImgDet&rs=1>

The followers of the Universal Life are forbidden to consume meat and coffee and the group produces and sells food with “positive energy”. A significant hallmark of the doctrine of this group is the expectation of the end of the world and the “millennial kingdom”. Moreover, it is active in the field of alternative medicine (*Christusklinik*)³³⁷ and pedagogy, establishing various organizations subordinated to the headquarters³³⁸. The number of believers of this group is estimated at 100,000, of which around 40% live in Germany. Approximately 800 people belonging to this group live in “housing communities” in this country.

The Universal Life broadcasts radio and television programs using its media structures: Radio Universelles Leben, die Neue Zeit TV and Neu Jerusalem TV. In addition to topics related to the religious doctrine of this group, they also discuss

³³⁶ Gaser, Muller and Valentin, ‘Universelles Leben’, *Lexikon der Sekten, Sondergruppen und Weltanschauungen*, pp. 1106-1109.

³³⁷ Rausch, *Sekten. 99 Fragen*, pp. 110-111.

³³⁸ Nicolette Bohn, *Kleines Lexikon der Sekten, Psychogruppen und Strukturvertriebe* (Padeborn: Volt-media, 2007), pp. 191-192.

issues related to the promotion of the idea of pacifism and vegetarianism. Apart from controversial medical practices, this group demonstrates significant business and managerial skills.

VII.8. Jakob Lorber and Cosmic Christianity

Jakob Lorber was born on 22nd June 1800 as the son of a peasant in Kanischa, Austria. Gifted with musical abilities, he obtained elementary education in the violin, piano, and organ. Using own skills, he earned money while attending school in Marburg, playing as a church organist there. In 1829 he obtained a primary school teaching diploma in Graz. Because he failed to find a suitable position, he gave music lessons for various instruments and singing, as well as composed and, occasionally, gave concerts. Simultaneously, Lorber was reading theosophical writings which had a great influence upon his subsequent activity. The authors whose works he became acquainted with include Emanuel Swedenborg, Justinus Kerner and Johann Tennhardt.

The turning point in Lorber's life was on 15th March 1840, when he heard "an inner voice"³³⁹ ordering him to record the contents of the message that God decided to entrust to him. He declined the previously accepted position of bandmaster at the local opera house in Trieste and accepted a new vocation, becoming the "Scribe of God". Until the end of his life on 24th August 1864, he tirelessly wrote religious books that made him a classic of "cosmic Christianity". There are elements in his work that, in the opinion of his advocates, were ahead of scientific discoveries, although there are many fantastic threads as well³⁴⁰. His greatest works include: *The Moon (Der Mond)*, *Saturn (Der Saturn)*, *Spiritual Sun (Die geistige Sonne)*, *Youth of Jesus (Die Jugend Jesu)*, *From Hell to Heaven (Von der Hölle bis zum Himmel)* and the *Great Gospel of John (Das große Evangelium Johannes)*. The basis of Lorber's considerations regarding the nature of the universe is the assumption that the universe is not built, as the representatives of many philosophical schools proclaim, from matter, but from energy. This concept, as the followers of the "Scribe of God" emphasize, seems to find confirmation in the recent discoveries of nuclear physics. God has, according to Lorber, a spiritual nature and is the infinite cause of all being. Among God's attributes, Lorber listed love, wisdom, and willpower. The Holy Spirit fills the entire universe as the "soul of the world".

³³⁹ Jakob Lorber, *Ein Man hört eine Stimme* (Bietigheim, Germany: Lorber Verlag, no date given), p. 3-8.

³⁴⁰ Jakob Lorber, *The Great Gospel of John Volume 1*, trans. by Jürgen Pless (Bietigheim, Germany: Lorber Verlag, 2005), pp. 8-559.

As a result of divine activity, the first angels, which had the power to emanate similar creatures in large quantities (“legions”), arose. These beings, by obeying the divine order, were elevated to a state resembling divine. However, some of them, under the leadership of Lucifer (Satan), who had fallen into self-admiration, rebelled and, because of the interruption of connection with God and the lack of divine life energy, “thickened”, or “petrified”, into matters. In this way, from the materialization of spiritual, ethereal beings, a fog composed of the primeval material of the world was created. God did not want the rebellious creations to remain forever in this “petrified” state and formed the primordial cosmos out of it, but the Act of Creation was not finished at that point; this substance also is subject to transformation, losing its original character and reaching higher and higher stages of development. The “satanic sparks of life” that appear during this process are trained by angels in the natural world and pass successively to higher forms of being, which assume the shapes of minerals, plants, animals and, finally, people. The task of this process is to combat diabolical selfishness and ensure the spiritual advancement of fallen creatures so as to allow the divine order to be restored. This is to be done through love³⁴¹. A person who arises from satanic matter, into which God “breathed the spirit”, has a chance to demonstrate obedience to the laws of eternal order “in the proof of their good faith”³⁴² and attain eternal life. God extended a helping hand to people by sending Jesus Christ to them and, thus, showing the way to return to oneself. The presentation of the problem of the Holy Trinity by Lorber is interesting: the Divinity Center is God the Father, Jesus is the Son of God, and the rays that come from God are the Holy Spirit.

The most important commandment given to humankind by the Creator is to love God and one’s neighbor, and it is through following this commandment that one can overcome the bondage of matter and attain spiritual birth. According to Lorber, only a few people manage to do it during their lifetime. The imperfect majority are transferred, after their demise, to another realm, where they experience a *sui generis* daydream and, after seeing a film flashback of their life, they undergo a kind of spiritual inspection, after which, depending upon the moral quality of their life, they experience a paradise pleasure or hellish suffering. Heaven and Hell are not understood as particular places, but as peculiar “psychical states” that are not eternal. Selfish souls very attached to the earthly life can be reincarnated both on our planet and in other parts of the universe. People who have reached the appropriate degree of development in the love of God and one’s neighbor are allowed to enter the real heaven, composed of three levels. Access to each of its next levels is related to the advancement of moral human development.

³⁴¹ Kurt Eggenstein, *Der Prophet Jakob Lorber* (Köln: Verlag Waldemar Proske, 1984), pp. 448-454; Jakob Lorber, *Das große Evangelium Johannes, Band 1* (Württemberg: Lorber Verlag, 1988), pp. 94-95.

³⁴² Eggenstein, *Der Prophet Jakob Lorber*, pp. 151-155.

Image 68: Jakob Lorber



Source: <https://beruhmte-zitate.de/media/authors/185nfam-lorber.jpg>

The movement initiated by Lorber is undoubtedly an interesting attempt at building a bridge between religious faith³⁴³ and the sphere of rational human thought. In the movement there is also a strong accentuation on the need to follow moral principles as well as that of practicing love. His adherents see themselves as the apostles

³⁴³ Jakob Lorber, *The 12 Hours* (Quispamsis, Canada: Lorber Publications, 2010), pp. 13-70 <<https://ia802903.us.archive.org/24/items/TheLordAsAPoorManHG2/The-12-HOURS-Excerpts.pdf>> [accessed dn. 28 August 2023].

of “synthesis” between Christianity and scientific knowledge. The position of this movement in publishing is strong; after the death of Lorber, his works were printed by Johann Christoph Friedrich Landbeck at the Publishing House in Bietigheim, Baden-Württemberg. The total number of copies of his publications is now estimated at a million copies. Due to the relatively small role assigned by Lorber to religious ritualism and cult, his followers did not form cohesive structures, though some of them operated in the Neu-Salems-Gesellschaft, founded in 1924, which was banned by the Nazis in 1937. After the war, the reborn organization resumed his work and in 1947 adopted the name “Lorber-Gesellschaft”³⁴⁴.

In this context, the establishment of the Divine Word Foundation by Hans von Koerber and Fred Bunger in the English language domain is noteworthy. As explained on their website:

*The Divine Word Foundation was established by Dr. Hans von Koerber and Fred Bunger, who met in 1953, drawn together by a passion for the teachings of the New Revelation. The Foundation was originally incorporated as a non-profit in the state of California in 1962 and is governed by a voluntary board of directors. The primary purpose of the Foundation is to publish the translated works of the New Revelation, and to support the translating which it has faithfully done for the past 60 years*³⁴⁵.

The followers of the “Scribe of God” are attempting to spread his ideas in various churches and religious groups. Lorber’s movement has not played a significant role due to the small size of the structures which it created, but it has influenced various religious and philosophical circles, including the readers of the theosophical literature as well as those who are interested in the subject of UFOs. Lorber’s legacy also proved valuable from an organizational and managerial point of view, inspiring the creation of media structures to disseminate his ideas.

VII.9. Christian Science

Christian Science evolved from the New Thought Movement, which originated in the United States in the early 19th century; the New Thought Movement referred not only to Christianity, but also to ancient idealistic philosophy as well as to mesmerism and Spiritualism. The main representatives of this organization include Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, Emma Curtis Hopkins, Malinda Cramer, and Mary Caroline Fillmore. The founder of Christian Science and its main figure was Mary Baker

³⁴⁴ Bohn, *Kleines Lexikon der Sekten, Psychogruppen und Strukturvertriebe*, pp. 124-125.

³⁴⁵ ‘Foundation’, *Divine Word Foundation* <<https://divinewordfoundation.org/about-us/>> [accessed on 20 November 2022].

Eddy (1821-1910). She presented a religious doctrine largely dominated by the Gnostic view of the world, had contacts with the participants in the New Thought Movement, and even collaborated with some of them³⁴⁶.

According to Baker Eddy, God is a spirit. She understood the Trinity differently than most of Christianity, believing in three separate persons rather than in one. She indicated the fact that the existing Christian churches emphasized his patriarchal “fatherhood”, forgetting about the divine “motherhood” of the Supreme Being. According to Eddy, “Father-Mother is the name for Deity, which indicates His tender relationship to His spiritual creation”³⁴⁷.

Baker Eddy was convinced that matter was just an illusion and she expressed this view many a time in her publications³⁴⁸. The consequence of the “immateriality” of all beings was the rejection of the concept of “somatic diseases”. She associated their occurrence with the effects of sins and believed that they should be opposed at a spiritual level. Consequently, Christian Science eliminated from its organization anything resembling traditional medicine, focusing upon “spiritual healing”, which was adopted as a great goal for Christian Science. This, in turn, led to the development of a specialized formation for “combating diseases”, their treatment, in turn, is understood as a proof of the truthfulness of what is taught and proclaimed by this group³⁴⁹.

Baker Eddy focused her attention upon the presentation of the philosophy of Christian Science and the issue of healing. She writes:

*Healing the sick and reforming the sinner are one and the same thing in Christian Science. Both cures require the same method and are inseparable in Truth. Hatred, envy, dishonesty, fear, and so forth, make a man sick, and neither material medicine nor Mind can help him permanently, even in body, unless it makes him better mentally, and so delivers him from his destroyers. The basic error is mortal mind. Hatred inflames the brutal propensities. The indulgence of evil motives and aims makes any man who is above the lowest type of manhood a hopeless sufferer*³⁵⁰.

In her search for an adequate definition of the essence of the disease, she came to the conclusion that it is a “false sense of the patient”³⁵¹.

³⁴⁶ Mainly with Phineas Parkhurst Quimby and Emmy Curtis Hopkins. The latter was a member of Christian Science for a while, but eventually left the ranks of this organization and practiced “New Thought” with addition of Oriental and Theosophical flavor.

³⁴⁷ Mary Baker Eddy, *Wissenschaft und Gesundheit mit Schlüssel zur Heiligen Schrift* (Boston, MA: The First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1998), p. 332.

³⁴⁸ Heaven is, according to Baker Eddy, a divinely inspired state of consciousness.

³⁴⁹ Healing, according to Baker Eddy, constituted a significant part of Jesus’ activities.

³⁵⁰ Baker Eddy, *Wissenschaft und Gesundheit mit Schlüssel zur Heiligen Schrift*, pp. 404-405.

³⁵¹ “Sickness is neither imaginary nor unreal, – that is, to the frightened, false sense of patient. Sickness is more than conviction. It is, therefore, to be dealt with through right apprehension of the through being.” *ibid.*, p. 460.

What is worth noting is Baker Eddy's peculiar approach to the role of the English language in keeping Christian Science "pure": she believed that her concepts were so firmly embedded in English that they could not be properly understood if translated into other languages; hence, only presented her publications only in the original. However, soon after her death, the translations of her books, including the most important of them, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, were published. The first edition in the German language appeared in 1912, published together with the original English version³⁵².

Although the idea of healing "without medicine" was not new (it was practiced by Quimby, among others), Baker Eddy gave it a very specific form combined with sophisticated ideology. While presenting her own religious concept, she was aware that it was original and innovative. She developed a very practical "product" that allowed Christian Science not only to gain "spiritual power" over its members, but also to educate large numbers of "Church-recognized healers" using her healing techniques to earn money³⁵³. In fact, Christian Science has taken a prominent place in the field of "healing by faith", has "standardized" this occupation and allows the organization promoting it to collect fees from those wishing to undergo "spiritual healing".

Christian Science is a wealthy organization and it did not require much time for it to become affluent³⁵⁴. A significant source of its income has been constituted by its own publications. These, primarily, include the books and articles of Baker Eddy

³⁵² "All Christian Science publications sell for large and, from a commercial standpoint, what would be regarded as excessive prices. The most important book, 'Science and Health,' which, in its cheapest form, costs considerably less than a dollar to manufacture is sold for \$3.18. Practically all of the hundred and thirty-six official publications of the church sell at similarly high rates. The latest enterprise is a German translation of 'Science and Health.' Until the year before her death Mrs. Eddy absolutely forbade any translation of this book. She did not believe that her philosophy, with its delicate shadowings of thought and its precise shading of words, could safely be intrusted to any foreign language. The considerable German following – there is a flourishing church in Berlin, one of its distinguished members being the Count Von Moltke, nephew of the great Field Marshal – finally induced her to permit the experiment. The first German translation is published as these lines are written. It is a bulky volume. On one page appears the English in Mrs. Eddy's ipsissima verba. On the opposite page is printed its German translation. This system will be maintained in all future translations. 'Science and Health' will never go forth in any language except side by side with the original English." 'Where Christian Science Gets Its Wealth', *Maclean's*, October 1912 <<https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1912/10/1/where-christian-science-gets-its-wealth>> [accessed on 15 October 2022].

³⁵³ "These practitioners, regular and irregular, probably treat not far from 6,000,000 patients a year and receive in fees an aggregate sum ranging from \$6,000,000 to \$12,000,000. It is estimated, for example, that the average income of the fifty-five hundred advertised practitioners is from \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year, which would make their annual earnings range from \$6,000,000 to \$10,000,000. Many practitioners, of course, earn far more than this average. (...) Science practitioners should make their charges for treatment equal to those of reputable physicians in their respective localities." *ibid.*

³⁵⁴ "The Christian Science Journal, the church monthly, contains a catalogue of nearly sixty pages of Christian Science healers. It is not absolutely necessary for a healer to publish his advertisement in the Journal, but its publication gives him an official indorsement." *ibid.*

herself, such as her main work, *Science and Health*. Ownership of the *Christian Science Monitor* magazine by this organization is also of great importance for its prestige, seriousness, and effectiveness of media impact. As explained in the Maclean's article, 'Where Christian Science Gets Its Wealth':

The Church's most ambitious undertaking in the periodical line is the Christian Science Monitor, its daily two-cent newspaper. (...) The policy of the Monitor is to "feature" or "play up" the "constructive" aspect of life. The feminine mind, which so frequently turns first to the death and marriage notices in a newspaper, meets disappointment here³⁵⁵.

Image 69: Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science

Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) and Christian Science

Eddy built her work on a Boston doctor named PHINEAS PARKHURST QUIMBY (1802-1866) founder of New Thought



She called her book *Science and Health* - became the 'bible' of Christian Science

Source: <https://image.slidesharecdn.com/hist3323-medicineinamerica-120616063303-phpapp02/95/history-of-medicine-in-america-26-728.jpg?cb=1339830065>

While focusing on healing, Christian Science seems to neglect areas important for other religious groups, for example, it has only a rudimentary liturgy. According to the Maclean's article:

There are probably not far from ten thousand men and women – largely women – who, regularly and intermittently, give Christian Science treatment in exchange for fees. Economically and ecclesiastically considered, these men

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*

and women are the foundation of the church. Remove them and Christian Science would not last twenty-four hours. They furnish the church all its converts; it is through their indirect influence that its literature is sold. They give a human interest to an ecclesiastical edifice which is, otherwise, rather cold. How can a church possibly survive, it is urged, that does not 190nfamy190 its members, that does not marry them, that does not bury them – that apparently fails of consolation and sympathy at all the great crises of life? The answer is found in the thousands of men and women, for the most part gracious and sympathetic, who are constantly coming into the closest personal touch with down-cast suffering mankind, consoling, cheering, apparently putting everybody at ease with himself and the world³⁵⁶.

The activities of Christian Science resemble the functioning of a large international company dealing with the promotion of the specific forms of healing, which “standardized” its techniques and achieves huge profits from their “franchising”. It is an extremely effective organization³⁵⁷ from an economic point of view³⁵⁸, with an efficient management system. Interestingly, this group has become largely female-dominated, which is not necessarily the case in religious communities founded by women.

Despite its significant achievements in business activity and management, Christian Science has a bad reputation for its controversial pseudo-medicinal practices. There have been reports of sick people who were not provided with essential medical assistance, as a result of the “healing” work by the group, and who then paid the highest price³⁵⁹. This makes one think about the limits of so-called “religious toleration” in the face of ignoring medical facts by Christian Science and exposing people to dangers to health, and even to life, by this or similar groups.

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*

³⁵⁷ In one way or another, many prominent people have been or are associated with Christian Science, including: Marilyn Monroe, Ellen DeGeneres, Robin Williams, Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, Kelsey Grammer, Ginger Rogers, Joan Crawford, Henry Fonda, Robert Duvall, Val Kilmer, Jim Henson, Alan Shepard, Danielle Steel, Carol Channing, Ernest Hemingway, Doris Day, Bruce Hornsby, James Hetfield, Paul Feig, Spalding Gray, Shannon Miller, J.D. Salinger, Alfre Woodard, Jean Stapleton, George Sisler, and Nile Kinnick. ‘27 Famous Christian Scientists’ *Ranker*, 5 November 2020 <<https://www.ranker.com/list/famous-christian-scientists/celebrity-lists>> [accessed on 29 December 2022].

³⁵⁸ “People earn their living at Christian Science in several ways. It has a large number of readers, teachers and lecturers. Besides, it has one species of worker absolutely unique. The church has thousands of workers in an already well populated professional field – that of healing the sick. This is the work which so largely distinguishes it from other organizations, and which at times has brought down upon its head such popular hostility”. ‘Where Christian Science Gets Its Wealth’, *Maclean’s*.

³⁵⁹ “In many US states, Scientists were exempt from charges of child abuse, neglect and endangerment, as well as from failure to report such crimes. Practitioners with no medical training (they become ‘listed’ after two weeks of religious indoctrination) were recognised as health providers, and in some

VII.10. Fiat Lux

This organization was founded by Swiss born Erika Bertschinger-Eicke (1929-2019), known as Uriella³⁶⁰. Initially nothing indicated that one day she would become a “prophetess”. She grew up in a Catholic family and led a so-called “normal life”. The situation began to change when the future Uriella established her contacts with spiritual circles and circles related to the “new religious messages”. From 1967 she visited the “spiritual lodge” in Zurich. From 1972 she had “seeings” of paranormal beings, which led her to recognize herself in 1975, like Lorber, as the person “chosen to communicate” between Jesus and mankind as a mouthpiece of God. This alleged destiny did not mean that she would resign from her private life and, after the death of her first husband in 1977, she married the industrialist Eberhard Eicke. She was also able to demonstrate achievements in the organizational field: first, she founded the publishing house Lichtquelle Bethanien and then on 12th January 1980 the Order of Fiat Lux³⁶¹.

Image 70: Erika Bertschinger-Eicke (Uriella)



Source: <https://production-livingdocs-bluewin-ch.imgix.net/2019/2/25/6aa44ae2-ea5d-4c63-9584-78d308061862.jpeg?rect=0%2C96%2C1024%2C575&w=994&auto=format>

states were required to report contagious illnesses or cases of child abuse or neglect, even as their religion demanded that they deny the evidence of the physical senses. Practitioners, of course, have no way of recognising the symptoms of an illness, even if they believe it existed, which they don't.” Caroline Fraser, ‘Dying the Christian Science way: the horror of my father’s last days’, *The Guardian*, 6 August 2019 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/06/christian-science-church-medicine-death-horror-of-my-fathers-last-days>> [accessed on 3 December 2022].

³⁶⁰ This is how the archangel Uriel, which is supposed to mean “my light is God”, is referred to.

³⁶¹ In accordance with the Latin Vulgate Bible “let there be light”. Moe, ‘FIAT LUX: An Explanation of “Let There Be Light”’, *Gnostic Warrior* <<https://www.gnosticwarrior.com/flat-lux.html>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

The organization founded by Uriella is included into ufological and catastrophic groups inspired by numerology, esotericism, Theosophy, and also by the religions of the Far East. Fiat Lux announces the approaching end of the world as, according to them, the Earth should be cleaned up by natural disasters. Only “pure spiritual people” (Fiat Lux supporters) will be saved in spaceships, and, after “restoring” the planet, they will return to it. In order to belong to the group of the “chosen” ones, certain conditions must be met, for example, they should resign from “hot” meals, and eat only raw foods instead (raw foodism). They are also prohibited from consuming coffee and tea as well as from using media services such as radio, television, or the press³⁶².

In the past, much controversy was caused by the ban once imposed by Fiat Lux on medical aid for the members of the group (“*Christus alleine ist euer Arzt*”³⁶³). However, due to the occurring death cases of sick followers and the legal problems associated with them,³⁶⁴ the teaching of the group was changed on this point and visits to doctors were allowed. Nevertheless, permitting the use of medical services does not mean that the group has given up on its “medical ambitions;” it regularly undertakes “healing sessions,” during which hands are laid on patients for 15 to 30 minutes. At this time, cosmic energy (*Athrumwasser*) supposedly flows, healing all diseases. This seems to be a kind of “universal therapy” that is also claimed to be effective against mental disorders.

Fiat Lux manages to earn a lot of money selling self-produced food. There are also indications that a considerable profit is generated by draining the pockets of the followers and sympathizers. They spend money not only on the organization’s literature, but also to cover the costs of various courses and therapies offered by Fiat Lux³⁶⁵.

³⁶² “Core Values

F – Faith in God

L – Living with purpose

A – Aiming High

M – Multifaceted learning

B – Benevolent Character

E – Environmental Awareness

A – Authentic Citizenship

U – Unprecedented Excellence”, ‘The Academe’s PVMGO’, *Fiat Lux Academe* <<https://fiatluxgenetri.braineeph.com/about-fla/philosophy-vision-mission-goals-objectives#Goals%20&%20Objectives>> [accessed on 5 November 2022].

³⁶³ “Christ alone is your doctor”.

³⁶⁴ Thomas Kutschera, ‘So lebte Uriella mit ihrer Sekte im Schwarzwald’, *Schweizer Illustrierte*, 1 March 2019 <<https://www.schweizer-illustrierte.ch/stars/schweiz/so-lebte-sektenfuehrerin-uriella-mit-fiat-lux-im-schwarzwald>> [accessed on 15 November 2022].

³⁶⁵ Bohn, *Kleines Lexikon der Sekten, Psychogruppen und Strukturvertriebe*, pp. 72-73.

VII.11. The Living Church of God

The Living Church of God was established in 1998 by Roderick C. Meredith³⁶⁶ as one of the “offshoots” of the direction initiated by Herbert W. Armstrong. The doctrine of this group differs in many respects from that of most Christian churches, for example, it does not consider the Holy Spirit as an independent being, *de facto* reducing the Holy Trinity to the “Divine Two” consisting of the Father and the Son (Binitarianism).

An interesting, though controversial, concept of this group is to assign a special role in the divine plan for the salvation of mankind to Great Britain and the USA³⁶⁷. The Living Church of God sees the populations of these countries as the “10 lost tribes” of Israel.

The intriguing story of how the modern descendants of the patriarch Joseph eventually became Great Britain and the United States of America is told in our free Bible study aid The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy. Much of God’s prophetic plan cannot really be understood without the national identifications carefully laid out in this publication. Both Great Britain and the United States played major roles, one following the other, in the restoration (after nearly 2,000 years) of the Jewish people to nationhood in the Middle East in 1948³⁶⁸.

The Living Church of God prescribes the observance of Old Testament laws against eating “unclean animals” as well as keeping Saturday as the Sabbath day, and forbids its members from participating in the political life of which the state in which they live. The members of this group are allowed to celebrate non-religious holidays as birthdays and New Year; this “liberalization” results from the lack of an official position of the authorities of this community on this subject.

³⁶⁶ Since Meredith’s death in 2017, Gerald E. Weston has directed the activities of this organization.

³⁶⁷ “After the reign of King Solomon, God caused the kingdom of Israel to divide into two separate nations because of Solomon’s sins. (...) Joseph’s descendants became the easiest to identify in contemporary history because the prophetic blessings they were to receive stand out so distinctly (see Genesis 49:22-26 and Deuteronomy 33:13-17).

The intriguing story of how the modern descendants of the patriarch Joseph eventually became Great Britain and the United States of America is told in our free Bible study aid The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy. Much of God’s prophetic plan cannot really be understood without the national identifications carefully laid out in this publication. Both Great Britain and the United States played major roles, one following the other, in the restoration (after nearly 2,000 years) of the Jewish people to nationhood in the Middle East in 1948. The Balfour Declaration in Britain (1917) was followed by U.S. President Harry Truman’s crucial political backing in the late 40s. The destinies of all three nations – biblically known as Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh – are intertwined and will be a big part of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy at the time of the end, albeit in different ways.” ‘Where Are the “Lost 10 Tribes” Today?’, *Beyond Today*, 4 March 2013 <<https://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/where-are-the-lost-10-tribes-today>> [accessed on 25 November 2022].

³⁶⁸ *ibid.*

Image 71: Roderick C. Meredith



Source: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/QBXYjILtuO8/maxresdefault.jpg>

This group is extremely active in the media, reaching large numbers of viewers with its beliefs. It broadcasts the program *Tomorrow's World* on the radio and TV, reaching almost 80 million US residents. The Living Church of God publishes propaganda materials and is active on the Internet. One of the sources of income of this group is the tithe collected from followers, ranging from 10 to 30% of their income³⁶⁹. This organization has about 8,000 members and its headquarters are in Charlotte, North Carolina.

³⁶⁹ Mario Espinosa, *Meet the Living Church of God (Armstrongism Exposed)*, online video recording, YouTube, 24 December 2016 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzXbWcWp3Gg>> [accessed on 19 November 2022].

VIII

Elements of Management in Selected Examples of Destructive Apocalyptic Groups

VIII.1. General Characteristics of Apocalyptic Sects

Among the wide range of contemporary non-orthodox religious groups, so-called “apocalyptic sects” play a special role. This is not because of their numbers, but because of their often strange behavior, which has led to tragedies. These groups try to change the existing world order and refer to the expectations of the “final end”. Not uncommonly, they try themselves to accelerate the global destruction by the use of violence, which poses serious threats to their members and to the societies in which they exist.

It is not an entirely new phenomenon³⁷⁰, in the past, there also have been tendencies to extreme behavior, including sacrificing one’s life on the altar of a “higher cause” in the anticipation of an eternal reward; an example of this is the Middle Eastern groups of assassins, such as the Ismaili group, who were ready to die while completing their mission. What we are encountering today, however, has a fundamentally different social and psychological dimension, as the development of telecommunications renders it possible to widely disseminate dangerous ideologies which threaten public safety.

Of course, not all groups showing apocalyptic interests are dangerous, that is, not all apocalyptic sects are destructive; the vast majority of them do not manifest any murderous or terrorist tendencies, nor do they persuade their members to commit suicide or mutilations. However, they do often create a dangerous ideological and psychological environment, which gives rise to inclinations to extreme behavior that

³⁷⁰ Danielle Kirby and Carole Cusack, *Sects, Cults, and New Religions: An Introduction* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313718111_Sects_Cults_and_New_Religions_An_Introduction> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

does not take into account the rules governing earthly life. The following examples of this type reflect these trends showing the psychosocial and political-economic aspects of the functioning of groups often referred to as dangerous cults. Although the groups classified as extreme religious organizations with apocalyptic tendencies are, to a large extent, syncretistic, in analyzing the sources of their doctrinal concepts, four main ideological categories can be distinguished: 1) referring to Christianity, 2) oriented to Far Eastern religions, 3) inspired by UFOs, and 4) connected to the New Age ideology.

VIII.2. Groups Referring to Christianity

The first one of those four sets is characterized by faith in the imminent end of the world; as a rule, the faith in the thousand-year reign of Jesus, which is to put an end to the existing order of the world, is invoked and used in this context. The most famous quasi-ecclesiastical groups of this type include the Peoples Temple of the Disciples of Christ and the Branch Davidians.

VIII.2.1. The Peoples Temple of the Disciples of Christ

The Peoples Temple of the Disciples of Christ was founded in 1956 in Indianapolis, US, by James Warren (Jim) Jones (1931-1978). Its ideology was a mix of Pentecostal doctrine, the concepts of Martin Luther King, Father Divine, and Gandhi as well as the teaching of communist leaders like Marx, Lenin, and Castro. Jones managed to rally people dissatisfied with the existing social, political, and religious situation in the United States under his banner. The aforementioned Father Divine (ca. 1876-1965) was a black religious leader and campaigner for racial equality, who ascribed divine powers to himself. Jones adopted some of his teachings and some concepts from Father Divine's social movement, the International Peace Mission. His speeches against racism rendered Jones popular with some of the public and he adopted children of different races, creating the so-called "Rainbow Family".

The leader of the Peoples Temple was also involved (in the media, at least) in actions for human rights. His group consisted of people from various social strata in the United States; however, the poor black population was dominant. The members of the Peoples Temple emphasized the positive changes that took place in them under the influence of the "church", for example, the believers addicted to drugs and alcohol were able to free themselves from their addictions. The supporters of the Peoples Temple devoted themselves to working for the community, which was a kind of "functional therapy" as well as gave them a sense of usefulness and self-worth. The price paid for these positive changes was the growing dependence upon the group and its leader. It is ironic that he did not follow the path that he himself

recommended to his “sheep”, in a sense, his actions can be regarded as contradicting his own teachings. Not only did he not abstain from stimulants, but he consumed them excessively, which obviously had an impact on his behavior and decisions, which became less and less predictable.

Over time, he developed a paranoid belief that he was the target of persecution and conspiracies by his broadly defined “enemies”. The followers of the Peoples Temple endured the multiplying cases of ill-treatment by the “charismatic pastor” with remarkable patience. His bisexual excesses also became more and more intense. Perhaps surprising is the indifference of his believers, who not only must have known about his behavior in this regard, but also were often forced to participate in these practices³⁷¹. They did not protest against excesses such as Jones throwing the Bible on the ground and emphasizing his own “mission”.

The gradual degeneration of the personality of Jones went hand-in-hand with the development of the mechanisms of control of the Peoples Temple he had created. He organized an “inner circle”, namely, a type of private police force that was designed to exercise order and use force against the less than fervent and enthusiastic members of the group. From 1961 Jones devoted more and more attention to the subject of the apocalyptic, predicting the imminent end of the world that was to come as a result of the outbreak of a nuclear war.

Throughout his career, the leader of the Peoples Temple developed close ties with influential people from the American establishment, including politicians. As a rule, the latter showed considerable interest in seeking electoral support from various types of religious leaders because ecclesial communities, having developed organizational structures, can mobilize their followers as well as influence public opinion by using the members of their communities as “electoral helpers”. Also important were donations, often from sources that raised (justified) suspicions with which the leader of the Peoples Temple supported his “political friends”. In return for this kind of help, they willingly showed themselves in public with Jones, thus giving his “mission” the appearance of seriousness and recognition on the part of those in power.

Despite the political success, events inside the Peoples Temple took an increasingly disturbing direction in the 1970s: the members of this community were forced to perform slave labor, subjected to humiliating punishments in the event of insubordination, and often imprisoned against their will. The members of the Peoples Temple had, from the beginning, been prepared for “all circumstances”, and once it went so far that a group of guards pretended to distribute poisonous beverages. Only later and after drinking them did the followers find out that it was only an “exercise”. This procedure was referred to as the “loyalty test”. Gradually, Jones’ eccentric and dictatorial behavior brought public criticism on the Peoples Temple. Regardless of

³⁷¹ Marshall Kilduff and Ron Javers, *Suicide Cult* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978), pp. 55-90.

his initially good contacts with the media, increasingly negative opinions about the “pastor” began to appear in them. The police also began to show interest in the activities of the Peoples Temple, alerted by the concerned families of members, and started investigating the activities of the community, reaching increasingly disturbing conclusions. Jones’ reaction to this development was not long in coming; feeling confident that his paranoid fears of a “conspiracy” were justified, he decided to disappear from the eyes of his “persecutors”, leaving the United States and moving the Peoples Temple’s headquarter to Guyana, where the group had purchased grounds, naming the new location Jonestown³⁷².

According to the plan, the community living there should be “autarkic” (self-sufficient), building an ideal society which combined the features of communism with the religious doctrine proclaimed by Jones. In practice, it failed in every way, convincing the paranoid leader, who struggled to hold back a “mass desertion” by terror, that “the end was coming”. The factor that directly accelerated the tragedy was the arrival of senator Leo J. Ryan, who was concerned about the news of the abuse in the Peoples Temple at the camp. He was murdered on 18th November 1978 by Jones’ men and on Jones’ orders, shortly after some members of the Peoples Temple had approached Ryan for help. The murder of a famous politician was a turning point in the history of the sect. After this incident, Jones knew he would be held responsible for his actions. Therefore, he decided to annihilate his religious community, using in practice the “variant of voluntary death”, which had been practiced with his followers many times before. As a result of this, about 900 followers took their own lives.³⁷³ The tragic end of the Peoples Temple was associated with the process of the gradual “incapacitation of the adherents” and the psychological degeneration of its leader, who, endowed with the hallmarks of absolute power, transformed from a religious activist, committed to overcoming the effects of social injustice and racial inequality, into an oppressor of his followers and the perpetrator of their destruction³⁷⁴.

In terms of the management of the sect, the cult of personality was very important, and, with time, assumed monstrous proportions. The leader was supported by selected “helpers” who, in return for their loyalty, could count on a number of privileges. Private property was *de facto* abolished and everything was at the disposal of the leader, who made decisions about the future of the group himself. A lot of riches were obtained by the sect from the slave labor of their faithful. The political influence of Peoples Temple proved possible to maintain for quite a long time owing to the

³⁷² Jeff Guinn, *The Road to Jonestown. Jim Jones and Peoples Temple* (London: Simon & Schuster, New York, 2017) <<https://oceanofpdf.com/authors/jeff-guinn/pdf-epub-the-road-to-jonestown-jim-jones-and-peoples-temple-download-56928158817/>> [accessed on 28 August 2023].

³⁷³ ‘Mass suicide at Jonestown’, *History* <<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/mass-suicide-at-jonestown>> [accessed on 15 December 2022].

³⁷⁴ Kilduff and Javers, *Suicide Cult*, pp. 148-201.

accentuation of its “usefulness” for political parties during elections. It is worth noting that the way of gaining new members and promoting one’s image was charity, which rendered it possible to hide the reactionary tendencies of this group.

Image 72: James Warren Jones and his “Apocalypse”



Source: https://i1.wp.com/nypost.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/08/jimjones_jonestown.jpg?quality=90&strip=all&ssl=1

VIII.2.2. Branch Davidians (Koresh’s Davidians)

Another known extreme apocalyptic group referring to Christianity is the sect known as the Branch Davidians. This group was created after the collapse of the apocalyptic movement led by the Bulgarian American Victor T. Houteff (1885-1955), who, after being expelled from the Seventh-day Adventist Church, founded the General Association of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists. He became infamous for announcing that his “church” would seize control of Palestine, which was to trigger the Apocalypse. This, however, did not materialize, and the author of the prophecy himself died during the “waiting period”. His wife designated the 22nd April 1959 as the final date for the fulfilment of her husband’s “prophecies”, that is, the creation of the Kingdom of David as a result of divine intervention, but when no serious event occurred on this date, the supporters of the General Association of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists felt disappointed. The widow of Houteff dissolved the group in 1961 and its former members joined other apocalyptic sects. Some of them remained at the movement’s headquarters in Texas, Waco, on a farm called the Mount Carmel Centre.

In 1984 25-year-old Vernon Wane Howell (1959-1993) joined the group and named himself David Koresh, in reference to King David and the King Cyrus of Persia. He possessed some leadership skills as well as ruthlessness and a willingness to use violence in order to impose his will. These qualities allowed him to take power in the group and force absolute obedience. Koresh considered himself a supernatural being: he went so far as to describe himself as a “prophet”, “messiah”, and even “Christ”. Under his rule, the Waco group grew in numbers, although it probably did not exceed a few hundred people. Preparing in a somewhat strange way for the end of the world, large amounts of firearms began to be stockpiled on the farm and worship of the leader increased. Tendencies to isolate the faithful from the outside world, including those of their family members who had not decided to accept the “Koresh truth”, also intensified.

Apocalyptic issues played a leading role in the teachings of Koresh and he constantly proclaimed the impending “end of history”. The group was forbidden to eat meat, as they were preparing for a “return to Eden”. The basic criterion for ensuring salvation was unconditional obedience to the leader, who forbade his followers any sexual contacts; the only exception in this regard was himself. He committed numerous acts of promiscuity, during which allegedly even 12-year-old children were abused³⁷⁵. The mental state of the “Davidians” was interesting as they tolerated all the imposed prohibitions and obeyed the orders of their leader. It was possible due to the fascination with Koresh on the one hand, and the fear of repression and social isolation in this group on the other.

There were also the elements of mass hysteria (based upon mental manipulation) and loud faith declarations. Gradually, the situation on the farm became more and more difficult. The reasons for this were twofold. Firstly, the apocalyptic prophecies of Koresh did not materialize, which could be skillfully explained at first, but the manipulation could not continue indefinitely without damaging the image of a “prophet”. Second, the authorities were increasingly concerned about the aggressive rhetoric and armaments of the Davidians, transforming Waco into a stronghold. This created a pressure in the face of which the mentally unbalanced leader was increasingly losing his sense of reality.³⁷⁶ The tragedy occurred in 1993, when the authorities sent a dozen FBI agents to Waco to search the group’s property. A shoot-out ensued, which forced the police to withdraw. This event marked the beginning of a long 51-day siege of the Mount Carmel Center. It ended with a fire which broke out while the facility was being stormed by security forces and claimed the lives of over 80 people, including many women and children. David Koresh was also among those killed³⁷⁷.

³⁷⁵ Schweer, *Die Heilsversprecher: Der Kampf der Sekten um die Seelen*, pp. 130-131.

³⁷⁶ Newport, Kenneth G. C., “‘And Death Shall Follow in His Wake’ (cf. Revelation 6.8): Vernon Howell, David Koresh, and the Branch Davidians, 1986-1993” in: *The Branch Davidians of Waco* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 191-212 <<https://academic.oup.com/book/5757/chapter-abstract/148925841?redirectedFrom=fulltext>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

³⁷⁷ ‘Branch Davidians’, *Encyclopedia.com*, 27 June 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/us-history-biographies/branch-davidians>> [accessed on 19 July 2021].

Image 73: David Koresh and the Waco Tragedy



Source: [https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/2rLZhn4-hb9IhsGeApH30i_WTIw=/768x0/filters:no_upscale\(\):max_bytes\(150000\):strip_icc\(\)/davidkoresh-5b63483346e0fb00259e40bb.png](https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/2rLZhn4-hb9IhsGeApH30i_WTIw=/768x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc()/davidkoresh-5b63483346e0fb00259e40bb.png)

It turned out that it was not the last tragedy: the events in Waco triggered a terrorist action by a former US soldier, Timothy McVeigh (1968-2001), who was outraged by the interference of federal forces in the religious life of the Davidians; in his opinion, this was an attack on the fundamental freedoms of the US citizens. In retaliation, on 19th April 1995, he detonated a car with explosives in front of a federal building in Oklahoma City, as a result of which 168 people were killed and several hundred injured. After a successful investigation, the perpetrator was arrested and sentenced to death, which was carried out on 1st June 2001.

VIII.2.3. The Manson Family

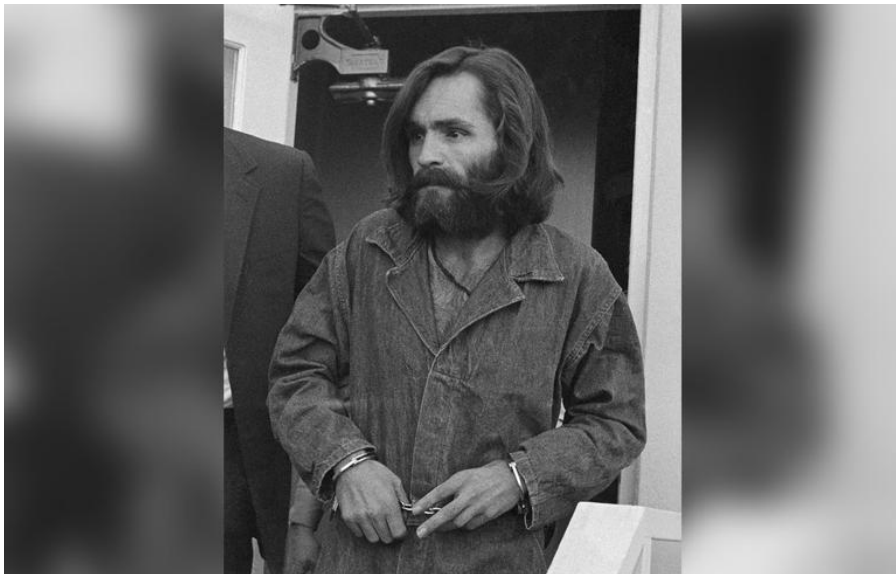
The Manson Family can be included, albeit with some reservations, into the grouping of extreme religious movements referring to Christianity. Charles Manson (1934-2017) founded the group after his release from prison in 1967 as a hippie group which was clearly racist. This racism was manifested not only in the rhetoric used by the members of the group, but also in the prohibition of listening to Black musicians. This group attracted many young women, some of whom came from so-called “good houses”. The main methods of disciplining the group were sexual excesses and drug consumption³⁷⁸. Charles Manson’s apocalyptic teachings included

³⁷⁸ Paul Watkins and Guillermo Soledad, *My Life With Charles Manson* (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), pp. 185-209.

the belief that there was an impending war between the races, which was supposed to happen in 1969. As a result, the Blacks were to exterminate the whites. Only the members of the Family, hidden in a place known to Manson, could survive. Since Black people “due to their slave nature” would not be able to rule, the surviving members of the Family were to claim the power over the world. The Beatles song entitled Helter Skelter, which was claimed to contain a hidden content, was a herald of the upcoming “final events”³⁷⁹, the Beatles played an important role in the teachings of Manson. Furthermore, his appearance was to be announced, in his opinion, in the Revelation of St. John.

To accelerate the fulfilment of the prophecies, the group of Manson committed a series of murders and attempted to mislead the police by falsifying traces and blame African Americans for them. The murders included Sharon Marie Tate Polański (1943-1969), the wife of the director Roman Polański, on 9th August 1969. The group’s activities ended only with the arrests of its members. As a result of the court trial which followed, Manson was sentenced to death; however, he escaped a close call due to a change in the California law system. He spent the rest of his life in prison and died there in 2017.

Image 74: Charles Manson



Source: <https://media.radaronline.com/brand-img/xRsz1SqwL/768x490/2017/11/Charles-manson-dead-crime-scene-photos-03.jpg>

³⁷⁹ John Philip Jenkins, ‘Charles Manson’, *Britannica*, 3 December 2021 <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Manson>> [accessed on 15 August 2022].

The Manson Family was, structurally, a simple cult with an extensive leadership system. It is difficult to talk in this case about managerialism in the classic sense of the word, but Manson certainly used many forms of manipulation which are used in marketing. Drugs and ideological “lessons”, bearing the hallmarks of “brainwashing”, were helpful in controlling followers. Interestingly, the destructive effects of Manson’s teachings continued many years after he had been brought to justice. The most spectacular example of this was the failed assassination attempt on President Gerald Ford in 1975, committed by Lynette Alice “Speaky” Fromme, one of his sect’s members.

VIII.3. Groups Oriented to Far Eastern religions: The Example of Aum Shinrikyo

This category, encompassing dangerous apocalyptic groups originating from Far Eastern religions, is composed of those which draw their ideological inspiration mainly from Buddhism, Hinduism, Shinto, and many local Asian cults, often in a syncretistic way. The most famous, due to the tragic events with its participation, is Aum Shinrikyo (“the Supreme Truth”)³⁸⁰. Aum Shinrikyo was founded in Japan on the initiative of Shoko Asahara (real name Chizuo Matsumoto, 1955-2018), who began his public activity in the 1980s. The doctrine he created contained a mixture of the elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, Nostradamus’ prophecies, chiliasm, science fiction, fascination with technology, anti-Semitism, and esotericism. Asahara, a nearly blind “truth-seeker”, showed great cunning in securing the semblance of “recognition” by respected religious authorities. He even managed to meet the Dalai Lama, which was publicly acknowledged as the acceptance of the religious role of the leader of the Supreme Truth on the part of the head of Tibetan Buddhism. Most likely, the Dalai Lama himself was unaware of Asahara’s plans and his actual teachings. Initially, Asahara dealt with yoga and Chinese medicine, promoting asceticism, and disregarding worldly life as *vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas*³⁸¹.

Soon, however, Asahara felt a messianic vocation, which prompted him to proclaim that mankind was in danger of extinction, from which he wished to save it. A characteristic role in his plans was played by Japan, which was the “chosen” country and which the self-proclaimed savior of mankind wanted to act as a protective sphere, making it a “base for saving the whole world”. There were many indications

³⁸⁰ Wiebus, *Lexikon Jugendkulte*, pp. 47.

³⁸¹ “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” – Ecclesiastes 1:2;
Hope and van Loon, *Introducing Buddha*, pp. 121-135.

that Asahara had great political ambitions and wanted to play the role of the state leader³⁸². His stance on his earlier concept of “saving the earth” changed after Aum Shinriko’s failure in the Japanese parliamentary elections in 1990, in which the organization suffered a severe defeat: none of its candidates won the expected mandate. In this situation, the guru of the sect began to proclaim from the mid-1990s that the end of the world was near and that Japan was to be annihilated in the Battle of Armageddon, from which the Millennial Kingdom would emerge with Asahara as a regent, which confirmed his interest in having secular power. On the occasion of his catastrophic prophecies, the founder of Aum Shinrikyo proclaimed himself “the last messiah of the century”.

To achieve his goals and ambitions, Asahara needed devoted followers, whom he recruited from various social strata in Japan, including the educated and the young. To recruit them, the sect used a computer network, various technical devices, and comics. Those interested were initially offered yoga and meditation courses³⁸³. Aum Shinrikyo was especially eager to recruit believers from such professional groups as biologists, doctors, chemists, and computer specialists. The attracted followers underwent long-term training aimed at breaking their will and destroying their ability to think independently. At the center of the sect’s life stood the cult of the master, whose orders had to be obeyed unconditionally. The methods used in the “treatment of pupils” included: gastric lavage by drinking plenty of water and inducing vomiting (supposedly to keep the digestive system clean); partial sleep deprivation and reducing access to light; electroshock (electric voltage was supposed to change brainwaves and tune them to the frequency of the gurus); and hot water baths (up to 50°C), combined with the consumption of large amounts of vitamins and drugs (such as LSD, produced by this group at its own expense). It is hardly surprising that, due to the use of such strict and unpleasant training methods, Asahara’s sect did not become a mass organization; the number of Aum Shinrikyo followers in Japan was estimated at around 10,000 people. This state of affairs was due, in part, to the fact that although the group kept its “techniques of working with students” secret, information about them leaked to the public and frightened away its potential adherents. The guru’s greed, expressed in demanding that its members transfer their property to him, also played a role, and he also showed a negative attitude towards sexuality as such.

³⁸² David E. Kaplan and Andrew G. Marshall, *Aum – Eine Sekte greift nach der Welt* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1998), pp. 19-204;

See also: Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography*, pp. 50-499.

³⁸³ Haruko Akimoto, ‘The Aum Cult leader Asahara’s mental deviation and its social relations’, *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* (2006) <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1440-1819.2006.01454.x>> [accessed on 28 September 2022].

The lack of a mass influx of new adepts was compensated by the sect with a special “concern” for those already acquired, so those who fell into the hands of Asahara, as a rule, could not easily escape. In many cases, leaving his organization ended with the intervention of Aum Shinrikyo militias bringing “deserters” back to “the source of truth”, sometimes, the escape even resulted in their death. Aum Shinrikyo also dealt ruthlessly with all criticism. Various forms of terror, including murder, were used against journalists, former followers or families fighting to free their relatives who were in the hands of Aum Shinrikyo. The organization often conducted court trials against its opponents, invoking the need for the state to respect the idea of religious freedom, and willingly presenting itself as an innocent victim of the “evil and dark plotting”.

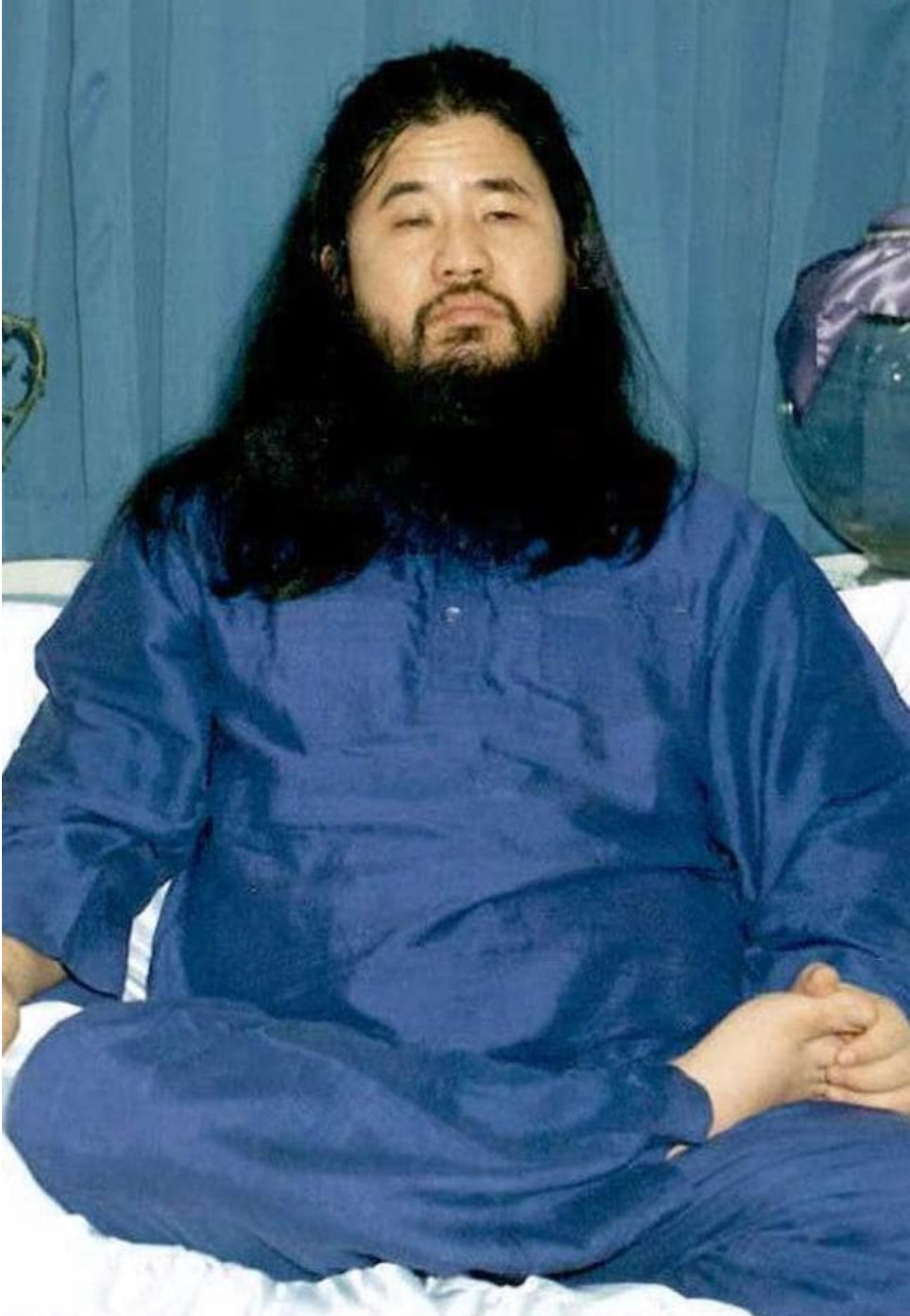
Aum Shinrikyo achieved relatively significant missionary success in Russia, where its ranks swelled to 30,000 followers. Not only did Russia prove to be a great place for Asahara’s supporters to spread propaganda, it was also the “promised land” when it came to doing business with money-hungry politicians, military, and academics. There are serious indications that, through their Russian contacts, the group came into the possession of significant amounts of weapons and poisons, and that it sought to obtain uranium, with which it wanted to make an atomic bomb. The purchases of lethal means were not accidental; after the election defeat in 1990, when it became clear that Asahara would not be able to take power democratically, the sect’s ideological profile changed and the issue of the apocalypse began to play a dominant role in its teaching. In their propaganda, there were more and more catastrophism and elements indicating a departure from the original concept of saving the world³⁸⁴. In addition to the themes of destruction, the leadership role of its guru was emphasized³⁸⁵.

After 1990, the predictions about the impending end of the world were also rendered more precise: the announced scenario of events assumed that the destruction would occur at the consequence of the nuclear attack by the United States and the United Nations on Japan between 1996 and 2000. As a result, from 1993, the propaganda campaign regarding this event intensified in the ranks of Aum Shinrikyo and from 1994, the consumption of drugs in this organization increased, through which its leadership attempted to put the followers into a state of euphoria as they looked forward to the fulfilment of apocalyptic prophecies. Moreover, the members were forced to conduct paramilitary exercises on the land estates owned by the group and turned into training grounds.

³⁸⁴ Robert Jay Lifton, *Destroying the world to save it* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1999), pp. 202-340.

³⁸⁵ ‘What Is the Aum Cult?’, *NHK World-Japan*, 5 July 2018 <<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/175/>> [accessed on 17 October 2022].

Image 75: Shoko Asahara



Source: <https://cdn.newsapi.com.au/image/v1/e4ef58174bbb59b7f23cf7e6a8b5b3bb>

The prophecies disseminated by Aum Shinrikyo turned out to be only a screen behind which there were hidden secret plans for Asahara to gain earthly power. In fact, Aum Shinrikyo planned a coup in Japan, which was to be preceded by a landing of its militants arriving across the sea from Russia. The action plan assumed entering Tokyo by the armed formations of the sect. Simultaneously, a gas attack should take place and important military points be captured by loyal “guru’s soldiers”. The members of the lawful government were to be exterminated and Asahara was planned to be declared the leader of the nation and the founder of theocracy.

The conspirators of Aum Shinrikyo were not able to fully implement these murderous plans. Soon, the threat of exposure loomed over them because their activities so far had resulted in a series of investigations against them by various authorities, including the police, which made the leadership of the sect nervous and triggered a desire to act desperately. A specific accelerator was the earthquake that destroyed the Japanese city of Kobe on 17th January 1995 and killed 5,500 people. Asahara recognized the event as a result of the United States’ use of a previously unknown weapon against Japan and announced that “the war has already begun”. Initially, he limited himself only to verbal attacks on “enemies”, without taking any radical actions; however, when news spread that the Japanese police were planning to search the Aum Shinrikyo buildings on 21st March, the sect’s chief ordered a strike. On 18th March, he gave the cult chemist Seiichi Endo the appropriate instructions, which resulted in a series of attacks using the poisonous gas sarin on non-military targets in Japan.

In the first of the genocidal attacks, which took place on 20th March 1995, a crowd of innocent victims using the Tokyo city train was targeted. 9 people died and 5,200 were injured. After another attack on 19th April 1995, conducted at the Yokohama railway station, 300 people had to seek medical attention. Furthermore, Aum Shinrikyo attempted to intimidate those investigating its case and organized attacks against them. The sect’s murderous activities were finally brought to an end when its leaders were arrested, along with the guru Asahara, on 16th May 1995, and sentenced to many years in prison. A few days before the capture of the head of Aum Shinrikyo (5th May), an attempt was made by his supporters to attack the Tokyo collector’s station again by using the gas used in World War II, Zyklon-B. It was only owing to the vigilance of passers-by that it was possible to prevent the catastrophe. The police said that the quantity of poison would have been sufficient to kill 10,000 people³⁸⁶.

The fall of the sect in Japan led to its banning in other countries, including Russia, where a large number of parents had already attempted to rescue their children who had fallen into the hands of a bloodthirsty “savior”. It was these events, among

³⁸⁶ Frank Nordhausen and Liane von Billerbeck, *Psycho-Sekten* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999), pp. 522-533.

others, that led to a significant tightening of the Russian Federation’s laws against religious organizations suspected of using unsafe practices. It is worth remembering that Aum Shinrikyo was also present in Central and Western Europe, and there was even a representative office in Bonn. Due to the manner in which he engaged into his criminal activities, Asahara was remembered by the public and his enemies not only as a “blind guru”, but also as a “gas guru”. Although, as a result of the police actions, the Aum Shinrikyo organization suffered a heavy blow, many of its structures survived, as not all senior activists were punished for their actions. Formally, Aum Sinrikyo was dissolved in February 1996, and its chief leader, Asahara, was sentenced to death by hanging; the execution was carried out in 2018³⁸⁷. The organization was reactivated under the new name “Aleph”. Its leadership tries to shift the blame for the gas attacks on the former guru, S. Asahara, and even created a fund from which compensation is paid to victims of the criminal attacks.

In its external form, managing the Aum Shinrikyo resembled the use of means taken from Buddhist tradition³⁸⁸. In practice, this group used a system of secret activities, the conspiratorial nature of which made its members even more certain about Asahara’s infallibility.

VIII.4. Groups Inspired by UFOs: The Example of Heaven’s Gate

The third category, inspired by UFOs, is predictably fascinated by the subject of extraterrestrial intelligence that is supposed to interfere with human life³⁸⁹. It includes the Heaven’s Gate, a group founded by Marshall Herff Applewhite (1931-1997).

Born in a Christian environment as the son of a Presbyterian pastor, Applewhite earned money as a church musician for many years, and endeavored to persevere in “the faith of his father”, but his own homosexual inclinations stood in his way. As a traditional Christian, he considered “sodomy” a grave sin, which led him to great mental tension and frustration. It can be presumed that it was this factor that contributed to his conflict with official religious groups, which, in turn, resulted in the formulation of his own doctrinal concept and the establishment of an organization that was to help him implement his ideological plans. He was dismissed from his job due to “emotional health problems” in 1970. The following year, he underwent unsuccessful

³⁸⁷ James R. Lewis, ‘Monolithic Inferences’, *Journal of Religion and Violence* 7:1 (2019), 44-54 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26671594>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

³⁸⁸ Charles Tart, ‘Science, States of Consciousness, and Spiritual Experiences: the Need for State-Specific Sciences’, in: Charles Tart, *Transpersonal Psychologies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 11-58.

³⁸⁹ Frank Nordhausen and Liliane van Billerbeck, *Psycho-Sekten* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1999), pp. 13-40.

treatment in the hope of eradicating his homosexual tendencies. The nurse Bonnie Nettles (1927-1985)³⁹⁰, whom Applewhite met during his treatment, collaborated with him in the field of religion until her death. Together, they developed a concept which combined the elements of reincarnation, spiritism, astrology as well as belief in extraterrestrial intelligence. In the early 1970s, Applewhite had a heart attack. His near-death experience during this event strengthened his determination for further religious research. He came to the conclusion that both he and Nettles were the people mentioned in the Bible in the Apocalypse of St. John 11:3, from which came the name of the organization they initially founded, The Two. From then on, the “mission” of proclaiming a syncretic belief system using certain New Age elements with the reinterpreted elements of Christianity and science fiction began. The state of mind of Applewhite evidenced by the fact that he was sentenced to several months in prison in 1974 for car theft. After his arrest, he explained that he was forced to commit the crime by extraterrestrial forces.

Applewhite showed a talent for organization and an ability to gain supporters. Perhaps, the ability to work with people he acquired while working as a church organist helped him. His group devoted a lot of time and resources to cultivating its image on the internet, posting a lot of video material about itself.

The members of the Heaven’s Gate believed that the Earth in its present shape had no future and it had to be cleansed, which, in fact, meant the extinction of life on the planet. From their point of view, the only way to save themselves was to leave the Earth. Simultaneously, they were convinced that their bodies were only “vessels”. Moreover, they believed in the possibility of using some kind of cosmic “brotherly help” from an advanced civilization to reach a higher level of development (Next Level)³⁹¹, and the condition for taking advantage of this opportunity was death. This way of perceiving reality led to a tragedy. When the Hale-Bopp comet appeared in November, 1996 (the closest approach to the Earth was expected to take place in 1997), the Heaven’s Gate members saw in it the sign from a “higher civilization” they were waiting for, enabling them to achieve the aforementioned “Next Level” of development. On 26th March 1997 the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven’s Gate³⁹², including the founder of the organization, were found at the group’s ranch in Santa Fe, north of San Diego, California. The mass suicide of

³⁹⁰ J. Gordon Melton, ‘Heaven’s Gate’, *Britannica*, 30 June 2011 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Heavens-Gate-religious-group>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² Jane Lavender, ‘Heaven’s Gate cult ended in 39 suicides as ‘castrated’ followers ate poisoned apple sauce’, *Mirror*, 28 May 2020 <<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/us-news/heavens-gate-cult-ended-39-22066244>> [accessed on 10 December 2022];

David Roos, ‘What Drove Heaven’s Gate Followers to Mass Suicide?’, *History*, 7 March 2023 <<https://www.history.com/news/heavens-gate-mass-suicide>> [accessed on 28 August 2022].

the members of the group occurred while the comet was approaching and it was precipitated by the conviction of Applewhite of the need to get onto the spacecraft, which was supposedly behind the comet, by “leaving the vessel” of the earthly body.³⁹³

Image 76: Marshall Herff Applewhite



Source: https://th.bing.com/th/id/R.2627092123b1546366d8ceffafd3116b?rik=f7qly91ypgepBA&riu=http%3a%2f%2fimg.timeinc.net%2ftime%2fimages%2fcovers%2fasia%2f1997%2f19970407_400.jpg&ehk=czXAUb4JomH%2f7T9w0Ej3W%2bYD0fSEh29R121xnvhmsi4%3d&risl=&pid=ImgRaw&r=0

³⁹³ *The Beast at Heaven's Gate: Georges Bataille and the Art of Transgression*, ed. by Andrew Hussey, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006) <<https://editions-ismael.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/2006-James-From-Recuperation-to-Simulacrum.pdf>> [accessed on 13 September 2021].

The Heaven's Gate organization was ruled by means of strict discipline and evoked associations with the medieval ascetic monastic structure; aspects such as community property and celibacy were particularly distinctive in this context. The members of the sect were subjected to complete control, including on telephone contacts with the outside world. There was also a ban on staying alone. The group obtained funds by offering internet services. It was revealed that the alienated sect was able to conduct effective actions and take care of its image. In its activities, "suicide management" was particularly recognizable, that is, helping people commit suicide.

VIII.5. Groups Connected to the New Age ideology: The Example of the Order of the Solar Temple

The fourth and final category is connected with the New Age ("New Era") ideology³⁹⁴, a kind of set of beliefs created in the 1960s encompassing multiple concepts in the field of esotericism, occultism and spiritism. This direction is represented in the extreme form by the group of the Order of the Solar Temple (*Ordre du Temple Solaire*)³⁹⁵. This organization referred to the Knights of the Temple, and was founded by Joseph Di Mambro and Luc Jouret in Geneva in 1984, although there are indications that some structure might have existed before. The central soteriological concept was the expectation of the second coming of Jesus Christ as the solar "god-king". The belief in the final victory of "eternal powers" over "temporal matters" was emphasized. The group's beliefs were a mixture of New Age (such as reincarnation), Christianity, and Masonic rituals. There were centers in Switzerland, Canada, Australia. And Martinique. The Order of the Temple of the Sun was divided into lodges and had a rich ceremony involving the use of altars, costumes, swords, and crusader coats as well as a number of technical devices with which long deceased religious leaders (such as prophets from the Old Testament) were 'materialized', and 'miracles' were performed.

As the descriptions of the group's ceremonies show, the effectiveness of using gadgets depended upon the intensity of the previous "mental processing" of the adepts, in which giving them drugs before the presentations played an important role.³⁹⁶ This group had extensive social and therapeutic contacts, providing in secret services in the domain of achieving "spiritual balance" to various prominent members of the establishment. Most likely, the famous "gadgets" were found to be

³⁹⁴ Antoine Faivre, *Esoterik* (Braunschweig: Aurum, 1996), pp. 119-144; Cammans, *Okkultismus*, pp. 167-194; Lux Ferre, 'Order of the Solar Temple', *Occult World*, 12 October 2017 <<https://occult-world.com/order-solar-temple/>> [accessed on 10 December 2022].

³⁹⁵ Bohn, *Kleines Lexikon der Sekten, Psychogruppen und Strukturvertriebe*, pp. 179.

³⁹⁶ 'Order of the Solar Temple', *World Religions and Spirituality Project* <<https://wrlrels.org/2016/10/08/order-of-the-solar-temple/>> [accessed on 12 December 2022].

helpful. The group's specialty was sexual acupuncture, which was used the former Duchess of Monaco, Grace Patricia Kelly (1929-1982). As part of the cooperation with the Duchess of Monaco, Ordre allegedly received about 12 million francs.

Image 77: Ceremony in the Order of the Sun



Source: <https://2.bp.blogspot.com/-8Bc8ycTUj8I/VmQwMhjAAsI/AAAAAAAAADZ0/ueP7PdMUhTo/s1600/order-of-the-solar-temple-cult-8.jpg>

The tragic “breakthrough” in the group’s career was the spectacular series of suicides in 1994, and there are reasons to believe that some followers did not want to part with their lives voluntarily, as for example, some of the dead had their hands tied behind their backs. The tragic events took place after the so-called “Last Supper”, during which 15 people took poison or were given it, 38 were shot or were killed in a different way. Drugs, presumably ingested to limit the logical judgment of the situation, were discovered in the bodies of the dead members. In Switzerland 48 bodies of the followers of the Order of the Solar Temple were found. They were “equipped” with mirrors and other items related to the symbolism of the group, and were dressed in ceremonial costumes, with plastic bags on their heads, supposedly to symbolize the ecological catastrophe happening in the world. On 23rd March 1997, in Quebec, Canada, a similar discovery was made: five people had died there. The sect’s motivation was unusual: the members of this group identified death with a “journey to planet Sirius”, which they considered their home. In this organization there were also elements of “suicide management” related to attempts to shape the image of the sect.

VIII.6. Conclusion

The examples given in this section illustrate the forms of the operation of some extreme apocalyptic religious groups. Repeated dramatic events render it necessary to analyze the essence of this issue, which is an indispensable condition for effective counteraction. The following characteristic features of the activities of extreme religious groups with an apocalyptic orientation seem to deserve a special attention:

1. The method of acquiring followers. Above all, they recruit lonely, needy, and lost people. Often, in addition to salvation, they are promised to acquire skills needed in their earthly life, and to free oneself of addictions.
2. Soteriological exclusivism. As a rule, these groups maintain that they have a monopoly on salvation; outside of them, it cannot be obtained. Since their leaders are practically regarded as saviors, they are the chief ministers of grace in the eyes of their believers.
3. Black and white optics of perceiving the world. These groups do not recognize compromises and theological “grey areas”. From their perspective, the world consists of “good” people, that is, the members of their own organization, and “bad” people, which means all the rest of humankind.
4. The requirement of absolute obedience. The faithful are obliged to strictly follow orders, which is often impossible, or at least, the degree of success in this field is found inadequate by their leaders. This usually leads to slave labor and permanent surveillance.
5. Isolation from the world. The members of extreme religious groups have strictly rationed social contacts, usually limited to “their own ranks”. An interesting phenomenon is also the formation of the forms of communication specific to individual groups; a significant role is played by a specific “newspeak”, which enables “thought control”, and in which facts and words are assigned meanings different than the accepted ones. Severing contacts with the outside world is important from the financial point of view as it *de facto* leads to taking over the property of the followers by the sects leaders.
6. Leader cult. This usually takes on monstrous dimensions. A characteristic feature is the ban on making any changes within the doctrine by anyone apart from by a “guru prophet” or “guru god”.
7. Total control over the sexual behavior of the supporters. Sexual life in extreme apocalyptic religious groups is usually under strict control.
8. Gathering weapons, most often “in order to defend against the forces of evil”. In general, the number of weapons and their type indicate the aggressive nature of the people collecting them. Only those belonging to the inner circle of power have access to the arsenal in question.

9. Using drugs and technical gadgets to build up the ambience of group ceremonies. In the case of drugs, the control of group management in charge of the distribution is clear. It does not consist in the use of drugs as such, but in the correlation of their consumption with the reception of the group's teachings. The use of "technical aids" also serves to strengthen the effectiveness of teaching.
10. Concentrating on the "end of the world", with a focus on the group's role in the event. This favors the creation of an atmosphere of danger, in which voicing homicidal or suicidal suggestions is particularly effective.

The leaderships of all the groups described above attached great importance to the material side of their functioning³⁹⁷. Practice proves that most organizations of this type show great concern for increasing their financial condition, which often contradicts the "expectation of the end of the world" that they publicly promote. They have rich bank deposits, buy and sell shares, and enjoy the financial privileges of being religious organizations, including, *inter alia*, being exempt from taxes.

The enslavement of their members, achieved in various ways, also had significant economic aspects. The management of these sects generally means using the members for selfish goals by the leaders. The rank and file are basically people who are deprived of their own will, being *de facto* slaves. They are used for various purposes, such as work or collecting money for a group by begging in the streets.

The leaderships of such sects are able to develop strategic plans and to manage the human resources of sects in ways that suit their purposes. In the management of such sects, one can see the main elements of "classical Fayol's management theory"³⁹⁸, albeit in a deformed form. One can see also "product placement" in the form of their ideologies. They use marketing, attracting new followers. Some of these organizations were able to function for a relatively long time, achieving significant economic successes. Unfortunately, this was usually at the expense of their followers.

³⁹⁷ Ritzer, *Enchanting Disenchanted World*, pp. 134-135.

³⁹⁸ Henri Fayol, *General and Industrial Management* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1955), pp. 43-80.



Final Remarks

The role of religion in the emergence of the first countries in antiquity was significant. Priests associated with the dominant religion played a significant role in the founding of state institutions, political doctrines and management systems. An important role in the civilizational development of mankind was also played by the emergence of the ethical doctrines arising under the influence of religions which helped to shaped the conditions required for the functioning of economy. In this “period of creation”, various ways of organizing societies, politics, and economics came into existence from the inspiration of religious circles, and their influence is visible, despite the passage of time, in many countries like India even today.

The process of the civilizational development of mankind has not been free of dramatic events, including wars, revolutions, coups, and various incidents of social unrest. This can be related to the fact that humans, like probably no other biological species, fight each other. Confessional organizations have mostly mitigated the results of Hobbes’s “war of all against all”³⁹⁹, but there were numerous exceptions in this respect.

Religions have also played a significant role in contributing to the emergence of economic concepts and doctrines, including capitalism. Here, too, the ethical systems shaped by them have often provided justification for the pro-business behavior of men. The situation is similar in the case of entrepreneurship, influenced by various forms of faith and strengthened by the belief that the “chosen ones” will succeed in their activities.

An interesting phenomenon is the “new religious movement” in the modern world. Internally differentiated, they create a conglomerate of diverse doctrinal systems. Among them, dangerous and even genocidal actions are not uncommon. Their activities as well as the radicalism and fanaticism of some of “traditional” religious circles force one to be vigilant. However, it should be emphasized that a significant section of pious organizations exhibits pro-social behavior.

³⁹⁹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 29-64.

The groups presented in this book are only examples of the confessional diversity of the world. Making oneself acquainted with the forms of influence of religious organizations on social, political as well as managerial areas allows us to understand their importance for the civilizational development of humankind.



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