



World Religions

Part 9: Non-Orthodox Christian Movements

1. Cults

b. Some examples

- The Love Family
- The People's Temple
- The Branch Davidians
- Heaven's Gate

a. Characteristics

- Strong authoritarian leadership
- Exclusive claims to truth
- Control of members and limitation of personal freedom
- Isolation of members from previous support systems
- Use of familial language
- Excommunication of dissenters

2. Mormonism, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

a. Founder: Joseph Smith

b. Main Beliefs

- Scripture
- God
- Jesus Christ
- Salvation





4. Jehovah's Witnesses

a. Founder: Charles Taze Russell

b. Main Beliefs

- Scripture
- God
- Jesus Christ
- Salvation
- Eschatology

Are Mormons and/or Jehovah Witnesses Saved

1. Salvation comes by Faith in Jesus Christ and his death on the cross, not by any works that we do.
2. Is belief in the Trinity and the true nature of God necessary for salvation?
3. Is belief in Christ's full deity and humanity necessary for salvation?
4. Our responsibility: Love people; pray for them; work with them when we have shared values and beliefs whenever possible.

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." (1 Peter 3:15)





Study/Discussion Questions:

1. What are some common characteristics of what we call “cults”?
2. Who founded Mormonism? What did he claim?
3. How do Mormons view the Book of Mormon? The Bible?
4. How do Mormons view God? In what ways does this differ from traditional Christianity?
5. Who founded the Jehovah’s Witnesses?
6. What do Jehovah’s Witnesses believe about the Trinity? About God (Jehovah)? About Jesus Christ?
7. What do Jehovah’s Witnesses believe about Christ’s Second Coming?

