

Introduction to research paper



Christian Science

Christian Science is a belief which practices the teachings and writings of Mary Eddy. The church bases its belief on the idea that there is only one true God and the belief in his teachings. Other than these, there is no other real or eternal thing. The idealism that God is the only true spirit also negates the existence of evil. It implies that good always triumphs over evil; likewise, religious power always conquers material power (The Christian Science Publishing Society). Consequently, ailment does not exist and it can be demonstrated from observing the faithful followers. Mary Eddy's life as a growing youth was riddled with moments of ill health. She believed that her devotion to the Church and the Bible would cure her from illness, so she turned to religion as a method of healing. Her medical history had proven to her that medicine wasn't working. Studies show that America has harbored the rise and development of a few religious movements. The Christian Science faith has always been under scrutiny over such claims. This research seeks to identify the source of this movement, to differentiate it from other religious sects, and to establish the strong points and shortcomings surrounding the existence of this religious movement. This would assist us establish what accounts for the movement's success.

Mary's writings were inspired by her experience as a growing youth, especially after the death of her first husband. She met Mr. Quimby, a

clock worker whose idealism was that the human mind was capable of healing if the ill had confidence in the healer, and the healer believed in the sick person's recovery. This idealism improved Mary's health, until 1866 when Quimby died. Following this incident, she suffered a fall on an icy sidewalk from which few expected her to recuperate. While on her supposed deathbed, one reading of Jesus' healings struck her attention and she instantly got a conviction that she would recover, since healing did not originate from within the physical body, but from the Divine Lord. She immediately received healing and began her three years exile to search for more knowledge on how healing could come from the Bible (Church of Christ, Scientist).

A comparison between the Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Science) and other religious movements

Some of the things taught by Mary's Church which differ from other churches include referring to God as the 'Father-Mother' and an inclusion of the text, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. The latter is a written text of Eddy's writing adopted into the church context. The church of Christ teaches that matter is non-existent and that creation is absolute. The movement negates the existence of illness, evil or death, saying these are pigments of our imagination. A critical study of Science and Health by Mary Eddy suggests that sin is only real in the case of one's belief in its existence (The Christian Science Publishing Society). It also suggests that this comes to an abrupt end upon being washed off the belief of reality by God, whom the Church refers to in a bunch of other synonyms. These are Principle, Soul, Mind, Life, Love and

Truth. The differences extend to other minor details in the teachings of the Church.

The significant similarities between the various universal beliefs of mainstream Christianity and Christian Science are the belief in one true Almighty God, the persecution and ultimate crucifixion of Jesus, and His resurrection. The Church also shares the scriptures used by mainstream Christianity churches.

The strong points and weaknesses of the Christian Science

The Christian Science church has a record of being financially weaker than other cults in the USA. A significant factor that has weakened the church is the negative media coverage on the church's practices. In the early 80's and 90's, members of the church faced criminal suits for murder, manslaughter, and child neglect after denying their family members medical attention in the name of religion. Heavy penalties were issued for these claims, and though the Court of Appeal in Minnesota overturned the case, further appeal for a complete lift of the damages at \$1.5million was denied. The church then changed its opinion on its stand against medical attention.

Research shows that Christian Science has maintained a stable growth rate in North America, but has fallen short in former socialist third world nations due to a shortage in resources. Mary Baker's work as a believer and a founder was less appreciated since the public saw her level of plagiarism in doctrines as having been influenced by money and

political agenda. The church, however, maintains a high and a strong amount of resources in more educated and westernized countries. The US Congress recognized Mary Baker for her contribution by passing Con. Res H 458 and honoring her efforts by recognizing the Mary Baker Library. The Church's head quarters sits in Boston, Massachusetts on a fourteen acre piece of land where all the church's 2200 branches are coordinated from. The Church faces negative media coverage as well as reviews from rival movements, but the internet library and online coordination offered on their main site clarifies these little differences in understanding.