

A Directory of Faiths in Calderdale

2006/2009



Calderdale Interfaith Council

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.

All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.

Albert Einstein



BAHÁ'Í - Nine Pointed Star

The number nine has particular significance because it symbolizes the nine great world religions; it represents the number of perfection, being the highest single-digit number; and it is the numerical value of the word "Bahá" in the Arabic language.



BUDDHISM - Wheel of Law and Truth

An eight-spoked wheel with the spokes symbolising the eight-fold path, the Middle Way, propounded by the Buddha. By following the Middle Way, a Buddhist may obtain Moksha and thus escape the cyclical nature of rebirth.



CHRISTIANITY - Cross

Of prime significance to the Christian Church because of the belief that the crucifixion of Jesus was the ultimate expression of God's love for humanity. Crosses can be found in a variety of forms, and may depict the Crucified Christ or may be plain - symbolising the Resurrection.



HINDUISM - Om (Aum)

The utmost sacred symbol in Hinduism. Regarded as bija (seed) of all mantras. The three phonetic elements (AUM), connected but remaining distinct, are said to represent Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma, respectively the Destroyer, the Creator and the Sustainer.



ISLAM - Crescent Moon and Star

Introduced as an emblem of the Islamic faith by the Ottomans, the constantly regenerating moon is a reflection of God's everlasting purpose and control. Portrayed with a star the symbol represents divine authority and paradise. Just as the moon and stars are guiding lights so too is Islam.



JUDAISM - Menorah

Mosaic seven-branched candelabrum which indicates divine presence. According to Josephus the seven branches represent the sun, the moon and the planets and also the seven days of the week. The Star of David, an equilateral hexagram, originally known as the Seal of Solomon, is found on the base of the branches.



SIKHISM - Khanda

The double-edged sword in the centre signifies truth, strength, freedom and justice. The circle or chakkar represents the eternal and the two swords (Miri and Piri) represent political and spiritual sovereignty.

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Section One

This moral sensitivity to the sacredness of human personality - the Commandments not to kill, not to hurt, not to put a stumbling block in the path of the blind, not to neglect the widow or the fatherless, not to exploit the servant or the worker - all this can be found in the Bibles of humanity, in all the sacred books. All teach in substance: "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you.

Algernon Black

It is in our lives and not our words that our religion must be read.

Thomas Jefferson

Introduction

It seems ironic, that in the high-tech world of today with its mega-information overload, we do not have a directory of all the different faiths, their institutions and organisations, that currently reside in Calderdale.

This modest directory is an attempt to fill that gap.

In the grand scheme of things secularism is a relatively recent phenomenon within the British Isles. Religion may seem to play a narrow role within society today. However a short visit to the 'Religions in Calderdale' section soon dispels the notion that religion is 'dead'. Indeed faith is vibrant and possibly more relevant today within a materialistic society steeped in the sense of the 'sacred individual'.

The reader may be surprised to see just how diverse the faith spectrum is within Calderdale. The United Kingdom as a whole has never been static in its religious make-up. For millennia there has been wave after wave of migrations and conversions. However, one thing is for sure, there has never been such a wide spectrum of faiths as exists today. Calderdale is truly a multi-faith borough. In a climate of the riots in the North of England, global events such as September 11th and July 7th and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq and their aftermath, never has the need for communities to come together been so great.

The process of compiling this directory has not been easy. Difficulties began at the outset with the problem of how to 'categorise' the different faiths. What criteria should we use in deciding which faith goes where within the directory? In the end we resorted to using the official method of listing as used by the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom.

The main faith communities have been placed in order of population (where figures exist); whereas the denominational communities (within each faith), and those within the 'Other Faiths & Denominations' have been placed in alphabetical order. We believe all the major faiths have been covered within the directory.

There will be, no doubt, people within Calderdale who hold other faiths and beliefs to the ones included in this directory. We have concentrated on those that are prevalent and/or have a formal profile.

If you wish your faith group to be included in future publications then please let us know.

The book you hold in your hands now is the outcome of much hard work put in by a truly multi-faith team. We hope it will prove useful to many, as a guide to the different faiths in Calderdale, and as a tool that enables faith communities to be able to come together for the common good.

Religions are many and diverse, but reason and goodness are one.

Elbert Hubbard

The Calderdale Interfaith Council

Who are we?

In 1993 following a proposal by the Anglican Diocese of Wakefield, the Calderdale Churches Partnership was set up for joint working on regeneration initiatives. A Declaration of Intent was signed in 1994 between the Bishop of Wakefield and representatives of the local Council.

The importance of inter-faith joint working became increasingly recognised in 2001 with reference to the civil disturbances in the North and as part of the Government's recommendations for promoting community cohesion. Furthermore, the impact of September 11th underlined the importance for local government to be more aware of religious and interfaith issues and to take a more active interest in ensuring good faith relations in their areas.

In 2002, the Churches Partnership revised its terms of reference and transformed itself into the Faith Communities Partnership, and other faiths and their representatives came on board. In 2003 the Partnership adopted a new constitution and a new name giving it broader appeal and greater independence: the Calderdale Interfaith Council (CIC).

Our Aims

- To work together for the purpose of overcoming ignorance, fear and misunderstanding between the various faith and those of secular persuasion communities in Calderdale.
- To enable us to move with greater confidence in our partnerships and contacts with faith communities.
- To promote a greater understanding of the positive role that religious faiths and faith communities can play in shaping our society.
- To maintain an environment of dignity for all in social interactions.
- To work in partnership with people of all communities and their organisations.

Our Objectives

- Working towards racial and religious equality in all areas of life.
- Promoting the positive role of religious faith in daily living.
- Influencing decision making in all areas of public life and forming links with and seeking public consultation rights with statutory and voluntary bodies.
- Sharing concerns and providing mutual support.

Who can join?

Membership is open to any faith group or religious institution and others who are interested in furthering the aims and objectives of the Calderdale Interfaith Council.

Who funds us?

The CIC has a close working relationship with Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council and has enjoyed the support of Council officers.

Although its many members of different faiths carry out work in a voluntary capacity, the CIC has also been successful in gaining funding from the HBOS (the Halifax Bank of Scotland) and Calderdale Council (Community Grant).

For Further Information

Should you require any further information, or a diary of our forthcoming meetings and events, or a copy of our constitution then please don't hesitate to contact:

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When I do good, I feel good; when I do bad, I feel bad. That's my religion.

Abraham Lincoln

Religion in Calderdale

In April 2001 the Census collected information about religious identity. The topic was new to the Census in England, Wales and Scotland although the subject had been included in previous Censuses in Northern Ireland. The Census religion question was a voluntary question. Nevertheless, over 92 per cent of people chose to answer it.

Just over three-quarters of the UK population reported having a religion. More than seven out of ten people said that their religion was Christian (72 per cent). After Christianity, Islam was the most common faith with nearly 3 per cent describing their religion as Muslim (1.6 million).

The next largest religious groups were Hindus (559 thousand), followed by Sikhs (336 thousand), Jews (267 thousand), Buddhists (152 thousand), and people from Other Religions (179 thousand). These groups each accounted for less than 1 per cent and together accounted for a further 3 per cent of the UK population.

Religion in Britain

	Thousands	%
Christian	42079	71.6
Buddhist	152	0.3
Hindu	559	1.0
Jewish	267	0.5
Muslim	1591	2.7
Sikh	336	0.6
Other Religion	179	0.3
<i>All Religions</i>	<i>45163</i>	<i>76.8</i>
No Religion	9104	15.5
Not stated	4289	7.3
<i>All no religion/not stated</i>	<i>13626</i>	<i>23.2</i>
<i>Base</i>	<i>58789</i>	<i>100</i>

The UK Population: by religion, April 2001

People in Northern Ireland were most likely to say that they identified with a religion (86%) compared with those in England and Wales (77%) and Scotland (67%).

The Census shows how important religion is to people's sense of self and identity. Only 16% of the UK population stated that they had no religion. This category included agnostics, atheists, heathens and those who wrote 'Jedi Knight'!

Religion in Calderdale

The population figures for the different religions in Calderdale were as follows:

	Value	%
Christian	133,962	69.6
Buddhist	350	0.2
Hindu	378	0.2
Jewish	147	0.1
Muslim	10,198	5.3
Sikh	222	0.1
Other Religion	443	0.2
No Religion	31,562	16.4
Not stated	15,143	7.9

The resident population of Calderdale, as measured in the 2001 Census, was 192,405 of which 48 per cent were male and 52 per cent were female.

A few notable differences emerge upon comparing national statistics with local ones.

Firstly, the percentage of Muslims within Calderdale is twice the national percentage. The Muslim ratio within Calderdale is just over 1 in 20.

At the same time, all other non-Christian faiths are significantly fewer in proportion within Calderdale than national.

Lastly a greater proportion stated 'No Religion' within Calderdale than nationally.



Section Two

The unique personality which is the real life in me, I cannot gain unless I search for the real life, the spiritual quality, in others. I am myself spiritually dead unless I reach out to the fine quality dormant in others. For it is only with the God enthroned in the innermost shrine of the other, that the God hidden in me, will consent to appear.

Felix Adler

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. The second is like it; You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus Christ

The Christian Community

Origins

Nobody has ever written a complete biography of Jesus. Apart from the birth Stories and an occasion when Jesus was taken by his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, we know nothing about the first thirty years of his life. It was John the Baptist who announced his coming, calling people to repent and to prepare for the dawn of a new age. The Jews had believed that God would one day intervene in history by sending his Messiah (Anointed One) to rescue the world from its sin and suffering. John spoke of his imminent arrival, instructing people to change their ways and be baptised. Among those who came for baptism was Jesus. As he emerged from the water a voice was heard saying, 'This is my beloved Son, upon whom my favour rests'. It was at that moment that Jesus knew himself to be the Promised One whose earthly life was destined for service, suffering and sacrifice. Immediately after his baptism Jesus withdrew to the wilderness to prepare for his ministry.

During the next three years Jesus set about teaching and healing, performing miracles and telling stories about the kingdom of heaven. His miracles were signs of a new age in which anything was possible. Faith, hope and love would heal the sick, restore sight to the blind, change water into wine and feed five thousand people with just five loaves and two fishes. On one occasion Jesus reportedly raised to life a man who had been dead for three days. Scholars view the miracles of Jesus in different ways but all agree that they should be regarded less as wonders by which to astound people and more as works of power which point to God's Glory.

Jesus also told many stories taken from ordinary life but each packed with spiritual truths. They were called 'parables' and were distinctive in that they disclosed spiritual realities from the most ordinary human situations. Most of the stories Jesus told were invitational in tone welcoming everyone into a world of faith and forgiveness, trust and grace. He never imposed his truth on anyone.

Jesus spoke the most gracious words inviting all to come to him and find forgiveness for their sins, power to overcome evil and, best of all, eternal life. But he also spoke harsh words especially to the religious leaders of his day. He criticised them for their

hypocrisy and pride. He judged them for being obsessed with trivial matters of religious law while neglecting the weightier matters of justice and mercy. He told them that they were spiritually blind.

The new life to which Jesus invited people was grounded in love, not law. It is true that he told his followers to keep the religious law and that no part of it would ever pass away, but went on to insist that the two greatest commandments were love of God and love for one another. He insisted that there were times when for the sake of love, religious laws had to be set aside or radically re-interpreted. Jesus insisted that what mattered to God, was what was in their hearts and souls.

In 'The Sermon on the Mount' he declared that his followers should love their enemies, pray for their persecutors and bless those who cursed them insisting that they must become perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect. He warned against hypocrisy and encouraged them to be generous. He taught them to pray in a new way, calling God 'Abba' a word difficult to translate but the closest parallel is 'Daddy' used by a young child to his father and packed with extraordinary intimacy. It is a word which no one had ever ventured to use in addressing God before. But in calling God 'Abba' Jesus summed up everything he knew his Father to be as one who is intimately close and to be utterly trusted for as long as life and need should last.

It is important to note that Christians put their faith in the person of Jesus, not just in his words or actions. Faith is relational. He spoke of himself as being the Way, the Truth. He said 'I am the Light of the world and I am the Resurrection and Life'. The Christian faith is not so much about new doctrines to be believed or commandments to be obeyed but rather a radical commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Following three years of intensive ministry, Jesus' enemies conspired as to how they might get rid of him. Eventually he was arrested and taken before the religious leaders who charged him with blasphemy; but was later changed to subversion. At the will of the people he was delivered up for crucifixion and eventually died. Finally, his body was taken down from the cross and laid in a tomb. On the third day he was raised from the dead and subsequently seen by



no less than five hundred witnesses until he ascended to his Father promising that His Holy Spirit would be with them and all believers until the end of time.

The best loved text in the New Testament puts it this way, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life'. Many commentators have attempted to interpret this text, but perhaps it is a hymn writer who catches its meaning most succinctly when he writes:

**'We may not know, we cannot tell
What pain he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us,
He hung and suffered there.'**

It is the experience of each Christian that the death and resurrection of Jesus is in some profound sense connected with their own.

Christians believe that ultimately through the work of Jesus Christ God will establish a kingdom of love which will embrace the whole human race and bring all things into harmony.

The first disciples believed that, because Jesus was raised from the dead, they too would be raised into eternal life. In this conviction they were empowered to believe that death was not the end but a gateway into a richer, fuller life. Today, Christians believe the same as the first followers of Jesus, that although evil and death still have immense power in this world, they will never have the final word, for both had been overcome by the death and resurrection of Jesus. He once said to his disciples 'I go to prepare a place for you, so that where I am you may be also'. Christians claim this promise and trust that in both life and death, they are held in God's eternal love.

Christians believe that God is experienced today through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has been present and active in the world and in human hearts from the beginning of time. (It is the Spirit who first created the Church by coming to the grieving disciples and, from them, created a unique community of men and women called to love and pray for the world.)

The Holy Spirit reveals the Father to all who seek Him and gives them gifts of spiritual power; convicts them of sin and assures them of forgiveness. That same Spirit enables them to find courage in the struggle for justice and peace and sustains them in the worst times of trial. Followers of Jesus have always spoken of themselves as being 'in Christ', it is a phrase which reflects the intimacy of their relationship with him. They believe themselves to live 'in Him' as he is 'in them' just as a wave is in the ocean and the ocean is in the wave. It is a gift of grace, a key word in Christian understanding, which refers to the undeserved and unconditional love of God for all the human race.

The Christian experience of God is essentially relational and is as profound and loving as the relationship that exists between loving parents and their children.

Teachings

The Christian religion was cradled in the faith of Israel and has centrally the belief that there is one God. However, Christians believe that they experience and respond to the one God in three distinct ways:

When Christians think about the universe, and the place of human beings in it, and all that they have been given, they worship God as Creator and Father.

When Christians look at Jesus, they see in him the expression in human form of all the qualities of God, especially love, and they worship Jesus as God and Saviour.

Although Jesus has ascended to the Father, Christians have continued to experience the presence, power and love of Jesus in the Church and in their own lives through the Holy Spirit, whom they therefore also worship as God.

There is no division in God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist as a perfect communion and known by Christians as the 'Trinity'.

Christian beliefs spring from the Bible and are summarised in the Historic creeds of the Church. The Bible is the record of God's self revelation, supremely in Jesus Christ, and is a means through which God still reveals himself, by the Holy Spirit.

God the Father is known as the giver of all life; the Creator of everything that exists and the Father of all humankind. He is 'the One in whom we all live and move and have our being'. Through his 'Word' he called the world into being and made human beings in his own image. Finally, he is above all, a personal not an abstract being who seeks in holy love to save His creation from evil, aimlessness and sin.

Christians believe that God came into to the world uniquely in Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth. During his three short years of ministry those who heard and knew him gradually began to recognise in him, the Divine presence. His every word, gesture, story, healing and miracle reflected the nature of God; a life perfect in love and grace, beauty and truth. He referred to himself as the way, the truth and the life. It is, however, in his death and resurrection that Christians are most conscious of his true identity.

Worship

The main worship day for most Christians is Sunday. Worship usually consists of prayers, hymns, readings from scripture, preaching and teaching. It is the means by which discipleship is renewed and faith sustained.

However the central act of worship is the celebration of a service which Jesus himself instituted and is known as the Eucharist, Holy Mass, Holy Communion or The Lord's Supper. It was inaugurated by Jesus himself when he met with his friends just prior to his death. The Acts of the Apostles, which relates the story of the early years following the death and resurrection of Jesus, tells how the first Christians



met together for the 'breaking of bread'. The language, the form and the interpretation of this sacrament may vary from one Church to another but for almost all Christians it is an irresistible magnet which draws them together to celebrate their unity in Christ.

'Eucharist' comes from the Greek word meaning 'thanksgiving'. This sacrament is primarily a celebration of all that God has done and continues to do, for the salvation of the world through Christ. In the Eucharist Christians know him to be especially present as they recall his death and resurrection. But the service is much more than a recollection of something that happened in history, it makes real for all generations of believers, the power of Christ's redeeming work.

As they share the bread and wine, Christ's sacrifice becomes mysteriously powerful and uniquely present. Christians may interpret this presence and power in different ways but all would agree that when they participate in the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes most real. In this simple act of worship they feel themselves drawn to him, so that his offering becomes theirs and his sacrifice their own. In this service Christians are drawn to Christ that 'through him and with him and in him' they will forever live and have their Being.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is offered to Christians who seek absolution from their sins through the mediation of a priest. All that is discussed remains absolutely confidential and can never be disclosed.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is usually administered at times of serious illness, great emotional strain or closeness to death. The rite may include confession, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, prayers of commendation and readings from Scripture.

Often worship is a private affair, and one can do it at any time, without any time or format constraints. No special arrangements apply.

Places of Worship

There are many different styles of church within Calderdale, both in terms of period and layout. Hence there are a variety of 'visiting etiquettes'. Although there is no strict dress code, there is a general expectancy that visitors will dress modestly and that men will remove their hats when entering the church. In some of the more Orthodox churches it is expected that women will have their heads covered.

There are no special entry rituals or etiquettes. In some Eastern Catholic churches men tend to sit on the right and women on the left. Some churches have benches with raised backs called pews. In Orthodox churches the congregation normally stands for worship.

Religious Books and Artefacts

The Holy Bible contains the 'Word of God' for Christian believers. It consists of two parts; the Old Testament which contains the Jewish Scriptures and the New Testament which tells the story of Jesus and his church. From earliest times, Christians have immersed themselves in the Bible believing that through its many words, God speaks the Eternal Word that gives life to all.

In addition there are prayer books, devotional reading and some Christians may have holy pictures. Some Christians also use the cross or crucifix to help focus on prayer and on Jesus.

Practices

Birth

Almost all Churches practice Baptism in one form or another. At infant baptism, parents promise to care for their children, to resist the powers of evil, and by their prayers, good example and love, to lead their children to Christ. When these promises have been made the priest may make the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and water is poured over the child's head pronouncing the words of baptism. The child will then be wrapped in a white robe to symbolise that he/she is now clothed in Christ.

This service is a powerful reminder of the love of God for each human being. All life is a gift of God's grace and needs to be cherished, claimed, named and known. The sacrament of baptism affirms human life and declares that each person born into the world is filled with Divine presence and potential. The Church affirms the child and promises to provide a place in which all who share its life may see their baptismal promises realised.

Marriage

Christian marriage is regarded as a binding covenant between husband and wife made in the presence of God. It is compared with the love that Christ has for his Church.

Christian marriage is seen as the life long union in body, mind and spirit of a man and a woman. It is God's way for the continuance of humankind and the bringing up of children in security and trust. In addition to hymns, prayers and readings the marriage service includes the exchange of vows and blessings.

For Christians marriage is seen as a life-long commitment, and hence there is debate within Christianity as to how it recognises divorce and remarriage of divorcees especially in church. Some churches will not allow a remarriage to take place within their institution, and others have placed a greater emphasis on the forgiveness aspect of Jesus' ministry.

Funerals

These services usually include hymns and psalms, prayers and readings. The emphasis is on the Christian hope of resurrection into eternal life. In



addition there will be a commendation of the soul into the care of God and the committal of the body to the earth from which it came. The emphasis of all Christian worship in the presence of death is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a deeply held conviction among Christians that because Christ was raised from the dead, so too will all who put their trust in him. For most Christians cremation is acceptable and offers no obstacle to belief in resurrection.

Rites and Initiation

Baptism is a rite which marks the reception of Christians into the 'Body of Christ'. Although for the most part, Christians still continue to baptise their children, a growing number of Christians practise believer's baptism for adults, who have made a personal decision of faith. The emphasis in this service is on conversion and discipleship. Candidates are asked publicly to renounce their old way of life and to testify to a personal faith in Christ. Following these affirmations the candidate may be immersed in water as a symbol of their dying to their old way of life and rising to a new life in Christ. Churches that practise Adult Baptism usually offer a service of dedication for new born babies.

Confirmation is a service at which new believers publicly affirm their faith. The service includes the 'laying on of hands' and in some traditions, the anointing with holy oil, by a Bishop or Church Leader symbolising the gift of God's Spirit bestowed on his people. As baptised children grow up within the Christian Church they may hear the call of Jesus say to them, as he said to the disciples, 'Follow me'. In response to his gracious invitation they will present themselves to publicly confess their faith in Christ and commit their lives to him. After which a Bishop or Minister addresses each one by their baptised name and lays hands upon them saying: 'Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit.'

Diet

Originally the diet for the early Christians was Jewish until the table spread vision of St Paul. This opened up the diet for Christians and there are no dietary restrictions. Some Christians do abstain from certain foods during Lent, and some do not eat meat during Fridays.

Dress

Culture plays a big part as to what is construed as appropriate. There are no dress codes, although still in some traditional churches women cover their hair whereas men never wear a hat in church. It is still quite common for church-goers to wear their 'Sunday best' to church.

Festivals & Celebrations

In addition to Sunday worship, Holy Days are observed throughout the Christian Calendar. The most significant dates to remember are as follows:

Christmas Day - December 25th

Celebrates God giving Himself to humanity with the birth of Jesus.

Ash Wednesday

Recalls the beginning of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness for forty days and the season of Lent when Christians are encouraged to observe a time of self-denial and spiritual reflection.

Maundy Thursday

Commemorates the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist.

Good Friday

Commemorates the death of Jesus on the cross.

Easter Day

Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

Ascension Day

Celebrates Jesus' ascension to Heaven forty days after Easter.

Whitsun or Pentecost

Celebrates the day when the disciples first received the Holy Spirit, 7 weeks after Easter, on a Jewish festival day.

Harvest Festival

Celebrates the fruits of creation after the harvesting of crops etc. Usually takes place in September or October.

Community

For many Christians the act of Confirmation provides the entry into the Church. Confirmation, depending on the denomination, occurs normally during the teen years and is a fulfilment of the promise made during baptism. The Christian faithful openly acknowledge the giving of their life to Jesus and then as a consequence of this are believed to receive the Holy Spirit. Following this the Christian believer has become part of the global fellowship of Christians.

Because Jesus emphasised to his disciples, just before His Ascension, the responsibility of every disciple to 'bear witness', Christianity has had a very strong connection with 'spreading the word'. This is Christian witness and the thousands of missions bear Christian witness to different communities around the world.

Denominational Differences

In the earliest Gospel, the author tells us that Jesus appointed a group of twelve men to be his friends. This group of men marked the beginning of the Church. After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus the disciples met together until the Holy Spirit came upon them and they were empowered to leave their safe houses to preach boldly wherever they could. They continued to worship in the Jewish Temple but also met in each other's houses for worship services, especially the Eucharist. They shared many of their possessions and gave to each according to their need. During this time the disciples performed many miracles and signs so that the Church grew rapidly.



Originally they did not consider themselves to be the founders of a new religion and were known as 'People of the Way'. They had no creeds, doctrines or elaborate organisation; they simply testified to the new life that they had found in Jesus Christ. At this time Christians were considered to be a sect of Judaism in that they continued to worship in the Temple. As non-Jews came into fellowship it became clear that the Church could no longer be contained, however tentatively, within Judaism. The problem was exacerbated by the fall of Jerusalem when Christians were dispersed through the Roman Empire. However, throughout this period a man named Paul (a former Pharisee) together with other members of the Church in Jerusalem travelled throughout the Empire preaching the good news of Jesus Christ and establishing new Churches. He wrote letters often in an attempt to heal the divisions in these new Churches, some of which are included in the New Testament.

During the first century the Christians suffered from periods of intense persecution from Roman emperors. When the worst of these were over the Church was threatened by internal disputes usually concerned with matters of doctrine. Yet despite all this the Church survived and spread. The situation changed however when Constantine became Emperor of Rome in 312 (CE). Tradition tells us that on the eve of a significant battle he saw a vision of a flaming cross with the words, 'In this sign conquer.' He then won a most improbable victory and Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Two great divisions continue to exist within the Church today. The first occurred between the east and the west around 1054 (CE) and was largely due to a question of authority and doctrinal matters concerning the Trinity.

The second division occurred in the sixteenth century when 'protestant' reformers such as Calvin and Luther protested against various practices and doctrines of the Church of England. This period is called 'the Reformation'.

Huge efforts are taking place to draw Christians of all denominations together acknowledging 'one body and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith and one baptism'.

Further Information

Books

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www.christianityandrenewal.com

www.alphacourse.com

www.ccws.co.uk

If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.

C S Lewis

The Anglican Church

The Anglican 'communion' is a world-wide family of Churches in fellowship with the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose status amongst the heads of other Anglican Churches is 'first among equals', with reason and conscience making it a broad Church, both Catholic and Reformed.

The Church of England (C of E) is part of this world-wide Anglican communion and is the largest Church in England. It grew out of the Roman Catholic Church which began in England by the arrival of St. Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory the Great of Rome, in 597 AD. Also present in its roots are the distinctive ministries of the Celtic monasteries originating in Ireland in the 5th century, which spread across the country at the same time as Augustine's mission.

In the 16th century for political reasons, under King Henry VIII, the Church seceded from the Papacy to be ruled by the English Crown. Over the following 150 years it was partially influenced by the Protestant Reformation, but some also sought to maintain its Catholic roots. The comparative strengths of these two influences waxed and waned according to various external influences.

Martin Luther pioneered a religious reformation (the Protestant Reformation) primarily in northern Europe which challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, stating that the Bible, and not the Pope, was the supreme authority. The Lutheran Church founded by converts resembles Anglicanism with whom it has recently entered into a covenant.

At the start of the 18th century, the Church more or less took its present form and the relationship with state was formalised. Various social changes, together with Evangelical and Catholic movements, further formed it. Finally, from the latter half of the 20th century, the Church's relationship with the State is being loosened, though it still firmly remains the Established Church in England.

The Anglican Church makes its decisions and 'does its theology' by its three-fold referral to scripture, reason and tradition. It is a 'broad' church managing to hold within its boundaries a real spectrum of opinion and emphasis.

There is a three-fold ordained ministry - bishops, priests and deacons.

There are various strands within the Anglican Church which often overlap with each other. There is the **Evangelical** strand whose roots lie in the legacy of the Reformation and its deep calling to bring others into the Church as well greatly emphasizing the scripture as a base upon which to lead one's life. There is the **Anglo-Catholic** strand which as mentioned before goes back to the original Catholic nature of the Anglican Church, both in terms of theology and doctrine (see *Roman Catholic section*). There is the **Charismatic** strand, which occurred as a result of the influence of the Pentecostal movement and emphasizes, both in terms of doctrine and practice, the central role of the Holy Spirit. And finally there is the **Liberal** strand which attempts to re-interpret Christianity in the light of past and current context, and place a heavy importance upon rationality as the tool of interpretation.

The Church of England is therefore, unique in Christendom as having a wide range of traditions with some individual churches looking and feeling very different from others. What binds it together is a common understanding of the Christian Faith as a belief in God-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the use of the same service books, called Common Worship (although used differently by different churches); and the ordained ministry of bishops, priests and deacons.

The Church of England is therefore both Catholic and Reformed, as is the Anglican Communion that emerged during the days of the British Empire.

Further Information

www.cofe.anglican.org



The Christian Community

The Anglican Church within Calderdale

- | | | | |
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| 1 | <p>All Saints Church
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Causeway
Halifax</p> <p>01422 355 436</p> |
| 2 | <p>All Saints Church
Savile Road
Elland</p> <p>Vacant</p> | 8 | <p>Holy & Undivided Trinity
Savile Road
Savile Park Road
Halifax</p> <p>Rev. Martin Russell, Vicar
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| 3 | <p>All Souls Church
Haley Hill
Boothtown
Halifax</p> <p>Rev. David Chillman, Vicar
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Sunnybank Road
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| 4 | <p>Christ Church
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| 5 | <p>Christ Church
Scammonden Road
Barkisland
Halifax</p> <p>Mr H Wadsworth, Churchwarden
01422 822 239
01422 823 796</p> | 11 | <p>St Andrew's Church
Stainland Road
Stainland
Halifax</p> <p>Rev. Rodney Chapman, Vicar
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| 6 | <p>Christ Church
Wharf Street
Sowerby Bridge</p> <p>Rev. Peter Stoodley, Vicar
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18 St George the Martyr

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19 St Hilda's Church

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20 St James' Church

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21 St John's Church

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22 St John the Baptist

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24 St John the Baptist in the Wilderness

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- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
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| 27 | <p>St John's Church
 Windle Royd Lane
 Burnley Road
 Halifax</p> <p>Rev. Tony Street, Vicar
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 The Cross
 Elland</p> <p>Vacant</p> |
| 28 | <p>St John's Church
 Towngate
 Clifton
 Brighouse</p> <p>Mrs Deborah Spivy
 Churchwarden
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 Burnley Road
 Todmorden</p> <p>Canon Peter Calvert, Vicar
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 Halifax</p> <p>Rev. Martin Russell, Vicar
 01422 352 446</p> | 36 | <p>St Mary's Church
 Cottonstones
 Sowerby Bridge</p> <p>Vacant</p> |
| 30 | <p>St Luke
 Norland
 Sowerby Bridge</p> <p>Canon Betty Pedley
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 Brighouse</p> <p>Rev. Terry Swinhoe, Vicar
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| | | 39 | <p>St Matthew
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 Halifax</p> <p>Vacant</p> |



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Rev. Pat Holmes, Vicar
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- 49 St Thomas the Apostle**
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- 50 St Thomas the Apostle**
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Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Baptist Church

The name "Baptist" comes from the Baptist practice of immersion in water. It was coined in the seventeenth century by opponents to the new movement but rejected by followers themselves. It wasn't until the nineteenth century that Baptists accepted the use of the label to describe themselves.

The roots of the Baptist movement date back to the sixteenth century and the post-Reformation period, although the first Baptist congregation appeared in 1609 in Holland. It was here that the Church of England minister, John Smyth, performed a radical and scandalous act of baptising himself by pouring water on his head. He then baptised his fellow reformer, Thomas Helwys and other members of the congregation.

Smyth and Helwys had left England for Holland in 1607 after being persecuted for wanting to purify the Church of England of all traces of Roman Catholicism. Both Smyth and Helwys had joined a group of "Separatists" in Gainsborough in 1606. Their three core beliefs went on to shape later Baptists. They were:

The Bible, not church tradition or religious creed, was the guide in all matters of faith and practice.

The church should be made up of believers only, not all people born in the local parish.

The church should be governed by those believers, not by hierarchical figures like bishops.

In 1612 Helwys and others returned to England to establish the first Baptist Church on English soil. Baptists initially developed in two streams of theological thought:

- 1 General Baptists believed that when Christ died on the cross he died for everyone in general.
- 2 Particular Baptists followed the Calvinist tradition of believing that Christ died for a particular group or elect.

These two groups eventually came together in 1813 to form a "General Union" which eventually became the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland in the late nineteenth century.

Throughout the seventeenth century Baptists were persecuted for their beliefs being known as "non-conformists" or Dissenters. They refused to become members of the Church of England, saying Christ and not the monarch was head of the Church. The nineteenth century saw a period of significant growth for the Baptist movement. Great preachers such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon in London and Alexander Maclaren in Manchester drew crowds in their thousands.

In terms of beliefs, Baptists share the Trinitarian tradition of all the major Christian denominations. However there are a few differences. In the Baptist movement everyone is equal. There is no hierarchy of bishops or priests exercising authority over members. Baptists reject the idea that authority flows down from previous church leaders which can be traced back to the apostles in apostolic succession.

Baptists are congregational: each church is self-governing and self-supporting, made up of members, each with a role to play. The churches encourage those attending to become church members through baptism. This entitles them to vote at the church meeting where all decisions are made. Final authority rests not with the minister or deacons but with church members at the meeting. It appoints ministers, elders, deacons and others who take a leadership role, agree financial policy and determine mission strategy.

Despite their autonomy, local Baptist churches have always come together in regional, national and international associations for support and fellowship. Baptists believe that churches should not live in isolation but be interdependent.

Technically there is no such thing as a Baptist denomination. The organisation has a "bottom up" rather than "top down" approach. However, in the UK most Baptist churches belong to the Baptist Union. This isn't a central authority but a central resource for assisting churches.

As each Baptist church is autonomous there can be no outside interference in decision making.



This applies to any secular power, such as the state, being involved in church matters. Therefore Baptists reject the idea of an established or state church.

Baptists are famous for their tradition of full immersion baptisms. The baptism is carried out by full immersion. Most Baptist Churches have a baptistery which is basically a pool (about 4m by 3m) in the church. During a baptismal service the minister and the person being baptised enter the water. The minister, holding the person, will lay them back in the water so they are totally immersed, and then bring them back up again. Baptists believe this practice is in line with the New Testament practice of baptism, as carried out by John the Baptist.

Today Baptists form the fifth largest Christian church in the world. Baptist churches are found in almost every country in the world and have about 40 million members worldwide. In Britain 2,150 churches belong to the Baptist Union of Great Britain, between them having 150,000 members.

Further Information

www.baptist.org

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2 Lee Mount Baptist Church

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3 Pellon Baptist Church

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4 Roomfield Baptist Church

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5 Steep Lane Baptist Church

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6 Vale Baptist Church

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7 West Vale Baptist Church

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True Christian love is not just a feeling or a pleasant disposition of the soul. It is a self-sacrificing, ceaseless, life-long act of heroism unto death. It is fiery yet dispassionate, not dependent on anything, not on being loved in return or having a kinship of blood. One no longer thinks of receiving something for oneself. One can be spat upon and reviled, and yet in this suffering there is such a deep, profound peace... Such love can only come from God. This is the only love that Christ is truly interested in the love He came to earth to show and teach humanity. With this love He gave up His Spirit on the Cross.

Monk Damascene

The Eastern Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church is one of the three major branches of Christianity, which stands in historical continuity with the communities created by the apostles of Jesus in the region of the eastern Mediterranean, and which spread by missionary activity throughout Eastern Europe. The word orthodox (from Greek, "right-believing") implies the claim of doctrinal consistency with apostolic truth. The Orthodox Church currently has more than 174 million adherents throughout the world. Other designations, such as Orthodox Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Eastern Orthodox, are also used in reference to the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church is a fellowship of these independent Churches. Each is autocephalous, that is, governed by its own head bishop (called Patriarch, Metropolitan, or Archbishop), but sharing a common faith, common principles of church policy and organization, and a common liturgical tradition. Only the languages used in worship and minor aspects of tradition differ from country to country.

A "primacy of honor" belongs to the Patriarch of Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey), because the city was the seat of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire, which between AD 320 and 1453 was the centre of Eastern Christendom. Neither in the past, nor in modern times, however, has his authority been comparable to that exercised in the West by the Roman pope: The Patriarch does not possess administrative powers beyond his own territory, or patriarchate, and he does not claim infallibility. His position is simply a primacy among equals.

Three other ancient Orthodox patriarchates owe their positions to their distinguished pasts: those in Alexandria, Egypt; Damascus, Syria (although the incumbent carries the ancient title patriarch of Antioch); and Jerusalem. However the patriarchate of Moscow and all Russia is the largest Orthodox Church today by far, having survived a difficult period of persecution after the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The concern for continuity and tradition, which is characteristic of Orthodoxy, does not imply worship of

the past as such, but rather a sense of identity and consistency with the original apostolic witness, as realized through the sacramental community of each local church.

This belief that truth is inseparable from the life of the sacramental community provides the basis for the Orthodox understanding of the apostolic succession of bishops: consecrated by their peers and occupying the "place of Christ" at the Eucharistic meal, where the church gathers, they are the guardians and witnesses of a tradition that goes back, uninterrupted, to the apostles and that unites the local churches in the community of faith. Orthodox canonical legislation admits married men to the priesthood. Bishops, however, are elected from among celibate or widowed clergy.

The ecumenical councils of the first millennium defined the basic Christian doctrines on the Trinity, on the unique Person and the two natures of Christ and on his two wills, expressing fully the authenticity and fullness of his divinity and his humanity. These doctrines are forcefully expressed in all Orthodox statements of faith and in liturgical hymns. Also, in light of this traditional doctrine on the Person of Christ, the Virgin Mary is venerated as Mother of God Mary.

Inseparable from the liturgical tradition, religious art is seen by Orthodox Christians as a form of pictorial confession of faith and a channel of religious experience. This central function of religious images (icons) - unparalleled in any other Christian tradition - received its full definition following the end of the iconoclastic movement in Byzantium (843). The iconoclasts invoked the Old Testament prohibition of graven images and rejected icons as idols. The Orthodox theologians, on the other hand, based their arguments on the specifically Christian doctrine of the incarnation: God is indeed invisible and indescribable in his essence, but when the Son of God became man, he voluntarily assumed all the characteristics of created nature, including describability. Furthermore, because the icons of Christ and the saints provide direct personal contact with the holy persons

represented on them, these images should be objects of "veneration" (proskynesis), even though "worship" (latreia) is addressed to God alone.

The two interpretations of primacy - 'apostolic' in the West, 'pragmatic' in the East - existed for centuries, and tensions were resolved in a conciliar way. Eventually, however, conflicts led to permanent schism. In the 7th century the universally accepted creed was interpolated in Spain with the Latin word filioque, meaning 'and from the Son,' thus rendering the creed as 'I believe ... in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds from the Father and the Son.'

The interpolation, initially opposed by the popes, was promoted in Europe by Charlemagne (crowned emperor in 800) and his successors. Eventually, it was also accepted (circa 1014) in Rome. The Eastern church, however, considered the interpolation heretical. Moreover, other issues became controversial: for instance, the ordination of married men to the priesthood and the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist. Secondary in themselves, these conflicts could not be resolved because the two sides followed different criteria of judgment.

However, mainstream Orthodox thought has adopted a positive attitude toward the modern ecumenical movement. Always rejecting doctrinal relativism and affirming that the goal of ecumenism is the full unity of the faith, Orthodox churches have been members of the World Council of Churches since 1948. They generally recognize that, before the establishment of full unity, a theological dialogue leading in that direction is necessary and that divided Christian communities can cooperate and provide each other with mutual help and experience, even if sacramental intercommunion, requiring unity in faith, appears to be distant.

Further Information

www.antiochian-orthodox.co.uk

The Eastern Orthodox Church within Calderdale

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He who governed the world before I was born shall take care of it likewise when I am dead. My part is to improve the present moment.

John Wesley

The Methodist Church

The Methodist Church sprang directly from the work of John Wesley (1703 - 1791) and his brother Charles (1707 - 1788), and was part of the evangelical revival of the 18th century. John and Charles were dedicated to Christian living and met with others at Oxford University to form, what was dubbed, the 'Holy Club' in 1725, also nicknamed "Methodists" because of their rigorous 'methodology' or approach to the Christian life. Among others in this 'Club' was George Whitefield who would become the greatest preacher of the time.

After being ordained deacons and priests of the Church of England, they left Oxford to go to Georgia in the American Colonies as missionaries in 1735. On the voyages, and whilst there, they were greatly impressed by the faith of Moravians, their piety, simple lifestyle and organisation. They returned to London, England where on May 24, 1738 John famously described a spiritual experience in his Journal:

"In the evening I went unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter to nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine and saved me from the law of sin and death."

After this new beginning, reluctantly following the example of George Whitefield, they began open-air preaching, despite the opposition of bishops and hostile mobs. For the following half-century beautiful and inspiring hymns flowed from Charles' pen (it is estimated he wrote over 6,000) which would affect many churches worldwide, while John became the organising genius who turned a spontaneous movement into structured body which became the origin of today's world-wide Methodist Church.

Societies were formed, both itinerant and local, first in Bristol and London, and then all over the United Kingdom. Preachers were employed; a system of circuits was formed, and from 1744 onwards there was an annual Conference of preachers and a centralised system geared for mission. John travelled 250,000 miles and preached 40,000 times, and by

1791, there were over 70,000 members and more than 400 chapels!

For the Wesleys, 'works' as well as faith were essential to the whole of Christian living, and caring for the poor, for prisoners, for widows and orphans mattered a great deal. Methodists were not only interested in welfare, they were concerned to remedy social injustice, and John Wesley's last known letter urged the abolition of 'that execrable villainy'; black slavery.

John Wesley never intended his movement to separate from the Church of England but in 1784 he gave legal status to his Conference and ordained ministers for America. Disputes about the status of the travelling preachers and the administration of the sacraments were resolved by the Plan of Pacification (1795) which was a decisive break with the Church of England. Divisions arising from constitutional disputes and fresh revivals led to the creation of the Methodist New Connexion (1797), the Primitive Methodists (1812), the Bible Christians (1816) and smaller groups. All except the Wesleyan Reform Union and the Independent Methodists united with the main body, the Wesleyans, to form the Methodist Church in 1932.

This Church, which covers England, Scotland and Wales, is the largest of the Free Churches in England. It belongs to the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and other ecumenical bodies and takes part in over 550 local ecumenical partnerships. It has 33 districts, each with a Synod, presided over by a ministerial Chair. It emphasises education and training for various forms of ministries, both lay and ordained.

The assurance of the free grace of God was the experience of the early Methodists, which the Wesleys set in the Christian tradition of 'arminianism', emphasising within human freewill the need for holy living as an outcome of faith leading towards 'Christian perfection'. Calvinists (such as Whitefield) by contrast stressed the absolute sovereignty of God and believed in predestination.

Its worship is a mixture of formal and free; the hymns of the Wesleys are still important to a people "born in song." Its commitment to Bible study in house fellowship/discussion groups, to youth work, to pastoral care and social outreach, are the main



characteristics of a church proud to celebrate 250 years of Methodist witness in 1988 and 200 years of overseas missions in 1986 within the World Church.

The rediscovery of Wesley's message for today is a vital part of its ongoing commitment to evangelical revival and the quest for holiness, personal and corporate, which offers Christ to all through worship, preaching and service.

Further Information

www.methodist.org.uk

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tonybuglass@fish.co.uk</p> |
| <p>16 Lindwell Methodist Church
Rochdale Road
Rishworth</p> <p>Rev. Paul Clapham, Minister
01422 311 591</p> | <p>23 Northowram Methodist Church
The Green
Lydgate
Northowram
Halifax
HX3 7TB</p> <p>Rev. Ruth Gee, Minister
01422 202 564</p> |
| <p>17 Luddenden United Reformed Church
Luddendenfoot Community Centre
Railway Street
Luddendenfoot</p> <p>Rev. Anthony Buglass, Minister
01422 843 203
tonybuglass@fish.co.uk</p> | <p>24 Old Town Methodist Church
Walker Lane
Old Town
HX7 8RX</p> <p>Rev. Robert Bowen, Minister
01706 839 032
rab@fish.co.uk</p> |
| <p>18 Lumbutts Methodist Church
Lumbutts Road
Lumbutts
OL14 6JA</p> <p>Rev. Robert Bowen, Minister
01706 839 032
rab@fish.co.uk</p> | <p>25 Queensbury Methodist Church
West End
Bradford Road
Queensbury
BD13 2ES</p> <p>Rev. David Jones, Minister
01422 322 764
davidb.jones@btopenworld.com</p> |
| <p>19 Midgley and Luddenden Methodist Church
Luddenden Lane
Luddenden</p> <p>Rev. Anthony Buglass, Minister
01422 843 203
tonybuglass@fish.co.uk</p> | |



26 St Andrew's Methodist Church

Huddersfield Road
Halifax
HX3 0AT

Rev. Judith Satchell, Minister
01422 354 610

27 St Matthews LEP

Crowtrees Lane
Rastrick
Brighouse

Rev. Terry Swinhoe, Minister
Rev Christine Jewitt, Minister
01484 714 725
01484 713 386

28 St Paul's Methodist Church

Tower Hill
Sowerby Bridge
HX6 2EQ

Rev. Stephen Barnett, Minister
01422 835 417
01422 831 109

29 Salem Methodist Church

Halifax Methodist Circuit
Richmond Street
Halifax

Rev. Judith Satchell, Minister
01422 354 610
01422 355 374

30 Southgate Methodist Church

Southgate
Elland

Rev. Andrew Scutt, Minister
01422 374 562
01422 372 104

31 Southowram Methodist Church

Withinfields School
Southowram
Halifax
HX3 9TH

Rev. Ruth Gee, Minister
01422 202 564

32 Stones Methodist Church

Rochdale Road
Ripponden
Halifax
HX6 4DS

Rev. Stephen Barnett, Minister
01422 825 596
01422 831 109

33 Trinity Methodist Church

Rochdale Road
Walsden
OL14 7SL

Rev. Robert Bowen, Minister
01706 839 032
rab@fish.co.uk

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted, to announce liberty to captives, and to open the eyes of the blind.

The Bible: Isaiah 61:1

The Pentecostal & Charismatic Churches

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in all their multifaceted variety constitute the fastest growing group of churches within Christianity today. According to some often-quoted estimates there are over five hundred million adherents worldwide, found in almost every country in the world. If these figures are not wild guesses, they indicate that in less than a hundred years, Pentecostal, Charismatic and associated movements have become the largest numerical force in world Christianity after the Roman Catholic Church and represent a quarter of all Christians.

Some Pentecostals point to the Methodist movement led by John Wesley as the early precursors to some of the thoughts of Pentecostalism. Wesley stressed aspects of the 'second blessing' also called 'entire sanctification' by the Holy Spirit. It was William Fletcher who saw the second blessing as 'the baptism in the Spirit' and talked about it as a power. Another famous preacher of his time who is also seminal to the Pentecostal movement in terms of ideas was the Scottish priest, Edward Irving, who flamboyantly taught that Jesus' human nature was just like ours, capable of sinning but that Jesus did not because he overcame by the power of the Spirit. Another Scot, John Alexander Dowie, believed that there was nothing in Scripture to show that healing was over. He began one of the most outstanding healing ministries of the time and is certainly part of the reason for healing becoming a central plank in the theology and practice of the Pentecostal movement at a later time.

From a historical perspective it is difficult to assess the impacts of various movements, thoughts and individuals upon what would be broadly classified as the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of today. But definitely among the major historical players would be the Welsh Revival, the Azusa Street and Charles Fox Parham, the Church of God in Tennessee and Alexander Boddy. It would take books to write about their contributions and all the other individuals who founded the different Churches within the the loose umbrella known as Pentecostalism, but to give an example let us look at one small part of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, the Elim Church.

Evans Roberts is usually identified as the most striking individual in the Welsh Revival, but there were others such as D.P. Williams, who became the

founder of the Apostolic Church and the Jeffrey brothers, George and Stephen. The Elim Pentecostal Church was founded in 1915 by George in Monaghan, Ireland. The name 'Elim' was taken from the book of Exodus where the Israelites, exhausted and dispirited en route from Egypt's cruel bondage to the freedom of Canaan, came to 'Elim' - an oasis in the desert where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees (Exodus 15.27). Between 1915 and 1934, George Jeffreys conducted some tremendous evangelistic missions where amazing miracles of healing took place. Elim Church continued to grow despite the ravages of World War Two and other difficulties and soon established itself as a Pentecostal power in the evangelisation of the United Kingdom. Today, there are over 500 churches in the homeland and nearly 9000 world-wide.

Experience rather than doctrine is the principal determinant of Pentecostalism. There is no absolute consensus among all Pentecostals on doctrine or any other matter except for Spirit baptism and the practice of charismata (gifts of the Holy Spirit). Pentecostals have defined themselves by so many paradigms that diversity itself has become a primary defining characteristic of Pentecostal and Charismatic identity. It is now probably better to speak of a whole 'range of Pentecostals'.

But, similar to the other mainline evangelical Christian denominations, Pentecostalism tends to adhere to most of the other fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. However, their inconsistency with some of the other Christian groups is in their understanding of the Holy Spirit baptism and gifts. Many Christians believe that the Holy Spirit baptism occurs at the onset of salvation and that the gifts were given only to the Apostles and gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed. However Pentecostals believe that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit seen in the first century Christian Church are available to contemporary Christians and ought to be experienced and practiced today.

Another distinguishing mark of Pentecostalism is worship which is often characterised by glossolalia (a gift of the Holy Spirit commonly referred to as 'speaking in tongues'), prophesying, healings, the 'casting out of devils' (exorcism), hand-clapping, shouting and being 'slain in the Spirit', which are all observed with great zeal and fervency.

The goal of Pentecostalism remains the reconciliation of mankind with God and the union with Jesus Christ at his return. The aim is to spread and promote the Christian faith on the basis of the Holy Scripture. According to their creed, Jesus Christ is the head of the Church which he maintains through the Holy Spirit. He therefore has sent and is still sending apostles into the world to preach his gospel. The rule for all Pentecostal teaching has to be the teaching of Jesus. Pentecostals have thus evolved as emancipated and active Christians through their personal and free belief in Jesus Christ.

Further Information

www.elim.org.uk

The Pentecostal Church within Calderdale

- 1 Elim International Christian Network**
Ryburn Street
Sowerby Bridge
HX6 3AZ

01422 836 441

- 2 Elim Pentecostal Church**
Hall Street
Halifax

David Green, Pastor
01422 365 370

- 3 Assembly of God Pentecostal Church**
Catherine Street
Elland

01422 327 405

- 4 New Testament Church of God**
Aked's Road
Halifax

01422 340 554

- 5 New Beginnings Christian Centre**
Wheatley Road
Halifax
HX3 5JR

Stephen Greening, Pastor
01422 252 374
administrator@wheatleyaog.org.uk

Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought.

Pope John Paul II

The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church (officially called The Catholic Church) is the single largest grouping of Christians, comprising two thirds of all baptised Christians. The word 'Catholic' (from the Greek 'katholikos') means universal and came into general use during the fourth century (CE) to distinguish it from Christians who had separated themselves from the main body of the Church. The word 'Roman' was added by other Christians during the sixteenth century.

There are twenty-one different Churches within the Catholic Church who follow various local traditions (e.g. Ukrainian Greek Catholic, Melkite Church in Syria, Chaldean Church in Iraq etc.) who all recognise the Pope (Bishop of Rome) as their earthly leader and guide. It is claimed that the Pope is the spiritual successor of St Peter, the leader of Jesus' twelve followers (the Apostles).

The teaching of the Catholic Church is based on two pillars, first the Sacred Scriptures (the Bible) and secondly on tradition (mainly the twenty one Ecumenical Church Councils which have met over the last 2,000 years). When the Pope and the Bishops and other Christians meet they interpret the teaching of Christ for the Christians of their time. This teaching authority is called the 'Magisterium'.

The central act of worship for Catholics is the celebrating of the Eucharist (usually called the Mass) when the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. In this way the faithful are in direct contact with Jesus Christ. There are seven sacraments or ways of making Jesus present to Christians: Baptism, Confession, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders (ordination of a bishop, priest or deacon) and Anointing the sick.

Only priests ordained by the Bishop have been granted the authority to provide and lead sacramental services. The Church has maintained its historic position of not allowing the ordination of women. To become a priest within the Roman Catholic Church, or to join a monastic order, one has to take a vow of celibacy.

The teaching of the Catholic Church divides the Church into three parts. First the Church on earth (militant - fighting to overcome evil), secondly the Church suffering (people who have died and are repenting for their sins in a state called purgatory) and lastly, the Church triumphant (those who worship God in heaven). Through prayer, Catholics believe they can be in contact with people in all these states. Frequently, Catholics ask Mary the Mother of Jesus to intercede on their behalf with her Son or indeed invoke other people named as saints who share with Mary a place in Heaven.

The Church is organised at a local level into areas called 'dioceses' each led by a Bishop (a successor of the

Apostles) and he works in co-operation with priests, deacons and lay people. There are twenty-two Catholic dioceses in England and Wales, and eight in Scotland. In addition there are seven Provinces each with an Archbishop. Leadership in England is provided by the Archbishop of Westminster, in Wales by the Archbishop of Wales, and in Scotland by the Archbishop of Glasgow.

No introduction to the Roman Catholic Church would be complete without mention of the immense community and charity work carried out every day of every year right across the world. There are groups of thousands of men and women who belong to religious orders or movements who live in their communities in countless countries to pray, run missions, schools, hospices, hospitals, orphanages etc.

Calderdale forms part of the Diocese of Leeds and hence the Bishop of Leeds is the local leader of Catholics.

Further Information

www.catholic-ew.org.uk

Leeds Diocese website: www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Catechism of Catholic Church 1994.
Published by Geoffrey Chapman. London

The Catholic Church within Calderdale

1 Church of Our Lady

(Ukrainian Greek Catholic)
Queens Road
Halifax

Fr. Jose Melnicki, OSBM, Priest
Fr. Irineu Kraiczi, OSBM, Priest
01422 342 514
01274 542 307

2 Good Shepherd RC Church

Royal Fold New Road
Mytholmroyd
Halifax
HX7 5EA

Fr. John Gott, Priest
01422 886 189
goodshepherd@iclwxy.co.uk



3 Sacred Heart & St Patrick's RC Church

Bolton Brow
Sowerby Bridge
HX6 2BA

Fr. Kevin Firth, Priest
01422 832 085

4 St Alban's Church

Abbey Walk South
Halifax
HX3 0AZ

Fr. David Smith, Priest
01422 352 141

5 St Bernard's

Range Lane
Halifax
HX3 6DL

Fr. Joseph M Taylor, Priest
01422 353 690
bernards@blueyonder.co.uk

6 St Columba

Highroad Well Lane
Pellon
Halifax
HX2 0QF

Fr. Joseph Finan, Priest
01422 361 682

7 St Joseph's

Martin Street
Brighouse
HD6 1DA

Fr. Philip Fitzgerald, Priest
01484 712 679
stjosephbrig@btconnect.com

8 St Joseph's Church

Wellington Road
Todmorden
HX5 0PU

Fr. Tony Gallagher, Priest
01706 813 676

9 St Malachy R C

Moorlands House
Nursery Lane
Ovendon
Halifax
HX3 5NS

Fr. Peter Nealson, Priest
01422 352 382

10 St Mary's Church

Gibbet Street
Halifax
HX1 5DH

Fr. David Smith, Priest
01422 352 141
info@stmaries.org.uk

11 St Patrick's Church

Victoria Road
Elland
HX5 0PU

Fr. Sean Leonard, Priest
01422 373 734

While women weep, as they do now, I'll fight; while children go hungry, as they do now I'll fight; while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, as they do now, I'll fight; while there is a drunkard left, while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets, while there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight, I'll fight to the very end!

William Booth

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an integral part of the Christian Church, although distinctive in its government and practice. The Army's doctrine follows the mainstream of Christian belief and its articles of faith emphasise God's saving purposes. Its objects are 'the advancement of the Christian religion, of education, the relief of poverty, and other charitable objectives beneficial to society or the community of mankind as a whole' (Salvation Army Act 1980).

The movement was founded in London, England, in 1865 by William Booth, has spread to many parts of the world. William and his wife Catherine Booth, were Methodists and William was a minister in that denomination. They both believed that William was called by God to be an evangelist and they did not agree with the decision of Methodist officials that he should be confined to a local church situation.

So strongly did the Booths believe William should be an evangelist that he resigned from the Methodist ministry and they moved to London with their young family. After being invited by a group of Christians from a small mission to preach on the streets to the crowds thronging the Mile End in East London, William was sure he had found his destiny.

The group made William its leader, and became known as The East London Christian Mission. The Mission grew rapidly, its work spreading through Great Britain, resulting in its name being changed to The Christian Mission. In 1878 the Mission's name was changed once more - this time to The Salvation Army. Such a military name fired members' imagination and enthusiasm, and uniforms were adopted and military terms given to aspects of worship, administration and practice.

The rapid deployment of the first Salvationists was aided by the adoption of a quasi-military command structure in 1878 when the title 'The Salvation Army' was brought into use. The Salvation Army crest was designed in 1878 when The Christian Mission changed its name to The Salvation Army and began adopting a military style with uniforms and military terms. The crest can also be found inside Salvation Army periodicals and books and on the walls of Salvation Army halls.

This symbol has particular relevance for Salvationists because it reminds them of the important features of their faith. The 'S' in the centre stands for salvation, while the cross represents the death of Jesus. The swords remind Salvationists that they are fighting against sin. The surrounding shape of the sun stands for the fire and light of the Holy Spirit. The crown reminds Salvationists that

Heaven is the reward of all those who love and serve God. The motto 'Blood and Fire' again emphasises important points of Salvation Army belief: 'Blood' because Christians are saved from sin by the death of Jesus, and 'Fire' representing the power of the Holy Spirit which helps Christians live holy lives.

All Salvationists accept a disciplined and compassionate life of high moral standards which includes abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. From its earliest days the Army has accorded woman equal opportunities, every rank and service being open to them, and from childhood the young are encouraged to love and serve God.

Evangelistic and social enterprises are maintained under the authority of the General (the Army's world leader) by full-time officers and employees, as well as soldiers who give service in their free time. The Army also benefits from the support of many adherents and friends, including those who serve on advisory boards. Leadership in the Army is provided by commissioned officers who are recognised ministers of religion

Raised to evangelise, the Army spontaneously embarked on schemes for the social betterment of the poor. Such concerns have since developed, wherever the Army operates, in practical, skilled and cost-effective ways. Evolving social services meet endemic needs and specific crises world-wide. Up-to-date facilities and highly trained staff are employees.

Modern facilities and longer-term development are under continual review. Increasingly the Army's policy and its indigenous membership allow it to co-operate with international relief agencies and governments alike. The movement's partnership with both private and public philanthropy will continue to bring comfort to the needy, while the proclamation of God's redemptive love offers individuals and communities the opportunity to enjoy a better life on earth and a place in Christ's everlasting Kingdom

The Salvation Army in the UK and Ireland is part of an international Christian church working in 109 countries worldwide. Demonstrating its Christian principles through social welfare provision, The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of social welfare in the world.

Further Information

www2.salvationarmy.org.uk



The Salvation Army within Calderdale

1 Salvation Army

Brighouse
33 King Street
Brighouse
HD6 1NX

Capt. Sue Coles, Church Leader
01484 401 175

2 Salvation Army Halifax

St James Road
Halifax
HX1 1YS

Majors Anne & Paul McNally, Church Leaders
01422 353 238



Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'

Ellen G. White

Seventh-Day Adventists

In just a century and a half the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has grown from a handful of individuals, who carefully studied the Bible in their search for truth, to a world-wide community of 13 million baptised members and 7 million others who regard the Church their spiritual home, with about half a million new members joining each year, making it one of the fastest growing denominations in the world.

There are three central truths about the history of the Seventh-Day Adventists: before it was 'Adventist', it was 'Christian'; it celebrates a history that has emphasised 'freedom' from the outset; and it welcomes and grows from diversity within its membership.

Doctrinally, Seventh-Day Adventists are heirs of the Millerite movement of the 1840s. William Miller had experienced much in his life: he was a farmer, a deputy sheriff, a justice of the peace and even a captain in the 1812 War of Independence. Brought up on the Baptist side of Evangelical Christianity, the horrors of war had such a profound effect on Miller that he went back to the Bible to search for something that would satisfy his soul.

Miller became intrigued by The Book of Daniel and the vivid vision (8:14) of the end of the world. Miller interpreted this as advent of the Second Coming and predicted the Day of Judgement to be within a year of March 21st 1843. When it did not occur, Miller recalculated that he had been out by 214 days, and the correct date was 22nd October 1844. When Jesus did not appear, Miller's followers experienced what became known as 'the Great Disappointment'. Many who had joined now left it.

A few, however, went back to their Bibles to find out why. They concluded that the October 22nd date had indeed been correct, but that the Bible prophecy predicted not that Jesus would return to earth in 1844, but that He would begin at that time a special ministry in heaven for His followers.

From this small group arose several leaders, notably a young couple, James and Ellen G. White. Ellen, a mere teenager at the time of the 'Great Disappointment', grew into a gifted author, speaker and administrator, who would become and remain the spiritual counselor of the Adventist family for more than seventy years until her death in 1915.

Adventists believe she enjoyed God's special guidance as she wrote her counsels to the growing body of believers.

Basing its faith and practice wholly on the Bible, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church developed 27 fundamental beliefs. It is these which unify the otherwise very diverse world-wide Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

Seventh-Day Adventists accept the traditional position, of three equal persons in the one Godhead, the Virgin birth, that Jesus was fully God and fully man, the Bible is the inspired Word of God and the crucifixion was the complete sacrifice for sin. However there are some beliefs which are not shared by all Christians. Seventh-Day Adventists believe that God has granted free will - and hence do not accept the concept of predestination. But the belief which really stands out is that Saturday is the Sabbath. They believe that God gave the seventh-day Sabbath when He first created the world and put a special blessing which can still benefit today. This is why Seventh-Day Adventists all over the world attend church on a Saturday and do their best to keep it special.

Adventists believe there is a sanctuary in heaven where Christ ministers, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry: investigative judgement, by which is determined who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore can partake in the first resurrection.

It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God, ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom.

The Second Advent will occur after this period and will be literal, personal, visible, and worldwide. When He returns, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and together with the righteous living will be glorified and taken to heaven, but the unrighteous will die and wait for resurrection a thousand years later.

Adventists believe very strongly in 'freedom' in all aspects including health of the body. Thus within nineteenth-century Adventism one finds strong anti-slavery actions, women licensed as ministers, and

health reform principles that included abolition of alcohol, meat and tobacco within the membership.

The heritage of Seventh-Day Adventists also reveals an incredible diversity in the background of some of the early membership: at least five different religious faiths formed the first Sabbath-keeping Christian Adventist church.

The first British community of Seventh-Day Adventists was established in Southampton in 1878. Following a period of growth, the Church was formerly organised into the British Union Conference in 1901. Today, there are over 22,000 members worshipping in more than 200 congregations around the UK. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is also an Associate Member of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

Seventh-day Adventists have established themselves in virtually every country of the world. While ethnically diverse, they remain united over the everlasting gospel, the basic Christian message of salvation through faith in Christ.

Further Information

www.adventist.org

Seventh-Day Adventists in Calderdale

- Meeting take place at:**
The Seventh-day Adventist Church
Oddfellows' Hall
3 Coleridge Street
Halifax
HX1 2JF

Local Secretary, Graham Rigby
01422 369032
Pastor, Jeff Couzins
07780610877

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed, and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer.

Henry David Thoreau

The Unitarian Church

The Unitarian Church is a branch of Christianity which, during the early Reformation, rejected the doctrine of the Trinity as unscriptural, asserting instead the Unity of God and the essential humanity of Jesus. The word 'Unitarian' refers to the traditional insistence on divine unity, the oneness of God and because of this, the affirmation of the essential unity of humankind and of creation. Unitarians recognise that the word 'God' has no single definition and that it may be used to describe a person's faith or ultimate belief system. Unitarians believe that no one has the right to define God for others; rather the description of God is one of personal experience. Where some Unitarians envisage God as a universal father or mother, others imagine him to be a unifying life-giving spirit.

Unitarians hold Jesus in high regard as a major figure in humanity's spiritual journey. He was a teacher in the rabbinical and prophetic tradition of Judaism and a powerful example of integrity, courage and compassionate living. Unitarians don't claim the divinity of Jesus and therefore don't worship him accordingly.

The Bible is valued by most Unitarians as a human record of a people's long struggle to understand their origins, their destiny and their God. Unitarians do not regard it as an unerring, unquestionable authority. They believe it should be read in the light of reason, informed by the insights of biblical criticism and scholarship. When they accept something in the Bible as true, they do so because it rings true in their own humble reflection upon it - not simply because it is in the Bible. Bible extracts may be incorporated in Unitarian worship, as may readings from any sacred or 'secular' literature or poetry which is felt to be appropriate and relevant.

Among Unitarians of today honest reflection on fundamental religious questions, illuminated by the insights gained from personal experience, the Judaeo-Christian tradition, other faiths, science, psychology, poetry and literature, tends to be seen as providing the most credible approach to the personal spiritual quest. While acknowledging this diversity of influences, many Unitarians continue to regard themselves as Christians first and foremost. Unitarians seek to provide a creative alternative to the rigidity of dogma which encumbers so many branches of organised religion for, in the words of the Fourth Gospel; it is the spirit which alone gives life.

Unitarians approach religion and spirituality in a rather unusual way. They believe that faith should be free from the constraints imposed by others. They believe that no one should dictate what another person may or may not believe. This means that this text is not the Unitarian party line, for there is no party line. It does not presume to speak for all Unitarians on any or every issue. It is essentially my own personal perspective as a lifelong Unitarian.

Unitarians believe that Jesus was a man, unequivocally human and that to talk of him as God is unfaithful to his own understanding of himself. The New Testament accounts describe a Jewish man, chosen, raised up, adopted and anointed by God. They claim that the divine purpose was that Jesus should reconcile first the Jews and then all humanity to each other and to God. Jesus stood both in the prophetic tradition of such figures as Isaiah and Hosea, and in the kingly line of David. His ministry took place in a primarily Jewish context. His challenge to a corrupt priesthood in the Jerusalem Temple made him powerful enemies. These found common cause with the ruthless Roman authorities. The result was his crucifixion, a supreme example of human integrity and faithfulness in the face of human evil. Unitarians do not see the crucifixion as a blood sacrifice for sin.

The oldest Unitarian movement in the world with a continuous history is in Transylvania -- now part of Romania. Unitarians there look to Francis David (1520-1579) as the founder of their Church. Another early figure of great importance was Fausto Sozzini (1539-1604) (better known to history as Faustus Socinus). He was an Italian theologian who became the effective leader of the Unitarian Minor Reformed Church of Poland, also called the Polish Brethren.

In England several names are worthy of special mention. John Biddle (1615-1662), a young schoolteacher, publicly propounded a Unitarian theology during the religious and political ferment of the mid-17th century. Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), best remembered as a scientist, became the leading spokesman for the Unitarian movement of his day, which grew within the English Presbyterian and other Nonconformist denominations during the 18th century. Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808) left the Church of England to found the first avowedly Unitarian congregation in Britain (in Essex Street, London) in 1774.



The man who designed the Unitarian's symbol was a Czech named Hans Deutsch, and his inspiration was the Czech religious reformer, Jan Hus. Hus was burned at the stake in 1415 for the 'heresy' of offering the chalice of communion to the laity as well as the clergy.

Further Information

www.unitarian.org.uk

The Unitarian Church within Calderdale

1 **Pepper Hill Unitarian Church**

Pepper Hill
Shelf
Halifax

01274 393127
01274 574974

Seek the truth
 Listen to the truth
 Teach the truth
 Love the truth
 Abide by the truth
 And defend the truth
 Unto death.

John Huss

The United Reform Church

The United Reformed Church takes its inspiration from the Reformation and such historic figures as Peter Valdes who lived in the 12th century and inspired a movement characterised by lay preaching, voluntary poverty and a life of good works; John Huss (c.1372 -1415), a Czech religious teacher whose teachings anticipated those of the Reformation and who was burned at the stake in 1415 but became a national hero; Martin Luther (1483-1546), the founder of the German Reformation, whose study of the writings of St Paul and Augustine of Hippo led him to the belief that men and women could only be justified, by the grace of God, through faith rather than through good works or religious observances; Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), like Luther, a Roman Catholic priest, and the first leader of the Swiss Reformation; and finally John Calvin (1509 - 64) the French Reformer best known for his work in Geneva, where he created a community with four orders ministry (pastor, doctor, elder, deacon) on which almost all subsequent Reformed churches were based to some degree.

Calvin's teachings, which shaped the beliefs of most non-Lutheran Reformed churches, stress the primacy of Scripture in matters of faith, justification through grace by faith and a strong view of God's omnipotence and therefore the 'predestination' of God's elect, combined with a greater emphasis on church discipline than in Luther's teaching.

Though one of the smaller of Britain's 'mainstream' denominations, the United Reformed Church (URC) stands in the historic Reformed tradition, whose member denominations make up the largest single strand of Protestantism with more than 70 million members world-wide. The URC comprises 150,000 adults and 100,000 children and young people in 1750 congregations spread throughout England, Scotland and Wales, served by some 1100 ministers, both women and men.

The URC is a Union of the Congregational Church in England and Wales (united in 1972), the Presbyterian Church of England (united in 1972), the Re-formed Association of Churches of Christ (joined in 1981) and the Congregational Union of Scotland (joined in April 2000).

The origins of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism go back to Elizabethan Puritanism, even though they did not emerge as separate denominations until after 1662. The main difference between Congregationalists and Presbyterians was over the nature and the ordering of the Church. Congregationalists (or Independents as they were often called) believed in a gathered Church, that is to say a Church which consisted of those who lived faithful and holy lives. They thought that this meant that the Church had in a sense to be separate from the rest of the community that did not live faithful and holy lives; hence they were called Separatists, and this differentiated them from Presbyterians who believed in the traditional parish system whereby the Church had a responsibility to everybody who lived in a given geographical area.

Intense persecution led to the emigrations which followed in the early years of the seventeenth century, particularly to North America (e.g. the Pilgrim Fathers of 1620). One result ironically, was that Congregationalism became the established church in Massachusetts until 1834. A famous example of the persecution is the case of the first Congregational martyrs - Henry Barrow and John Greenwood were imprisoned for the best part of seven years. Eventually they were found guilty of attacking the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Queen and of the Church of England and hanged.

The Evangelical Revival from the middle of the eighteenth century led by such figures as John Wesley (Methodism) affected all the churches in this country, as well as creating some new ones. In particular it affected Congregationalists and Baptists by giving them a new missionary sense.

The central work of the URC is carried out through an annual council called the General Assembly. There are about 700 representatives, mainly appointed by District Councils. Half the members are lay persons, mostly elders, and half are ministers. Decisions are taken about the general policy of the church, and committees appointed to carry it out.



Each year a Moderator of Assembly is elected, either lay or ordained, who then becomes the national representative of the URC.

Along with other Reformed churches the URC holds to the Trinitarian faith expressed in the historic Christian creeds and finds its supreme authority for faith and conduct in the Word of God in the Bible, discerned under guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The URC's structure also expresses its faith in the ministry of all God's people through the structure of democratic Councils by which the Church is governed. Theologically, the URC is a broad church. Its membership embraces congregations of evangelical, charismatic and liberal understandings of the Christian faith - in a variety of mixtures!

Further Information

www.urch.org.uk

The United Reform Church within Calderdale

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 1 | <p>Carlton United Reformed Church
Harrison Road
Halifax
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| 2 | <p>Christ Church Local Ecumenical Partnership
Leeds Road
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01422 202 564</p> | 6 | <p>Mixenden United Reformed Church
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| 3 | <p>Heath United Reformed Church
Free School Lane
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01422 353 455</p> | 7 | <p>Northowram United Reformed Church
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HX3 7DJ</p> <p>Rev. John Filsak, Minister
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| 4 | <p>Highroad Well & Warley United Reformed Church
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01422 357 739</p> | 8 | <p>Park United Reformed Church
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| | | 9 | <p>Providence United Reformed Church
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| | | 10 | <p>Stainland & Hollywell United Reformed Church
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Non-Denominational

Non-Denominational within Calderdale

- | | |
|---|--|
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 Ripponden
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 01422 822 217</p> |
| <p>2 Chaplaincy at Holy Trinity Senior School
 Holdsworth Road
 Holmfield
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 01422 358 282</p> | <p>5 The Kings Church
 Kings Centre
 Park Road
 Halifax</p> <p>01422 250 872</p> |
| <p>3 Chaplaincy at Ravenscliffe High School
 Skircoat Green
 Halifax
 HX3 0RZ</p> <p>Rev. Sandie Maude
 01422 358 621
 01422 358 856</p> | <p>6 The Mothers Union
 Halifax Parish Church</p> <p>Janet Hardy
 01422 258 730</p> <p>Correspondence address:
 6 Bell Hall View
 Savile Park
 HX1 3DZ</p> |



I swear by Him in Whose Hand is my soul, you will not enter Paradise until you believe, and you will not believe, until you love one other. Do you want me to guide you to something which if you practice, you will (begin to) love one other? Spread greetings of peace among yourselves.

Prophet Muhammed (pbuh)

The Muslim Community

Origins

In the beginning when God (or 'Allah' in Arabic) had created the Universe, He created the first man, Adam (peace be upon him (pbuh)) from Clay and breathed into him His Breath. And God commanded that all (angels and others) should bow down to Adam (pbuh), and all did, except Iblees. Iblees was not an angel but was from the Jinn, a supernatural creation of God made from Fire, also given the ability to think and make decisions of right and wrong, but as physical creatures invisible to man. Iblees arrogantly defied God and exclaimed 'I am better than he, I am from Fire and he is from Clay'. And so the first sin, the most heinous sin in Islam, of arrogance, thinking oneself higher (and looking down upon the creation of God) was recorded. Iblees requested from God:

"Allow me respite 'til the Day they (mankind) are raised up...

I will sit in wait against them on Your Straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left, and You will not find most of them as thankful ones." (Qur'an 7:14 - 17)

And so the Devil or Shaytaan was born. The battle had begun.

God created the first woman; Eve (Hawa, peace be upon her) and together Adam and Eve (peace be upon them) dwelt in tranquillity in Heaven. However Iblees, using his wiles, tempted both Adam and Eve to disobey God and eat from the forbidden fruit tree. Both succumbed and both later stood humbly before God in repentance. Both were forgiven for their mistake, and sent down to the Earth to live there, them and their progeny, mankind, for an appointed time, until the End of Days.

Over the centuries and the millennia that followed, the population of people on Earth grew and different nations, languages and cultures were created. And throughout all this time God kept His Promise and sent to every nation and community, from the Aborigines to the Eskimos, a Prophet, warning their people of their unjust practices, of the whisperings of Shaytaan in each and every person and guiding them to what would give them strength to combat their temptations and bring them inner peace, the wonderful worship of One God. They were righteous examples for their respective peoples; glowing lamps

of nur (light) amidst the darkness of the world. Their way from day one was Peace emanating from the complete submission to the Will of the Creator; a meaning encompassed by one word, 'Islam'.

This line of Prophethood began with Adam (pbuh) and included people of great courage and character, who spent nights crying unto their Lord, and who spread justice and compassion wherever they went. Yes, this list is huge, yes, they were great people, but among this list were a few absolutely outstanding individuals: Noah (Nuh, pbuh) who for so many years struggled to bring his people to the worship of One God; Abraham (Ibraheem, pbuh), the 'Friend of God', who was the father of the semitic people, the Jewish and Arab nations, and among whose offspring were numbered many prophets; Moses (Musa, pbuh) to whom God spoke through the burning bush; King David (Da'ud, pbuh) whose beautiful voice lifted up to the skies the words of worship of God; John (Yahya, pbuh) who was beheaded for his conviction and belief; and of course the beloved Jesus (Eesa, pbuh), the 'Word from God', the Prophet born without a father, the healer of lepers, the one who brought people back from the dead, the one who suffered at the hands of the Pharisees and the Romans, and the only Prophet who was physically lifted up to the Heavens and who will descend eventually in the future as a sign of the End of Days.

These Prophets had been divinely inspired to move among the people, to say, and do what He, The Creator and Sustainer, wanted them to. Muslims believe, contrary to Christians and Jews, that these Prophets had characters that made them strong enough to combat and overcome the temptations that Shaytaan sent their way, that they did not deliberately contravene God's law, they did not deliberately sin, for they were the Guides and Role-Models that God had chosen, and He had chosen them above all people. They were truly the best of mankind. Some of them had been sent special revelation from Him, His direct Words that they heard through the Angel Gabriel (Jibreel, pbuh), and that they relayed verbatim to their people, without addition or subtraction. Special names have been given to these revelations, these miracles from God, these bursts of Light emanating from Him: the Torah of Moses (pbuh); the Psalms (or Zabur) of David (pbuh); and the Good News (or Injeel) of Jesus (pbuh).



But all these wonderful words of inspiration were not written down verbatim, some were forgotten by the subsequent followers of these Prophets, some became jumbled up with other words, some people tried to remember years after the Prophets had gone, some were lost in translations into other languages. Eventually some of these writings found their way into scriptures of religions. And Muslims still greatly value the wonderful glimmers of reflection of that beautiful Light from time ago, when they read these scriptures.

God had ensured that mankind was consistently guided by the advent of Prophet after Prophet, but the time in history was now ready, technologies and cultures were now able to record accurately for posterity, and so the 6th century saw God unfold the last of His Revelations, the one which would be, as was His Will, recorded verbatim and so accurately that it would stand the test of time. And the Prophet he chose for this final Chapter was the one endowed with the most beautiful character, with the compassion and kindness, strength of conviction and courage and perseverance befitting the greatest man God had ever created: Muhammad (pbuh). The line of Prophethood ended with the advent of Prophet Muhammad (570 - 632CE), hence his title 'the Seal of the Prophets'.

He was born in the Arabian city of Makka and began receiving revelations from God via the Angel Gabriel, from the age of 40. These revelations, the direct word of God, the same who spoke to Moses and Jesus, continued for almost 23 years until the Prophet's death, and form collectively 'the Qur'an'. For this, he and his early followers were persecuted: some of these early Muslims were crucified, others were tortured in the desert heat, some were made prisoner in their own homes by their families, he himself was mocked, spat at, and there were three attempts to assassinate him. His wife died just after they and his followers were allowed to return after they had been boycotted and removed from the city for almost three years. Eventually he and his followers fled to the city of Yathrib (renamed Medina tun Nabi, the 'City of the Prophet'), where he forged the first Muslim community and laid down the foundations of an Islamic state. Even here the Arab idolaters would not let him alone and there were three battles where they tried to wipe this religion out, but he persevered and the faith grew. At the age of sixty-three the Prophet (pbuh) passed away, 10 years after he had first entered Medina.

In every aspect he was an example to mankind. He was not interested in the material pleasures of this world, he shunned wealth, preferring to give away every time he received. He wore very simple clothes, a few outfits which he would mend himself, shoes which he cobbled himself. He ate most frugally, but he prayed most prolifically. He engaged in this world, and yet he remained unattached to it, unaffected by its lure

After him the religion and its simple creed conquered the hearts and minds of millions. Still to this day it is the fastest growing religion in the world.

Alphonse de Lamartine, the famous non-Muslim historian, commented in 'Historie de la Turquie,' Paris, 1854:

"Never has a man set for himself, voluntarily or involuntarily, a more sublime aim, since this aim was superhuman; to subvert superstitions which had been imposed between man and his Creator, to render God unto man and man unto God; to restore the rational and sacred idea of divinity amidst the chaos of the material and disfigured gods of idolatry, then existing. Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design, no other instrument than himself and no other aid except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert.

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls.

"On the basis of a Book, every letter which has become law, he created a spiritual nationality which blend together peoples of every tongue and race. He has left the indelible characteristic of this Muslim nationality the hatred of false gods and the passion for the One and Immaterial God.

"The idea of the unity of God, proclaimed amidst the exhaustion of the fabulous theogonies, was in itself such a miracle that upon it's utterance from his lips it destroyed all the ancient temples of idols and set on fire one-third of the world. His life, his meditations, his heroic revelings against the superstitions of his country, and his boldness in defying the furies of idolatry, his firmness in enduring them for fifteen years in Mecca, his acceptance of the role of public scorn and almost of being a victim of his fellow countrymen...

"Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Conqueror of Ideas, Restorer of Rational beliefs.... The founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

Teachings

Islam is the religion of the Unity/Oneness of God and tolerance towards all mankind. As such, Islam stands for purity, and the word means 'peace' and 'complete submission to the will of God'. A Muslim is one who submits to God's Will and sincerely professes the Declaration of Faith (Shahadah):

"I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except God and I bear witness that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger."

By stating this he or she is also accepting the complete line of the Prophets that came before.

Islam has its primary source of teaching and law in the Qur'an. This is the actual Message of God giving His final statement on the meaning, purpose and conduct of human existence. A second source of Islamic teaching and law is the Hadith or Sunnah. These are the sayings, actions and approvals of the Prophet (pbuh) and they are huge in number and require an expert to determine the validity, authenticity and context of each one.

Islamic faith, worship, religious requirements and daily life are enunciated and regulated by sacred laws, called the Shariah that are based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The most important truth that God revealed to mankind is that there is nothing divine or worthy of being worshipped except Almighty God, thus all human beings should submit to Him. God is absolutely One and His Oneness should never be compromised by associating partners with Him - neither in worship nor in belief. Due to this, Muslims are required to maintain a direct relationship with God.

In short, in the Islamic concept of God, which is completely based on Divine Revelation, there is no ambiguity in divinity - God is God and man is man. Islam teaches that God has a unique nature and that He is free from gender, human weaknesses and beyond anything which human beings can imagine. The Qur'an teaches that the signs and proofs of God's wisdom, power and existence are evident in the world around us. As such, God calls on man to ponder over the creation in order to build a better understanding of his Creator. Muslims believe that God is Loving, Compassionate and Merciful, these being three of the ninety-nine names that Muslims are taught to seek out and glorify Him with. But according to Islam, it is not enough that people believe that "God is One", but they must actualise this belief by proper conduct.

In the Holy Qur'an, God teaches human beings that they were created in order to worship Him, and that the basis of all true worship is God-consciousness. The teachings of Islam act as a mercy and a healing for the human soul, and such qualities as humility, sincerity, patience and charity are essential. Additionally, Islam condemns pride and self-righteousness, since God is the only One who knows what is in the hearts of man and so is the only judge

of human righteousness.

Human beings are not believed to be inherently sinful, but are seen as equally capable of both good and evil.

Islam also teaches that faith and action go hand-in-hand. God has given people free-will, and the measure of one's faith is one's deeds and actions as long as they are with pure intentions. However, human beings have also been created weak and regularly fall into sin. This is the nature of the human being as created by God in His Wisdom, and it is not inherently "corrupt". This is because the avenue of repentance is always open to all human beings, and Almighty God loves the repentant sinner. The true balance of an Islamic life is established by having a healthy 'fear' or 'awe' of God as well as a sincere belief in His infinite Love and Mercy.

Muslims believe that all human beings will ultimately be judged by God for their beliefs and actions in their earthly lives. In judging human beings, God will be both Merciful and Just, and people will only be judged for what they were capable of. Suffice it to say that Islam teaches that life is a test, and that all human beings will be accountable before God. A sincere belief in the life hereafter is key to leading a well-balanced and moral life on Earth.

Islam teaches that true happiness can only be obtained by living a life full of God-consciousness and being satisfied with what God has given us. Additionally, true "freedom" is freedom from being controlled by our base human desires and being ruled by man-made ideologies. A direct and clear relationship with God, as well as the sense of purpose and belonging that one feels as a Muslim, frees a person from the many worries of everyday life.

Worship

Worship in Islam has a very wide scope that could be private or communal. Much of this is encapsulated in the Five Pillars of Islam (the basic statutory obligations to God):

Shahadah

Sincere faith from the heart and verbal testimony that there is none worthy of worship except God and that Muhammad (pbuh) is His Messenger.

Salah

Praying the five compulsory prayers a day; before sunrise, noon, late afternoon, sunset and late evening. Obligatory ritual washing precedes prayer. Preferably prayer will be performed in congregation in the Mosque led by the Imam, but when this is not possible a Muslim can pray almost anywhere, wherever it is clean and quiet. During prayer, Muslims face towards the Kaabah situated in the city of Makkah (Saudi Arabia), which from Britain is generally in the Southeast direction. Friday is the main day of gathering for Muslims and is obligatory for every adult Muslim male, but only optional for women, this being among some of the relaxed rulings regarding women and their elevated position.



Zakah

A specific, annual, obligatory contribution that is to be used primarily for the poor and needy. It is calculated as 2.5% of savings (over and above one's essential needs) after a period of one year.

Sawm

Fasting during the month of Ramadhan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Muslims abstain totally from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual relations between dawn and sunset. Fasting during this month is incumbent upon every adult Muslim who is fit to do so. To allow ease Islamic Shariah has exemptions which include the sick, the frail, the mentally unstable, pregnant or nursing mothers, women on their periods and travellers. Alongside the physical abstentions, the spirit of Ramadhan lies in engendering goodness of character and fighting against one's bad traits.

Hajj

Pilgrimage to Makkah. All Muslims who can afford to do so must make this pilgrimage once in a lifetime.

The most crucial aspect to the whole of worship is intention and sincerity. The Prophet (pbuh) remarked: "All actions will be judged by their intentions." Hence any action with the intention of seeking the pleasure of God, or done through love for Him, will be deemed worship.

Places of Worship

The mosque, or more appropriately 'masjid' (meaning 'place of prostration') is devoted to the remembrance of God. This may include public meetings of benefit to the community, religious classes, ceremonies etc. Islam does not have the concept of consecrated or hallowed ground. The Prophet (pbuh) reiterated this when he said the whole of the earth is a masjid. Upon entering a masjid, shoes are removed to observe the purity of the masjid and modest clothing should be worn as a sign of respect. Every single human being is welcome into any masjid, it being designated as the place of worship to God, and God welcomes everyone of His creation.

Practices

Birth

Muslims believe that the first words a baby should hear upon entering the world are the words of God, hence the Adhan, or the first call to prayer, is recited gently into the right ear of the baby and the Iqamah, or the second call to prayer, into the left ear. In the hope that the baby will have a 'sweet character', tradition states that something sweet is placed in the mouth of the baby, usually a tiny slither of a date or a drop of honey. The baby's hair is also shaved off in the first few days and the equivalent in weight of either gold or silver is donated as charity to thank God for the blessing He has bestowed. Also to show gratefulness on this joyous occasion, Muslims perform the Aqiqah ceremony, where they sacrifice an animal and distribute some of the meat to the needy. Muslims also circumcise boys, following the custom and tradition begun by Prophet Abraham (pbuh).

Marriage

Islam places a very strong emphasis on the institution of marriage and family life. Marriage is a statutory civil contract, a mutual agreement, made between the man and the woman before God and witnessed by Muslims. Strict codes of sexual morality and modesty are essential for the protection of the family and community. The sexes are, therefore, often segregated after puberty. Islam does not call for suppression of sexual desire, but strongly encourages marriage.

Funerals

When death is imminent, family members, or the Muslim leader, will simply recite verses from the Qur'an by the bedside of the dying person; who if possible will repeat the Shahadah. Upon death and the washing and shrouding of the body, funeral prayers are held, and the body is buried. It is highly encouraged to do all of this as soon as possible. Cremation is forbidden for Muslims. A period of mourning follows, traditionally for a period of up to three days. Death is seen but as a transition from one life to another.

Diet

Muslims are only allowed to eat halal food. The term 'halal' is defined as that which is permissible under Islamic Law. In the context of meat this means those animals that are permitted to be eaten and which have been slaughtered according to Islamic Law, namely that God's name is stated and blood is drained and the meat is healthy and hygienic. In particular, halal food must be free from any product or by-product derived from pigs, e.g. pork, bacon, ham; and also from alcohol. The term 'haram' defines all that is not permitted under Islamic Law. However, in places where halal meat is not available, the meat of the Jews and Christians, slaughtered according to their religious rules, is allowable to Muslims.

Dress

There are no general requirements as to the dress except that for a man the area between the navel and the knees must be covered. In addition the majority of Muslim men prefer to cover their heads. For a woman, everything except her hands, feet and face must be covered. A woman therefore must have her head covered (hijab) and wear modest clothing that do not reveal the features of the body when out of her home or in front of men who are not close family.

Religious Books and Artefacts

The Qur'an is the most sacred book for Muslims, because it is God's word. Muslims treat the Qur'an with great reverence. Additional source of guidance is found in Hadith (traditions) containing words of advice and acts (Sunnah) of the Prophet (pbuh). Many Muslims will have prayer mats to pray on, although others will take shoes off before entering their homes, so as to keep the place clean and hence be able to pray anywhere. Rosary beads called tasbees are often used to aid in reciting God's praise.



Rites and Initiation

There are no set rites or initiation ceremonies in Islam. However at puberty the Muslim individual enters the adult world, ceases to be a child and becomes accountable for his/her actions.

Festivals and Celebrations

The Islamic calendar has 12 months and is based on the lunar year. The start dates of the holy month of Ramadhan therefore and festivals are subject to the sighting of the new moon. This also means that Muslim festivals fall about eleven days earlier each year.

Eid-ul-Fitr

1st Shawwal (10th month)

Celebration of the ending of the month of Ramadan (fasting period)

Eid-ul-Adha

10th Dhul Hijjah (12th month)

Muslims remember Prophet Abraham's (pbuh) acceptance of the Divine command to sacrifice his son Ismail (pbuh)

Shab - e Barat

Night of 15th Shaban (8th month)

Change of direction of Qibla (direction of prayer) from Palestine to Makkah and also the Night of Forgiveness

Laylat-ul-Qadr

Night of 27th Ramadhan (9th month)

The Night of Power when Muslims believe the Qur'an was first revealed

Milad-un-Nabi

12th Rabi ul Awwal (3rd month)

Birthday of Prophet Mohammed (pbuh)

Ashura

9th / 10th Muharram (1st month)

Anniversary of the day Prophet Moses (pbuh) and the Children of Israel were liberated from the tyranny of Pharaoh. It also coincides with the day on which Prophet Mohammad's grandson Hussain (pbuh) was martyred. This has greater significance for Shi'a Muslims.

Community

There is no ordained priesthood or centralised hierarchy in the religion of Islam. All Muslims accept at the basic level that the individual's bond with God is direct and an intermediary is not necessary. Most masjids will have an Imam in charge, responsible for leading prayers and teaching and performing religious functions. However, any Muslim who is capable of doing so can lead the prayers. Muslims believe that all human beings are of one family since we are all children of Adam and Eve (peace be upon them). We are all therefore 'brothers and sisters'.

Muslims also believe that Jews and Christians are singled out as a special group of people, the Ahlel Kitab, or People of the Book, in that they worship the same God, were sent previous Revelations, and hence share many of the same stories of the Prophets. In addition Muslims can be grouped into a distinct category called 'Ummah' or community. Upon declaring the Shahadah, the new convert becomes a member of this Ummah.

Different Schools

The majority (85%) of the world's Muslims belong to the Sunni school of thought with the largest minority being Shi'i Muslims. The Shi'i differ with their Sunni brethren on the question of the succession to the Prophet (pbuh), maintaining that Imam Ali (pbuh), the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, was appointed by the Prophet by divine command to succeed him.

The Sunni world is also further divided into four schools of jurisprudence: Hanafi, Shafi, Hanbali and Maliki. These differences are in interpretations and Islamic legal theories which lead to often subtle differences in the practical details of Islamic Law.

In addition there have been differing traditions and movements historically. There are sufi groups, with their spiritual tariqas, which espouse 'ways' by which one gets 'closer' to God. There are traditions based on political movements of the past, and there are reformist traditions.

Despite all the different schools within the Muslim world that exist and have existed, there is one fact worth bearing in mind. By far, most, if not all, accept each other as Muslim and as part of the Ummah. 99% of all that they believe and practice is identical and in terms of fundamental beliefs they are in agreement: there is one God, one Qur'an, there is belief in the prophets, angels, the Day of Judgement, heaven and hell, the five pillars and so on. Hence, historically all have been welcomed to perform the annual Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, where traditionally only Muslims have been allowed to enter.

The masjids in this directory have only been listed under different denominations to show the varied flavours of interpretations that exist. None of them would prevent any Muslim - of any denomination - to enter and worship there. The Muslim world has been blessed by the fact that the differences are not in the fundamentals but in the minute details. Often the criterion used by worshippers is quite simply which one is nearest.

Further Information

The Holy Qur'an

Lings, Martin, Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources, London, Allen & Unwin, 1983.

Eaton, Gai, Islam and the Destiny of Man, London, Allen & Unwin, 1985.

www.muslimheritage.com

Once you know that God has created you to serve Him, you will realise that there can be no service except with Pure Monotheism (Tawheed). Just as there is no formal prayer without purity, and there is no purity with uncleanness, so there is no worship of God while worshipping others along with Him.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd ul-Wahhab

The Ahlel Hadith Movement

The Ahlel Hadith or Wahhabi Movement is a reform movement that began about 250 years ago to rid Muslim societies of cultural practices and interpretation that had crept in over the centuries and acquired an almost acceptance. Muhammad ibn 'Abd ul-Wahhab was born in 1703 at al-Hauta of the Nejd area in central Arabia, and was of the tribe of the Bani Tamim. After making the pilgrimage with his father, he spent some further time in the study of Islamic Law at Medina.

Aroused by his studies and his observation of the luxury in dress and habits, the superstitious pilgrimages to shrines, the use of omens and the worship given to Muslim saints rather than to God, he began a mission to proclaim the simplicity of the early religion founded on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

To understand the significance of Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab's ideas, they must be considered in the context of Islamic practice. To Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab there was a difference between established rituals clearly defined in religious texts and that performed by popular Islam. The latter refers to local practice that is not universal. Muslim scholars held that as long as the practice does not contravene a well-established Islamic principle then partaking in it is not a problem. But to Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab these practices did violate principles, and more importantly they were not practices that were done by the Prophet (pbuh) nor any of the early Muslims in the way they were being done now; they were innovations. To him this was a violation of the pristine rituals and principles of Islam that Muslim scholars seemed to have been complicit in allowing over the centuries. Muslim scholars rebutted that it did not matter if these practices had not been done by Early Muslims, as long as they did not violate principles, since Islam had always been flexible in the way it adapted to local situations. The principles remained the same but the flavour was different.

Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab focused on the Muslim principle that there is only one God (the concept of Tawheed), and that God does not share his power with anyone - not Imams nor Saints. From this unitarian principle, his students began to refer to themselves as muwahhidun (unitarians). The idea of a unitary god was of course not new. Muhammad however, attached political importance to it. Their detractors referred to them as 'Wahhabis' - or

'followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab,' which had a pejorative connotation, but gradually became more widely accepted. As the Movement spread it also became known by different names: in the Indian subcontinent it was known as Ahlel Hadith ('People of the Hadith' referring to the strict, almost literal, adherence of its members to the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh)); the other name by which members referred to themselves as was Selafi ('The Pious Predecessors' - 'The Early Muslims,' referring to the great position placed upon following the ways and practices of the earliest generation of Muslims). In addition they have always been regarded as Sunnis (or Ahlel Sunnah wa'l Jammah), since they place a great importance in following the Sunnah.

Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab's emphasis on the oneness of God was asserted in contradistinction to shirk, or polytheism, defined as the act of associating any person or object with powers that should be attributed only to God. He condemned specific acts that he viewed as leading to shirk, such as votive offerings, praying at saints' tombs, and any prayer ritual in which the suppliant appeals to a third party for intercession with God. Particularly objectionable were certain religious festivals, including celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, Shi'i mourning ceremonies, and Sufi mysticism, although Wahhabis were not against Sufism per se, since some Sufi groups also regarded others as 'straying' off the course. Consequently, the Wahhabis forbid grave markers or tombs in burial sites and the building of any shrines that could become a locus of shirk. A major source of contention remains the way Wahhabis have removed grave markings of tombs of early Muslims and even Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) because they would encourage an almost pilgrimage to these sites.

Realising that he needed political support and authority to effectively reverse the status quo, he settled in Deraiya (in the Nejd), where he succeeded in winning over the Chief of the Saud tribe, Muhammad ibn Sa'ud, who married his daughter, and so became the founder of an hereditary Wahhabi dynasty. It was this that spurred on the success of the propagation of the reformist ideas.

The Wahhabis also believe in the necessity of deducing one's Islamic Law and duty apart from the decisions of the four schools of jurisprudence. It is in this field that Wahhabi scholars have flourished,

allowing themselves to break free of what they perceived as 'extra boundaries' of the four schools and come up with interesting contemporary and challenging fatwas (legal verdicts) since there was ample scope for reinterpretation in areas not decided by the early jurists.

The impact of the Wahhabi Movement globally cannot be underestimated. It has provoked greater introspection of many in the Muslim Ummah. Whether Muslims are in agreement of it or not: it has been a giant wake-up call for the Ummah in the last century. It has subconsciously provoked greater thinking especially in the area of Islamic law.

Over the centuries it has attracted many globally by its simple message and it has successfully established masjids and centres of learning across the globe. Although it had quite stormy beginnings, the Wahhabi or Ahlel Hadith community is now very much an accepted part of the Muslim landscape.

Further Information

www.al-jumuah.com

The Ahlel Hadith Movement within Calderdale

- Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith Mosque**
97 Hopwood Lane
Halifax
HX1 4ET

Mr Iqbal, Secretary
01422 356 843



There is a candle in your heart,
 ready to be kindled.
 There is a void in your soul,
 ready to be filled.
 You feel it, don't you?
 You feel the separation
 from the Beloved.
 Invite Him to fill you up,
 embrace the fire.
 Remind those who tell you otherwise that
 Love comes to you of its own accord,
 And the yearning for it
 cannot be learned in any school.

Jalaluddin Rumi

The Bareilvi Movement

The Bareilvi Movement has had the greatest success of any of the Indian Subcontinent reformist movements attracting the largest following, in terms of numbers. It sees itself as a continuation of the great heritage of Sufism, which was historically instrumental in the incredible spread of Islam globally, but especially in the whole of Asia. Many great Sufi leaders or Saints are buried in the Indian Subcontinent who set up their tariqas or 'ways' of building personal relationships with God.

The Movement was founded by Imam Ahmed Raza Khan (1856 - 1921) born in Jasoli, an area in the city of Bareilly in India (from where the word 'Bareilvi' comes from). He came from a long line of distinguished Muslim scholars from the Sufi background.

From an early age Ahmed Raza showed remarkable aptitude in the traditional Islamic learning that his family bestowed upon him. Very quickly he was able to master the subtleties of Islamic discourse. At the same time he began to notice that some popular Muslim practices of some of the masses were not in accordance with the religious texts that he studied. More importantly than that, he saw, what he regarded as, the over-reactions to some of these practices by some Muslim scholars who had been influenced by the Wahhabi movement from Saudi Arabia.

Whereas he regarded some of these popular practices as definitely erroneous, being carried out by some of the public, often without scholarly basis, or being led by people of little Islamic knowledge, or as left overs of the Hindu culture from which historically the Muslims had emerged, it was easy for him to counter these, but what he saw as a greater threat was the way that the Deobandi and Wahhabi scholars were reacting to some of these practices. He asserted this was more dangerous because it had scholarly backing. To him this was over-reaction and it meant that many of the practices which he regarded as genuine, were being criticised by these scholars.

What began now was a lifetime of re-affirmation of those points in Sufi Islam which to him accorded to Islamic Law, to counter this threat, and it was this that began the Movement and made him an almost household name by the end of his life.

He wrote extremely prolifically and chose, among others, three main areas of concentration: supporting and defending issues regarding the personage of the Prophet (pbuh) which he felt were orthodox and not against Islamic theology; uprooting the innovations prevalent in the popular Muslim society; and finally issuing a huge compendium of fatwas (Islamic verdicts) on day to day issues from the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, often in agreement, it has to be said, with those of his Deobandi contemporaries.

The Bareilvis follow many Sufi practices: they believe very strongly in intercession between humans and Divine Grace, not just by the Prophet (pbuh). This consists of the intervention of an ascending, linked and unbroken chain of holy personages, Pirs, or Siritual Guides, reaching ultimately to Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), who intercede on their behalf with God. These doctrines give rise to a form of Islam that provides a space for holy men (Spiritual Guides) and esoteric practices. In addition they hold that visiting the graves of these Saints will benefit the visitor and requests are heard by the Saints inside their shrines. Graves appear to be often more ornate than those found within Deobandi and Wahhabi communities.

The public are to give allegiance to one of the Spiritual Guides, who are regarded as Wali'Allah, Friends of God, who through their practices of devotion have reached a supremely high level of God-consciousness, and who have often been granted the ability to perform special miracles. Indeed Ahmed Raza Khan is regarded as one of these Wali'Allah, and also as a Mujaddid, a Reviver that comes once every generation or century, and there is numerous mention of many miracles performed by him.



The Barelvis believe the Prophet is a human being (bashar) made from flesh and blood and a noor (light) at the same time. He is human but not like other humans. God has given him the ability to see the whole of Creation in detail while he is in his grave as if he was looking at it in the palm of his hand: he is nazir (witnessing). They believe God has also given him the ability to go physically and spiritually anywhere in the created universes he pleases whenever he pleases and to be in more than one place at the same time: he is hazir (present). This is not the same as believing that he is present everywhere at the same time! Yet at the same time they affirm that he is not like God, nor does his knowledge in any way matches that of God's.

Today Barelvis form the main proportion of Muslims in Britain and in many mosques across Britain and the Subcontinent can be heard the Urdu Na'aths (special songs in celebration and praise of the Prophet (pbuh)) that were created and initiated by Maulana Ahmed Raza Khan himself almost a century ago - a lasting legacy of his love of the Prophet (pbuh).

Further Information

www.razaacademy.org

The Barelvi Movement within Calderdale

1 Central Jamia Mosque & Madni Education Centre One

Gibbet Street
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HX1 5LE

Mr M Sultan, General Secretary
01422 380 540
01422 380 175

2 Madni Education Centre Two

Queens Road
Halifax

Mr M Sultan, General Secretary
01422 380 540
01422 380 175

3 Madni Education Centre Three

Hopwood Lane
Halifax

Mr M Sultan, General Secretary
01422 380 540
01422 380 175

4 Madni Education Centre Four

Hyde Park Road
Halifax

Mr M Sultan, General Secretary
01422 380 540
01422 380 175

5 Markazi Jamia Mosque

49 Rhodes Street
Halifax
HX1 5DE

Mr Ayub
Treasurer
01422 330 041

6 Markazi Jamia Mosque Two

Hanson Lane
Halifax

Mr Mohammad Ayub
Treasurer
01422 330 041

7 Bain-ul-Aqwami Anjuman Tabligh-ul-Islam

Vincent Street
Hopwood Lane
Halifax
HX1 4EN

Mr. Muhammad Tariq Choudhry
01422 342 366

8 Zahra Educational & Cultural Centre (al-Jamia az-Zahra)

Heathroyd House
16 Francis Street
Halifax
HX1 5JY

Professor Syed A. H. Shah, Imam
01422 380 540
01422 382 888

9 Jamia Mohammadiya Noor-ul-aloom

29 Gibraltar Road
Halifax
HX1 4XG

Qari Mohammad Zaheer Iqbal
01422 351990

10 Minhaj ul Qur'an

6 Wellhead Lane
Halifax
HX1 2BL

Ms. Naseem Riaz
01422 343353

11 Minhaj ul Qur'an Islamic Cultural Centre

187 Manningham Lane
Bradford
BD8 7HP

Haji Javed Akhtar
07931 114636
01274 723249

Khuluq (good character) is to deal with the creation in such a way which is pleasing to the Creator and the Creation.

Muhammad ibn 'Abd ul-Wahhab

The Deobandi Movement

The foundation stone for the seminary (madrassah) to train Islamic scholars was laid in May 30th 1866 in the town of Deoband in a very simple ceremony without much fanfare. Little could people visualise that a Madrasah beginning so humbly, with utter lack of resources, would be destined to become the centre of the Islamic sciences in Asia. Accordingly, before long, students desirous of studying the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the Shari'ah and the Tariqah (the spiritual path), began to flock in droves from the Indian Subcontinent as well as from neighbouring and distant countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Bukhara, Samarqand, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey.

Historically institutes of Islamic learning had always relied on the patronage of the Sultans of India. However the time was one of crises as the diminishing power of Muslim rulers was matched by the increasing influence of the British occupation of India. The institutes of learning were among the first to suffer. It was under these circumstances that a young Imam, Moulana Muhammed Qasim Nanautvi (1833 - 1879) sensed the imminent danger. He knew too well that nations have attained their right status through knowledge only. So, without depending upon the government of the time, he and a few other notables founded the Darul Uloom, Deoband, with public contributions and co-operation. Indeed one of the principles that Moulana Nanautvi proposed for the Darul Uloom is that it should be run trusting in God and with public contributions for which the poor masses alone should be relied upon.

A large number of famous scholars, well-versed in the religious sciences, founded, studied at or taught at the Darul Uloom. They include Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, Maulana Mohammad Abid Husain, Mullah Mahmood Deobandi and Maulana Mehmoodul Hasan. And these weren't the only ones. Soon there was a queue of people wanting to learn there and other Darul Ulooms were set up to cope with the demand. A movement of ideas had begun.

The Deobandi Movement today is more than just the Darul-Uloom in Deoband or elsewhere. Because of the incredible foresight, and it has to be said, the level of sacrifice, especially in the early days, Darul Ulooms, were set up, cloning the original, right across the world. From the European context the ones set up in Britain and South Africa are of great importance. As more and more students enrolled, and more teachers arrived from the original Deoband, greater

was the need for more institutes. Masjids began implementing the Islamic syllabi developed by these Darul Ulooms taught by the ever-increasing numbers of students graduating from these Darul Ulooms. Today in Britain the Deobandi scholars are the largest in number by far. The Darul Ulooms are producing 'home-grown', English, Arabic and Urdu-speaking Imams who very rapidly are occupying the positions of Imams in mosques and other Islamic centres (right across Europe and the Americas), which may not even be traditionally Deoband, because of the urgent demand for English-speaking Imams to relate to the second and third generation youth. At the same time the number of Islamic secondary boarding schools set up by Darul Ulooms following the GCSE syllabis has also increased to well over a hundred.

The other huge influence has been the public offshoot of the Deoband, the Tablighi Jamaat (Movement for the Disemmination of Islam). This has become the world's largest Muslim organisation. The largest gathering of Muslims in Europe occurs in the Tablighi Jamaat ijtimas (gatherings) in Dewsbury UK. Their main focus is missionary activity to revive the Muslim Ummah in particular, across the globe. Their message is simple to encourage Muslims to begin to pray, to read the Qur'an and to study Islam. Their method is highly organised where volunteers are assigned to particular locations for often 40 days or more, residing in the local mosque, being offered food etc by the local, often Deobandi, community, and then setting off to go door to door inviting Muslims to attend a public programme in the mosque.

The Deobandi scholars were opposed by the prevalent Sufi culture of the time, although they themselves also share some of the Sufi heritage. In this they are different to the Wahhabi movement. The other major difference is that they are strict adherents to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, although they recognise the validity of the other three schools, and regard the Wahhabi idea of non-adherence to any of the four schools as incorrect and going against the historical tradition over numerous centuries. Their heavy emphasis on jurisprudence has led them to be very zealous as to the detailed laws of ritual worship in all its aspects. But Deobandi teachings are puritanical in tone and seek to purge Islam of Western and modernist influences and institutions and to establish the Qur'an and Hadith as the sole guiding lights.

Deobandi schools have sought to purify Islam, as practiced in India, of such popular practices they believe are borrowed from Hinduism as the visits to shrines and graves of saints (the Wahhabis sought to do the same in the Arabian peninsula).

It is the love for Islamic study that has been the main legacy of the Deoband and it is what they have concentrated on for the last one and a half centuries. They have forced the issue of Islamic scholarship upon many other Muslim movements. This has generated a hunger in recent years for deeper learning of Islam among the masses.

Further Information

www.darululoom-deoband.com

The Deobandi Movement within Calderdale

- 1 **Elland Mosque**
26 -34 Elizabeth Street
Elland
HX5 0JE

Mr Fazal-ur-Rehman Tariq, Chairman
01422 378 808
01484 515 313
- 2 **Makki Masjid**
Hermon Avenue
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Halifax
HX1 3XN

Mr M S Bashir, Secretary
01422 380 934
- 3 **Anjuman Islah-ul-Muslimeen**
18 Rothwell Road
Halifax
HX1 2HA

Dr Rahmat A Chaudhry
01422 340 096
- 3 **Anjuman Islah-ul-Muslimeen**
18 Rothwell Road
Halifax
HX1 2HA
- 4 **Muslim Society
Eagle Street Mosque**
Todmorden
OL14 5HQ

Mr. Gulzar Khan
01706 816310



Know that small but permanent deeds with conviction are more favorable to God than many deeds that lack conviction. No living is more pleasant than good mannerisms, no fortune is more advantageous than satisfaction with the sufficient and the little, and no ignorance is more harmful than self-conceit.

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq

The Shi'i

Shi'i Islam (Shi'a as singular) is the second largest division of Islam, constituting about 10 to 15% of all Muslims. The majority of Muslims are known as Sunni Muslims which is an abbreviated form of Ahlel Sunnah wa'l Jamaah - meaning 'The People of the Sunnah (Prophetic Tradition) And The Majority'. The word Shi'i originated from the words Shi'at Ali, meaning 'Partisan of Ali', and it is here that the difference emerges. Sunni Muslims recognise the first four Khalifs (leaders of the Muslim World after the death of the Prophet (pbuh)), Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, as 'Rightly Guided', while Shi'i Muslims recognise only Ali as the First Caliph. The first three according to them are usurpers.

The Shi'i revere Ali as the First Imam, and hold that the Imamate must be within the bloodline of the Prophet (pbuh). They point out why Ali is so special during the life of the Prophet (pbuh). The Sunnis concur on most of these points made about Ali, but they believe that the succession to the Prophet (pbuh) was to be designated by order of merit determined by the Muslims of the time and they chose Ali as the fourth Khalif, which does not in any way detract from his elevated position as one of the great heroes of Islam.

In 661 CE, Imam Ali, the Khalif, was assassinated in southern Iraq and buried in Najaf, where his tomb continues to be a destination for pilgrims. Mu'awiya, the Governor of Syria, named himself subsequently as Khalif and made the Khalifat hereditary for his own family, the Umayyads, who the Shi'i reject as usurpers of Ali and his sons' rights to the caliphate.

Nineteen years after Ali's death, attempts to challenge the Umayyad leaders resulted in the martyrdom of Ali's son and the third Shi'i Imam, Imam Hussain, at the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE, which has also become a major shrine.

Although this tragic incident is of great significance to both Shi'i and Sunni Muslims, the Shi'i commemorate this annually in the Ashura ceremony. Male participants in the Ashura beat their chests and chant in an action called lahtom. Some use chains to beat their backs to evoke the suffering of Imam Hussain. It is a highly charged and emotive experience as the grief and frustration of the injustices faced by this noble man are relived.

Shi'i believe that Imams are imbued with a redemptive quality as a result of their sufferings and martyrdoms. And, although not divine, they are sinless and infallible in matters of faith and morals. None of the twelve Imams, with the exception of Ali, ever ruled an Islamic government. During their lifetimes, their followers hoped that they would assume the rulership of the Islamic community, but because the Sunni Khalifs were cognizant of this hope, the Imams generally were persecuted during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.

The Twelfth Imam is believed to have been only five years old when the Imamate descended upon him and it is believed that he disappeared from earth by Divine Will in about 939 CE. Since that time, the greater occultation of the Twelfth Imam has been in force and will last until God commands him to manifest himself again as the Mahdi or Messiah. During this occultation Shi'i believe he is spiritually present, some believe physically as well, and he is besought to reappear in various invocations and prayers. His name is mentioned in wedding invitations, and his birthday is one of the most jubilant of all Shi'i religious observances.

Shi'i Islam has also developed several different sects. Because of the belief that the leader of the Muslim community must be a blood relative of the Prophet (pbuh), disputes arose about the situation where an Imam had two sons. These caused the Shi'i to divide into three groups differing on how many Imams there were: Zaidis (Fivers), Ismai'ilis (Seveners), and Ithna Asharis (Twelvers). The latter is the most important of these, as it vastly predominates.

The dominant Shi'i legal school is sometimes termed the Jafari Fiqh, after the Sixth Imam. This school is in most cases indistinguishable from the four Sunni schools, except for a few points. Shi'i Muslims usually join the noon and afternoon prayers, and the sunset and evening prayers (although they can pray them separately at different times, like the Sunnis). Shi'i may place a piece of stone or clay, known as a turba, from the shrine of an Imam or other Shia figure on the ground so that their forehead touches the stone when they prostrate themselves in prayer. Shi'i do not believe in predestination: they accept the teachings of the Mu'tazila, a group of Sunni scholars declared heretical, who believed that God cannot be responsible for evil, and therefore, humans must have

freewill and be independent of God's authority in this life. Shi'i also accept mutah, temporary marriage, that is, marriage with a fixed termination contract, as legitimate.

Despite the differences, there is still far more that is the same. The Shi'i, like all Muslims, believe that the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the final Messenger sent by God to mankind, and therefore after him, no one has the right to claim to be a prophet or messenger. The Qur'an and the fundamental beliefs are the same. The major common practices identical, such as the obligatory five daily prayers, fasting during the holy month of Ramadhan, Hajj and payment of Zakah (alms).

Further Information

www.shia.org

The Shi'i within Calderdale

1 Hussainia Islamic Mission

Hussainia Hall
All Saints Road
Bradford
BD7 3AY

Mr Kauser Shah
01274 571 598

2 Anjuman e Haidria

47 -48 Southfield Square
Bradford
BD8 7SL

Mr Iqbal Shah
01274 723 516



Non-Denominational

Non-Denominational Islamic Organisations within Calderdale

- 1 Islamic Society of Britain**
Linden House
Linden Road
Halifax
HX3 0BS

Akram Ali, Branch President
01422 355 054
01484 515 313

Other Major Faiths

Hinduism

Buddhism

Sikhism

Judaism

Bahá'í

There is something common in all living beings from the highest to the lowest, irrespective of pieces, caste or creed. We have all been created by God and this must never be forgotten. In his eyes, we are all equal. Our human frailties create differences among us.

Bhagvad Gita

The Hindu Community

Origins

Hinduism is the name given to a set of religious traditions which originated in India. The religion was not founded by any one individual. Rather, it is the fusion of many religious beliefs and philosophical schools of thought. These have been ever growing over a few millennia. Accordingly, Hinduism is said to be a religion of a million and one Gods. Its origins are mixed and complex. Hinduism began with the Aryans, a group of nomadic warriors and herders who migrated into India around 1500 B.C. Their culture centred on the Veda, a set of hymns. Before the Aryans, between 2500 and 1500 B.C., the Indus Valley civilisation flourished. Since the civilization was in decline when the Aryans migrated into India, it is impossible to know whether the two had significant contact. Hindus still consider the Vedas to be the most sacred of all literature. The Vedas were passed down orally by Vedic priests memorising every syllable. These texts were later written in the Sanskrit language.

Hindus do not call their religion by any name. The current name is the one given to their whole pattern of life and culture by outsiders who spotted them on the banks of the river Indus. To say what they practice as their mythological as well as spiritual tradition, they use the term "Sanatana Dharma" which means "perennial righteous conduct". At the outset, its emphasis has been threefold - purity of life, devotion to the Almighty and a yearning for spiritual salvation.

Teachings

The central belief of Hinduism is that the truth is one but its nature is manifold. This explains why there are many religions in the world. Consequent to this belief, Hindu followers have no difficulty believing in one God and several Gods at the same time.

Central, also, to Hinduism are the concepts of reincarnation, the caste system, merging with Brahman (or the ultimate reality), finding morality, and reaching Nirvana (the peaceful escape from the cycle of re-birth).

Both human and animal spirits reincarnate, or come back to earth, to live many times in different forms. The belief is that souls move up and down an infinite hierarchy depending on behaviours practised in life.

Today a Hindu can be polytheistic, monotheistic, pantheistic, agnostic, or atheistic and still claim to be a Hindu. This open theology makes it difficult to discuss basic beliefs since there are many ideas about what Hinduism means.

The Hindu paths to salvation include The Way of Works (rituals), The Way of Knowledge (realization of reality and self-reflection), and The Way of Devotion (devotion to the god that you choose to follow). If the practitioner follows these paths, salvation can be achieved.

We also discover many gods/goddesses who are but the embodiment of certain virtues e.g. Learning, Wisdom and Arts is Goddess Saraswati, Wealth is Lakshmi, Power is Parvati. God is both He and She. The same divinity, which, when in charge of creation is called Lord Brahma (Creator God), while protecting, is called Vishnu; and termed as Shiva when He is about to destroy the evil world. Apart from its inexhaustible mythological panorama, Hinduism has also a long and living tradition of mystic and spiritual enquiry, practiced to attain Godliness. Hinduism respects all notions of God and even no-God. It does not discriminate between religions.

Hinduism shares many things in common with predominant religions of India such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. It is possible to find various sects within the Hindu community that are parallel to the specific faiths of the world. However diversified the practices of Hindus may look, one can perceive a unity in their one character - the tendency to change, to adopt and to assimilate.

Worship

Hinduism does not insist upon having faith in God, or any particular form or name of God. However, a Hindu may be found worshiping a presiding deity (of one's choice) calling it God or Goddess. The object of meditation may even be the Absolute Reality (Brahman), which has no attribute. The reward of a pooja (worship) can vary - anything from the material to some abstract thing, or even one's liberation from life. The realization of God 'here and now' is held to be the ultimate ambition of a devotee. To motivate this, Hindu spirituality holds that every soul (spirit) is basically immortal and potentially divine.



A threefold path is laid down to access Divinity. A devotee can choose any of them according to one's convenience. They are:

The Path of Action (Karma Yoga) in which the seeker endeavours to relinquish the rewards of one's actions by renouncing all desires.

The Path of Devotion (Bhakti Marga) in which one prays to God and performs the religious practices.

The Path of Knowledge (Jnana Marga), the intellectual approach to spirituality.

Places of Worship

The place of worship could either be a temple (mandir) or one's own home. Both communal (congregation) worship and individual worship are popular among Hindus. There are no rigid canons to be adopted for the course of a Pooja. People adopt various patterns of Pooja, using different prayers from various books. They may pray to any God or Goddess, or their favourite deity, no matter which temple they are in.

The duration of a Pooja could be anything from a few minutes to a large part of the day. The ingredients used in a Pooja (worship) include incense, camphor, offering of flowers, fruits or any type of food (always vegetarian), water, milk etc. The rituals may involve ringing a bell, singing or chanting, holding a lamp (Arti), kneeling down or folding hands etc. Hindus also have a wide choice of who they can worship - a deity, holy book, a drawing of the word AUM, etc. They may use red powder or white holy Vibuti to mark the forehead. Beads can be used in the course of a pooja. After the pooja, the congregation usually receives offerings as a blessing of the Almighty.

Practices

There are sixteen main Sacraments (Samskaras). These range from pre-conception to funeral ceremonies. Samskaras (Sacraments) are rituals and sacrifices. By virtue of their performances the life of the performer receives a higher security.

Birth

These Sacraments begin even before a child is born. **Garbhadana** (conception) is the fervent prayer for a child. This is done in order to fulfil the parental duties to continue the race. **Punsavana** (fetus protection) is performed during the third or fourth month of pregnancy before the fetus is conscious. The prayers hope to invoke divine qualities in the child. **Simantonnyana** (satisfying the craving of the pregnant mother) is similar to a baby shower. It is performed during the seventh month: prayers are offered for the healthy physical and mental growth of the child. **Jatakarma** is performed at the birth of the child. It is done to welcome the child into the family. **Mantras**, or verse prayers are recited for a healthy, long life. The goal of this **samskara** is to provide a comfortable atmosphere for the child and mother.

The naming ceremony, or **Namakarna**, is done according to scriptural procedures.

Marriage

A wedding is an auspicious, holy as well as a happy occasion for Hindus. It is a sacrament to mark the sacred contract receiving social recognition between two persons. It is a ceremony celebrated according to one's tradition. Arranged marriages are popular within the Hindu community. Consequently, a marriage paves the way for two families to unite. A token dowry may be given to the bride and groom as a gift.

In Britain a Hindu marriage takes place before a Registrar but will also include a wedding officiated by a priest. The ceremony, which takes place in a temple or a hall, is attended by a large number of guests. The rituals, which can last for up to three hours, are highly symbolic, containing many prayers made through offerings to a holy fire in order to attain blessings for a happy, long and fruitful married life.

Funerals

A devout Hindu who is very ill or dying may wish to lie on the floor (close to Mother Earth) and may welcome someone reading from any of the holy scripture of Hindus, especially from the Bhagavad Gita.

Following a death, the whole family mourns for 10 to 15 days. Sometimes the family members and close relatives may not eat until after the cremation has taken place. Several ceremonies take place at and before the cremation under directions of a Hindu priest. The eldest son of the deceased has a major part to play in them.

Adult Hindus are cremated. Young children and infants are buried. In this country the eldest son of the dead person will wish to press the ignition button at the cremation. Washing the body is a part of the funeral rites and will be done by close family. A non-Hindu touching the body may cause distress or offence in some families.

After returning from the crematorium, the family is involved in ritual washing and purifying of the residence. Some time after the cremation, the ashes are collected and scattered in certain places including rivers or the sea and other sacred waters e.g. the River Ganges in India.

Diet

Many Hindus are strict vegetarians and will not eat meat, fish, eggs or food containing egg. Others may eat meat and fish but not beef, and rarely pork. However, vegetarian food may be preferred especially on festivals and sacred days, when killing is not desirable. Hindus generally avoid tobacco and alcohol, though the decision is of individual choice.

Dress

Hindus have no religious code for dress. There is no special requirement for men. The traditional dress of an Indian woman is a sari. Normally women cover their entire body when they take part in a religious activity.



They may even cover their head with the fringe of their sari etc. In some northern parts of India it is customary for men also to cover their head with some cloth. Hindus take off their shoes when entering a temple. They leave footwear outside when they participate in a pooja. Some married women wear a coloured spot, known as a Bindi, on the forehead. Jewellery worn by men and women usually has religious or cultural significance and therefore should be respected.

Religious Books and Artefacts

Hinduism has a substantial collection of sacred writings that embody their beliefs, legends and religious practices. The earliest of them, the Rig Veda, is the first of the four basic books, which record the revelations and continue a long oral tradition. The Rig Veda is also a record of the earliest language and religion known to mankind. Vedas have mystical hymns, psalms of praise of gods, and the belief in God as manifest in the powers of the elements or spirits of the universe such as wind, fire, water etc. The other Vedas are Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. These are concerned also with the practical details of the sacrificial rituals, prayers and mantras and details of meditation, which are often symbolic. The best known among the later scriptures is the Bhagavad Gita (or Gita), meaning the "Song of the Lord". The Gita is a part of the whole text of the Mahabharata, the Epic of India, one of the major texts. There are also four other major texts: Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and the Ramayana.

The following religious items may be used as part of worship:

- Mala - prayer beads
- Murti - a deity, from 2 inches in height, made of either metal, wood, glass, stone or marble, or alternatively an image or photograph
- Incense sticks and Diva (small lamp) - These are normally burned during prayer
- Small bell - used when beginning and ending prayer rituals
- Bhagavad Gita - Holy book.

Rites and Initiation

For boys in the upper three castes, a second birth ceremony is performed. This is known as the thread ceremony or Upanayan. During the ritual the boys eat a final meal with their mothers and then are introduced to manhood. After this ceremony, boys are expected to eat with men and take on more responsibilities. They 'die' of their young self, and are 'born' into their new, older self.

Festivals and Celebrations

If we count all the festivals of the numerous sections of Hinduism, the festivals are more than 300 in a year. The major ones are:

Maha Shivaratri

A day of fasting. Lord Shiva is worshipped through the night (usually in March).

Shri Rama Navami

The festival to worship Lord Rama (usually held in March or April).

Shri Krishna Janmashtami

Celebration of Lord Krishna's birthday (at midnight, usually in August).

Shri Ganesh Pooja

Worship of Lord Ganesh (Aug - Sept).

Navaratri

Nine nights to worship Power in order to destroy the evil (usually in October).

Diwali

The Festival of Lights and welcoming the new year (usually in November).

Holi

The Festival of Colours: to welcome the spring season, people rejoice by throwing colours at one another (usually in March).

Vaisakhi

Celebrated in the Punjabi community (usually in April)

Community

The caste system applies to the social pattern of Hindus especially the social structure in India. A priest or a Pundit usually belongs to the Brahmin caste, but not necessarily. Priests are also appointed according to education, knowledge or authority in religious matters. There is no institution or organized hierarchy of priests in the Hindu faith as in comparison with other religions. A priest, either a man or a woman, may have some other job as well. He or she leads in the temple and in communal worship, assists in explaining scripture etc. and officiates in the rites.

The caste system, as already indicated, refers to social divisions. It is integral to the belief of the Hindu, in the cycle of rebirths occurring in consequence of one's deeds. The structure of an exclusive and hierarchical caste system developed into a rigid social structure in medieval India. Hence a person's social and occupational status as well as the potentialities of a religious and spiritual career could often be traced to the caste one belonged to. A rigid caste-awareness could have a say in the restrictions on marriage between castes, on eating, and other matters of social intercourse.



Such customs are rigid in the rural parts of India, but there are signs of rapid change and reformation thanks to education and natural changes that occur with the passing of time. In Britain the differences are becoming increasingly blurred.

Further Information

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Bhagavadgita - As it is, Aldenham, Watford.

Rev. Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, Hindu Dharma: The Universal Way of Life, Kanchi, India.

www.hindunet.com

www.hindukids.org

The Hindu Community around Calderdale

- 1 **Hindu Cultural Society Mandir (Temple)**
321 Leeds Road
Bradford
BD3 9LT

01274 725 923
- 2 **Shree Prajapati Mandir (Temple)**
Thornton Lane
Off Little Horton Lane
Bradford
BD5 9DH
- 3 **Hindu Mandir (Temple)**
20 Zetland Street
Huddersfield
HD1 2RA

01484 515 370
- 4 **World Council of Hindus**
Yorkshire Regional Committee

Joniah Parthasarathi
Secretary
01422 361 381
- 5 **Education Bradford**
Seema Buttoo
Hindu Faith Co-ordinator
01274 731 674
seema.buttoo@educationbradford.com
- 6 **Calderdale Indian Cultural & Welfare Association**

Mr. Gian Gabbi
01422 363 534



Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The Buddhist Community

Origins

Unlike other religions, Buddhism does not recognise a Creator-God and neither does the concept of God play any part in the practice of Buddhism. The Buddha is not a God or any manifestation of God, nor a prophet of God. The Buddha is the One Who Knows or The Enlightened One.

Conventionally, Buddhism dates from the Enlightenment, in the sixth century BC, of Siddhattha Gautama, by birth a Prince of the Sakyas, in northern India. However, the truths that Buddhism points to and the principles it upholds are said to be true and valid for all times and ages. Gautama the Buddha, the 'historical' Buddha, is said to be the latest in a long line of extraordinary beings who after careful preparation have found and realised the Truth for themselves, by themselves, unaided and without the benefit of earlier Buddhas or their influence.

Gautama's life was a spiritual journey. His father was the ruler of a small kingdom that sprawled across what are now the borderlands of India and Nepal. He was brought up in some splendour and trained as a warrior, although even in childhood there were indications of the religious life that was to follow. He married when he was sixteen. Then, when he was twenty-nine, the realities of old-age, sickness and death became so vividly impressed upon his mind that he was unable any longer to interest himself in the pursuit of worldly things, things that like himself must inevitably age, spoil and break up. Following the inspiration of a wandering monk he'd seen, he decided to go forth into the forest wildernesses in search of that which is 'not-born, not-become, not-made and not-compounded.'

For six years, far from his wealth and home, he wandered without success. Grave asceticism brought him fame and respect, and five close disciples. Wasted and almost at the point of death he decided to abandon that extreme and try another way. Disappointed, the disciples left. Sitting all alone, his body refreshed and strengthened, he began to work at concentrating his mind and focussing on the breath. Then carefully watching himself, he was able to wake up to the true nature of himself and all things and so purge his mind of all Greed, Hatred and Delusion. Then he was The Buddha. Thereafter, until he passed away at the age of eighty, out of great compassion for all beings, he continued to teach the truths and principles, the teachings and practices that form the core of this Way of Liberation now known to the world as Buddhism.

Teachings

The Teachings of the Buddha, also called the Dhamma or Dharma, focus on the Middle Way, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. Essentially, the Middle Way means the avoidance of genuine extremes.

The Four Noble Truths are:

Suffering

That our ordinary life and all conditioned things are unsatisfactory, problematical and experienced in terms of suffering and discontent.

Origin of Suffering

The desire or craving, rooted in ignorance and intrinsic to all unenlightened beings, which arises within and colours adaptation to each and every experience.

Stopping of Suffering

Way to Stop Suffering

The Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path

This is often symbolised by a wheel, rather like a ship's wheel of eight spokes. This shows the eight steps as mutually supportive and beginning and ending with Understanding. The eight steps are:

Right Understanding

Of the Four Noble Truths, Cause and Effect, and the Three Characteristics (Impermanence, Unsatisfactoriness and Not-Self or Insubstantiality)

Right Thought

Free from lust, thoughts of good-will and of compassion

Right Speech

Abstaining from Lying, Tale-bearing, Harsh Language and Idle Chatter

Right Action

Abstinence from Killing, Stealing and Sexual Misconduct

**Right Livelihood**

Avoiding jobs involving killing, deceit, treachery, exploitation and dealing in meat, liquor, drugs, human beings (e.g. slavery and prostitution), and poison

Right Effort

Overcoming unwholesome mental states, and developing and maintaining wholesome mental states

Right Mindfulness

Being mindful of one's body, feelings, mental texture and the experience of certain Teachings

Right Concentration

The mind perfectly poised, stable and focused constantly on the Four Noble Truths

The Precepts are a condensed form of Buddhist ethical practice. They are often compared with the ten commandments of Christianity, but the precepts are different in two respects. Firstly, they are to be taken as recommendations, not commandments. This means the individual is encouraged to use his/her own intelligence to apply these rules in the best possible way. Secondly, it is the spirit of the precepts, not the text that counts, hence, the guidelines for ethical conduct must be seen in the larger context of the Eightfold Path.

The first five precepts are mandatory for every Buddhist, although the fifth precept is often not observed, because it bans the consumption of alcohol. Precepts six to ten are laid out for those in preparation for monastic life and for devoted lay people unattached to families. The eight precepts put together number eight and nine and omit the tenth. Lay people may observe the eight precepts on Buddhist festival days. Ordained Theravada monks undertake no less than 227 precepts, which are not listed here. The precepts state that they:

Must not take the life of any living creature

Must not steal anyone's possessions

Must not be involved in sexual misconduct

Must not tell any lies

Must not use any alcohol or misuse drugs

Must not eat after midday

Must not attend shows where there is music or dancing

Must not use any perfume or personal jewellery

Must not sleep on raised or upholstered beds

Must not accept gifts of gold or silver (money)

Karma is a Sanskrit word which originally meant "action". Karma is the accumulation of causes we make and their effects. As such, it is a force which influences one's present and future, lying deep within one's life. In Buddhism, this means every thought word and deed imprints a latent effect in one's life. This influence, or karma, becomes manifest when activated by an external stimulus, and produces a corresponding effect. According to this concept, one's actions in the past have shaped one's present, and one's actions in the present determine one's future.

This law of karma operates over the three existences of past, present and future, and it is karma formed in past lifetimes which accounts for the differences with which we are born into this world. This law also applies to families, societies and countries.

In Buddhism, only intentional actions are karmic 'acts of will'. The 'Law of Karma' refers to 'cause and effect'. Accompanying this usually is a separate tenet called Vipaka, meaning result or effect. The reaction or effect can itself also influence an action, and in this way the chain of causation continues ad infinitum. When Buddhists talk about karma, they are normally referring to karma/action that is 'tainted' with ignorance - karma that continues to ensure that the being remains in the everlasting cycle of samsara.

This samsaric karma comes in two types - 'good' karma, which leads to positive/pleasurable experiences, like high rebirth, and bad karma which leads to suffering and low rebirth.

There is also a completely different type of karma that is neither good nor bad, but liberating. This karma allows the individual to break the uncontrolled cycle of rebirth which always leads to suffering, and thereby leave samsara to permanently enter Nirvana.

The Buddhist sutras/teachings explain that in order to generate liberating karma, we must first develop incredibly powerful concentration, and proper insight into the (un)reality of samsara.

Worship

Buddhists can worship both at home or at a temple. It is not considered essential to go to a temple to worship with others. The act of worship is a very personal and individual affair. It may include the recitation of devotional and meditative texts followed by meditation and ideally will take place before a shrine upon which there will be an image of the Buddha, lighted candles, incense and flowers. In their practice Buddhists may use prayer beads called malas. Respect being highly valued by Buddhists, there will be some bowing or prostrating. This may take place once or twice a day or as and when the individual wishes.

Places of Worship

Buddhist temples come in many shapes. Perhaps the best known are the pagodas of China and Japan. Another typical Buddhist building is the Stupa, which is a stone structure, built over what are thought to be



relics of the Buddha, or over copies of the Buddha's teachings. Buddhist temples are designed to symbolise five elements: Fire, Air, Earth (symbolised by the square base), Water, and Wisdom (symbolised by the pinnacle at the top).

All Buddhist temples contain an image or a statue of Buddha. When entering a Temple, Buddhists will take off their shoes, put their hands together and bow to the image of the Buddha. People can make offerings of flowers and incense at the shrine within the temple and take food for the monks

Practices

Birth

There is no special ceremony to mark the birth of a child in Buddhism so people generally follow local customs. However, Buddhism does teach the concept of rebirth, a similar teaching to reincarnation, and the belief that everyone is influenced by past karma. Rebirth has always been an important tenet in Buddhism; and it is often referred to as walking the wheel of life (samsara). It is the process of being born over and over again in different times and different situations, possibly for many thousand times. This process eventually ceases when one reaches Nirvana, by extinguishing passions and overcoming delusion, greed and aversion.

Marriage

Marriage in Buddhism is a civil contract, a social convention and has nothing essentially to do with Buddhism, although the Buddha did stress that once entered into, that contract should be faithfully honoured. Again customs will vary with the school and country of origin, but in the Theravada, for example, after the civil ceremony there will be a Blessing when the newly-weds will present offerings to the Sangha (loosely translated as community) and after the chanting of traditional stanzas of blessing, the Senior Monk will deliver a short homily exhorting the happy couple to honour and cherish one another.

Funerals

These vary with the school of Buddhism and country of origin, but generally focus on a reflection on the transitoriness of life and, in case the departed has any awareness of what is going on, a reassurance that what has been left behind will be cared for, together with good wishes for the future. The Buddha's body was cremated and this set the example for many Buddhists, even in the West. However the body may also be buried, or exposed for vultures and other creatures to consume. The corpse or its skeleton is sometimes donated to a monastery for meditative purposes.

Diet

There is no prescribed diet as such, but some schools and some groups within schools insist on a vegetarian diet. The inclination towards vegetarianism is the result of the precept to refrain from killing and the Buddha's insistence on the practice of harmlessness and his frequent call to treat all beings with lovingkindness. Some will reason that if it's dead

already, eating it doesn't matter, but others will point to the demand and the consequent harm and loss of life that meat eating creates. Generally the Buddhist attitude is not to insist, but to encourage and then to support a gradual extension and refining of Buddhist precepts in accordance with what is sensible and practical. Fasting is sometimes practised and especially on the Observance Days devotees will observe the Eight Precepts, one of which prohibits any food after noon and before the following dawn.

Dress

In the Theravada, bhikkhus wear the distinctive robe of brownish yellow, nuns wear brown and postulants of both sexes wear white. Tibetan monks wear a maroon robe. Zen monks wear a black or brownish robe with a kesa, a symbolic rectangular robe, the colour of which is determined by the status of the wearer, suspended about the neck by a band of cloth. Certain Zen lay-devotees and lay-ministers also wear over their normal attire a simple kesa, which lacks the symbolic robe. Dharmacharis and Dharmacharinis of the Western Buddhist Order, often referred to within the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order as 'Order Members', wear an embroidered white kesa. On Observance Days and Festival Days many of the lay-folk will endeavour to wear white, otherwise there is no special dress for the laity.

Religious Books and Artefacts

The sacred book of Buddhism is called the Tipitaka. It is made up of two words, ti meaning 'three' and pitaka meaning 'baskets'. The first part refers to the three sections that make up the book. The second is a reference to the ancient method of relaying material used by labourers, via baskets which were carried on the head and passed on from person to person. Writing was known in the Buddha's time but as a medium it was considered less reliable than human memory. A book could rot in the monsoon damp or be eaten by white ants but a person's memory could last as long as they lived. Consequently, monks and nuns committed all the Buddha's teachings to memory and passed it on to each other just as construction workers passed earth and bricks to each other in baskets. After being preserved in this manner for several hundred years the Tipitaka was finally written down in about 100 BC in Sri Lanka. It is written in an ancient Indian language called Pali, which is very close to the language that the Buddha himself spoke.

As for the three parts of the book, the first part is made of poetry, stories and many of the Buddha's dialogue and discourses. The second contains the rules for monks and nuns, advice on monastic administration and procedure and the early history of the monastic order. The third part is a complex and sophisticated attempt to analyse and classify all the constituents that make up the individual. The Tipitaka is a very large book; the English translation of it takes up nearly forty volumes. The Dhammapada, an anthology of 423 verses, is one of the smallest works in the first section of the Tipitaka. Dhammapada could be translated as 'The Way of Truth' or 'Verses of Truth, and has long been recognized as one of the



masterpieces of early Buddhist literature. Since first collated, the Dhammapada has become one of the best loved of Buddhist scriptures, recited daily by millions of devotees.

Since the making of human images of the Buddha was considered sacrilegious for a long time, Buddhist visual art has produced an elaborate vocabulary of symbolic and iconic forms of expressions. A great variety of Buddhist symbols can be found in temples and in Buddhist visual art and literature. The lotus, the wheel, and the stupa can be seen in almost every Buddhist temple.

Rites and Initiation

To become a Buddhist there is no special ceremony needed (although one is often held) - only the sincere repetition of the sacred formula, 'the Three Refuges' (the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha) and the Five Precepts. After this acceptance one investigates the Buddha's teaching and puts effort into practicing the suggestions made.

There are special rituals to mark, protect, and bless the occasions of major life transitions. They publicly mark and protect times of passage from one status to another and times of unusual vulnerability such as birth, birthdays, coming of age, marriage, the entering into a new house, and death. Monks preside over ordinations, funerals, and death commemoration rites. In the Theravada tradition, ordination is a puberty or coming-of-age rite.

The central daily rite of lay Buddhism is the offering of food. Theravada laity make this offering to the monks. Mahayana laity make it to the Buddha as part of the morning or evening worship.

Festivals and Celebrations

There are numerous festivals recognised and observed within the various Buddhist schools and cultures. Three principal festivals (listed below) of common significance to all schools are:

Vesakha Puja

Buddha Day, also known as Vesak, normally takes place in May. This day commemorates the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing of the Buddha.

Asalha Puja

Also known as Dhamma Day. This day commemorates the Buddha's First Sermon. It normally takes place in July. The three-month Rains Retreat for the Sangha commences the following day.

Pavarana Day

Also known as Sangha Day. The last day of the Rains Retreat and the occasion when bhikkhus invite the Sangha to inform them of their faults. It usually takes place in October. The Kathina offering to the Sangha and attendant celebrations (of immense importance) follow during the next month.

Community

Monks are called Bhikkhus in the Theravada or Bhikkhus in the Mahayana and are usually known by their ordination name. Bhikkhus of more than ten years standing are Theras or Elders, and after twenty years, Mahatheras or Great Elders. Those of a Thai background with usually ten years standing or more may be called Ajahn, which means Teacher. If they are of Burmese background and of twenty years or more they may be called Sayadaw, which again means Teacher. Bhikkhus are celibate and governed by a very strict rule. Any form of physical contact with women is prohibited. Zen monks have the title Reverend and senior monks of some spiritual advancement may be called Roshi, which means Teacher.

Soon after his Enlightenment and at the very beginning of his ministry, the Buddha established the Sangha, which literally means 'the community', although in this case 'spiritual community' might be better. At first, the Sangha was composed of men who had been ordained as bhikkhus (monks who depend on alms) by the Buddha himself and who were themselves Enlightened or partly so, having attained to one of the irrevocable stages on the way to Final Liberation. Thus, the Noble Sangha and the Bhikkhu Sangha overlapped each other, although this was not to be the case for long. A few years later women were ordained as bhikkhunis and the Bhikkhuni Sangha was established. Later still and in more recent times other orders and forms of ordination have been developed and particularly in the modern West the use of the term 'Sangha' has gradually been extended to the laity as well.

Different Schools

Broadly, Theravada Buddhism flourishes throughout South East Asia and Sri Lanka; the Mahayana is strong amongst Chinese communities and in Japan, Korea and Taiwan; the Vajrayana is found mostly in Tibet and amongst Tibetan communities; and all three are on the increase in Western countries. In India, the country of its birth, Buddhism practically died out although communities survived in Bengal and what is now Bangladesh.

In Britain, there are established substantial communities of Sri Lankans, Burmese and Thais, most of whom will be at least nominally Buddhist as well as Vietnamese, Koreans, Tibetans and a number of Indian Buddhists. There are also large numbers of Chinese many of whom will have Buddhist affiliations. In addition, of course a growing number of those who were born here and whose roots are here are embracing Buddhism.

Buddhists may be aspiring to attain Enlightenment as soon as possible and become an Arahant, or, embarking on a much longer and more difficult career of many lifetimes, their goal may be to become a Buddha, either a Private Buddha of limited teaching ability or a Supreme Buddha capable of leading others to liberation and of immeasurable effect on humankind.



The first of these two principal ideals is called that of the Savaka or 'hearer' and the second that of the Bodhisatta or Bodhisattva which means a 'wisdom-being'. In the course of time the Bodhisattva Ideal was developed to mean a person who out of compassion postpones their own Enlightenment to remain in the world and serve others. Broadly speaking, the Savaka Ideal characterises the Theravada School and the Bodhisattva Ideal the Mahayana School. A third principal school is the Vajrayana which adds esoteric Tantric practices to the Mahayana. Both the Mahayana and Vajrayana appear to be more ritualistic and artistically inspired than the Theravada. Within these main schools there are further sub-divisions and between all of them, the sub-divisions and the main schools, there is a certain amount of overlap and cross-fertilisation, as well as other 'local' influences.

Further Information

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Causton, Richard, *The Buddha in Daily Life*, Rider, 1995.

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Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.

The Buddha Guatama

Kadampa Buddhism

The founder of Buddhism in this world was Buddha Shakyamuni who lived and taught in India some two and a half thousand years ago. Since then millions of people around the world have followed the pure spiritual path he revealed. Buddha explained that all our problems and suffering arise from confused and negative states of mind, and all our happiness and good fortune arise from peaceful and positive states of mind. He taught methods for gradually overcoming minds such as anger, jealousy and ignorance, and developing positive minds such as love, compassion and wisdom. Through this we will come to experience lasting peace and happiness.

These methods work for anyone, in any country, in any age. Once we have gained experience of them for ourselves we can pass them on to others so they, too, can enjoy the same benefits. The Buddhist way of life - peace, loving kindness and wisdom - is just as relevant today as it was when Buddha appeared in ancient India. The teachings of Buddha reveal a step by step path to lasting happiness. By following this path anyone can gradually transform his or her mind from its present confused and self-centered state into the blissful mind of a Buddha.

Kadampa Buddhism is a Mahayana Buddhist school founded by the great Indian Buddhist Master Atisha (982-1054 CE). His followers are known as 'Kadampas'. 'Ka' refers to Buddha's teachings, and 'dam' to Atisha's special Lamrim instructions known as 'the stages of the path to enlightenment'. Kadampas, then, are practitioners who regard Buddha's teachings as personal instructions and put them into practice by following the instructions of Lamrim. The Kadampa tradition was later promoted widely in Tibet by Je Tsongkhapa and his followers, who were known as the 'New Kadampas'.

By integrating their knowledge of all Buddha's teachings into their practice of Lamrim, and by integrating this into their everyday lives, Kadampa Buddhists are encouraged to use Buddha's teachings as practical methods for transforming daily activities into the path to enlightenment. The great Kadampa Teachers are famous not only for being great scholars but also for being spiritual practitioners of immense purity and sincerity.

The lineage of these teachings, both their oral transmission and blessings, was then passed from Teacher to disciple, spreading throughout much of Asia, and now to many countries throughout the western world. Buddha's teachings, which are known as 'Dharma', are likened to a wheel that moves from

country to country in accordance with changing conditions and people's karmic inclinations. The external forms of presenting Buddhism may change as it meets with different cultures and societies, but its essential authenticity is ensured through the continuation of an unbroken lineage of realized practitioners.

Through the activities and dedication of the renowned Buddhist Master, Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, Kadampa Buddhism has spread to many countries in recent years. Geshe Kelsang has worked tirelessly to spread Kadampa Buddhism throughout the world by giving extensive teachings, writing many profound texts on Kadampa Buddhism, and founding the New Kadampa Tradition, the International Kadampa Buddhist Union. The latter provides a vehicle for promoting Kadampa Buddhism throughout the world. It is an association of Buddhist Centers and practitioners that derive their inspiration and guidance from the example of the ancient Kadampa Buddhist Masters and their teachings as presented by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso.

According to Buddhist thought, there are three reasons why we need to study and practise the teachings of Buddha:

To develop our wisdom

To cultivate a good heart

To maintain a peaceful state of mind

If we do not strive to develop our wisdom, we shall always remain ignorant of ultimate truth - the true nature of reality. Although we wish for happiness, our ignorance leads us to engage in non-virtuous actions, which are the main cause of all our suffering.

If we do not cultivate a good heart, our selfish motivation destroys harmony and good relationships with others. We have no peace, and no chance to gain pure happiness. Without inner peace, outer peace is impossible. If we do not maintain a peaceful state of mind we are not happy even if we have ideal conditions.

On the other hand, when our mind is peaceful we are happy even if our external conditions are unpleasant.

Therefore, the development of these qualities is of utmost importance for our daily happiness.



Geshe Kelsang Gyatso has designed three special spiritual programs for the systematic study and practice of Kadampa Buddhism that are especially suited to the modern world: the General Program, the Foundation Program, and the Teacher Training Program.

The General Program provides a basic introduction to Buddhist view, meditation, and practice that is suitable for beginners. It also includes advanced teachings and practices from both Sutra and Tantra. It is taught at every Kadampa Buddhist Center and is an ideal starting point for those interested to find out more about Buddhism and meditation. Classes, which are usually held in the evenings, are open to everyone and are supplemented by optional day courses, weekend courses, and meditation retreats.

The Foundation Program provides an opportunity to deepen our understanding and experience of Buddhism through a systematic study of five texts.

The Teacher Training Program is intended for people who wish to train as authentic Buddhist Teachers, and also for those who wish to gain a clear insight into Buddha's teachings and deep experience of their practice.

Further Information

www.losangdragpa.com

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The New Kadampa Tradition within Calderdale

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2 Ganden Buddhist Centre

Peace Cafe
5 North Bridge
Halifax

01422 353 311

All descriptions of reality are temporary hypotheses.

The Buddha Guatama

The Nichiren Daishonin Buddhist Tradition

Sokia Gakkai International - UK

SGI-UK is the organisation for lay people who practice Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism in this country.

Its motto is:

Trust through friendship, peace through trust.

SGI members believe that exerting oneself in both faith and practice - including taking action in reality based on wisdom and compassion - is the means by which one is able to realize one's Buddhahood.

Nichiren strongly believed that the true aim of Buddhism is to enable people living in the real world and facing real problems to become empowered and change their lives and society for the better. Nichiren Buddhism is a philosophy that respects the fundamental dignity of all life and stresses the profound connection between one's own happiness and the happiness of others.

Nichiren Daishonin lived in 13th Century Japan during a tumultuous time of social unrest and natural disasters. The common people, especially, suffered enormously in this harsh feudal society. Appalled by this state of affairs, Nichiren, while still a young priest, set out to find the solution to the suffering that surrounded him. After intensive study of the Buddhist sutras, he realized that the essence of the Buddha's enlightenment, and the means to bring an end to suffering and social turmoil, was found in the Lotus Sutra. This sutra affirms that all people, regardless of gender, capacity or social standing, inherently possess the qualities of a Buddha, and are therefore equally worthy of the utmost respect.

Nam-Myoho-renge-kyo is the title, or *daimoku* in Japanese, of the Lotus Sutra. The phrase is somewhat difficult to render into English because each word or set of words contains a complex set of symbolism and connotation, and without an understanding of the symbology behind the words, the full meaning is lost. Precise interpretations of Nam(u)-Myoho-Renge-Kyo, how it is pronounced, and its position in Buddhist practice differ slightly among the numerous schools and sub-sects of Nichiren Buddhism. The SGI prefer the following translation: 'Devotion to the Mystic Law of Cause and Effect Sutra.'

The *Gohonzon* is a mandala in the form of a scroll which all practitioners of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism have enshrined in their homes and to which they perform the twice daily practice. Honzon means

"object of fundamental respect", *go* means "worthy of honour".

The *Gohonzon* is inscribed with Chinese and Sanskrit characters. Together, these characters represent life in its highest condition, Buddhahood. Down the centre is written "Nam-myoho-renge-kyo, Nichiren". Nichiren Daishonin taught that one who takes faith in and chants to the *Gohonzon*, and teaches others to do the same, will definitely attain the same life-condition of Buddhahood that he himself possessed.

Gongyo literally means "assiduous practice." In the SGI, *gongyo* means to recite chapter two and sixteen of the Lotus Sutra in front of the *Gohonzon*. This is the supporting practice of SGI members and is performed together with the chanting of *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo*, ideally each morning and evening. These two chapters contain its most essential message. The Expedient Means chapter reveals that there is no separation between the lives of ordinary people and the life of the Buddha. The Life Span chapter clarifies that the Buddha's life - all life - is eternal, and that his wish is for all people to attain the same life-condition as himself.

In Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, chanting *Nam-myoho-renge-kyo* is the most positive karmic cause one can make. It is the means by which practitioners overcome negative karma created in this and former lifetimes, create positive karma for this and future lifetimes, and overcome difficulties in the present by transforming Greed, Anger and Stupidity into the three qualities of the Buddha: Wisdom, Courage and Compassion.

We tend to think that happiness is caused by something which comes from outside: something "makes" us happy. The happiness referred to in Buddhism is not dependent on outside events. Rather, true happiness comes about when we value our own Buddha nature. This requires a change from within, not without. This inner change is often referred to by Nichiren Buddhists as "human revolution" and is the objective of practicing Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism.

The practice, in fact has a two-fold aim. As well as the process of human revolution, Nichiren Buddhists are working to establish world peace based on the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin.

This goes beyond a world without war to mean the widespread acceptance of Buddhist philosophy as the foundation of society with a profound respect for the



dignity of all life and the recognition that all humanity is equal, as all have the capacity to reveal Buddhahood.

Further Information

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This is the Path to Union:
 Destroy the sense of self,
 Thou shalt then find my Lord
 Within thee.

Guru Arjan

The Sikh Community

Origins

The Sikh religion preached by the Ten Gurus is strictly monotheistic requiring belief in one Supreme God. From the birth of its founder, Guru Nanak (1469), to the death of Guru Gobind Singh (1708) the father of the Khalsa, there was a period of 239 years.

Guru Arjan (the fifth Guru) compiled the Sikh scriptures in 1604 which he formally installed at the Darbar Sahib - Amritsar (Golden Temple). After the formation of the Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh gave the final shape to the scriptures by including the compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur (the ninth Guru). In 1708 Guru Gobind Singh himself carried the 1430-paged volume to Sri Hazoor Sahib in Nander and conferred the perpetual Guruship on the Granth. From then on this volume is called Guru Granth Sahib.

Teachings

Sikhism is a way of life shown to mankind by the ten Sikh Gurus. Each succeeding Guru was believed to be NANAK himself with the spirit of Nanak descending in every one of them but in different physical garb. Sikhism is a practical religion teaching mankind not how to avoid evil but how it is to be met and overcome. Sikhs believe that every human soul possesses the potentiality of perfection and is capable of attaining direct union with God.

Guru Gobind Singh's introduction of the Amrit Sanskar (initiation ceremony), established the Khalsa (the pure), which gave the Sikhs their unique and distinct identity. With the creation of the Khalsa and its code of ethics, Guru Gobind Singh made Sikhism complete in itself and quite distinctive from Hinduism, Islam and other world faiths.

Guru Nanak's composition of Japji is the essence of the whole teaching of the Sikh Gurus. The Hymn starts with Mool antar - the root foundation of the Sikh faith, on attributes of God and emphasis on Holy name:

**"There is One God; The Supreme Truth; the Creator;
 Without fear or enmity; timeless;
 Beyond birth and death; self created;
 Realised through God's grace."**

In order for Mankind to realise the true destiny of living eternally with God in this present life, it is necessary to meditate upon and to repeat Nam Simran or Nam Japna (God's name); to share one's earnings with the poor (Wand Chakna) and to earn ones living by honest labour (Kirat Karni).

Human souls are freed from the suffering resulting from physical existence and attachment to material things by living according to God's will. The law of Karma accords reward and punishment for all man's thoughts and deeds and determines the cycle of rebirth.

For the soul to be released from the cycle of rebirth and suffering and merge with God. Release or Mukhti can be achieved through the Grace of God. God's grace is available to those who seek to lead honest lives; having faith in God, doing His Will serving others (Sewa); living in peace and being tolerant of the ways and beliefs of other people. A soul without God's grace is lost in the wilderness of egoism and passionate desire and is unable to win its way from that misery to God's company where there is Peace and Joy - the ultimate bliss.

A Sikh is a disciple of the Ten Gurus. Any person who believes in the One God; the Ten Gurus (from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh); the Guru Granth Sahib; the scriptures and teachings of the Sikh Gurus; believes in the necessity and importance of the Amrit of Guru Gobind Singh and one who does not believe in any other religion or rituals is a Sikh.

The tenth and last living Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) instituted the Khalsa Panth (the Sikh community) symbolising a casteless society with two main principles - to seek truth (NAM) and to do selfless service (Sewa). Practising Sikhs, male or female, are enjoined to wear the Five K's (Panj Kakar) which are symbols of their faith

There are four prohibitions which all Sikhs must observe, known as **Char Kurehtan** or the **Four Injunctions**. These are:

1. Not to cut or trim ones hair.
2. Not to use tobacco, intoxications or drugs.



3. Not to eat halal meat (this includes kosher or other meat involving ritual killing).
4. Not to commit adultery.

Worship

In the Sikh faith, corporate worship can take place on any day. Worship may be led by any knowledgeable Sikh acceptable to the group.

Generally each day begins with an early morning bath followed by meditation, prayers and reciting of hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib. Devout Sikhs will pray at least three times a day - before sunrise, at sunset and before going to bed. Sikhs will wish to maintain their prayer routine wherever they are.

A typical Sikh service consists mainly of reading scriptures (Gurbani) and singing hymns (Kirtan) from the Guru Granth Sahib, followed by a religious discourse on divine name and the concluding corporate prayer Ardas (supplication).

Then a random reading of a passage from the Guru Granth Sahib (Hukum Nama) which is considered the message of the day. The service concludes with sharing of holy food.

This sharing of food, specially prepared and blessed at the Gurdwara (temple) kitchen, is an important and integral part of communal worship. The food is known as Langar (a vegetarian meal), which symbolises equality and Kara Prashad (a specially blessed sweetmeat).

Places of Worship

The Sikh place of worship is called a Gurdwara, and is the place where the Guru Granth Sahib is housed, on a Maji Sahib (dais/throne) covered in brightly coloured Romala (covers) under the Palki (canopy) with utmost respect. For the Sikhs the Guru Granth Sahib is the living Guru (the Supreme Authority).

Gurdwaras in the UK vary in size and style. Only a few are purpose built. The Darbar Sahib (prayer hall) is a bare hall with no images or seats. Before entering the prayer hall (or any other place where the Guru Granth Sahib is present) shoes must be removed and those not wearing turbans must cover their heads as a mark of respect.

Sikhs will then walk towards the Guru Granth Sahib, make their offerings in the offertory box (Golak) and with reverence bow to the ground with folded hands. They then move back to sit on the carpeted floor exemplifying the teaching of equality. Males and females often sit separately, but this segregation has no religious connotation. Alcohol and tobacco, in any form is not permitted within Gurdwara premises.

Sikh Gurdwaras throughout the world are recognised by the Sikh religious flag (Nishan Sahib), a tall flagpole draped in saffron cloth bearing the Sikh emblem (Khanda Kirpan) in black or navy blue.

Practices

Every important Sikh ceremony is performed in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib and the holy congregation (Sangat).

Birth

As soon as possible after birth the whole family, relatives and friends go to the Gurdwara for the naming ceremony. This is done by opening the Guru Granth Sahib at random and taking the first letter of the hymn, on the top left hand page, with which the family then choose to start the baby's name. To this will be added the suffix 'Singh' for a boy or 'Kaur' for a girl. Guru Gobind Singh has made it obligatory for male followers call themselves Singh (Lion) and female followers to call themselves Kaur (Princess). However, many Sikhs also use an additional family name as well as Singh or Kaur eg Mohinder Gill, Harbans Sahota. The chosen name is announced to the holy congregation either immediately or on a subsequent occasion.

Marriage

The marriage ceremony is considered a sacred institution and an essential component of a couple's social and religious life.

The Sikh marriage is not regarded as a social contract but a spiritual state. Living in this world and discharging family duties is advocated as the Sikh way of life. Sikhs go through a civil marriage ceremony but consider it incomplete until the marriage is solemnised under the auspices of the Sikh Religious Order.

Today most Gurdwaras in UK are registered for civil marriages. Therefore, the couple can have their religious marriage and civil marriage at the same time. The marriage takes place in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib preferably at the Gurdwara.

Funerals

In Sikhism, death is not the end of life but the door to pass through in order to enjoy the bliss of God's presence. Therefore, no lamentations or mourning should take place.

A devout Sikh, who is dying, may receive comfort from reading hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib. Any practising Sikh can be asked to help. The last (or death) rites are called Antam Sanskar.

All Sikhs, including the stillborn or babies who die within a few hours of birth, are cremated. After death, the body is washed and dressed in new clothes (with the Panj Kakar if one is initiated). The coffin is brought to the family home where relatives and friends get a last glimpse of the body. Family members help to place the coffin in the hearse and it is taken to the crematorium.

Traditionally the eldest son or other close relative lights the pyre (in UK crematoriums this is done by pressing the button). After cremation everyone returns to the Gurdwara for final prayer. The ashes are later collected and scattered in a river or in the sea. Some Sikhs wish to have the ashes taken back to India - their birth place.

Diet

Many Sikhs are vegetarians by choice. Those who do eat meat are prohibited from eating halal and kosher meat. Because of the Indian subcontinent origin of Sikhism, many Sikhs will not eat beef.

Dress

The majority of Sikh men will wear western clothes with a turban. Initiated Sikhs, (Khalsa), will always have the five symbols, while others may wear one or more of the Five Sikh Symbols:

1. Kesh (uncut hair): tied in a knot and kept tidy, symbolising spirituality and obedience in accepting God's Will.
2. Kangha (comb): to keep the hair neat and clean, symbolising cleanliness and discipline.
3. Kirpan (small Sword): an emblem of power and dignity - symbolising self-respect, fearlessness.
4. Kacha (Shorts): or Kacchera (shorts or underpants) symbolising morality and considered an appropriate garment for an active life.
5. Kara (steel bracelet): worn on right wrist. Symbolises oneness and unbreakable bond with God.

The Sikh Turban is a distinct religious entity - an inseparable complementary factor bestowing spiritual wholeness on the Khalsa personality and character. All the Sikh Gurus wore turbans and when Guru Gobind Singh initiated the Khalsa he made it obligatory for all his followers to do so. The Sikh turban is a unitary emblem of the Sikh faith. The turban is generally about 5 yards long and 45 inches wide and should cover the hair on the head completely with the tops of the ears customarily under the turban.

Most women will wish to wear a salwar kameez (salwar: trousers, kameez: shirt) or sari and a chunni or dupattah (long scarf). Wedding bangles and rings have the same significance as British wedding rings.

Religious Books and Artefacts

The Guru Granth Sahib contains writings of the Sikh Gurus and other Saints. It is the ultimate book of guidance for Sikhs. Sikhs also may have a Gutka or Nitnem - (a prayer book) with extracts from the Guru Granth Sahib.

As mentioned before Sikhs place significant religious significance to the turban and the five Ks.

Rites and Initiation

The Amrit initiation: this can take place at any time providing the recipient understands the implication of the vows and is able to fulfil the discipline of the Khalsa. Vaisakhi is the most popular occasion although the ceremony can take place on any other festival day or occasion. On completion of the initiation ceremony the participants are reminded of the significance of the Panj Kakar (five K's) and explained their importance.

Festivals and Celebrations

Birthdays of Guru Gobind Singh

Occurs during the months of December and January.

Vaisaki

Khalsa initiation. Occurs during April.

Martyrdom of Guru Arian Dev

Occurs during June.

Birthdays of Guru Nanak

Occurs during November.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur

Occurs during November.

First Reading of Guru Granth Sahib

Occurs during September.

Installation of Guru Granth Sahib

Occurs during October.

Bandi Chor

Diwali - On this day Guru Hargobind Sahib (6th Guru) was released from Gwalior fort by the Mugal Emperor Jahangir. He successfully insisted that 52 Hindu princes also falsely imprisoned, also be released. Sikhs celebrate this day by worship and prayers of thanksgiving at the Gurdwara and by fireworks. This day coincides with the Hindu Festival of Lights (Diwali) and occurs during September.

Hola Mohalla

Occurs during February or March. This was introduced in 1680 by Guru Gobind Singh to replace the Hindu festival of Holi. It is a spring festival "Mela" when Sikhs engage in Gatka (martial art and related sport activities).

Community

In the Sikh religion there is no ordained priesthood or religious hierarchy. Sikhism lays emphasis on equality. Therefore any devout initiated Sikh, male or female, may read the Guru Granth Sahib or lead prayers in the Gurdwara.

The Granthi -. In the UK almost every Gurdwara employs a Granthi (reader of Granth) as a permanent caretaker or reader. He will conduct services on a regular basis.

Providing for the family and caring for all its members' needs, spiritual and emotional, are religious duties for Sikhs. There is a strict code of sexual morality to ensure protection of families and communities. Families are close knit and have strong responsibilities for any sick, elderly or infirm relatives.

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www.allaboutsikhs.com

www.sikhithemax

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4 Ramgarhia Sikh Temple

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Death is merely moving from one home to another. The wise man will spend his main efforts in trying to make his future home the more beautiful one.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern

The Jewish Community

Origins

What is the Jew? What kind of unique creature is this whom all the rulers of all the nations of the world have disgraced and crushed and expelled and destroyed; persecuted, burned and drowned, and who, despite their anger and their fury, continues to live and to flourish.

What is this Jew whom they have never succeeded in enticing with all the enticements in the world, whose oppressors and persecutors only suggested that he deny (and disown) his religion and cast aside the faithfulness of his ancestors?!

The Jew - is the symbol of eternity. He is the one who for so long had guarded the prophetic message and transmitted it to all mankind. A people such as this can never disappear.

The Jew is eternal. He is the embodiment of eternity.

Leo Tolstoy (What is the Jew? 1908)

The Jews or Israelites traced their common lineage to the biblical patriarch Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. Jewish tradition holds that the Israelites were the descendants of Jacob's twelve sons (one of which was named Judah), who settled in Egypt. Their direct descendants respectively divided into twelve tribes, who were enslaved under the rule of an Egyptian pharaoh, often identified as Ramses II. In the Jewish faith, the emigration of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan (the Exodus), led by the Prophet Moses, marks the formation of the Israelites as a people.

Jewish tradition has it that after forty years of wandering in the desert, the Israelites arrived in Canaan and conquered it under the command of Joshua, dividing the land among the twelve tribes. For a period of time, the united twelve tribes were led by a series of rulers known as Judges. After this period, an Israelite monarchy was established under Saul, and continued under King David and Solomon. King David conquered Jerusalem (first a Canaanite, then a Jebusite town) and made it his capital. After Solomon's reign the nation split into two kingdoms, Israel, consisting of ten of the tribes (in the north), and Judah, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (in the south). Israel was conquered by the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser V in the 8th century BCE.

There is no commonly accepted historical record of those ten tribes, which are sometimes referred to as the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

Judea under Roman rule was at first an independent Jewish kingdom, but gradually the rule over Judea became less and less Jewish, until it became under the direct rule of Roman administration (and renamed the province of Judaea), which was often callous and brutal in its treatment of its Judean subjects. The Romans destroyed much of the Temple in Jerusalem and, according to some accounts, stole artifacts from the temple, such as the Menorah. Judeans continued to live in their land in significant numbers, and were allowed to practice their religion, until the 2nd century when Julius Severus ravaged Judea while putting down the Bar Kokhba revolt. After 135 CE, Jews were not allowed to enter the city of Jerusalem, although this ban must have been at least partially lifted, since at the destruction of the rebuilt city by the Persians in the 7th century, Jews are said to have lived there.

Many of the Judaeans Jews were sold into slavery while others became citizens of other parts of the Roman Empire. This is the traditional explanation to the diaspora. However, a majority of the Jews in Antiquity were most likely descendants of converts in the cities of the Hellenistic-Roman world, especially in Alexandria and Asia Minor, and were only affected by the diaspora in its spiritual sense.

Jews settled throughout Europe, especially in the area of the former Roman Empire. There are records of Jewish communities in France and Germany from the 4th century, and substantial Jewish communities in Spain even earlier. Since they were the only people allowed to loan money for interest (forbidden to Catholics by the church), some Jews became prominent moneylenders.

Jews were frequently massacred and exiled from various European countries. The persecution hit its first peak during the Crusades. In the First Crusade (1096) flourishing communities on the Rhine and the Danube were utterly destroyed. In the Second Crusade (1147) the Jews in France were subject to frequent massacres. The Jews were also subjected to attacks by the Shepherds' Crusades of 1251 and 1320. The Crusades were followed by expulsions, including in 1290, the banishing of all English Jews; in 1396, 100,000 Jews were expelled from France; and, in 1421 thousands were expelled from Austria.

Many of the expelled Jews fled to Poland.

Although Jews flourished and underwent a revival within Muslim Spain, this was brought to a tragic end following the Christian reconquest of Muslim Spain, which was followed by Spanish Inquisition in 1492, when the entire Spanish population of around 200,000 Sephardic Jews were expelled. This was followed by expulsions in 1493 in Sicily (37,000 Jews) and Portugal in 1496. The expelled Spanish Jews fled mainly to the Ottoman Empire, Holland, and North Africa, others migrating to Southern Europe and the Middle East.

During the Middle Ages, Jews were generally better treated by Islamic rulers than Christian ones. Despite second-class citizenship, Jews played prominent roles in Muslim courts, and experienced a "Golden Age" in the Moorish Spain about 900-1100, though the situation deteriorated after that time.

In the 17th century, almost no Jews lived in Western Europe. The relatively tolerant Poland had the largest Jewish population in Europe, but the calm situation for the Jews there ended when Polish and Lithuanian Jews were slaughtered in the hundreds of thousands by the Cossack Chmielnicki (1648) and by the Swedish wars (1655). Driven by these and other persecutions, Jews moved back to Western Europe in the 17th century.

During the period of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, significant changes were happening within the Jewish community. The Haskalah movement paralleled the wider Enlightenment, as Jews began in the 1700s to campaign for emancipation from restrictive laws and integration into the wider European society. Secular and scientific education was added to the traditional religious instruction received by students, and interest in a national Jewish identity, including a revival in the study of Jewish history and Hebrew, started to grow. Haskalah gave birth to the Reform and Conservative movements and planted the seeds of Zionism while at the same time encouraging cultural assimilation into the countries in which Jews resided. At around the same time another movement was born, one preaching almost the opposite of Haskalah, Hasidic Judaism. Hasidic Judaism began in the 1700s by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, and quickly gained a following with its more exuberant, mystical approach to religion. These two movements, and the traditional orthodox approach to Judaism from which they spring, formed the basis for the modern divisions within Jewish observance.

Though persecution still existed, emancipation spread throughout Europe in the 1800s. Napoleon invited Jews to leave the Jewish ghettos in Europe and seek refuge in the newly created tolerant political regimes that offered equality under Napoleonic Law. By 1871, with Germany's emancipation of Jews, every European country except Russia had emancipated its Jews.

Despite increasing integration of the Jews with secular society, a new form of anti-Semitism

emerged, based on the ideas of race and nationhood rather than the religious hatred of the Middle Ages. This form of anti-Semitism held that Jews were a separate and inferior race from the Aryan people of Western Europe, and led to the emergence of political parties in France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary that campaigned on a platform of rolling back emancipation. This form of anti-Semitism emerged frequently in European culture, most famously in the Dreyfus Trial in France. These persecutions, along with state-sponsored pogroms in Russia in the late 1800s, led a number of Jews to believe that they would only be safe in their own nation.

At the same time, Jewish migration to the United States created a new community in large part freed of the restrictions of Europe. Over 2 million Jews arrived in the United States between 1890 and 1924, most from Russia and Eastern Europe.

Though Jews became increasingly integrated in Europe, fighting for their home countries in World War I and playing important roles in culture and art during the 20s and 30s, racial anti-Semitism remained. It reached its most virulent form in the killing of approximately six million Jews during the Holocaust, almost completely obliterating the two-thousand year history of the Jews in Europe. In 1948, the Jewish state of Israel was founded, creating the first Jewish nation since the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.

Today, the largest Jewish communities are in the United States and Israel, with major communities in France, Russia, England, and Canada.

Teachings

Judaism, the religion of the Jewish people, has, at its heart an underlying promise, the belief that there exists only one indivisible God who is the Creator and ruler of the universe and all that is in it; transcendent and eternal, knowing and seeing everything.

God has revealed the Law (Torah) to his specially appointed people, the Jews, which on the one hand forms the central part of the particularistic covenant, or bond, between them. On the other hand the Torah contains a message from God to humanity, mediated through the Jewish prophets but of universal validity. Through Abraham, the biblical patriarch, the Jewish faith was given its first expression and the blessing and inheritance from God to the Jewish people, especially the promise of the land, Israel, that maintains a central place in Jewish thought and practice.

The essence of the Jewish faith is contained in a prayer called the Shema, which is found in the Torah and recited daily by the devout Jew: it begins:

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart".

Deuteronomy, Chapter 6. verses 4-6

The Prophets are divided into two sections: early Prophets -Joshua, Judges, Kings, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; later Prophets include the twelve minor Prophets - Amos, Hosea, Micah, and others.

Worship

The Sabbath (Shabbat), the most important of Jewish holy days is observed weekly from sunset on Friday until one hour after sunset on Saturday. It is set apart from the rest of the week for worship, rest and peace. The devout Jew does not work or transact business on the Sabbath.

Regular and frequent prayer is an essential part of Jewish daily life. Jews may pray whenever they wish, but for the devout there are three set occasions for prayer: morning, afternoon and evening.

Places of Worship

In a synagogue, a minimum of 10 adult male worshippers must be present for a service to take place. There are many variations in form and customs in synagogues reflecting the particular religious views of the congregations. In Orthodox synagogues, men and women sit separately but in Reform synagogues mixed seating is normal. The ritual and participants also vary accordingly.

In Orthodox services, the men wear their skull-caps, talliths and tefillin with the women seated in the galleries. In Reform services women share the conduct of the service.

A synagogue can be a simple room and contain the two main items of the ark and bimah. The ark is a decorated cupboard or cabinet to contain the scrolls on which the Jewish Law, the Torah, is written. The bimah is simply a raised platform with a reading desk on which the scrolls are placed when read aloud during worship. A menorah, the seven-branched candlestick, and a lighted lamp hanging near the ark are normally installed. All these items can be portable. Normally a Rabbi (teacher) and Cantor or Reader lead the worship, but any layperson can officiate in their absence.

The synagogue is, however, a totally lay institution and therefore any adult male Jew may lead the prayers, read from the Torah and perform other synagogue rituals.

Jews will attend the synagogue for corporate worship services, which are held at the onset of the Sabbath on Friday, and on Saturday morning afternoon and evening at the termination of the Sabbath. The observant Jew does not work or travel on the Sabbath.

Practices

Birth

Boys are normally circumcised on the 8th day after birth and are then given a Hebrew name.

Marriage

Marriage signifies the setting up of a new family -the family being the basic unit of Jewish ritual. It is a holy thing instituted by God and it reminds the Jew that the home is a sanctuary in which God dwells. Judaism does not accept marriage with a non-Jewish spouse, and marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew cannot be performed in a synagogue. The ceremony is called Kiddushin, meaning 'to be holy', and takes place usually in a synagogue. A convenient room is also acceptable as the legal essentials are that the Secretary for Marriages of the Synagogue is present as a witness and registrar.

Jewish marriage ceremonies are usually held in a synagogue but can also take place in a hall or hotel before the Secretary for Marriages of the synagogue. An essential part of the service is the act of marriage contracts and vows, which take place under the marriage canopy. Men must have their heads covered at all times. During the ceremony under the canopy there are 2 occasions in which the bride and bridegroom drink wine as prayers are said. The marriage service lasts about 50 minutes.

Funerals

There are no special rites for a dying person. However of the Jewish faith should not die alone. so that the dying person may recite the appropriate prayers.

Orthodox Jews are always buried; burial should be in a Jewish cemetery. Reform Judaism does not object to the practice of cremation. The ceremony will last about one hour and include prayers in Hebrew and a sermon in English. All male mourners will be expected to put three shovels of earth into the grave. All must keep their heads covered: both men and women can attend. There is no special part for the eldest son to play, although he should be present. Next-of-kin undergo an intense period of official mourning for the first week after the burial. The mourning then decreases in intensity during the next 12 months.

In accordance with religious practice, delay in burial is prohibited, and subject to the Coroner's permission arrangements for burial should be made immediately after death occurs. concerning preparation for burial as many different customs prevail. Orthodox Jews are always buried and in a Jewish cemetery. Non-Orthodox Jews are normally buried. Reform Judaism does not object to cremation. Unless accompanying officers themselves are Jewish, they will not be expected to take any part in the service. After the funeral, special mourning rites are observed by the bereaved, ie children, spouse, brothers and sisters. These last for seven days and take place at home, often where the deceased used to live.

Diet

Food eaten by Orthodox Jews is determined by strict adherence to the Jewish dietary laws. Some Jews will observe the dietary requirements only partially or reject them completely, as in the case of some Reform Jews, although many will tend to eat kosher-style food developed from traditional cuisine.



Jewish dietary laws prohibit the eating of all animals which do not have cloven hoof and chew the cud, all birds which are birds of prey and all sea creatures which do not have fins and scales. Meat which can be eaten is known as kosher. To be Kosher, animals must be religiously slaughtered, certain parts removed and the meat salted to remove the blood before it can be eaten. Kosher fowl (not birds of prey) must also be slaughtered and dressed in the prescribed manner.

Meat and dairy products cannot be cooked, served or eaten together. Milk products may not be eaten with or immediately after meat products; an interval of time depending on the custom of the community must elapse between meat and milk. Meat products, on the other hand, may be eaten after milk products, after a short interval.

Fish (kosher if with scales and fins) does not require special preparation. Fish can be eaten with dairy products, if prepared with non-meat shortening or if broiled. Fish, meat, milk and their products, eggs, fats, oil and shortenings are all considered kosher only if derived from the above-mentioned animals or from plants and vegetables.

Utensils used for the preparation and serving of non-kosher food may not be used for kosher food or vegetables. Separate utensils are used for meat and milk foods.

During the eight days of Passover, Jews do not eat leavened products (ie without yeast), nor would they wish to touch any leavened products. Instead they eat special foods including matzos (unleavened bread).

Dress

Jews may wear caps and prayer shawls and Orthodox Jews, in addition, would wear phylacteries (strap-on leather boxes enclosing parchment sections of the scriptures which are worn by male orthodox Jews on the forehead and left arm) during mid-week morning services.

The head is covered during prayer with an ordinary hat or skullcap (yarmulke or kippah). In the morning a prayer shawl (talith) is worn and on weekdays phylacteries (tefillin) may be worn. The tefillin are black leather boxes containing four passages of scripture, which are strapped to the forehead and left upper arm. The Shema (Deuteronomy 6. v.4.6) is recited morning and evening. The Orthodox Jew may continue to cover his head throughout the day as a sign of reverence to God. Married women cover their heads at prayer.

Jewish dress varies greatly. Some men often have their heads covered and some married women cover their hair.

Religious Books and Artefacts

The basic doctrines and tenets of Judaism concerning its beliefs, philosophy, law and ritual are contained in the Torah (which means "teaching"), the five law

books of Moses (the Pentateuch) which are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The Jewish Bible consists of three parts: the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings.

The Torah consists of the five lawbooks of Moses (the Pentateuch): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The Writings are a variety of books including the Psalms, Proverbs, Ruth, Esther, Daniel, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, etc. The Talmud explains the laws written in the Torah. The detailed interpretation and explanation of the law written in the Torah is found in the Talmud and covers the many aspects of Jewish life and thought including laws about agriculture, festivals, marriage and divorce, civil and criminal laws and the laws concerning food and drink.

A copy of the Torah and copies of the Prayer Books (Siddur);

Prayer cap

Prayer Shawl

Tephillin (Phylacteries)

Copies of the Holy Scriptures (according to the Masoretic Text) and the Authorised Daily Prayer Book. The Pentateuch and Haftorahs are also available.

Festivals and Celebrations

There are a number of religious festivals found within the Torah that are observed within Judaism following similar practices as for the Sabbath. All begin at sunset of the previous day and end one hour after sunset the following day(s).

The Jewish calendar is lunar, but to keep in step with the Gregorian calendar, leap months are intercalated (ie inserted) at regular intervals since the festivals are tied to the agricultural seasons. Observant Jews do not work on the major Jewish festivals, but rather, worship together on these days.

Rosh Hashannah

New Year Festival, which lasts 2 days. Occurs during the months of September and October. For Jews, this is a time of divine judgement in which the fate of the world in the coming year is determined. Jews repent of their sins, the ram's horn (shofar) is sounded to remind them of their shortcomings and a call to spiritual awareness. It is also a time to eat sweet foods as a symbol of the good year to come and to greet relatives and friends. The period between New Year and Atonement is a time of soul searching and penitence, culminating in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The Jewish date is 1st Tisri.

Yom Kippur

Day of Atonement - Occurs during the months of September and October. This is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar: a day of fasting, devoted to

prayer and worship, seeking atonement (ie 'at one' with God) from God for past sins. The Jewish date is 10th Tishri.

Tabernacles

Also called Sukkot. Occurs during the months of September and October, five days after Yom Kippur. It is primarily a Harvest Festival, but linked with the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt. For the period of the festival, Jews live in a little shack or booth (sukkah) covered with branches and remember the time that their Israelite ancestors wandered through the wilderness after the exodus protected only by the mercy of God. The Jewish date is 15th to 23rd Tishri.

Simchat Torah

Rejoicing of the Torah - Tabernacles concludes with the festival of Shemini Atzeret on 22nd Tishri and Simchat Torah on 23rd Tishri. Simchat Tishri is a particularly joyous occasion with special appeal to children. It commemorates the conclusion of the reading of the Torah in the Synagogue.

Pesach

Festival of Passover - Occurs during March and April. Pesach is the Festival of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, remembering the period when in their haste to leave Egypt they only had time to make bread without yeast. The staple food eaten during Passover is unleavened bread (matzah). On the first two nights a ritual meal is held, a tradition maintained even among Jews who do not keep up with other Jewish traditions. Orthodox Jews will possess a completely separate set of kitchen and tableware for Passover. The Jewish date is 15th to 22nd Nisan..

Shavuot

Pentecost - Occurs during the months of May and June. This is celebrated seven weeks after Passover and lasts 2 days. It is known as the Festival of Weeks because it is held seven weeks after Passover and commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. It used to be associated with the harvests of Israel when people brought to the Temple the first crops of barley, wheat and fruit. Most synagogues today are still decorated with flowers and plants in thanksgiving to God. The Jewish date is 6th and 7th Sivan.

Chanukah

Festival of dedication (or Lights) - This is a minor festival commemorating the victory of the Maccabees over Antiochus of Syria in the 2nd Century BC in preservation of their faith and lasts for eight days. On each night an extra candle is lit in the eight-branched candelabrum (menorah) until all eight candles are burning. The Jewish date is 25th Kislev.

Purim

Feast of Esther - This carnival-like festival commemorates how the Jews of the Persian Empire were saved from the villainous Haman as recounted in the Book of Esther. It is a joyful festival with parties, presents to the poor and fancy- dress parades. The Jewish date is 14th Adar.

Tishah B'Av

This is a fast and solemn day of mourning commemorating the destruction of the Temple in 587 BC and again in 70 AD. The Jewish date is 9th Av.

Community

The main members in the order of ministry within Judaism are the Rabbi and Cantor. The title Rabbi means teacher; a rabbi is an expert in the Jewish law and leader of the Jews in the local community. He will often preach during synagogue worship. The Cantor or Reader leads the service in the synagogue; he needs a good voice as most of the service is chanted. A child is considered a Jew if born of a Jewish mother. Until the age of twelve for a girl and thirteen for a boy, a child is regarded as a minor. After instruction in Jewish religious law and the Hebrew language, the child at the age of twelve or thirteen is regarded as an adult. This is marked by the ceremonies of a Bar Mitzvah for a boy and a Bat Mitzvah for a girl.

Old age is given great respect in Judaism. Children have a duty to honour and look after their parents. In established Jewish communities old people's homes are often well endowed to provide a comfortable and Jewish atmosphere.

The Jewish home is the centre of Jewish life and ritual. Traditionally the Jewish family will fix a mezuzah (a small parchment scroll on which is written the first two paragraphs of the Shema and contained in a metal case) to each doorway of their home. A traditional Jewish home may have a plaque on a wall facing Jerusalem, known in the west as mizrah (ie.'east').

On Sabbaths and festivals the family endeavour to eat their meals together, which are accompanied by benedictions and hymn singing. Before food is eaten, their hands should be ritually washed as they are on rising in the morning. A number of other ritual observances are customary in the Orthodox Jewish home. Life is structured around religious observances, which affect both family and individuals.

Different Schools

Within Judaism there is a number of different groupings based on common ancestry, religious identification and mutual concern. In each of these groups there are variations in respect to religious belief and practice, ritual observances, lifestyles and degree of acculturation.

Orthodox Judaism is the traditionalist approach which believes that a complete revelation of God's eternal will has been conveyed through the Bible and Rabbinic law and therefore is fully authoritative.

Conservative Judaism emphasises and is committed to the historical elements of the Jewish tradition, but with adjustment and change in response to theological and ritual concepts as objects of continuing and evolving change.



Reform Judaism holds to an historical religious experience inspired by the progressive revelation of God's will for each generation emphasising ethical concepts rather than ritual Law. In Reform congregations, women play an active part in synagogue management and in some cases act as full-time Rabbis or Cantors.

Further Information

Unterman, Alan, *Jews -Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Routledge.

Holy Scriptures -according to the Masoretic Text.

The Jewish Community in and around Calderdale

- 1 Etz Chaim Synagogue**
584, Harrogate Rd Leeds
LS17 8DP

0113 266 2214

- 2 Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue**
399, Street Lane Leeds
LS17 6HQ

0113 269 2181

- 3 Sinai Synagogue**
Roman Avenue
Leeds
LS8 2AN

0113 2665 256

- 4 Bradford Synagogue**
Bowland St
Bradford
BD1 3BW

01274 728925



Know ye not why we created you all from the same dust?
That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder
at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since
We have created you all from one same substance it is
incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the
same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the
same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds
and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of
detachment may be made manifest.
Such is My counsel to you.

Bahá'u'lláh

The Bahá'í Community

Origins

The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion founded a century and a half ago. It is today among the fastest growing and most widespread of the world's religions with more than 6 million followers on earth. Embracing people from more than 2,100 social, ethnic, and racial groups, it is quite likely the most diverse organised body of people on the planet.

The Bahá'í Faith originated in Persia on the 23rd of May 1844, when a Prophet named 'the Báb' (Arabic: The Gate) heralded the coming of the Promised One of all religions who would bring about **peace and unity on earth**. The Báb Himself suffered severe persecution and was publicly executed in 1850, for bringing this new message from God. Many of His followers were persecuted and martyred.

In 1852 a follower of the Báb, known today as 'Bahá'u'lláh' (Arabic: **The Glory of God**), received during His imprisonment, a vision of God's will for humanity, and the revelation that he was the Promised One foretold by the Báb. The event is comparable to those great moments of the ancient past when God revealed Himself to His earlier Messengers: when Moses stood before the Burning Bush; when the Buddha received enlightenment under the Bodhi tree; when the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon Jesus; or when the archangel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad.

Bahá'u'lláh, born in 1817, was a Persian nobleman who became known as the "Father of the Poor" and was renowned for defending the rights of the oppressed and impoverished citizens of Persia. He turned down a ministerial position in the Court of the Shah, and chose instead to devote his energies to a life of philanthropy and charity. As one of the leading advocates of the Báb's message he was tortured and imprisoned and cast into the notorious "Black Pit" prison in Tehran. This dungeon became the birthplace of His Divine Revelation.

Upon His release Bahá'u'lláh was banished from His

native land - the beginning of 40 years of exile, imprisonment and persecution. He passed away on the 29th May 1892 near Akka in the Holy Land. His resting place is considered by the Bahá'ís as the holiest place on earth, and the most important place of pilgrimage.

Teachings

Bahá'u'lláh taught that there is only one God who has progressively revealed His Will to mankind by sending Divine Messengers whose common purpose has been to bring the human race to spiritual and moral maturity.

God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquility of mankind, and provide the means by which they can be established. (Bahá'u'lláh)

Among the principles emphasised by Bahá'u'lláh are:

- **The Oneness of God**
- **The Oneness of Religion**
- **The Oneness of Mankind**
- Independent Investigation of Truth
- Equality of Men and Women
- A World Commonwealth of Nations
- World Peace is Inevitable
- Abolition of all Forms of Prejudice
- Spiritual Solutions to Economic Problems
- A Universal Auxiliary Language
- Harmony of Science and Religion
- Elimination of Extremes of Wealth and Poverty
- Compulsory Universal Education
- Establishment of a World Government

Some of the other beliefs and teachings are:

We are created as noble and spiritual beings.

The soul continues to live and progress after death.

Living a moral life has a direct influence on our spiritual happiness and development.

The family is the foundation of human society.

Marriage is a means for the spiritual development of both parties.

Consultation is a dynamic process for finding truth and for solving conflicts and problems.

Bahá'ís believe all Divine Revelations come from the same Source; thus, the religions identified with them are in essence one. They differ in the measure of their teachings and particularly in their social laws and principles, appropriate to the times in which they appeared. The successive Divine Revelations over the centuries have provided the spiritual force and laws for the advancement of civilization. The Messengers of God have been:

Krishna	3000 BC
Abraham	2000 BC
Moses	1300 BC
Zoroaster	750 BC
Buddha	560 BC
Christ	1 AD
Muhammad	622 AD
The Báb	1844 AD
Bahá'u'lláh	1863 AD

“The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth.”
Bahá'u'lláh

The Bahá'í writings explain the station of Bahá'u'lláh:

To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the 'Everlasting Father,' the 'Lord of Hosts'... to Christendom Christ returned 'in the glory of the Father', to Shi'ah Islam the return of the Imam Husayn; to Sunni Islam the descent of the 'Spirit of God'; to the Zoroastrians the promised Shah-Bahram; to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna; to the Buddhists the fifth Buddha (Maitreya, the Buddha of universal fellowship).

The name Bahá'u'lláh means 'the Glory of God' or 'Glory of the Lord'. This title is mentioned in many prophecies:

To Him Isaiah, the greatest of the Jewish prophets, had alluded as the 'Glory of the Lord', the 'Everlasting Father', the 'Prince of Peace', the 'Wonderful', the 'Counsellor'.

Worship

Bahá'ís say daily obligatory prayers, and read the Holy Scriptures every morning and evening. There are also prayers for special occasions such as marriage or fasting. Bahá'ís believe that work performed in a spirit of service to mankind is regarded as worshipping God. The best time to pray is when one is free of daily cares, in the privacy of one's chamber, like at midnight or at dawn.

The short obligatory prayer is:

“I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”
Bahá'u'lláh

Pilgrimage

It is the duty of every Bahá'í to go to pilgrimage in one's lifetime if possible. Pilgrimage is made to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith in Haifa, Israel - the Holy Land - to the shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Fasting

This takes place during the Bahá'í month of Alá (meaning 'Loftiness' and occurring between 2nd to 20th March) for 19 days between sunrise and sunset. Fasting is obligatory from the age of 15 until the age of 70. Certain groups are exempt from fasting such as the sick and pregnant women. Fasting is seen as a time of spiritual renewal and discipline and it is a particularly joyous and bountiful period.

“As regards fasting, it constitutes, together with... prayers, the twin pillars that sustain the revealed law of God. They act as stimulants to the soul, revive and purify it, and thus ensure its steady development.”
Abdu'l- Bahá

Places of Worship

There are Houses of Worship on each continent open to everyone and symbolising unity. They are nine sided, representing the world's nine Great Religions. Bahá'u'lláh envisioned that local Houses of Worship will, in the future, be the focal point of a community's spiritual life - and an expression of its humanitarian concern. However devotional prayer meetings can be held anywhere and often take place in the homes of the believers.

Religious Books and Artefacts

The Holy Book revealed by the Báb is called the Bayán. There are over 100 volumes of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings. The Kitáb'i'Aqdas being the Most Holy Book.



Practices

Birth

Birth

No ritual or ceremony, although prayers can be said for the unborn and there are many prayers for children's spiritual growth.

Marriage

Bahá'u'lláh attaches great importance to the institution of the family as the foundation of human society. There is no set marriage format but the vow, "We will all verily abide by the will of God," must be recited by the bride and groom in front of witnesses. The consent of both parties' living parents is required. The sanctity of marriage is recognised.

Divorce is discouraged and only possible after one year of patience has elapsed.

Funerals

Cremation is forbidden. Burial has to take place within one hour's travel from the place of death. The body of the deceased has to be washed and wrapped in several sheets of white cotton or silk. A special congregational prayer for the departed is recited at the site of the burial.

Diet

There is no set diet.

Dress

Decency and moderation should be considered. Men must not wear their hair past the earlobe, lengthwise.

Rites and Initiation

There are no rituals of initiation. If an individual believes in Bahá'u'lláh and in His Teachings he is accepted as a member of the Bahá'í Community.

Festivals and Celebrations

The Bahá'í Calendar is a solar one and has 19 months, each of 19 days. They are named after the names of God such as Glory, Might, Will and Perfection. These total 361 days and the remaining 4 days are termed the "intercalary days" and are a time for giving to charity and offering hospitality. There are 9 Holy Days during the year when work or school is to be suspended as a mark of respect. These are the following:

21 March	Naw Ruz (New Year)
21 April	First Day of Ridván (Anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh)
29 April	Ninth Day of Ridván
2 May	Twelfth Day of Ridván
23 May	Declaration of the Báb
29 May	Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh
9 July	The Martyrdom of the Báb
20 October	Birth of the Báb
12 November	Birth of Bahá'u'lláh

Community

Around the globe, individual Bahá'ís and Bahá'í communities are raising up a new kind of community. Through a unique process of cooperation, study and worship, they are exploring the application of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on an effective and far-reaching basis. Activities are open to all and their focus is on personal development, the education of children and community devotional gatherings.

The Bahá'í Faith has no clergy. In any locality, where there are 9 or more Bahá'ís, a Local Spiritual Assembly is elected by secret ballot and becomes the body in charge of the affairs of the community. This constitutes the basic unit of Bahá'í administration. On a national level, the National Spiritual Assembly is elected annually by delegates from various localities. Every five years the members of National Spiritual Assemblies elect the Universal House of Justice - the supreme institution of the Bahá'í world today.

Denominational Differences

A unique feature of the Bahá'í Faith is that it has not broken down into several schools of thought or sects interpreting the scripture in various ways. This is due to a unique Covenant instated by the Founder of the Faith, Bahá'u'lláh. In His Will and Testament, Bahá'u'lláh appointed his eldest Son, Abdul-Bahá, as the Head of the Faith and the divinely inspired authoritative Interpreter of His writings. 'Abdul-Bahá, in turn, appointed His eldest Grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as the Guardian of the Faith and the infallible Interpreter of its teachings. Following his passing the Universal House of Justice was elected as the Supreme Governing Body of the Bahá'í Faith, invested with the infallible authority and guarantee of divine guidance from Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

"Know ye not why we created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you..."

"The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."

Bahá'u'lláh

"Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!"

The Báb

Further Information

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Esslemont, J E, Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era: An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'í Publication Trust, New Delhi, 1980

www.bahai-library.com

www.bahai.org.uk

www.bahai-publishing-trust.co.uk

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Other Faiths & Denominations

Christadelphians

The Church of Christ, Scientist

The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter Day Saints

The Jehovah's Witness Community

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)



In all God's doings, there is purpose. Everything is planned; everything adapted with the utmost exactness of wisdom to the accomplishment of a pre-determined end. All His plans are characterised by illimitable comprehensiveness of bearing, like His own mind, which takes into account the infinitude of minute circumstance and remote contingency that surround us, knowing all things from the end to the beginning.

Robert Roberts

Christadelphians

The Christadelphians were founded in America through the teachings of an Englishman, Dr John Thomas, a medical doctor, born April 12th 1805, in Great Britain. In 1832 his family decided to emigrate to the United States. He went first, but the ship he was in encountered a series of severe storms off the coast of Nova Scotia causing it to flounder and shipwreck became imminent. In fear Dr Thomas cried out to God and vowed that if he survived he would dedicate himself to studying religion until he found truth. God spared the doctor's life and John Thomas kept his vow.

Dr Thomas was ultimately bound for Cincinnati, Ohio, where he joined the Campbellite movement (now known as the Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ) soon after arriving. The Campbellites were followers of Alexander Campbell, a preacher who was determined to restore Christianity to its first century simplicity and authenticity. Dr Thomas was rebaptised as a Campbellite, and became a well-known speaker in the Campbellite movement, editing several magazines, preaching to and debating with anyone who would listen. After a few years, however, there emerged some disagreements between him and Campbell himself, which proved unreconcilable. Dr Thomas left and pushed on with his search.

Some of the Campbellite congregations left with him, and began to look to him as their leader. At this time the Millerite or Adventist movement was growing and Dr. Thomas began to associate with this movement. He admired their enthusiasm, their desire for the return of Christ, and their questioning spirit. He influenced the movement and was influenced by it. However, once again, he went on his own way.

In 1844 he began a monthly magazine The Herald of the Future Age. Returning to England in 1848 Thomas published his ideas in 'Elpis Israel' (The Hope of Israel). An early convert was Robert Roberts, baptised by Thomas in 1853, at the age of 14. Great Britain proved to be a great success and his movement gained many converts.

By this time he had quite a large following. His movement had no official name until 1864. The Civil War in the United States found believers on both

sides. The movement believed strongly in conscientious objection to participation in war. However, in order to be exempted from military service, believers had to belong to a recognised religious group that did not permit participation in war. So in 1864 Dr Thomas gave the movement a name to identify it, 'The Christadelphians', which was Greek for 'Brethren in Christ'.

After Thomas died in 1871, it was Roberts who gradually became regarded as the leader. Roberts wrote a series of pamphlets later published as Christendom Astray from the Bible. He changed the title of a magazine he edited to The Christadelphian. Now with over 120 volumes it is regarded by many as the official mouthpiece of the organisation.

Christadelphians do not fully believe that Christ bore our sins at Calvary; it still requires something from us. Salvation depends on an understanding of the Bible, baptism and the keeping of the commandments. Jesus Christ was not God, neither a mere man, nor had he any existence prior to His supernatural birth. He was the Son of God, the manifestation of God by spirit-power, but not God himself. Christadelphians believe that Christ's resurrection was a physical one and that He has not changed since then. Because God cares about the world he caused a son to be born of a virgin, to be the saviour of the world. Jesus lived a life without sin, died and rose again to save us from sin and death and to give us hope of life for ever. Jesus ascended to heaven and will return to judge the world and rule over all nations from Jerusalem. Jesus will set up God's kingdom on earth with great power and in righteousness.

Christadelphians do not believe in the Trinity. There is One God. The Holy Spirit is not the third person of a 'trinity' and there is no manifestation of the Spirit in these days. There is also no resurrection for all people. Those who do not 'believe on' Jesus will simply cease to exist. Those who have believed will be resurrected with a tangible, incorruptible body that will not waste away or perish. Such ones will be used to preach the truth of God to the nations. During the millennium only these 'resurrected ones' will be immortal; those of the nations could still die but they can come into harmony with God during the 1,000

years and they will not be destroyed. Those who refuse to accept the truth of God, who are still alive at the end of the 1,000 years will be destroyed. Hence there is no heaven. Future habitation will be the earth itself.

The return of Jesus Christ to the earth, just as literally as he left it, was the unanimous hope of the early believers. The New Testament repeatedly asserts the Second Coming; the apostles take it for granted in their writings. When Christ comes then will come the turn of the nations, who will be summoned to "fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement is come" (Revelation 14:7). However, the governments of many nations will refuse the summons and will have to learn submission. Thus will begin the re-education of the peoples of the earth under the new kingdom of God with Christ as King, a theocracy centered in Jerusalem. When God's will is understood and obeyed, then peace and justice among men will come to the earth at last.

The Christadelphian beliefs also include a conviction that God's purpose is still being worked out in the world today, and is still centred on his people Israel. The careful reader of the Bible will be in no doubt that the nation of Israel has occupied a special place in the purpose of God.

The Christadelphian community has no headquarters, clergy or church hierarchy. Each congregation manages its own affairs through an elected management committee. Congregations participate in activities such as Mission work, Bible Schools, preaching campaigns, youth activities and meetings for fellowship and spiritual refreshment. Meetings are held each Sunday, and take the form of hymns, prayers, Bible reading and communion. The community has no paid ministry, no robes or elaborate ceremonies, nor has it any 'head of church' or legislative council. Their ecclesias (the New Testament word for 'church') organise their own affairs, though the pattern is similar everywhere.

At the meeting for the 'breaking of bread' on 'the first day of the week' there are hymns, prayers, readings from the Scriptures and an exhortation. The bread and the wine circulate among all the 'brothers and sisters' present. Voluntary collections are taken to meet all the expenses. If some of the early followers of the apostles in the first century could attend such meetings, it is believed that they would immediately recognise what was going on, for it is patterned on New Testament worship.

Christadelphians accept that all of the Bible (including the Old Testament) is the wholly inspired Word of God. They therefore read it carefully and regularly. A reading plan, called the Bible Companion, enables them to read the Old Testament once in a year and the New Testament twice.

Since that time, the Christadelphian movement has grown to include believers in every continent and more than 50 countries. But all Christadelphians recognise Dr Thomas not so much as a founder, but as an inspirational example of someone who strongly

desired to know God and searched the Bible until he found the truth. Such a spirit is not common today, but it is a spirit that pleases God.

Further Information

www.halifax-christadelphians.org

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Douglas Halstead, Secretary
01422 363759



To live and let live, without clamour for distinction or recognition; to wait on divine love; to write truth first on the tablet of one's own heart - this is the sanity and perfection of living.

Mary Baker Eddy

The Church of Christ, Scientist

Mary Baker Eddy was born on July 16 1821 in Bow, New Hampshire. She founded The Church of Christ, Scientist in 1879 in Lynn, Massachusetts. Her most famous book, 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures', first appeared in 1875.

This book and the Bible are the two primary texts used for individual study and spiritual growth. Together they are the foundation for Christian Science teaching and practice and are used during church services as well. Eddy ordained these books as a 'dual and impersonal pastor' for these services.

The Church does not report for publication the number of its members. Eddy saw that Christ Jesus and his few disciples had enormous impact on the world, not through numbers but through their spirituality and obedience to God. The Church reports that there are readers of Science and Health in about 120 countries and about 2,200 congregations (branch churches) in over 70 countries worldwide.

The first 45 years of Eddy's life were punctuated by various illnesses and, at times, complete debilitation, as well as several tragedies. Her revered and deeply religious mother, her favourite brother, and her husband all died in short succession, and she suffered through a forced separation from her son because of her recurring ill health. Marriage to her second husband, Dr Daniel Patterson, an itinerant dentist, began with an anticipated, but never fulfilled, reunion with her son and eventually ended in divorce.

In her early forties, Eddy sought relief under the tutelage of Phineas P. Quimby, who experimented with natural healing through the powers of the mind. But she found only temporary relief. In 1866, shortly after Quimby's death, severe injury left Eddy in a condition which the local newspaper reported as critical. She asked for her Bible and read about Jesus' healings. In a short time, she was healed, not only of the effects of the fall, but of other longstanding ailments. It was this healing and the remarkable change in her thought which accompanied it, that she regarded as her discovery of the Science of Christ Jesus' teachings. In her words, "I discovered the Christ Science or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science."

Eddy believed that healing occurred through realization of God's allness, goodness, power and presence, and thus, the fundamental powerlessness

of illness and all forms of evil. Ills could be overcome through the power of the Divine Mind, God, though not through the human mind as Quimby had believed. Eddy spent three years in deep search of the Bible to understand how her healing had taken place and nine years putting her discovery to the test in healing others. The results were consistently good and scores of people were healed by her through Christian Science prayer and treatment. In 1875 Eddy published 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures', to help others understand the Bible's spiritual meaning, including how to practice Christian healing.

Eddy had expected that Christian churches of the day would accept her discovery. When this did not happen, she and a small group of followers undertook in 1879 to establish a church to help others find the discovery explained in Science and Health. The church's organization and form of government evolved over the next three decades. Eddy died on December 3 1910.

During the second half of her nearly 90 years, Eddy's accomplishments included founding a spiritual preventive and therapeutic system; writing her definitive work as well as fifteen other books; founding a publishing house and an international daily newspaper, The Christian Science Monitor; and establishing a world-wide church organization, The Church of Christ, Scientist.

Christian Science is based on the life, teachings, and works of Christ Jesus. Christian Science does not have an organisational creed. However, the following are the tenets, or important points, of the religion as given in 'Science and Health':

As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.

We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.

We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.



We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life, and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.

We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.

And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just, and pure.

Christian Science does not accept the teaching of a personal trinity, that God is three persons in one person. Indeed Eddy writes "If the term personality, as applied to God, means infinite personality, then God is infinite Person, - in the sense of infinite personality, but not in the lower sense." (Science and Health p 116). Eddy also taught that the Comforter (Holy Ghost) that Jesus promised was 'Divine Science', the development of eternal Life, Truth and Love.

Christian Science practice demands faith in order to heal and cure physically. It further teaches that in order to heal systematically and consistently, understanding the nature of God and His laws is necessary. Jesus' words, "And these signs shall follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17) precede a description of healing effects. Over the course of more than one hundred years, Christian Science magazines have published more than 80,000 testimonies of healing through prayer, including a significant number which have been medically verified, such as tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes, bone diseases, and others.

While physical cure appears as a noticeable element of the outcome of prayer, it is important to recognise that Christian Scientists believe that character transformation also results and that all inharmony in relationships, school, career, marriage, mental health or any other aspect of life can be healed through prayer.

It is customary for Christian Scientists to pray for themselves for healing. For additional assistance through prayer, they can call Christian Science practitioners. Practitioners are men and women in the public healing ministry, helping those who wish to rely on spiritual treatment alone for healing. Practitioners claim no personal healing power. They turn to God alone, who is the healing power in all cases. Christian Scientists believe that Jesus was speaking to all, for all time, when he said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also . . ." (John 14:12).

An important part of a Christian Scientist's religious practice is study of the weekly Lesson-Sermon outlined in The Christian Science Quarterly which

includes citations from the Bible and Science and Health. This lesson also comprises the sermon that is read at each Sunday service in churches throughout the world.

There is no ordained clergy in the Church. Services are conducted by lay Readers, elected from the congregation normally for three years, who read the Lesson-Sermon from the Bible and Science and Health. The church does not support Christian Science practitioners as the clergy are supported in other denominations. Their ministry is not restricted to local congregations but can be worldwide. They are expected to be paid by their patients for the services given; in the same way general practitioners of medicine are paid.

One of Mrs Eddy's students, Emma Hopkins, who later discontinued the practice of Christian Science as taught by Mrs Eddy together with Julius Dresser, a former student of Quimby, began what came to be known as the New Thought movement. New Thought places emphasis on the power of the human mind, while Christian Science recognises all power as vested in the divine Mind, God, to evangelise the human self and cure physically. Because they use similar terminology, although with different meanings, some people confuse the teaching and practice of Christian Science with that of New Thought. Christian Science is also sometimes mistakenly associated with other systems or philosophies including Scientology, Quimbyism and his system of 'natural healing' and 'mind-healing'.

The practice of Christian Science healing starts from the biblical basis that God created the universe and man and made them perfect. Reasoning from this basis, Christian Scientists prayerfully work to bring their lives in every way into accord with God's law of love. As a result, discord, disease, and other evidences of evil are destroyed, and healing occurs.

Further Information

www.christianscience.com
www.tfccs.com
www.spirituality.com

The Christian Scientist Community within Calderdale

- 1 **Christian Science Society**
 Well Head Lane
 Halifax
 Joyce Mallinson, Second Reader
 01422 354 208
 01422 366 651

- 2 Committee on Publication for West Yorkshire
 10 Holt Close
 Leeds, LS16 8DJ

 Frank Drake
 01132 672 200

And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good.

The Book of Mormon

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Joseph Smith Jr. was born in 1805 in Sharon, Vermont, to Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith. He had 10 brothers and sisters. His parents taught him to pray, read the Bible, and to have faith in God. At age 14, Joseph saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, in his First Vision. At age 17, Joseph began to receive heavenly messengers who prepared him for his role in the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ to the earth. He was a prophet, just like those in biblical times.

It was 1820 and Joseph Smith was surrounded by various churches which each claimed to teach the truth. This caused him much serious reflection. He wanted to know which church was right. One day he read a passage in the Bible which says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Joseph decided to accept the invitation to ask God and went to a grove of trees near his home to pray for guidance as to which church he should join. In answer to his prayer, the Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him.

When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other- This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

Joseph was told not to join any of the churches that existed at that time. Joseph Smith's First Vision marked the beginning of the Restoration of Jesus Christ's Church to the earth. In the second vision a messenger from God called Moroni appeared in a white light and spoke to Joseph:

He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants. Also, that there were two stones in silver bows and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim-deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these

stones were what constituted "seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

For 4 years Joseph came to the place where the plates were and was forbidden to take them out. Then after this period he was granted permission and he took the sacred objects and acquired the ability to translate the golden book from the Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic languages into English. He was helped in this endeavour by Oliver Cowdery who served as a scribe. The Book of Mormon was finally translated.

Mormons believe that Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Father's Only Begotten Son in the flesh. He is the Redeemer. Through Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Father has provided a way for all people to become like Him and return to live with Him forever. Christ is worshipped. He is the example and the Saviour. He redeems from death by providing the Resurrection. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, man can return to live with God if he keeps His commandments. The Holy Ghost helps him to recognise truth. Man is but a child of God. Before he was born, he lived as a spirit with God. He came to Earth to learn to be more like God. When life on Earth is over, he will return to live with the Heavenly Father.

In addition Mormons believe that the Bible and the Book of Mormon are the words of God. And God reveals His will to prophets today, just as He did anciently. They also follow that baptism is necessary to become a member of His kingdom or Church (John 3:5). The minimum age for baptism is eight, when a person is old enough to comprehend the importance of the commitment that he or she will be making.

At various times, the Lord has commanded His people to practice plural marriage or polygamy. For example, He gave this command to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon (Doctrine and Covenants 132:1). In this dispensation, the Lord commanded some of the early Saints to practice plural marriage. The Prophet Joseph Smith and those closest to him, including Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, were challenged by this command, but they obeyed it.

Church leaders regulated the practice. Those entering into it had to be authorised to do so, and the marriages had to be performed through the sealing power of the priesthood. In 1890, President Wilford Woodruff received a revelation that the leaders of the Church should cease teaching the practice of plural marriage (Official Declaration 1). Current President Gordon B. Hinckley made the following statement in 1998 about the Church's position on plural marriage:

This Church has nothing whatever to do with those practicing polygamy. They are not members of this Church. If any of our members are found to be practicing plural marriage, they are excommunicated, the most serious penalty the Church can impose.

In June 1844 Joseph Smith and his brother were killed in Carthage, Illinois. The leadership of the Church passed to Brigham Young, who was the senior Apostle of the Church. He led the first group of pioneers across 1,000 miles of unsettled plains, arriving in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847; supervised the subsequent immigration of more than 70,000 people from the U.S. and Europe; and founded over 350 settlements. He died in 1877 at age 76 in Salt Lake City. After each Church President passes away, the senior Apostle becomes the next President. The current Church President is Gordon B. Hinckley (since 1995).

Members of the Church celebrate Christmas and Easter, regarding these two events as the most spiritually significant days in history because of the birth, suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pioneer Day is held on 24 July, celebrating the arrival of the first Latter-day Saint pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Twice a year, usually the first weekends in April and October, the Church holds a general conference for all members.

Each week, usually on Monday night, Church members gather their families together for activities and instruction. Church members set Sunday aside as the Sabbath, or the Lord's day - a day to worship God and rest from their labours

In addition to emphasising the benefits of proper eating and physical and spiritual health, Mormons believe that God has spoken against the use of: tobacco, alcohol, coffee and tea and illegal drugs.

The Church has a lay priesthood, with no professional clergy. A worthy young man can be ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood when he is 12 years old and to the Melchizedek Priesthood when he is 18 years old.

Missionaries generally serve when they are between 19 and 21 years old. Prior to the missionary's departure, he or she speaks in a sacrament meeting on doctrines or principles of the restored gospel. As there is no paid ministry, the missionaries usually serve from 18 months to 2 years while being supported by themselves or their family.

The principle of tithing, or voluntarily giving one tenth of one's income to God's work, has been known since Old Testament times. Abraham paid tithes to

Melchizedek (Genesis 14:17-20). Today all faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints contribute one tenth of their income as tithing.

Mormons believe that God loves His children and that He continues to send living prophets. Joseph Smith (1805 - 44) was the first prophet of our time. Gordon B. Hinckley is God's chosen prophet today. Just as God led the Israelites out of slavery and to a better place through His prophet Moses, He leads His children today into happier, more peaceful lives when they choose to follow His living prophet.

Further Information

www.mormon.org

The Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in and around Calderdale

1 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Stafford Road
Halifax
HX3 0PA

Stuart Gray, Bishop
01422 360 565

2 The Mission Office

Leeds

01132 584 221

3 Family History Centre

Geneological Records
Huddersfield

01484 454 573

If we were following a man undoubtedly it would be different with us; undoubtedly one human idea would contradict another and that which was light one or two or six years ago would be regarded as darkness now: But with God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, and so it is with truth; any knowledge or light coming from God must be like its author.

Charles Taze Russell

The Jehovah's Witness Community

The history of Jehovah's Witnesses begins in 1869 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, when Charles Taze Russell (born February 16, 1852) began a Bible study group which led to this movement. The name 'Jehovah's Witnesses' (based on Isaiah 43:10-12) was not adopted until 1931.

Although Charles Taze Russell was born to Presbyterian parents, he joined a Congregational Church at the age of fifteen. Soon, however, he became troubled by certain doctrines such as predestination and eternal punishment. At the age of seventeen he became a sceptic and disbelieved the Bible.

Brought up a Presbyterian, indoctrinated from the Catechism, and being naturally of an inquiring mind, I fell a ready prey to the logic of infidelity, as soon as I began to think for myself. But that which at first threatened to be the utter shipwreck of faith in God and the Bible was, under God's providence, overruled for good, and merely wrecked my confidence in human creed and systems of Bible misinterpretations. (Charles Taze Russell - Watchtower magazine, 1916)

His wavering faith was re-established in 1870 after dropping in on a Second Adventist Bible study conducted by Jonas Wendell. Soon after this meeting, Russell organised his own Bible study with a circle of friends who came to regard him as their pastor. Although Russell believed that the Second Adventists were 'called of God' and he never renounced them, a miscalculation concerning the Second-Coming of Christ caused him to re-evaluate Adventist teachings.

In response, Russell, together with his organised Bible study group, determined that Christ's return would be an invisible or spiritual one. He later wrote a booklet entitled 'The Object and Manner of the Lord's Return' to describe his new ideas and views on the issue. When he read similar ideas in N.H. Barbour's *The Herald of the Morning*, Russell joined him in editing the periodical. Both agreed that the Adventists had been mistaken in awaiting Christ in the flesh. In 1877, Russell and Barbour wrote and published 'Three Worlds' and 'The Harvest of This World'.

This book set forth their belief that Christ's second presence began invisibly in the fall of 1874 and thereby commenced a forty-year harvest period. Then, remarkably accurately, they set forth the year 1914 as the end of the Gentile times.. (Qualified to Be Ministers, published in 1955 by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society).

Charles Taze Russell disassociated himself with Barbour, however, a couple of years later over disagreements in theology. He withdrew from the *Herald of the Morning* magazine and began publishing his own - *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* - in 1879. This periodical proved influential as around thirty congregations were born in seven states after only one year. In 1881, *Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society* was established as an unincorporated body. Three years later, it was organised as a corporation. Some consider the birth of the corporation to be the beginning of the Jehovah's Witness movement, which would set the date at December 13, 1884. The purpose of the society as a corporation was as follows:

the dissemination of Bible truths in various languages by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, papers and other religious documents, and by the use of all other lawful means... (Article II of the charter)

In 1886 Russell began writing what is now known as 'The Studies in the Scriptures', a sacred text. Charles Taze Russell died in October of 1916 leaving Joseph Franklin Rutherford with a solid foundation for the group we now call the Jehovah's Witnesses. It was under Rutherford, in 1931, that the name 'Jehovah's Witnesses' was adopted.

After Rutherford's death in 1942 the previous vice president, Nathan Homer Knorr, rose to the position of president. One of his major accomplishments includes the founding of the Watch Tower Bible School of Gilead in the state of New York. This school is dedicated to equipping missionaries through intense scriptural study and learning evangelistic techniques. Presently, Frederick Franz, who was elected after Knorr's death in 1977, is president of the group.

Although Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs come from the Protestant and Adventist tradition, they do hold many beliefs that set themselves apart:

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that God is the God of the Old Testament - all-powerful, all-knowing, and everlasting. He is referred to as Jehovah - a true, personal, and exclusive name that all should use. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the Trinity. The relationship between God and Jesus is like that of father and son: Jesus is the first creation of God. He is fully human. The Holy Spirit is an active force which intervenes for God on earth. All the above mentioned are separate entities.

Satan is seen as an enemy of God. He is misleading and inflicts pain and sorrow. Through spiritism, nationalism and temptation, Satan leads people astray. The way to resist the devil is by learning about Jehovah. Man is blemished with sin because of the disobedience Adam and Eve showed towards God. Every man is born with sin (save for Jesus, who was born to a virgin). They also believe that man's soul is mortal - i.e. that when a person dies, his spirit (or soul) dies as well. In addition, some will experience eternal life when they are resurrected in the flesh and soul, simultaneously.

In contrast to some Christian traditions that believe salvation is achieved by accepting Christ as Lord ('once saved, always saved'), Jehovah's Witnesses believe it is possible to fall from grace. Accepting Jesus as Lord is essential, but failure to exercise fidelity to God's requirements can result in the loss of the gift of salvation.

Heaven is where Jesus Christ and 144,000 of the faithful will live. There they will rule over the kingdom which will be on earth. Hell is non-existent for the Jehovah's Witnesses. There is not a fiery torment, claims Russell, because it runs contradictory to God's loving nature. Those who don't qualify for heaven or the kingdom that will be established on earth will simply disappear, as if they had never existed.

This unique government (of Jesus and the 144,000) rules over the earth from heaven. Jehovah fulfilled His promise to Jesus that he would rule in 1914. When Jesus became king, Satan and his evil angels were kicked out of heaven and sent to inhabit the earth. This is how the Jehovah's Witnesses explain the wars, crime increases, and other 'bad' things which are happening in our world today. All these things indicate that Jesus has established his reign and that we are in the last days. Within a certain time frame, some faithful followers, 144,000 to be exact, will join Jesus and assist him in his reign. After Jesus judges his people (some receiving everlasting life others non-existence), Jehovah will rule again.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, birthdays, or any other holidays (save one). They believe these celebrations grew out of ancient false religions. Also, because early Christians did not celebrate these occasions, they believe they should not either.

The one day they do celebrate, however, is the Memorial of Christ's Death during Passover.

Jehovah's Witnesses have calculated many dates which were meant to invite extraordinary events. Five times the start of Armageddon has been predicted by Jehovah's Witnesses; however their predictions did not come to pass. They still hold fast to the date of 1914 in which Jesus Christ returned invisibly to earth, but admit erring in their calculations (1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, and 1941) for Armageddon.

Their stance on refusing blood transfusions comes from an interpretation of Bible verses found in Genesis, Leviticus and Acts. For example, Leviticus 17:10 (the New World Translation) reads:

God told Noah that every living creature should be meat unto him; but that he must not eat the blood, because the life is in the blood.

Jehovah's Witnesses consider blood transfusions to be 'eating blood'. Because of this interpretation, many people have chosen to die rather than receive one. Also, criticism has risen against parents who refuse transfusions for their children.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that 'they owe allegiance to no person, flags, or nation; they owed allegiance only to Jehovah', therefore they do not vote, salute the flag, or participate in military duty. Men have been jailed for refusing to be drafted. Children have been expelled for not pledging allegiance to the flag.

The Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches 1997 marks Jehovah's Witnesses membership at 5.1 million across 232 countries. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society also keep reliable records of their own membership numbers. Their 1997 statistics state that their peak membership count tallied in at 5,599,931. It is important to note that Jehovah's Witnesses count only active publishers in their statistics. Their principal periodical, The Watchtower, has a circulation of 15,290,000 copies in more than 100 languages.

Further Information

www.watchtower.org

The Jehovah's Witness Community within Calderdale

Kingdom Hall
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01422 365 868



Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive His strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms.

George Fox

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

"Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life."
(Advices and Queries)

The Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, originated in 17th century England during the social and political upheavals around the time of the civil war, which were breaking down old ideas of a strictly defined social order. Around 1652, George Fox (1624-1691) began preaching that since there was 'that of God in every man', a formal church structure and ordained ministry were unnecessary. As George Fox travelled up and down the country, he met with others who also had spent time seeking for a more intimate relationship with God. These groups spread their faith throughout England, denouncing what they saw as social and spiritual compromises and calling individuals to an inward experience of God. It was Fox with his administrative ability, and Margaret Fell (1614-1702) who later became his wife, who were able to fuse these groups into a society which survives, while most other religious groups originating at that time have died away. The new movement expanded during the Puritan Commonwealth (1649-60) and after the restoration of the monarchy (1660). By openly defying restrictive legislation, Friends helped achieve passage of the Toleration Act of 1689.

Quakers were persecuted from the outset. They were imprisoned, transported and 338 died in penal institutions. They interpreted the words of Jesus Christ in the New Testament literally, particularly, "Do not swear at all" (Matthew 5:34), and "Do not resist one who is evil" (Matthew 5:39). They refused, therefore, to take oaths; they preached against war; and they often found it necessary to oppose the authority of church or state; it is from this period that the Quaker custom of 'speaking truth to power' arises. In 1660 Quakers said "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world."

Over the last three centuries the Quakers have undergone various changes, but maintained the fundamental principles. There is no list of things that Quakers believe in. Quakerism is about one's individual connection with 'God', 'the spirit' or the 'mystery of the universe'. Being a direct and personal experience it cannot be mediated by someone else so Quakers have no priests and no creed.

Although Quakerism has its roots in Christianity and many Quakers today still identify themselves as Christians, a significant number do not. A growing number of Quakers also identify with other religious traditions. Whatever their background, most Quakers believe that there is much to be learned from the life and teachings of Jesus.

Throughout their history Quakers have been clear that what is important is how faith and beliefs are lived out from day to day. They have always tried to live simply and with integrity and work for greater equality, justice and peace. More recently the environment has also become an important concern.

Quakers speak of an 'inward light' within every human being. Some would call this 'conscience' or 'moral sense' but Quakers think it is something more - part of religious experience which connects us and gives us direction in our search for the right way to live. As every person has access to 'the inward light' and the working of the spirit, Quakers have no spiritual hierarchy and do not separate clergy from laity. All members of a Quaker meeting are clergy in that they are responsible for the life of the Meeting.

Similarly, Quakers regard the whole of life to be sacred. They do not consider their Meeting Houses as holy spaces and, although often held on Sunday mornings, Meetings for Worship may be held in any place and at any time.

When Quakers meet to worship they try to connect deeply with the spirit - individually and collectively. The form is quiet and still, with all present trying to reach a gathered unity. However, from time to time individuals may have a strong leading to stand and speak spontaneously to the meeting.

The corporate nature of Quaker practice is extremely important not only in worship but also in the way that decisions are made. In their Meetings for Business, Quakers do not vote or even try to reach consensus but try to discern the right thing for the group to do at that time.

Quakers recognise that the working of the spirit is of central importance and that this may be understood, interpreted and expressed in a variety of ways. The ability to live comfortably in a society of diverse beliefs, recognising the 'inward light' in all people, allows Quakers to connect and work with those of all faiths and none. It is this inclusive element that searches for the God in everyone that is open to light from any source, since truth and light are not the sole property of anyone, that attracts people to the Friends. It is probably for this reason that Friends are very active in interfaith dialogue and in reconciliation and conflict resolution programmes both in Britain and internationally.

As George Fox said over 300 years ago:

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”
George Fox, 1656

More than twenty-seven thousand people attend Quaker meetings for worship in the UK. These quiet times of seeking the presence of God are held in about 500 places, many of them Quaker-owned Friends Meeting Houses.

Further Information

Quaker Faith and Practice, The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Britain, 2004.

Gillman, Harvey, A Light that is Shining: An Introduction to the Quakers, Quaker Home Service, 1998.

www.quaker.org.uk

The Quakers within Calderdale

1 Hebden Bridge Quaker Meeting

Royd Square Centre
 Bond Street
 Hebden Bridge

Correspondence address:
 The Clerk Team
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Catherine Putz
 01422 842 748

Hazel Bone
 01422 885 942
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2 Halifax Quaker Meeting

St John's Ambulance Headquarters
 40-42 Gibbet Street
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Maureen Thorpe
 01422 248 541

Sheena Partridge
 01422 882 570

And now, on a lighter note...

'Many a true word is spoken in jest'; the following are a mixture of humourous and thought-provoking quotes, words of wit and wisdom:

"I intend to live forever - so far so good."
Unknown

"God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called."
Unknown

"According to the latest figures, the death rate in this country is still 100 percent."
Unknown

"Atheists are Beyond Belief."
Unknown

"I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress."
Ronald Reagan, (ex-US President)

"A lot of church members who are singing 'Standing On The Promises' are just sitting on the premises."
Sr. Monique Rysavy

"The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending, then having the two as close together as possible."
George Burns

"The Two Foundations of Human Enlightenment: 1. There is a God and 2. You are not Him."
Dan Ward

"There is only one relationship that matters and that is your relationship to a personal Redeemer and Lord. Let everything else go, but maintain this at all costs."
Oswald Chambers

"A fanatic is one who can't change his mind and won't change the subject."
Attributed to Sir Winston Churchill

"When I told the people of Northern Ireland that I was an atheist, a woman in the audience stood up and said, 'Yes, but is it the God of the Catholics or the God of the Protestants in whom you don't believe?'"
Quentin Crisp

A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?", asked the clerk. "Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?", said the woman. "Well, give me 50 Baptist and 50 Catholic ones."

"The bubbling brook would lose its song if you removed the rocks."
Unknown

"Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity."
Attributed to Kahlil Gibran

"When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace."
Attributed to Jimi Hendrix

"We are here on Earth to do good to others. What the others are here for, I don't know."
Attributed to W. H. Auden

"One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade."
Chinese Proverb

"In every community there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart there is the power to do it."
Marianne Williamson

Perhaps the final word should be given to the children, who teach us to look at life from a completely different perspective!

The following are pieces taken from various school examinations on religion (mostly at GCSE level):

"Get thee hens, Satan!"

"Predestination is the thief of time".

"Unlike drink and drugs, there's no recovery from religion."

"The history of the Jewish people begins with Abraham, Isaac and their 12 children."

"Judyism was the first monolithic religion. It had one big God named Yahoo. Old Testament profits include Moses, Amy and Confucius, who believed in Fidel Piety."

"One of the only reasons Confucius was born was because of a Chinese tradition".

"China had confusion as a religion".

"Noah's wife was called Joan of Arc."

"Henry VIII thought so much of Wolsley that he made him a cardigan."

"The fifth commandment is "humour thy father and mother"."

"Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day and a ball of fire by night."

"Salome was a woman who danced naked in front of Harrod's."

"The Pope lives in a vacuum."

"The patron saint of travellers is St. Francis of the sea sick."

"The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple."

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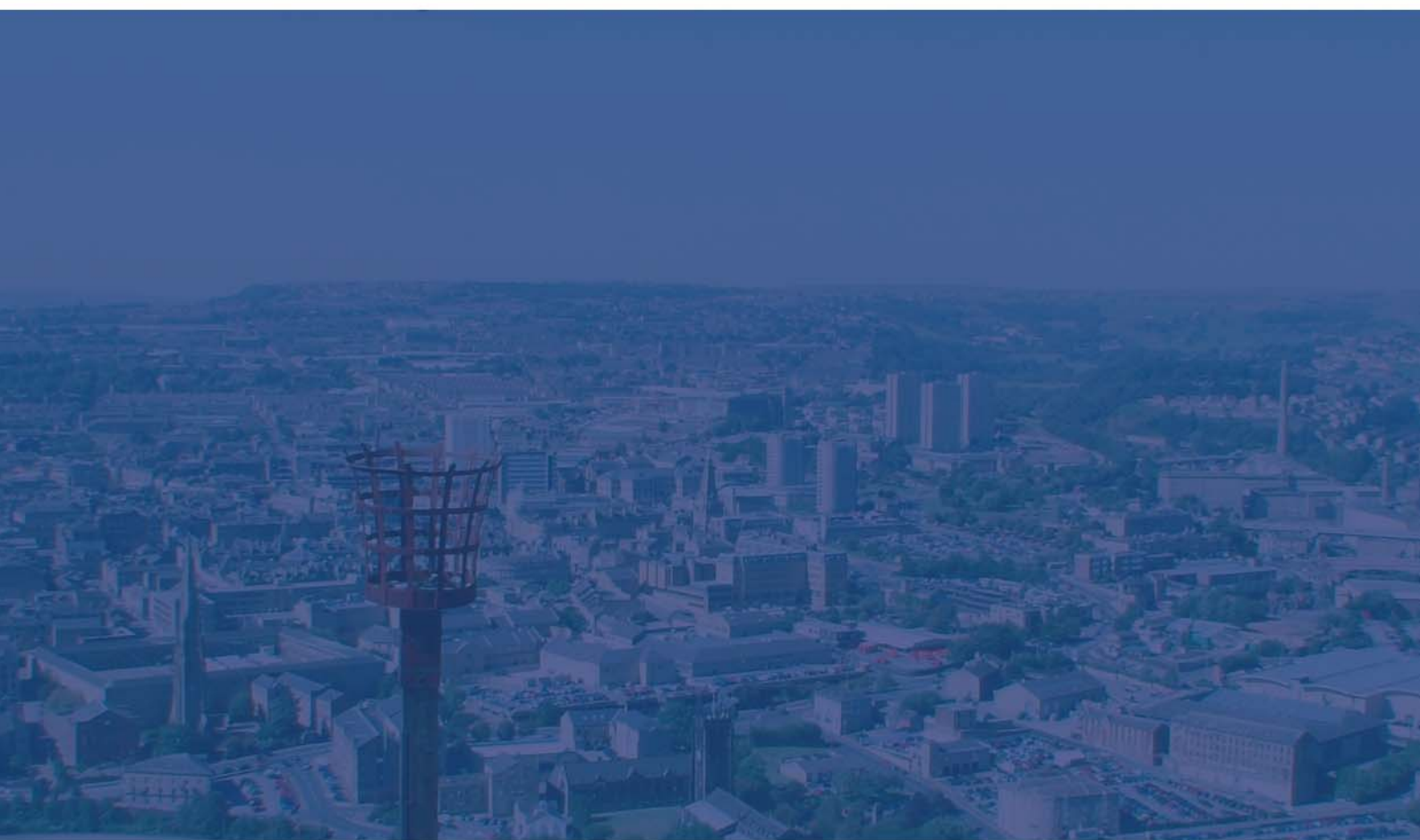
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