

***SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN EXOTERIC AND ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY**

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Many great world religions have both inner teachings and outer expressions. For example, Judaism, as the outer expression, has Kabbalah as its inner teaching. Islam, as an outer expression, has Sufism as its inner teaching. Esoteric Christianity, sometimes called Mystical Christianity, is the inner teaching of the expression called Christianity. A Mystic / Esoteric Christian is one who seeks awareness with Christ through personal experience rather than through dogma and commandments, and also acknowledges ageless wisdom teachings. This chart is a "middle of the road" simplification of many complex ideas found among both groups. Variations to this chart are to be expected.

ATTRIBUTE	ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY (INNER TEACHING)	CHRISTIANITY (OUTER EXPRESSION)
View of God	A personal, experiential awareness of the indwelling spirit of God, (the Christ within - God immanent) is sought. God transcendent (outside of ourselves) is considered, but not as emphasized. God immanent ≈ the feminine aspect; God transcendent ≈ the masculine aspect.	Both God within and outside of ourselves (immanent and transcendent) are acknowledged, but there is usually less emphasis on the God-within.
View of Jesus and Christ	<p>Jesus and the Christ are seen as two separate entities. The Christ refers to the living flame of love that guides all life and evolution on our planet. Jesus was a man who was able to perfect himself enough to hold the high energy of the Christ, and thus become Jesus, the Christ.</p> <p>Further, Jesus is seen as an initiate; one able to hold high consciousness and "master" (become Master of) the inner teachings. He modeled a pattern for humanity, showing that what he did, humanity is to do also. All can become sons / daughters of God through the process of initiation. All can, through initiation, become "Christed" by being vessels for the love of the Christ.</p>	Jesus Christ is seen as one entity, the only son of God, born as a God-human. Jesus is seen most often as a "personal savior" for the race than a pattern for the race.
View of early years of Jesus (pre-ministry)	Jesus is believed to have traveled to Egypt, India, Persia, Greece, and various mystery schools, perfecting the inner teachings and initiations of those traditions.	Little is said or acknowledged of Jesus life between his approximate ages of 12 - 30.
Emphasis on crucifixion and resurrection	There is greater emphasis on resurrection rather than crucifixion, not just of the physical body, but of self to Self. Jesus didn't save us from our sins (die for our sins) because our sins are for us to deal with ourselves. He showed us how we can become our own saviors - by raising our consciousness through love and the path of initiation. All people have the capability to become fully human / fully divine.	Greater emphasis is on crucifixion. God "gave his only son to die for us" - death being the measure of God's love for us. Jesus "died for our sins," and is thus our savior. Some more progressive theologians, however, do not hold to the "died for our sins" doctrine, but rather hold that Jesus was executed for political reasons. His life purpose was to bring justice and equality as God's kingdom on earth.

Belief in reincarnation	Belief in reincarnation is accepted (not required) since the arduous path of initiation from human to God-hood would take more than one life-time. It is thought that Jesus likely reincarnated many times to be able to hold the Christ energy, and thus become Jesus, the Christ.	Usually reincarnation is not discussed, and often not accepted. Each of us lives one life which earns its reward (heaven) or punishment (hell). Those who do accept reincarnation generally remain silent.
Meditation and Prayer	Meditation as a spiritual discipline (being in the silence) is practiced as a way to contact God-within, along with prayer (asking, telling, thanking).	Prayer is still more commonly practiced than meditation among congregants although there is increasing acceptance of meditation practices.
Authoritative Texts and holy books.	Any and all texts that contain wisdom are accepted and studied, including The Holy Bible and ageless wisdom teachings.	The Holy Bible, both Old (first) and New (second) Testament, is seen as the primary holy book and authoritative text.
Dogma and Conscience	Conscience, the truth found in one's heart and mind ("thinketh in the heart") is favored above dogma as the final authority.	Wide variation. Church dogma is more often the primary authority, although conscience is considered important as well.
Convergence of Spiritual Paths	The fundamental unity of all spiritual paths that express love is seen and honored. "No matter where they walk, it leads to Me." (Bhagavad Gita)	Wide variation from the idea that "Christianity is the one true religion," to acceptance of varied paths.
Continuity of revelation	There can be many "sons[daughters] of God." God continues to reveal new messages and new teachers (and thus, new "saviors") as consciousness evolves. The message, teacher, and mode of expression are relevant to the culture, and evolution of consciousness of the time.	Jesus was / is "the only begotten" son of God.
The idea of a "second coming"	Viewed as primarily an inner experience (the birth of the Christ within), although a world teacher / wayshower and/or The Christ is invoked (consciously or unconsciously by humanity), and expected in times of global turbulent upheaval. The Mahabharata, a Hindu scripture says, <i>"When goodness grows weak; When Evil waxes mighty; I make for myself a vehicle. In every age I return to deliver the Holy, to destroy the fault of the evildoer; to establish true goodness."</i>	Traditional and Conservative Christianity sees this as the return of Jesus; an outer, literal experience. More conservative groups may see it as Armageddon. The more liberal and progressive expressions of Christianity either do not ascribe to a second coming or believe that it has already come in consciousness of humanity. The "kingdom of God" is here and now.