

Thee Church of Seven Planes
Interfaith Ministers
Basic Training Course
"ONE GOD --MANY NAMES"

A Letter from the President:

To all Ministers & Members of the Church of Seven Planes, The Church of Seven Planes has seen remarkable growth in the past few years. Requests for ordinations, made from all over the world, have increased tremendously. This has been made possible, in part, by the kind and generous donations of time and money and our many ministers who have made an order from the catalog to assist in funding this Church. As I am sure all of you know, this Church does not take tithes and our only funding comes from the sale of certificates and materials from our catalog.

We want to take this time to welcome all who are new to the Church of Seven Planes as well as thank those who have through the years been with us. We are growing. And each and every day seems to bring something new into our Church. We are grateful to all of our members who have been with us and assisted us throughout the years we struggled and scrambled to stay alive with the seemingly insurmountable problems we faced. But, now we are doing better than ever and we want to welcome each and everyone into the Church of Seven Planes.

The Internet is a wonderful thing, as glorious as was first radio and then television. It has enabled this humble Church to span the globe and bring our message to many places that would have been impossible just a few short years ago. As a minister of the CSP you have the opportunity to help us spread our message of Interfaith Inclusiveness and Tolerance!

We look forward to having you as one of our ordained Interfaith Ministers. After successful completion of this short basic Ministers course we will ordain you as an Interfaith Minister. Further, we believe in continuing education for our ministers and in the near future we will make available more courses, which our ministers can complete to comply with our requirement for continuing education.

As a minister of the CSP you are free to contact the CSP Headquarters at any time. Please feel free to do so and let us know how we can help your and your ministry grow.

I wish to personally welcome you to the Church of Seven Planes and want you to know that we highly value each and every one of our ordained ministers and our lay members as well.

Blessings and Peace to you all!
Robert Guffey,
President & Archbishop
Church of Seven Planes

BASIC TRAINING COURSE FOR THE INTERFAITH MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH OF SEVEN PLANES

Please read all material contained in this course. There is an online test to answer upon your completion of this course. Failure to return the test will not prevent you from being ordained by the CSP but it is required by the CSPCD Certification Process.

The Church of Seven Planes

The Church of Seven Planes, in existence since 1978, envisions a world where people of all faiths, religions and beliefs can live together in peace and harmony. It envisions a world where all people can enjoy without prejudice the practice of their faith, religion or belief in Furtherance of their spiritual quest that brings them closer to their God without fear of rejection or persecution. The Church of Seven Planes exists to provide a place of comfort and solace to those who are seeking a repose, to those who seek persons of a like mind who share their thirst and hunger for a deeper and broader knowledge of what pushes them forward in their search of peace, knowledge and understanding. For those who wish to be free of denominational constraints, the Church of Seven Planes exists to offer ordination who feel called to serve their fellow man as ministers and will serve to help all expand their knowledge as they feel led. The Church of Seven Planes believes in its commitment to be a leader into the 21st Century by continuing its service to mankind and by constantly reaffirming our motto:

"ONE GOD -MANY NAMES"

The Church of Seven Planes is an interfaith organization. Our ordained Interfaith Ministers are NOT restricted to the beliefs or practices of any one spiritual or religious belief system. Thus, our Ministers can practice any religion of their choice, or as requested by them for ceremonies or remain interfaith.

Unlike some other churches the CSP does NOT authorize it's ministers to ordain new Ministers. This is to keep down confusion and disarray. The exception to this policy is those who have been given the Rank of Bishop by the CSP (Bishops of other Churches not Applicable.) When it comes to basic religion the CSP has an official position, which we embrace. That position is that there is one religion, only one, though there may appear to be many.

When understood according to their mystical or true meaning, all religions are basically the same. All religions proclaim the Truth and teach the relation of God to the Divine's creation. All sound religious creeds are valid and rather than condemning each other, their followers should be reconciled. Unfortunately, people have used religion to advance their claim to superiority and promote separation rather than to advance peace, harmony and inner growth.

Perhaps if people realized that when religious books tell us to destroy unbelievers we are actually being told to eliminate negative, materialistic and doubting thoughts and ideas within us. For truly, those things are our enemies and must be destroyed if we are to reach our spiritual fulfillment.

The world is our home, and our brothers and sisters are all humankind no matter what their religious convictions might happen to be. Holding true to this position the Church of Seven Planes is truly an Interfaith Church.

We do NOT subscribe, therefore, to any one religion. It is our desire that as an Interfaith Minister of the CSP that you will share and uphold our position and Interfaith doctrinal tenets. We ask each and every one of our ministers to always remember that they are INTERFAITH MINISTERS and that each of you be INCLUSIVE rather than exclusive.

ORDINATION VOWS FOR CSP MINISTERS:

I have been called to devote my life to be of service to my fellow human beings. I have chosen to manifest this in the form of a Spiritual ministry, and on that basis I accept ordination from The Church of Seven Planes in order to solemnize and empower that ministry. I recognize that each individual follows their own paths to spiritual awakening and as a member and a minister of The Church of Seven Planes.

I vow to respect all paths and honor all paths toward their eternal truth. I further recognize the diversity of the world and vow to perform my ministerial duties without prejudice of any kind. These vows I make as a matter of public record and swear to eternally keep them for the good of all.

NOTE: The Church of Seven Planes takes your vows seriously. We ask that you also take them seriously and keep them in the forefront of your mind daily.

A VISION STATEMENT FOR EVERY CHURCH THE SUCCESSFUL CHURCH IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

The successful church of the 21st Century will be a church of many colors. Its membership will consist of peoples from every nation, every tongue and every color. It will draw its theology from all the worlds' great spiritual traditions, finding commonalties instead of Focusing on differences. It will incorporate these commonalties of religious tradition into it's own unique ideology, ritual and practice. A successful church of the 21st Century will, thus be, truly Interfaith and not just simply Interdenominational.

A successful church of the 21st Century will be a place of spiritual learning and discovery. It will be a gathering point for all members of the community. It will promote the development of individual theology rather than enslave its members with the burdening yoke of archaic Doctrines and meaningless rituals. Such a church will be a home for both rich and poor, young and old, firm and infirm. It will be a physical place in which people meet people but, more importantly, a place in which human spirits meet human spirits.

The successful church of the 21st Century will be a place for the gathering of family, meaning, and both family in the traditional sense and family in the

nontraditional sense. It will be a place in which traditional couples commit to each other and it will also be a place in which nontraditional couples commit to each other. It will be a place for ALL people and, thus, the successful church of the 21st Century will be a place of Inclusiveness and not one of exclusiveness.

A successful church of the 21st Century will actively and purposefully reach out to the excluded, to the marginalized, and to the cast out in global society. It will reach out unto both "saint" and "sinner" alike. It will be a place of rejuvenation and refuge for the tired and hopeless. And such a church will be a great beacon of Light in a world that is becoming increasingly dark.

The successful church of the 21st Century will address the issues, which concern people's daily lives, and the issues, which concern the world at large. The spiritual leaders of such a church in the 21st Century shall stand courageous as they stand up for the rights of every human being on the face of planet earth.

The successful church of the 21st Century will incorporate both modern and new music. It will draw both from tradition and nontraditional. It will mix the old with the new and the new with the old. It will draw its teachings from not only the old but also from the new revelations because it will very much realize that spirituality and spiritual growth, like creation, are ongoing things not yet finished.

Finally but not lastly, the successful church of the 21st Century will be a place for giving, sharing, and not for taking. It will stay far from a place of hoarding. Its clergy will be true ministers and shepherds, meaning, "teacher" and not "overlord". It will be a holy and sacred place and it shall be a place overflowing with spiritual enlightenment and unconditional love. And in such a church of the 21st Century, there shall be no fear because in such a place the universal Law of Love shall be truly active.

This is the church that will emerge in the 21st Century. This is the church that will survive into the next millennium and the next. Prejudice and exclusion shall have no place in it. Hatred and self-righteousness shall find nowhere to hide within it. Greed and deception will flee from it and such a church will lead humanity into a true Brotherhood and Sisterhood of Light.

To some of you this may seem but only a simple fantasy but alas it is already dawning in many churches, temples, mosques, and synagogues all around the world:

This IS the Church of Seven Planes.

CHURCH AND FAITH

There are many different churches and faiths in the world today with many different interpretations of what the Bible or other holy writ means and what they stand for. At The Church of Seven Planes we do not require that you give up your present beliefs or your present church to become a Interfaith Minster in our church. We believe that it is your right to believe as you feel led and not as we tell you to. Below are some of our basic beliefs:

- There is ONE Supreme Being, no matter what name he/she/they are called.
- There is NO one Religion as such, but many different interpretations.
- That everyone is entitled to his or her own belief on what is right and wrong.
- That it is NOT our right to tell others how to believe think, dress or behave.
- That to treat others, as we want to be treated, is a major moral imperative.
- We learn from each other and our inner self.
- Nothing is impossible, miracles happen all the time, we just need to open up and see them.
- We hold that neither a truth, nor a revelation, is a truth for a person unless they see it for themselves.

OUR DOCTRINE

The Church of Seven Planes holds many truths to be evident but it does not insist on the acceptance of its philosophy. Feeling that since it is true, all people will one day come to see its truth and order their lives thereby. We hold that "a truth is not a truth for a person or revelation until they see it to be true for themselves." The Creator has said, " Before Abraham was, I am." This goes along with our belief that there is one Creator no matter what he/she is called in the formulation of this body of teachings and ethics.

The Church takes what is, in some respects, a distinctive position among churches. The Christian church has always contained within itself different

schools of thought. The medieval scholars who systematized theology in the Western church followed the method of Aristotle. However, the earliest among the Church Fathers of philosophic bent were Platonists. The Church, while not undervaluing the clarity and precision of the scholastic theory,

has much in common with the Platonic and Neo-Platonic schools of tradition.

It holds that a theology can justify itself and be of permanent value only in so far as it partakes of the character of total divine wisdom.

That is to say, that while certain of its higher teachings remains within the category of revelation; because they are far beyond our grasp and attainment, others less remote are capable of re-verification, and even of development, by those who have unfolded within themselves the necessary spiritual faculties.

Man, being in essence divine, can ultimately know the Deity whose life he shares by gradually unfolding through successive lives on earth the divine powers that are latent in him. And he can grow into knowledge and mastery of the universe, which is all the expression of that divine life. This method of approach to divine truth is of ancient usage. It finds complete justification in scripture and has constantly appeared in the religious thought of both East and West.

Thus, truth is recognized in all and any universal religious experience, wherever it is to be found and under whatever outer form.

Ancient Truths:

Ancient wisdom holds that there are three truths which are absolute and which cannot be lost, for they are eternal in their divine message:

"The soul of human beings is immortal and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor have no limit."

"The principle which gives life dwells within us and without us. It is undying, and eternally beneficent. It is not seen or heard or felt, but is perceived by the person who desires perception."

"Each person is his/her own absolute law giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to her/himself, the decrrier of their life, reward, and punishment."

These truths, which are as great as life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind. Feed the hungry with them.

The Church of Seven Planes and the Laying on of Hands:

Throughout time and within many different cultures and beliefs, the laying on of hands to heal someone either physically or spiritually has become an established practice.

Many religions, faiths, and beliefs use this as a vital part of their doctrine and dogmas. The Church of Seven Planes understands that many of its ministers and members also use the laying on of hands in order to help bring about physical healing and spiritual comfort to those in turmoil.

The Church of Seven Planes also believes and understands that the persons who perform the laying on of hands are but vessels for the healing and love that proceed from them. It is a higher power, a Deity or Deities, who actually empower someone to assist those in need. Faith, Love and Compassion are necessary and vital in performing this ultimate act of human kindness to another in distress.

With this in mind, the Church of Seven Planes wholeheartedly endorses the practice of laying on of hands in a religious sense, to help bring about the healing and comfort it does provide.

The Church of Seven Planes does not offer this policy as an acknowledgement, endorsement, certification or licensure to any person who is obligated to obtain certification or licensure by their local or state authorities to operate as a business where such licensure or certification is required. The Church of Seven Planes also does not condone or authorize the laying on of hands, under the guise of religion, to anyone seeking to evade their legal and lawful responsibilities or requirements.

The Church of Seven Planes, its staff, officers, clergy, volunteers and members (collectively "CSP") believes that it is possible to enhance one's health through spiritual exercise. CSP has members or clergy (commonly called healers) who pursue spiritual health through prayer, meditation, and other religious/spiritual rituals which may include oils, herbs, incense, candles, etc. However, CSP is not a medical provider, does not practice medicine, and none of CSP's staff or clergy are medical practitioners. Anyone seeking assistance from CSP "healers" should consult a physician for evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of disease. If you do not have a physician you are advised to contact the licensing board in your area for a referral.

SUMMARY OF DOCTRINE

The existence of The Creator, infinite, eternal is the one existence from which all other existence derives. In him/her we live and move and have our being. The manifestation of God by whatever name he/she/they is called in the universe, the life giver, the inspirer and sanctifier.

Man, made in the image of God, is himself divine in essence - a spark of the divine fire. Sharing God's nature, he cannot cease to exist, therefore he is eternal and his future is one whose glory and splendor have no limit. The divinity that was manifest in him is gradually being unfolded in every man, until each shall come unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of The Creator.

The world is the theatre of an ordered plan, according to which, the spirit of man by repeatedly expressing himself in varying conditions of life and experience, continually unfolds his powers. That evolution or spiritual unfolding takes place under an inviolable law of cause and effect: 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' (Gal. vi, 7) His doings in each physical incarnation largely determine his experience after death in the intermediate world (or world of purgation) and the heavenly world and greatly influence the circumstances of his next birth.

Man is a link in a vast chain of life extending from the highest to the lowest. As he helps those below him, so also those who stand above him on the ladder of lives, receiving thus a 'free gift of grace' to help him.

There is a 'communion of saints' of 'just men and women made perfect' or holy ones, who help mankind. There is a ministry of angels or Guides, as they are sometimes called, who help guide you along your way.

Man has ethical duties to himself and to others, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with thy entire mind and with all thy strength."

This is the first and great commandment, and the second like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22, 37-40). This is not the same as being a Christian" because this is Universal Law no matter what religion or lack of religion you have.

It is the duty of man to learn to discern the divine light in himself and others that light 'which lights the way of every man because men are Son and Daughters of God they are brothers and sisters and inseparably linked together. That, which harms one, harms the entire brotherhood/sisterhood. Hence a man owes it as duty to the God within himself and others:

First, to endeavor constantly to live up to the highest that is in him, thereby enabling that God within himself to become more perfectly manifest.

Secondly, to recognize the fact of that brotherhood/sisterhood by constant effort towards unselfishness, love, consideration for, service of his fellowman, service of humanity, and the sacrifice of the lower self to the higher are Universal laws of spiritual growth.

EMBODIMENT OF DOCTRINE:

Inasmuch as The Church welcomes to its membership all who are seeking truth, it does not require its members to accept this statement of doctrine, we are prepared to ordain anyone who asks for it because we believe they are seeking the truth, as are we all.

WHY RELIGION TODAY ?

Religion is a means to an end. As such, it may be seen to have a dual purpose.

Philosophy of Life:

FIRST, it should provide a workable and progressively uplifting philosophy of life. The word "philosophy" means, "love of wisdom." Wisdom may be considered to be the sum total of the experiences and knowledge gained during all of man's past lives. Knowledge alone is the function of the lower mind.

Wisdom reaches far above the lower mind. It involves the whole human being, including that understanding often attributed to man's "heart-qualities." Wisdom gives man that true perspective with which to discover the real purpose of life. It makes possible prudent, dispassionate, perfect judgment.

Religion, then, must have a place daily life, building the honest, unselfish, tolerant human being and producing in him/her the preference for spiritual values over material excesses.

While thus raising his/her awareness to see divine life in all of God's creation and creatures, it yet aids him/her to attach proper values to everything in existence in the universe. Seen in this light, material means have their place and are necessary; but their utilization rather than their acquisition deserves primary attention.

An obvious expression of such a philosophy of life is found in man's affinity for all Nature, a sign of a mature love and heartfelt respect for The Creator's creation. In the effort to understand even more fully Nature's ways, man is helped by eager intellect that directs his studies and interests toward the divine. Truth, being what it is to each person, enlightens him increasingly as his intuitive faculties unfold. Eventually everyone will know God "first hand."

Divinity of Man.

The SECOND purpose of religion is to develop a realization of the divinity in man. The root meaning of the word 'religion' -to bind back refers to man's basic oneness with the Deity. Man IS a divine being, "created in, the image of God The Creator" the spiritual image that is.

Religion sees in the Deity (God/The Creator) as a universal, all- embracing Being of abstract perfection. To "bind back" to Him implies man's inner urge, his spiritual quest for his own perfection and resultant return to God. To achieve this he needs the experiences of many lives (incarnations) on earth. The "Laws of Nature," all of which are divine laws, aid him in his unfolding towards perfection. Among these laws one principle is fundamental: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. VI.7)

Religion does not mean dogma, doctrine, or denominational regulation. It does not require rigid ceremonial or ritual. It does not require institutional churches. HOWEVER, ritual and places where they can be performed are invaluable tools that should be used to aid and strengthen man's spiritual development.

Divine energy permeates the whole universe and is channeled through it like all other forces known to man. The work of the Church, while seemingly of the character of institutionalized worship, is free from rigid structuring, except that in their outer forms its services provide the visible channel facilitating the transmission of that spiritual (divine) energy down to the physical level.

It is essential that the mind be completely free to participate in the services of the Church according to each person's inclinations and his/her potential for

response. Thus, there can be no authority dictating beliefs, creeds, or dogmas, nor setting up restrictions, which inhibit the partaking of any of the Church's Sacraments. In all, the individual's conscience commands supreme authority and respect.

WHY PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH?

Performed by imperfect human beings no ritual can be spiritually perfect in itself. Yet, there IS a great value in performing such a ritual or ceremony. It gives every human being the beautiful opportunity and, it is hoped, the inner responsibility, to become a dedicated and effective channel through which the Deity can pour out His power and blessing over the universe.

Looking at the celebration of life with purely physical sight may not reveal any particular worthiness, except perhaps its simple beauty but exploring and discovering the deep wisdom and tremendous usefulness underlying the purpose of the Celebration of Life opens one's "spiritual eyes" to an untold splendor. Thus, the philosophy of life promulgated through the work of The Church of Seven Planes allows expression of every individual's inner nature and furthers the steady unfolding of his divine stature. The one great goal lying before us all is to go forward and rise upward toward a more wholesome, inspired life which will help us to become devoted and productive workers in the divine plan for His (our) world. YOUR participation in this work will always be of great benefit to you, to the community, and to mankind as a whole. The Church of Seven Planes holds its doors open to all who find joy and happiness in reverently partaking of The Creator's Blessings.

You should know that The Church of Seven Planes believes that when a person requests to be ordained, they are already ordained of God, according to the Bible. John 15:16 says that God called you and has ordained you. You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and produce fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. We, the Church of Seven Planes, believe that scripture to be true. We believe that you are an ordained minister. What we do, is stand between you and the Federal Government and between you and the state, not between you and your God. We meet the requirements of the Federal Government and the States.

Therefore, we give you a Minister's Credential, making you an ordained minister. This gives you all the rights of the Federal Government and the States that pertain to ministers. There are many ceremonies that take place in churches. But that is all they are, ceremonies. They have no authority or power with the Federal Government or the State. If you have been ordained by the Church of Seven Planes and have the Minister's Credentials with the Ministry seal and the Founder's signature on it, then as far as you and the State are concerned, you are a legally ordained minister.

However there are states that are attempting to decide what is and what is not a valid religion. It is unconstitutional for these states to pass these laws however states have stated that marriage falls unto the state to ratify. So be it. Consequently, the Church has developed continuing education courses to certify our ministers.

A minister is by definition a, "servant". The minister exists to serve himself, his congregation, the church, and his God. He is an agent administrating the duties and functions of his church. The minister should be compassionate, loving, and trustworthy. The responsibility of church administration rests on his shoulders. The minister must be able to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those rejoicing. He should strive to be an able leader, to promote spiritual growth and happiness within the congregation. One of greatest gifts a Minister has is to know what to say and how to say it when the occasion arises. The Minister is a teacher, comforter, confidant, friend, peacemaker, counselor, father/mother, brother/sister; he/she is all things to those in his/her congregation.

Church of Seven Planes ministers are sanctioned to perform the ceremonies and rituals in religious services. All of the ceremonies and rituals are meaningful for those they are performed for and their love ones. Even though a Minister may have no inclination to perform some of the ceremonies of rituals it is wise that he/she learns about them. The Minister may be called upon to perform them at any time. The greater his/her knowledge is of what is expected of a Minister, the better he/she may be able to perform those duties and services for the congregation. The Minister who is capable of ascending in mind, thought, and spirit above the cares of the world and is capable of lifting others, the love given in times of need is not rejected or forgotten. Every minister needs to have some knowledge of the legal rules and principles concerning the relationship of church and state. This understanding and application of the rules and principles will greatly help to serve, with commendable distinction, the parishioners and the community.

The Church of Seven Planes is a unique church where the individual Minister is as important as the President or Board of Directors. Everywhere life is, the Universal Spirit is there too. Reverence for this life comes through the knowledge of who and what we are, and our relationship with our God. All religion in America orthodox or heterodox, Christian or Pagan, Protestant, Catholic, or Jew, stand equal before the law which regards "the Pagan and the Mormon, the Brahmin and the Jew, the Swedenborgian and the Buddhist, and the Quaker, as all possessing equal rights, and "Protects a Chinese joss house as much as it does a Christian church." Because we are Universal and believe in inherent strength of the unity of religion, we do not hesitate to allow other religious systems free scope. Protection is, therefore, afforded to all religions and beliefs. The Church of Seven Planes does not interpret or set in judgment of your beliefs, creed, religion, race, color, sex or sexual orientation.

WHAT IS AN INTERFAITH MINISTER?

"God is like a mirror. The mirror never changes, but everyone who looks at it sees a different face." –Jewish teaching

"To those in whom love dwells, all the world is one family." – Hindu teaching

"Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads as long as we reach the same goal. In reality there are as many different religions as there are individuals; that is how it should be." –Mahatma Gandhi

The concept of an Interfaith Minister is contained in the following:

An Interfaith Minister is someone who seeks to promote understanding, harmony, and love among people by emphasizing what is universal in the teachings of the many spiritual paths and faith traditions.

An Interfaith Minister has chosen to learn about, respect, and appreciate the diversity of paths to Oneness, and to look for the universal truth contained in each one.

An Interfaith Minister is someone who is dedicated to serving the spiritual needs of all those who seek their guidance, counsel, and assistance, without regard to race, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, ethnic background, gender or age.

An Interfaith Minister is someone who is dedicated to deepening their own spiritual development and practice, and their connection to the Divine, so that their service to others is always grounded in the integrity of their own spiritual life.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR RELIGIONS:

The world's major religions and spiritual traditions can be classified into a small number of major groups. The vast majority of spiritual adherents follow one of the following faiths:

33% of world population follows Christianity
20% of world population follows Islam
13% of world population follows Hinduism
6% of world population follows Chinese Folk Religion
5% of world population follows Buddhism
Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

Religions are sometimes summarized into larger groups. For instance, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism as sometimes referred to as Abrahamic Religions.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Vairayana, East Asian Buddhism, Zen, Sikhism, and Jainism are referred to as Dharmic Religions.

Chinese Folk Religion, Taoism, and Shinto are referred to as Far Eastern religions.

Abrahamic religions are by far the largest group and these consist primarily of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and sometimes Bahai are included. These faiths are named for the patriarch Abraham, and are unified by their strict monotheism. Today, around 3.4 billion people are followers of Abrahamic religions and are spread widely around the world.

Dharmic religions originated in Greater India and tend to share a number of key concepts, such as dharma and karma. They are of the most influence across the Indian subcontinent, East Asia, South East Asia as well as isolated parts of Russia. The main Indian religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. Indian religions mutually influenced each other.

Far Eastern religions consist of several East Asian religions that make use of the concept of Tao (in Chinese) or Do (in Japanese or Korean). They include Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Chondogyo, Caodaism, Yiguandao, and Far Eastern Buddhism (in which the group overlaps with the "Indian" group).

In the Abrahamic religions, which include Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, God is viewed as one God. The belief in one God is known as "monotheism." Most Christians refer to God as Christ and this faith believes in the Trinity.

The Trinity is composed of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit but these are not three different gods. Rather they are all different names for the One and Only God. In Islam, God is known as Allah and Allah is believed by Muslims (the followers of Islam) to be the One and True God.

In Judaism, God is sometimes known as Yahweh and is viewed as the One True God of all. Each of these faiths is divided into subgroups also known as denominations." These denominations or sects might vary in some of their beliefs but all adheres to the basics of monotheism.

Paganism / Pagan Religions Pagan religions seem to be growing in popularity, especially the Wicca beliefs. Whilst not forming any of the major religions today, Paganism traces its roots back to the pre-Judeo/Christian world. Modern Pagan religions follow beliefs from some of the most ancient religions known to humanity, including ancient Roman, Greek, Egyptian and Celtic.

Paganism is generally polytheistic (follows multiple Gods and/or Goddesses) utilizing the deities from these ancient religions. Paganism and many Pagan religions have been recognized in many countries as nature religions as Pagans generally believe that the divine manifests in all creation; they see the divine as immanent in the whole of life and the universe, balanced between male and female hence the existence of a God and a Goddess.

Unlike the Abrahamic religions, in Paganism there is no one single "right" or "wrong" way to worship; individuals are free to explore those deities and practices that give them the greatest comfort and understanding, as long as they do not break the main beliefs of harming nobody and the freedom of every person to choose their own path. The influence of ancient Pagan religions over today's modern beliefs and practices can not be ignored. Many of the Christian beliefs and practices were influenced in some way by the Pagan cultures that existed during the time of their creation.

It is widely accepted by many scholars that the dates for Christmas, Easter, Candlemas, and the identities of several Saints, were influenced by the early Pagan traditions. Whilst this fact does NOT make these Christian traditions any less valid or sacred, the history could be important for the Interfaith minister dealing with Pagan communities. The common Pagan religions found in the west today include Wicca, Heathen, witchcraft, Druidry, Celtic Paganism, Shamanism, and general eclectic Paganism.

Pagan "religious" holidays are based on the cycle of the seasons and include the summer and winter solstice, spring and fall/autumn equinox, and the start of the four seasons, which includes the harvest festivals. As these are season based it is common for the relevant celebration to be held according to the timing of the relevant hemisphere; for example, Yule is the winter solstice occurring around December 22 in the northern hemisphere, or June 22 in the southern hemisphere.

THE CHURCH OF SEVEN PLANES STRUCTURE:

The Church of Seven Planes has several auxiliary organizations in addition to Headquarters. These auxiliaries are described below:

Monastic Order of St. James:

The Monastic Order of St. James (OSJ) is a group of contemporary monks within the CSP composed of both male and female monks. The CSP offers ordination either as a minister or monk. Monks do not have the same duties as ministers. CSP monks have no physical abbey or monastery. They live in the community and work as most other people do. They may be married and have children. In their spare time they may engage in contemplation or helping others within their communities. Some monks in the Order are ordained as Ministers as well and these may perform all rites of the Church. OSJ is presided over by an Abbot or Bishop Abbot.

Order of St. Michael:

The Order of St. Michael (OSM) is a group of contemporary knights of the Church of Seven Planes. The Order is presided over by a Grand Master (the President of CSP) and a Knight Commander. Membership in the Order is open to all members of the CSP; however, there are various fees for various ranks in the Order.

The Light:

The Light is the official newsletter of the CSP. It is published monthly.

Interfaith Seminary:

The Interfaith Seminary (IFS) is the official seminary of the CSP. The IFS offers a wide variety of religious degree programs on the Master's and Doctorate levels. Degrees from the seminary are designed for religious use and not for secular use.

The CSPCD:

The CSPCD is the Chaplain Division of the Church of Seven Planes. It is presided over by the Commander (the President of the CSP) and by one or more Captains and Master Chaplains. The Chaplains are certified by the CSP.

CSP ORGANIZATION:

The Church of Seven Planes is presided over by the President who also serves as Archbishop. A Board of Directors also helps the President preside over the CSP. Most decisions and changes are left up to the Board of Directors.

CSP Bishops:

A body of Bishops also exists within the CSP. Bishops are UNLIKE those of the Catholic Church. CSP Bishops act in an advisory role only to the President and may serve to help guide ministers in establishing their ministries. It is important to understand that CSP bishops act only as advisers and not in supervisory or overseer roles.

CSP Ministers:

Under the bishops are the ministers and members of the CSP. Ministers are INDEPENDENT CLERGY and their ministries are INDEPENDENT MINISTRIES. They are NOT extensions of CSP Headquarters.

MARRIAGE LAWS:

If you live in a country outside the United States you need to check the laws of your country. If you live in the U.S. check on the most current laws in your State and county for marriage laws in some states, particularly a Commonwealth" state can vary county to county. It is your responsibility to know what the marriage laws of your Country, State, or County are.

OTHER MATTERS OF LAW:

The Church of Seven Planes, its Board of Directors, Bishops, Ministers, or anyone else associated with the Church in any way, can not and will not give you legal advice on any matter.

It is up to you to know and to apply the laws that govern you and your ministry. The Church takes your vows very seriously and it is suggested that you as a minister also take your vows seriously.

Being a minister does not give you immunity from prosecution and the right to do whatever you please.

The Church has a code of ethics that ministers should be aware of and besides that code of ethics; every minister must have his or her own ethics as well. That is why you must take your vows seriously for an ordained minister is accountable to God, Church, Country, State, County, Township, self, and every person you minister to.

FOUR STATEMENTS FROM THE CODE OF ETHICS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) I will hold in confidence any privileged communication received by me during the conduct of my ministry. I will not disclose confidential communications in private or in public.

(2) I will not proselytize from other religious bodies, but I retain the right to present my religious body only to those who are not affiliated with any religious body.

(3) I will show personal love for God in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which we have been called.

(4) I recognize the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will ever use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being, religiously, emotionally or sexually. I will use my ministerial office only for that which is best for the persons under my ministry.

Although you as a Church of Seven Planes minister will apply all of the code of ethics as well as your own code of ethics, it is on the last statement that the following is linked to for one of your duties as a minister will be to try to comfort or support someone in a difficult time in their life.

Thus someone may come to you for advice or counseling and dealing with emotional problems can produce risks and any minister is well advised to know the limitations of both their license as well as their own capabilities. The Church of Seven Planes does not give you a legal license to do anything other than to be a constitutionally recognized ordained minister and that recognition does not release you the minister from legal responsibility under the laws of your country, state, county, or locality.

Therefore you may be held accountable if it is perceived that harm was done as a result of your efforts to counsel. A minister can find him or herself liable because of some action taken or suggested or because of a lack of appropriate action which would be an act of omission. Thus the minister must know when confidence must be compromised and when a problem should be referred to a licensed and qualified professional. The following is an example and not the law and you are reminded that you the minister are responsible to know the laws and how to apply them to yourself and everything you do as an ordained minister.

CONSULTING, COUNSELING, MENTORING, PASTORAL COUNSELING, AND/OR COACHING:

While there are overlapping qualities and skills in each of these, there are distinct differences.

Consultants are experts in their field. They draw on their experience to manage projects, change, organizational development, etc. They make recommendations and are directive. Some Consultants are retained on an ongoing basis by companies or organizations; others work on a project only basis and usually receive payment.

Counselors work with people who have a diagnosable illness and/or behavior that prevents them from functioning well. Counselors and Therapists require advanced degrees and a license to practice. Counselors usually meet in person with their clients and the Counselor is directive.

Mentors work with people who are starting out in a business, ministry or life experience where the mentor has experience. Mentors most often do not receive a fee for their assistance. A mentor role is an advisory role that diminishes naturally as the mentee becomes established.

Pastoral Counselors work with people who want a deeper understanding or interpretation of scripture which can be applied to everyday life. Pastoral Counselors have extensive biblical training and/or seminary degrees along with training and certification in Pastoral Counseling.

Life Coaches work only with emotionally healthy people who are looking to make changes in their lives to become or to achieve more.

Coaches are not directive, but by listening, questioning, support and challenges, they assist their clients in reaching their own goals and solutions. Coaches provide options to consider and they exchange ideas but the client sets the agenda not the coach.
