

A STUDY OF THE CULTS

Introduction and Definitions

Introduction--America is “*the great melting pot*” of different nationalities and those different nationalities have brought their various _____ with them.

What is a cult?

A belief system that differs significantly in one or more respects as to beliefs or practices from those religious groups that are regarded as “normative expressions” of religion in our culture. The normative religion will be Biblical Christianity. We will look at other Religious Systems later.

A group of people gathered around a _____ or someone's _____ of the Bible.

Charles T. Russell and J.F. Rutherford	Jehovah Witnesses
Joseph Smith and Brigham Young	Mormons
Mary Baker Eddy	Christian Science
Charles and Myrtle Fillmore	Unity School of Christianity

Some have been deliberately deceptive for financial gain while others have stumbled upon error while trying to find truth!

Aren't we being “judgmental” to criticize the beliefs of Others? Absolutely not! Lets see how the Bible deals with these folks. Shouldn't we be tolerant and accepting of their beliefs. Absolutely not!!! Shouldn't we just leave them alone and let God deal with them? Absolutely NOT!!

**Jesus, Peter, Paul, Jude, John, etc. predicted these Cults!
And gave us clear instructions for how to deal with them.**

¹⁵ **“Watch out for false prophets.** *They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.* ¹⁶ *By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?* ¹⁷ *Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.*

¹⁸ *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.* ¹⁹ *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.* ²⁰ **Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.**

²¹ *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.* ²² *Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’*

²³ *Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’*

Matthew 7:15-23

But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. ² Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. ³ In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed..... 2 Peter 2:1-3 (Similar passage in Jude)

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ² For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³ They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴ They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵ They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly.

Stay away from people like that!

2 Timothy 3:1-5

*¹⁰ If anyone comes to your meeting and **does not teach the truth about Christ**, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. ¹¹ Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work.* 2 John 1:10-11

The #1 aspect that is attacked in our Biblical Christianity is the Doctrine of _____!

If we are to take the Gospel to everyone, yet, reject false teachers how do we know when to do what?

The key is are they _____! Matthew 13, rocky soil or fertile soil?

The Bible calls upon us to know what we believe and DEFEND our faith! Sounds militant! YES!!!

³ Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to His holy people. ⁴ I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:3-4

¹⁵And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. 1 Peter 3:15-16

Shouldn't we just be content to believe what we believe and leave other folks alone? After all, God in the Bible says in Acts 5:38-39 that if they are of God we cannot resist it and if it is not of God we should just leave it alone to die a natural death?? First, God didn't say it Gamaliel did! Second, inspiration guarantees us that is what Gamaliel said.

It does not mean it is _____.

Don't all roads lead to God? NO In John 14 Jesus clearly states there is only one road leading to Heaven, it is JESUS Himself and it is a _____ way!

With all this politically correct thinking of “toleration”, playing down our differences to “get along” with everyone, we have let that atmosphere enter the church body and so we don’t stand up for our beliefs. Dr. Van Baalen said “the cults are the unpaid bills of the church.” I agree wholeheartedly.

We have contended for the faith and as a result cults are growing faster than the true church. Love is important but it cannot and must not cancel out _____!

We have forgotten Jesus also said, *But everyone who denies Me here on earth, I will also deny before My Father in heaven.* ³⁴ *“Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.”* Matthew 10:33-34

Overcoming the Language Barrier

Well, we believe in Jesus too! But what “Jesus”? Angel? Prophet? God? Michael?
We believe in God also! Pantheistic, Polytheistic, Monistic, Dualistic, Force, Personal?

Cults feast upon the average Christians inability to understand the subtle art of redefinition!

We live in an age of manipulation of _____.

A classic example is “Do You Believe Jesus is the Son of God?” Well, Mormons believe that God the Father had sex with Mary and she had a male child, God’s Son so they would answer “YES!” The clarifying question to ask is “Do You Believe Jesus is God, the Son?” Mormons will quickly answer “NOT!”

Another example is “Do You Believe the Bible contains the Word of God?” Many groups will answer “Yes” to that and then put it on equal footing with their books. Or they think it contains the Word of God but not in the Bible’s entirety. That PART of the Bible is the Word and usually they are quick to point out which parts they think are not.

The KEY to Overcoming the Spin Doctors is to ask _____ questions.

Also, we should not fall for the sympathy vote that says, “Well, that’s YOUR interpretation. I’ll interpret it my way. Let’s be open-minded.” First, to accept that premise is to equate yourself with millennia of scholarly and godly champions who have dug deep and long and have supported the traditional interpretations and definitions. Secondly, it is possible to be wrong and have a wrong interpretation even if it hurts your feelings. Finally, it is to leave the Holy Spirit out of the equation who “guides us into all truth!”

Cultists are experts at lifting out a verse or part of a verse and building an entire system of belief. Peter warned us that they “wrest (twist) the scriptures to their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:16)

Summary

1. Average cultist knows their stuff really well. You better _____ what you believe.

2. The well-trained cultist know how to avoid _____ of orthodox Christianity. They can steer around the Trinity, Deity of Christ, Bodily Resurrection of Christ, The Atonement, Salvation, etc. They must be pressed to clarify themselves in light of orthodoxy.
3. The Christian must know their Bible and be ready to use it. It is our _____.
4. The Caring, Concerned Christians needs to know what THEY believe and what WE believe in order to have success in understanding and defending the Faith!

A Word on Psychology from Dr. Phred

There is a psychological aspect of the cults as well. It is important to know and understand how they were formed in order to have an upper hand.

First, nearly all cults have a distinct close-mindedness. They are prohibited in their group to question anything but accept everything. It is an extremely rare encounter that finds a cultist open to true discussion. They may humor us but most are not really interested in our view. That is probably why we shouldn't waste our time arguing. Jesus warned us not to "throw our pearls among the swine" for that very reason. They have indeed been programmed, brain-washed.

Second, there is a high level of antagonism with cultists. This is understandable since their cult is in conflict with us and holds opposite beliefs. This causes the cultist to reject the person as well as the belief. Some even make HATE a principle conduct. We must not make the same mistake. We hate the false system but love the cultist as a person for whom Christ died. When we engage in that Biblical format they will not understand how we can love them yet reject their system of belief. This can open a door.

Third, there is a sense of nobleness with cultist. They believe- they have freed their followers from religious exploitation by us orthodoxists. That means we must be openly honest and not practice deception such as "bait and switch." All of these elements tend to make cultists isolationists and from there anything can happen (i.e. Jim Jones).

Finally, and maybe this is repetitive, but **there is a manifestation of institutional dogmatism and pronounced intolerance for any but their own.** That is why they will have their own books to follow so as to get their followers away from the Bible--even if their books have to be continually corrected. The Jehovah Witnesses were somewhat of an exception until lately as they used the King James Bible and Thayer's Greek Lexicon. They finally gave up on twisting scriptures and wrote their own perversion of the Bible because it was too easy to refute them with their own KJV. Even the Book of Mormon has subsequent rewrites to cover erroneous text and failed prophecies. Yet, every edition claims the Divine Source. How can that be? If the first edition was perfect from the Divine then any changes move to imperfection or if the second edition is now perfect the first one was not and yet is claimed Divine source?? This is irrational at best.

ANSWERS:

Religions, Person, Interpretation, Jesus Christ, Receptive or Argumentative, Good Theology, Very Narrow, Truth, Vocabulary and Terminology, Clarifying, Know, Definitions, Main Weapon