

Chapter 8 – Analysis of a Cult

The Church without a Name

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Characteristics of a Cult

Most people have an exaggerated idea of what a cult is. They generally think it is something violent or bizarre. However, a **cult is simply any religion that does not acknowledge the God of the Bible. A cult twists the scripture to different meaning and infringes on the decision making ability of the individual drawing him away from society.**

Jesus tells us that in the last days false Christs, false prophets, false apostles, false witnesses and deceitful workers will arise. They will preach a different Jesus, a different Gospel and have a different Spirit. Matthew 24:24, Galatians 1:6-9, I John 4:3-6, II Corinthians 11:13, Mark 13:22.

Theologians have pronounced the Two by Two Church a **pseudo-Christian cult**. It isn't Christian. It is **not** a fundamentalist sect. The word "fundamentalism" means **"orthodox religious beliefs based on a literal interpretation of the Bible"**. Since the workers have changed the Bible's view of Jesus as "God/man" to Jesus as *"just a man with the Christ Spirit,"* they do not use the Bible in a literal sense, do not preach the true gospel and do not apply the scripture to everyday life but rather view it in a symbolic and Gnostic sense they cannot be described as Christian or fundamentalist.

Doctrinal Characteristics Of Cults

1. Cults declare variations on Satan's promise in the garden, **"Ye shall be as gods."** Details are given on what man must do to receive godhood.
2. Denial of the Trinity.
3. Denial that Jesus is God in human form. Very low concept of Christ; a perfect man, a "divine" man or a religious reformer.
4. Salvation or godhood comes through conformity to methods. Blind obedience in supporting the hierarchy of the cult. Legalism.
5. Cult members are discouraged from examining the gospel of Christ and deny and oppose the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ.
6. Cults claim to be the only ones on earth to possess Truth.
7. Cult leaders use inconsistent doctrines and illogical thought patterns. Leaders will answer questions differently depending on whom they are talking to.
8. Cults put more reliance on being moved by the spirit or emotion than on understanding the scripture. Spiritism, divination, occultism and mysticism are sometimes practiced.
9. Cults use small portions of scripture to support pet methodology but ignore the rest of scripture that disagrees with their particular views.
10. Cult leaders make prophecies that do not come true.
11. Cults practice little or no charity towards outsiders unless it serves a specific purpose to the group.
12. Cults believe that their leaders have a special anointing from God that others don't have.
13. Cults give great reverence to their leader or leaders.
14. Cults view scripture through the window of a certain interpretation of a particular scripture or concept.

Psychological Characteristics

1. Cults are secretive. Members are not aware of facts about the church that are common knowledge to others.
2. Cults isolate themselves from the culture and non-members.
3. Cults practice mind and behavior control. They urge people to empty their minds in order to become more spiritual. Signs of mass hypnosis. Blank looks on people's faces.
4. Emotional problems are common within cults, especially depression, lack of motivation, fear, low confidence levels, and inability to make decisions. People fear the group's disapproval and are dependent on the group to validate one's own existence.

5. Sexual immorality, hidden or overt. Cult leaders don't often respect marriage. Cults practice sexual immorality and perversions, sometimes claiming abstinence even though their leaders will usually privately exclude themselves from that requirement. Jude 7 lists it in the description of false religious leaders.
6. Cult leaders instill an aversion for outsiders, especially Christians.
7. Refusal to consider the possibility that the group may be wrong.
8. The leaders impress prospective members with their "saintliness" and feign a lack of interest in natural things.
9. Cult members find it difficult to think for themselves.

Sociological Characteristics Of Cults

1. Cult leaders do not report the amount, location or use of their money.
2. Cults put extra duress on children and women. Sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect are not uncommon.
3. Cults often require distinctive styles of appearance or apparel.
4. Cults condemn those who leave, and members are forbidden to talk to them.
5. Cult leaders practice surveillance of members, and monitor their viewpoints; attendance at frequent meetings is demanded.
6. Cults use informers or gossip to keep everyone in line.
7. Cults are adversarial towards Christian churches, society and culture. They view themselves as spiritually superior and therefore qualified to condemn the world.
8. Cults use jargon to confuse outsiders and as a code for members.
9. Cult leaders encourage members to focus all attention on ***their instructions and ignore all other information***. This narrow focus often results in emotional/social detachment caused by the alteration in a person's perception of reality.

Group pressure in a cult can make one feel physically helpless, hopeless, lethargic, hysterical or frightened. It results in withdrawal from people. Cult membership brings about changes in appearance, voice change due to tension, changes in speech patterns, posture change, new mannerisms, rapid weight loss or gain, euphoria, visions, and alienation from society. It can lead to distrust of people, inability to make logical decisions, lapse of memory, depression, crying spells and unreasonable fears. Cults are a spiritual, socioeconomic and political nightmare for people and nations.

Not all cults corral their members into communes, although many of them begin their movement within restricted confines. Most cult leaders know that the way to keep their membership growing is to mingle with others in order to recruit new members. But the mingling must be controlled.

Cult leaders exude great zeal for their cause with soft-spoken gentleness. Once they have established trust they promote their followers' dependency upon themselves by instilling guilt and a feeling of ignorance and helplessness. Cult leaders use repetition of a theme or ideology to program their followers to obedience. They threaten their followers with fear of doom in this life or hell in the next life. Not all cult leaders are interested in money. For some, power, sex and pride are enough. Some are psychopaths or sociopaths.

People become vulnerable to cult involvement during stress, social alienation or new environments when they are looking for friends. Children raised in dysfunctional families are especially vulnerable to "love-bombing" done by cultic leaders. People who lack self-confidence appreciate the "group ego." The group ego lowers the need for self-direction and self discipline.

Mind control and abuse also occurs within abusive families, gangs and abusive relationships such as pimps/prostitutes or abusive/controlling lovers. The victims find it difficult/impossible to break free and it takes years to recover from such experiences, if ever.

Thinking becomes difficult if not impossible for cult members. Cultists are made to feel that their minds are not to be trusted or that they are "dumb." Thinking is of the devil. Cult leaders play on the member's needs for acceptance, his fear of rejection and his guilt or fear of God, believing that God will bring bad luck or punishment for exerting independent thought.

When you deprogram someone who has been involved in a cult you must force him to think. Present him with information which has been hidden. Show him scripture that refutes his selected proof texts. When the mind gets to a certain point that he can see he has been deceived he can "snap" out of it and his mind can start working again.

It usually takes a ***shock*** of some sort to get a cult member's attention. A cult member will not usually begin thinking on his own unless something has happened that disturbs his basic perceptions of right and wrong. Even then, it seems almost impossible to get some people to recognize what they are seeing because of their state of denial.

People like to feel they have been specially chosen by God and that only "other people" get involved in cults. The truth of the matter is that there are more cults in the world than there are good healthy Christian churches, so the possibility of being caught in a cult is pretty high. Each person needs to search the scripture daily and examine himself and his leaders for biblical understanding and behavior.

Cult victims come from all walks of life. They include millionaires, paupers, lawyers, pastors, professors, theologians, blue-collar laborers, farmers, devout Christians and pagans, etc. No one is exempt, no family is safe.

Cult members sometimes experience dissociative disorders and trance-like states. A dissociative disorder can cause memory loss in a subconscious effort to disassociate oneself from the core of one's personality to obtain gratification and simultaneously avoid stress.

This also provides the individual with the means to deny responsibility for behavior that might be unacceptable. A dissociative disorder is flight from reality, like walking around without thinking responsibly.

Cult members occasionally display contradictory patterns of behavior, or multiple personalities. Cult members repress things that cause stress or guilt. This provides them with a false sense of happiness and peace.

Cult leaders encourage child-like attitude and behavior through the misuse of scripture. Cult members lose their ability to make independent decisions and the ability to think logically and rationally in certain areas of life. Stress of cult membership causes some people to lose their previous capacities for compassion or tenderness, even their parenting instincts.

Spiritual Or Scriptural Verification

Professing people believe this is the “Truth” or “True Way” simply because they **feel** it is right. A few have said they heard a voice tell them it is right. Some believe it is right because they heard of it after praying to know “the right way,” so they assume God was answering their prayer. Some believe it is right because it is more primitive than other churches, therefore it must be like the original New Testament Church. They make the mistake of assuming that “the right way” was a church instead of the person of Christ. The only authority and judge of the Christian church must be the Holy Scripture. The Bible is the Word of God. There are over 3800 verses in the Bible that state that scripture is the Word of God. God’s Word is Living, and not because of what people say about it or do with it.

Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, Moslems, Christian Scientists, Scientologists, New Agers, Catholics and others have had visions, heard voices, had visitations from dead relatives or angels, had a “burning in the bosom” or out-of-body experiences. They were convinced that they were following God. Many of their experiences came after praying to “know the right way” or “God’s true prophet.” Satan knows just when to present a false gospel or deceiving spirit.

Statistics show that **78 percent of all members of cults come from Christian churches and Christian families**. Most cults use scripture to substantiate their beliefs.

Experts say the average cult experience lasts 14 years. Only about 3 percent of cult victims ever get back into mainstream Christianity. This is why so few Ex-Two by Twos ever settle into a new church home or become true believers in Jesus Christ.

There have been many people who have left this church without understanding the mind control they were under. They later had emotional breakdowns or lived lives of senseless behavior. This could have been prevented if they had gotten some good scriptural teaching or had gone to a Christian exit counselor. An exit counselor is someone who has been trained to help people who have experienced mind control, spiritual abuse or have left a cult.

Admitting that this church is actually a cult is one of the hardest things a professing person can do. Even those who don’t agree with the doctrine or workers’ policies find it difficult to acknowledge this statement.

Not everyone is equally harmed by it. It depends on the strength of one’s family relationships and the manipulative abilities of the workers and friends within one’s field of experience. Some people seem to function better than others. Some people have not submitted to the mind control. And some people seem to actually have a real relationship with the Lord. Others have not internally understood the doctrine and have retained a more scriptural viewpoint. However, those people are rare. It is my opinion that the majority (if not all) of the people in this group actually suffer personality destruction to some degree.

Anyone who condemns people for diligence in studying the Bible should not be trusted. Anyone who mocks others who have spent their entire lives studying the scripture, in translating it and teaching it should be avoided.

It isn’t enough to say **“if people know the truth they will recognize error when they see it.”** Remember some cult leaders were once pastors and theologians.

Theologians and pastors have also been drawn into cults, especially because cult leaders are such excellent liars. Some people can verbalize truth yet not really comprehend the difference between truth and error when the errors are hidden with deceitful words and definitions. Some people join cults during stressful situations. Others join cults without realizing that the doctrine is any different than normal Christian teaching.

This specific cult has disguised its beliefs so well that some workers and members actually hold more biblical viewpoints than the head workers allow. They have absorbed some truth simply from their own study of the Bible. Some workers disagree with the head workers and are hoping to eventually change the situation from the inside out.

Cult members must have **specific error** pointed out over and over **and over**.

And they must have **truth explained over and over and over**.

Every cult instills hostility towards Christianity. Jesus told us that people would hate Christians. It is remarkable to see how hostile some ex-members continue to be towards Christians and churches after they leave a cult or abusive church. Some people have severe problems relating to churches. There are too many opportunities for flashbacks to old patterns of relating to scripture and religious gatherings. There is too much suspicion and fear. It may be that these people will need professional counseling to feel comfortable in a church setting. Some never will. One of the big barriers is overcoming the prejudiced attitudes that are instilled in cult members. Many people become introverted due to the cult experience and never do feel comfortable in social settings, no matter what kind of group.

Exit-Counseling

A cult experience is a mind abuse experience. There is rarely anyone who has been involved in a cult who isn't damaged emotionally to one degree or another. It is for this reason that exit counseling is a real necessity for **most** people who have left a cult.

- **Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center**, P.O. Box 67, Albany, OH 45710 Doctrinal and psychological counseling
- **Cult Awareness Network**, 2421 West Pratt Blvd. #1173, Chicago, IL 60645 phone (312) 267-7777
- *** Unbound**, P.O. Box 1963, Iowa City, IA 52244, (319) 337-3723
- **Saskatchewan Citizens Against Mind Control**, Meadowlake Chapter, Box 358, Meadowlake Saskatchewan SCM 1V0 Canada
- **Alberta Cult Education** 0136-100 St. #502, Edmonton, Alberta T5P 4C1 (406) 476-9601
- **Cult Project** 3460 Stanley St., Montreal, Quebec H2A 1R8, Canada (514) 845-6756

Studies Have Been Done By:

Cults and the Family by Florence Kaslow and Marvin Sussman

Psychodynamic Perspectives on Religion, Sect and Cult, edited by David Halperin,

Cults in America by Apple.

Combating Cult Mind Control by Steven Hassan

Toxic Faith by Arterburn and Felton

Cult Proofing Your Kids by Dr. Paul Martin

The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse by Johnson & Von Vonderan

Out of the Cults and Into the Church by Janis Hutchinson

Breaking the Chains by Leo Booth

Videos on different cults are a quick way to educate one's self. Some helpful videos to watch are:

The God Makers, The God Makers II, A Crisis of Faith, Witnesses of Jehovah

Seventh-Day Adventism: the Spirit Behind the Church, Gods of the New Age

False Gods of Our Time

Pagan Invasion: Secrets of Mind Control.

Most of these videos can be obtained at Christian bookstores or from counter-cult ministries. Even though they are about various other cults, the information about doctrine and mind control applies to all.

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