

Cults of Christianity



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Christianity

Christianity is defined as a “one God” religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. It also believes that both the original Old (Hebrew) and New (Greek) Testaments were given to men directly from God (God inspired).

Christian Core Beliefs

- Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God.
- He is fully God and fully man.
- He is the 2nd part of the Holy Trinity (Son).
- He willingly gave His life to save humanity from their sins.
- He died on a cross and was physically brought back to life after 3 days.
- He will return one day to rule the earth.
- You are saved by grace through faith (not works).

Cult

- A cult is considered an evil religious group, often with a single charismatic leader, that may engage in brainwashing and other mind control techniques.
- They may believe that the end of the world is imminent.
- They may collect large amounts of weaponry and food in preparation for a massive war.

Cult = NOT Going to Heaven

- If they stray from the core beliefs of Christianity, they are NOT going to Heaven!
- Cult = Claims to be Christian but isn't.

They're a Cult if...

- They promote some kind of new revelation from God.
- They believe there are sources other than the Holy Bible that God gave them.
- They don't believe in the Holy Trinity.
- They have a distorted view of God and/or Jesus.
- They deny salvation through grace...They believe you must “work” your way to Heaven.

Some Goals of a Cult

- To control the people that are in it so that they do what they are told without questioning it.
- Cults keep the truth of God and Jesus from the followers through ignorance and deception.
- There are many techniques and tactics that cults and cult leaders use to bring members in and keep them in.

Cult Tactics

8 Marks of Mind Control (Robert Lifton – 1987)

1. Milieu Control: Control of the environment, communication, and access to information.
2. Mystical Manipulation: The leader gets to reinterpret events and history as he sees fit.
3. Demand for Purity: Members are told that society is corrupt so the members must be purified. The desire to become mentally and physically pure makes members susceptible to guilt, fear, and other moral appeals used by the leader.

Cult Tactics (Continued)

8 Marks of Mind Control (Robert Lifton – 1987)

4. Cult of Confession: Control of shame and guilt; members must confess any wrongdoing to the leader, including mental infractions (thoughts).
5. Sacred Science: Reliance on dogmatic (absolute) principles; the leader has all the answers. Only the leader is privileged to know the absolute truth.

Cult Tactics (Continued)

8 Marks of Mind Control (Robert Lifton – 1987)

6. Loading the Language: Reliance on thought restraining phrases and language; serves to isolate members from the outside world and constrict members' thinking.
7. Doctrine Over Person: The causes doctrine is more important than the person. Members' character and identity need to be reshaped.
8. Dispensing of Existence: Outsiders are unworthy unless they join the group. Members fear being expelled from the group.

Cult Recruitment Techniques

- **Windows of Vulnerability**
 - Targets are most vulnerable during times of emotional crisis (illness, death of loved one, divorce, etc).
 - Targets judgment is impaired.
 - Target is looking for answers to life's problems.
- **Befriending the target**
 - Compliments and flattery (especially about sources of insecurity)
 - Lure of forming a serious or close relationship.

Cult Recruitment Techniques

- **Invitation to attend a meeting or retreat**
 - Isolation from family or friends.
 - Control over the environment.
 - Difficult to leave.
- **Deception**
 - Withhold the true identity of the group.
 - Withholding the purpose of befriending the target. (Tent revivals)

Cult Tactic Summary

- Try to convince followers that everyone else is wrong.
- Misrepresent God's word and/or change what the bible really means.
- Mix in just enough truth to make the lies believable.
- Other teachings present a danger to the group or society as a whole.
- Warn followers never to listen to other doctrines because they will be easily deceived.

Mainstream Religious Cults

- **Roman Catholics**
- **Mormons – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**
- **Jehovah's Witnesses**
- **Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy)**
- **Scientology (L. Ron Hubbard)**
- **Islam (Muslims – Prophet Mohammed)**

Roman Catholics

Founder: Roman Emperor Constantine

Founding Date: Around 312 AD

Scriptures: The Bible, The Apocrypha, Church Tradition (Catechism).

Leadership Structure:

Pope -> Cardinals -> Bishops -> Priests -> Nuns



Pope



Cardinals



Priests



Nuns



**What's with all
the hats???**

Roman Catholic Problems

- Believe you are saved by baptism
- You keep your salvation by continued “Works”
- You must be cleansed in purgatory.
- The living can lessen purgatory for the dead by indulgences (donations, prayer, deeds)
- Indulgences are possible through Jesus, Mary, and Saints.
- The Pope is Christ’s representative on earth and everything he proclaims is infallible doctrine from God.

Roman Catholic Problems

- Clergy cannot get married or have children.
- The bread and wine of communion (Lord's Supper) are literally and miraculously changed into Christ's flesh and blood (this is actually cannibalism and is called transubstantiation).
- Christ's sacrifice is literally repeated over and over at every mass.
- Mary was sinless.

Roman Catholic Problems

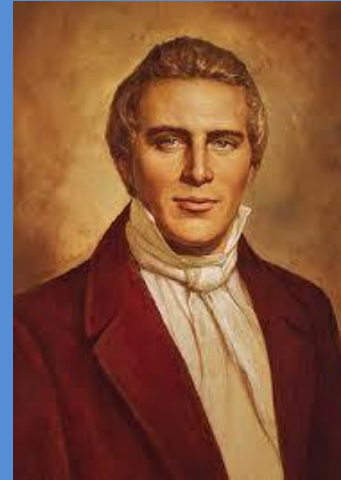
- Mary's body was brought to heaven (she did not die).
- Mary or priest is intermediary between Christ and man.
- They worship idols (statues, symbols, and crosses) and dead saints.
- Believes that their traditions and the "Apocrypha" are equal to the Bible.

Mormons

(The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

Founder: Joseph Smith

Founding Date: April 6, 1830



Scriptures: Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, KJV Bible.

Structure: Prophet -> 12 Apostles -> 1st and 2nd Councils of 70 (general Authorities)

Mormon History

- Joseph Smith was born December 23rd, 1805 in Vermont.
- At the age of 14, he was praying and God the Father and Jesus visited him and told him that all present religions were an abomination and that he should not join any of them.
- On September 21, 1823 at the age of 17, he was visited by the angel Moroni.

Mormon History

- Moroni was the son of Mormon, the leader of the Nephite people in the 4th century AD.
- Mormon wrote “The Book of Mormon” in reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics on golden plates and hid them near Palmyra, NY so that Joseph Smith would one day find them.
- On September 22, 1827 Joseph Smith found the plates and began translating them.

Mormon History

- Joseph Smith translated the plates by placing a “Seer Stone” into a hat, he would then place his face into the hat.
- A spiritual light would appear and show him 1 character at a time that he would tell to another person in the room (a scribe named Oliver Cowdery) for them to write down.
- They would repeat it back to him and then it would disappear so another character could be shown.

Mormon Problems

- Many Gods (Council of gods)
- God is not eternal (He was a man who worked his way to being God)
- God was once like us
- Jesus and Lucifer are brothers and Lucifer wants to be the savior of the world.
- Men become “gods” based on good works and merit.
- God the Father’s name is Elohim and he lives on a planet near the star Kolob.

Mormon Problems

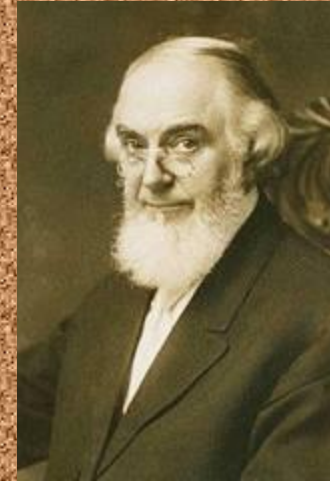
- God the Father is married to the “Mother God”.
- All humans are offspring of the heavenly father and heavenly mother.
- Brigham Young (mormon prophet) believed that people lived on the moon and the sun.
- Black people are colored due to misdeeds in pre-existence.
- They baptize dead people.

Mormon Problems

- Jesus had many wives and children.
- There are different levels of heaven
- Salvation for women is dependent on her husband.
- Works are necessary for salvation.
- Temple rituals include secret handshakes, secret names, and even secret underwear.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Founder: Charles Taze Russell



Founding Date: 1879

Scriptures: Watchtower Bible and Doctrinal Publications

Structure: President -> Governing Body

Jehova's Witnesses History

- Charles Taze Russell was born in 1852 and founded the “Zion’s Watch Tower” in 1879.
- Changed name to “Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society” in 1884.
- Rejected the doctrine (existence) of hell.
- Rejected nearly all other Christian doctrines.
- Wrote 6 volume series called “Studies in the Scriptures”.

Jehova's Witnesses History

- Held the 1st national assemble in 1893 at the Calvary Baptist Church of Chicago.
- There were about 360 followers present and 70 of them were baptized.
- Russell died in 1916 and Joseph Rutheford took over.
- Rutheford slowly changed the original doctrine setup by Russell in his publications called "Harp of God".

Jehova's Witnesses History

- Rutheford had many critics and many of them left the core group to form other sub-cults.
- Due to confusion, the official name was changed to “Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society” in 1931.
- The group grew to over 115,000 by 1942 mainly due to the false prophecy that the world was about to end and Armageddon was going to happen any day.

Jehova's Witnesses History

- Between 1943 and today, there have been 3 different presidents and the total membership has risen to over 6 million members worldwide.
- Don Adams is the current president and has been since 2003.

Jehova's Witnesses Problems

- Rejection of the Trinity.
- Jesus is the 1st created being.
- Jesus is the Archangel Michael.
- Jesus was not physically resurrected from the dead (only His soul was raised).
- The Holy Spirit is not a person but just a force.
- Use “New World” bible translation (corrupted)
- Watchtower organization is a prophet.

Jehova's Witnesses Problems

- Don't allow blood transfusions, vaccinations, or organ transplants.
- Are against serving in the armed forces.
- Are against celebrating ANY holiday (birthdays, Christmas, Mothers day, etc...)
- Not saved by grace but must be a member of WBTS and must continually strive to be good, upstanding, and an active Jehova's Witness.

Jehova's Witnesses Problems

- 2 classes of saved people...144,000 who will go to heaven and the rest will live forever on earth in a type of earthly paradise.
- (Revelation 7:3 KJV) Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the **servants of our God** in their foreheads.
- (Revelation 7:4 KJV) And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed **an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand** of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Jehova's Witnesses Problems

- IF THEY JUST KEPT READING...
- (Revelation 7:5 KJV) Of the tribe of Juda *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.
- (Revelation 7:6 KJV) Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand.
- (Revelation 7:7 KJV) Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.
- (Revelation 7:8 KJV) Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

Jehova's Witnesses Problems

- There is no hell...Just non-existence.
- The creative work took God 42,000 years (each day was 7,000 years long).
- God rules the universe from His home in the Pleiades star system.
- Teach that all Christianity is false except for the Jehova's Witnesses "theocratic" organization that is run by a few men in Brooklyn, NY.

How to Treat Cults

- Preach the Gospel to them in a loving fashion.
- If they will not listen or get angry then avoid them.