

Deadly Religious Cults



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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 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 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.

Extreme (Death) Cults

- **Heaven's Gate**
- **The People's Temple (Jones Town)**
- **Branch Davidians**
- **The Family (Charles Manson)**
- **Moonies**

Heaven's Gate

Founder(s): Marshall Applewhite & Bonnie Nettles

Founding Date: 1972

Scriptures: Holy Bible



Structure: Applewhite & Nettles were leaders over 37 followers.

Heaven's Gate History

- May 17, 1931- Applewhite is born in Spur, Texas
- Applewhite fired from job
- He checks himself into psychiatric hospital due to depression and hallucinations.
- He meets Bonnie Nettles who was a nurse at the mental hospital.
- Nettles was also a prominent member of the Theological Society (God Society)
- Applewhite leaves his family for Nettles.

Heaven's Gate History

- Nettles convinces Applewhite that he was sent from the Kingdom of God to lead his followers to a divine realm.
- Applewhite and Nettles form “Heaven’s Gate” cult.
- They tell people that they are the 2 chosen witnesses from **Revelation 11:3-4**

Heaven's Gate History

- (Revelation 11:3 KJV) And I will give *power* unto my **two witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days (1260 days), clothed in sackcloth.
- (Revelation 11:4 KJV) These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

Heaven's Gate History

- They tell people that aliens exist and a select few can communicate with UFO's.
- They told followers that after 1260 days of witnessing, their enemies would kill them.
- They would then be brought to heaven by a spaceship.
- They had approximately 200 members and they split the group then went into the wilderness for 6 months.

Heaven's Gate History

- Whoever remained after 6 months was chosen to evolve with them to the next level.
- A computer business called “Higher Source” provided them with money.
- They mis-interpreted scripture related to Armageddon as referring to UFO visitation.
- They convince followers that they are supposed to meet up a with UFO that is behind the “Hale-Bop” comet.

Heaven's Gate History

- They all needed to kill themselves to get to the UFO and it would then take them to heaven.
- 21 women and 18 men from ages 26 to 72 committed suicide by eating applesauce laced with sleeping pills, taking a shot of vodka, and putting a plastic bag over their heads to suffocate themselves.
- 1997- 39 bodies discovered in a rented mansion located in Rancho Santa Fe, California

Heaven's Gate History

- They were all wearing black and a pair of new Nike sneakers.



The People's Temple

Founder: Jim Jones

Founding Date: 1955

Scriptures: Holy Bible

Structure: Jones was leader



The People's Temple History

- The Jonestown cult (officially named the "People's Temple") was founded in 1955 by Indianapolis preacher James Warren Jones.
- Jones, who had no formal theological training, based his liberal ministry on a combination of religious and socialist philosophies.

The People's Temple History

- Everybody had to give their money to Jones.
- Everybody worked to keep the camp self-sufficient.
- Parents would publicly beat their children for transgressions.
- Husbands and wives would be required to punish each other.

The People's Temple History

- There were no disagreement since rules were clearly laid down by Jones.
- Nobody left the commune because they would have to admit they were wrong to begin with – and they no longer had any money to support themselves.
- Jones introduced 'outside threats' which he took care of to enforce his position as a protective father figure.

The People's Temple History

- Relatives of cult members soon grew concerned and requested that the U.S. government rescue what they believed to be brainwashed victims living in concentration camp-like conditions under Jones's power.
- Relatives described them as living zombies. They petitioned the US Government to do something.

The People's Temple History

- Relatives of the 'cult' disappeared in the Guyana jungle looking for them;
- People could not contact their relatives.
- There were social security irregularities about the community;
- Human rights were being violated...People were being held against their will and they were being brainwashed.

The People's Temple History

- In June 1978 Debbie Blakey, a defector from “Jonestown,” claimed that the community at “Jonestown” had, on a number of occasions, rehearsed for a mass suicide.

The People's Temple History

- In November 1978 Congressman Leo Ryan went to Guyana to interview its inhabitants.
- After having his life threatened by a Temple member during the first day of his visit, Ryan cut his trip short and attempted to return to the U.S. with some of the Jonestown residents.
- As they boarded their plane, a group of Jones's guards opened fire on them, killing Ryan and four others.

Congressman Leo Ryan



The People's Temple History

- Some members of Ryan's party escaped, however. Upon learning this, Jones told his followers that Ryan's murder would make it impossible for their commune to continue functioning.

The People's Temple History

- Rather than return to the United States, the People's Temple would preserve their church by making the ultimate sacrifice: their own lives.
- Jones's 912 followers were given a deadly concoction of purple Kool-Aid mixed with cyanide, sedatives, and tranquilizers.

The People's Temple History



The People's Temple History



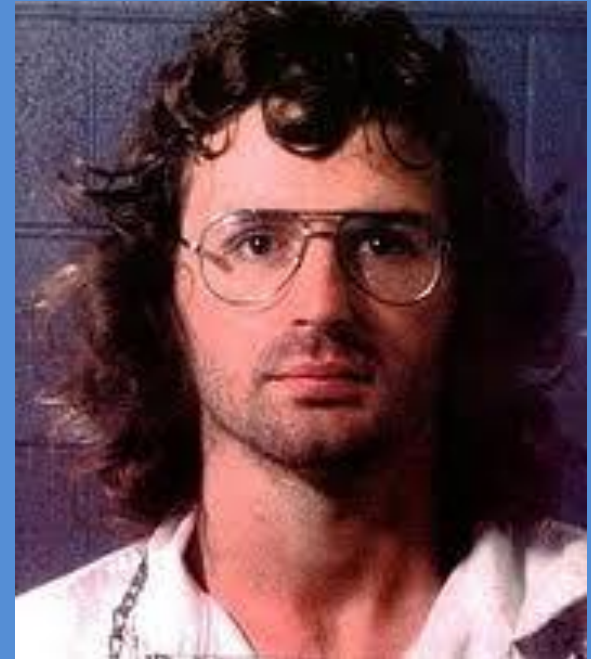
Branch Davidians

Founder: David Koresh

Founding Date: 1935

Scriptures: Holy Bible

Structure: David Koresh was Prophet & Leader



Branch Davidians History

- David Koresh was born Vernon Howell in 1959 in Houston, Texas.
- His mother was 14 years old.
- His father abandoned David and his mother when he was two years old.
- His stepfather was harsh and his home life was unsatisfactory.
- In school, he was often teased.
- He was dyslexic and he eventually had to drop out of high school

Branch Davidians History

- He had a n interest in religion and memorized the New Testament by the age of 12 years old.
- At age 20, he joined The Seventh-Day Adventist Church his mother attended.
- He was kicked out of that church for telling the pastor that God wanted Koresh to have the pastor's daughter as his wife.

Branch Davidians History

- Established himself as the leader of the Branch Davidians by 1990.
- After becoming the leader he isolated his members so that they would only rely on him and no one else.
- He convinced his followers that by practicing what he taught they would be spared by God come Armageddon.
- People loved and worshipped Koresh as a great man.

Branch Davidians History

- His sermons were very motivating, and he had a keen ability to manipulate biblical texts in his own favor.
- He abused his own children mentally and physically, and once had his son locked in a barn.
- He advocated Corporal punishment and brutally punished children as young as 8 months old.
- Koresh instructed the children of the couples to address their real fathers as “dogs” and him as “father”.

Branch Davidians History

- He convinced his followers that he was given the power by Jesus Christ to open the book in **Revelation 5:1-5**

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the **Root of David**, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. (**Revelation 5:1-5 KJV**)

Branch Davidians History

- His terrible behavior began to alienate some of the followers and the truth about the Branch Davidians finally compelled the FBI to take action.
- The ATF division staged a raid which took a wrong turn, and by the time they got to Koresh, they found him as well as 75 followers dead
- Twenty-five of the dead were children, 12 of which Koresh fathered

Branch Davidians History



Branch Davidians History



Branch Davidians History



How to Extreme Treat Cults

RUN!