



Christian or Cult?

Year 11 & 12

7th November 2010

What is a religion?



A complex system of beliefs and practices which point to a set of values and an understanding of the meaning of existence.

– High Court of Australia

A particular system of faith and worship –
Oxford Dictionary



What makes a cult different from mainstream religions?

A relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or as imposing excessive control over members

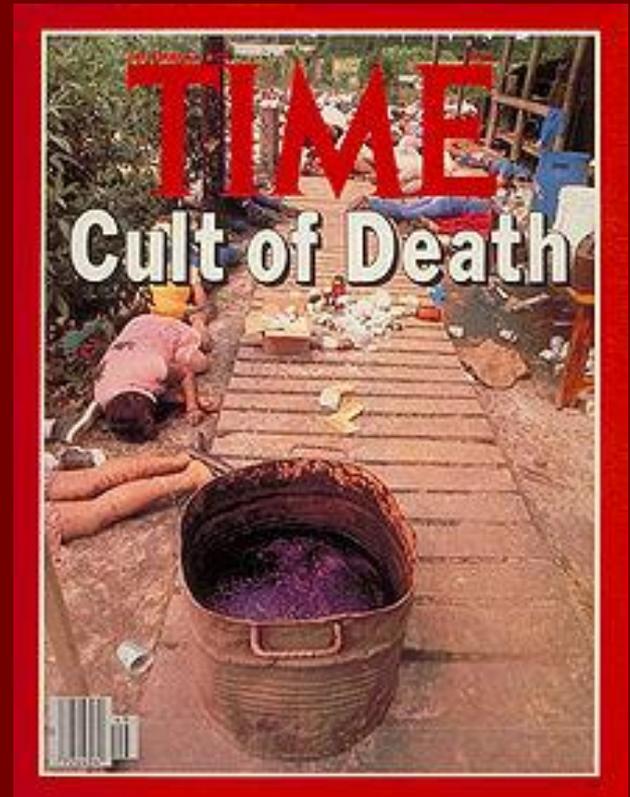
– Oxford Dictionary

Are cults always a small group of people?

No!

What makes a cult different from mainstream religions?

On Nov. 18, 1978, in Jonestown, Guyana, more than 900 members of the Peoples Temple cult, led by Rev. Jim Jones, an American, committed suicide by drinking poisoned punch. The mass suicide immediately followed the murder of Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.), who was visiting Guyana to investigate Jonestown and was ambushed along with several others at the Port Kaituma airstrip. Source: Associated Press, Aug. 7, 1985



Why do I need to know the difference?

❖ **False prophets will abound;**

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber. 2 Pet. 2:1-3

Why do I need to know the difference?

❖ **To have a correct understanding of my faith;**

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Tim. 2:15



❖ **To be able to give a reason for my faith;**

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed." 1 Pet. 3:15–16

Why do I need to know the difference?

❖ To be able to preach the word;

"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." 2 Tim. 4:2



❖ Our Lord warned us about this;

Why do I need to know the difference?

Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows." Matt. 24:3-8

Why do I need to know the difference?

❖ **St Paul the apostle also warned us about this, so we should be well-prepared;**

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. 1 Tim. 4:1



Why do I need to know the difference?

❖ **Fifty million** Americans are involved in some form of the occult, this includes;

- Magic
- Astrology
- Reading tarot cards
- Palmistry
- Numerology
- Going to psychics, mediums & clairvoyants
- Séances/using a Ouija board
- Witchcraft
- Satanism

MASSIVE NUMBERS

❖ **Forty million** Americans read their horoscopes everyday to see what their zodiac sign says they should do!

So, what's the difference?

We **MUST** be clear about our own faith first in order to answer this question...

❖ **There is ONLY ONE TRUE GOD;**

"You are My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, and besides Me there is no saviour." Is. 43:10-11

So, what's the difference?

❖ **God is Spirit who fills the heaven and the earth;**

"Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD. Jer. 23:24

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:24

❖ **God is not man;**

"I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror." Hos. 11:9

So, what's the difference?

❖ **Our Lord Jesus Christ is Almighty God incarnate in the flesh;**

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.
1 Tim. 3:16

❖ **Our Lord Jesus Christ pre-existed in heaven;**

And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." John 8:23

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. John 1:1-2

So, what's the difference?

❖ **We become children of God through baptism;**
For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. Romans 8:14-16





So, what's the difference?

❖ **The gospel by which we are saved is: that our Lord Jesus Christ provided forgiveness of sins, resurrection and eternal life through His finished work;**

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. 1 Cor. 15:1-4

So, what's the difference?

❖ **We are saved by grace through faith unto good works as God's workmanship;**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Eph. 2:8-10



So, what's the difference?

❖ **God makes us new creatures as the Author and Finisher of our faith;**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor. 5:17-21

We also need to be clear about who God is (His character)!

- ❖ **God is Spirit**
- ❖ **God is Living**
- ❖ **God is Self-existent** (existed eternally with no beginning and no end)
- ❖ **God is Immutable** (unchangeable)
- ❖ **God is Omnipotent** (all-powerful)
- ❖ **God is Omnipresent** (He is everywhere)

We also need to be clear about who God is (His character)!

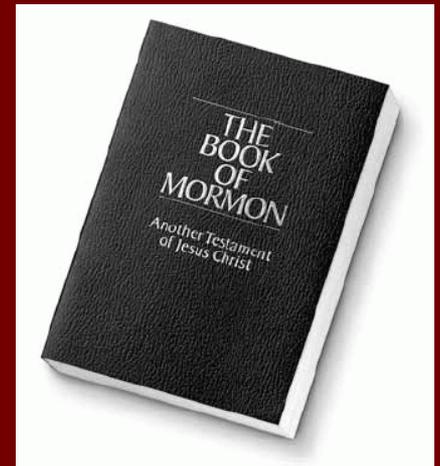
- ❖ **God is Omniscient** (all-knowing)
- ❖ **God is Transcendent** (not limited by our three dimensional world or by time)
- ❖ **God is Sovereign** (having supreme authority)
- ❖ **God is Holy** (absolute purity, perfection & majesty)
- ❖ **God is Love**
- ❖ **God is Truth**

The Cults

There are four groups of cults:

1. Pseudo-Christian Cults

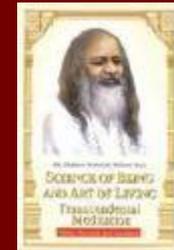
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Christian Science
- Unification Church
- The Way



The Cults

2. Oriental Cults

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Hare Krishna
- Yoga
- Zen
- Transcendental Meditation
- Divine Light Mission



The Cults

3. The New Age Cults



- Church of Scientology
- Human Potential Movement
- A combination of Eastern philosophy and Western humanism
- “You can become God yourself!” – the ultimate lie which was first used by the serpent in the Garden of Eden

The Cults

4. The Spiritist Cults or the Occult (had a look at these earlier)

- Magic
- Astrology
- Reading tarot cards
- Palmistry
- Numerology
- Going to psychics, mediums & clairvoyants
- Séances/using a Ouija board
- Witchcraft
- Satanism



What the cults say about Jesus Christ

- ❖ Jehovah's Witnesses? They say He is the archangel, Michael, and that He was the first creation of God, came to earth as a man, died on a stake and rose invisibly as a ghost.
- ❖ The Mormons say that Jesus was simply one god in a pantheon of gods, He's the brother of Satan, that the cross and blood of Christ is foolishness. He points the way, but we ourselves are our own 'way.'
- ❖ Mary Baker Eddy taught in Christian Science that Jesus was a divine idea, a nice idea.
- ❖ Sun Myung Moon, in the Unification Church, says that Jesus was a man who failed, and that he, Sun Myung Moon is the second coming of Jesus Christ.

What the cults say about Jesus Christ

- ❖ The Bahais say that Jesus is one of nine great world manifestations. They say it does not matter what religion you believe, that all religions are basically the same.
- ❖ The Unitarians say that Jesus was a good man but his followers mistakenly deified him (made Him a god).
- ❖ The Spiritists say that Jesus is an advanced medium in the sixth sphere in the astrological projection... wherever that is.
- ❖ The Rosicrucians say that Jesus is the man at the station of cosmic consciousness.

What the cults say about Jesus Christ

- ❖ Maharishi and Transcendent Meditation says Jesus was an enlightened guru who never suffered or died for anyone.
- ❖ Shirley McLaine (a famous actress) says that we are all "Jesus Christs."
- ❖ And the list goes on & on

The Jesus Christ of the cults is not the Jesus of the Bible. Their Jesus is a false Christ who can save no-one.

Who is the real Jesus Christ?

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*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

1 John 4:1-3

Who is the real Jesus Christ?

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12



In Summary

Salvation is not a man-made system or organisation, but it is **a gift of God.**

It was bought and paid for by the eternal Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who was the infinite sacrifice, who shed His blood on the cross, for an infinite amount of sins, that we could come by faith and receive that free gift of salvation.

That's why they call it "good news." It is the true power of God Himself in each and every one of us.

Questions?

