

GOD'S WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS AND TEACHINGS

See to it that no one misleads you,
"For many will come in My Name saying, "I am the Christ"
and will mislead many" (Mt. 24:4-5)

Throughout Scripture there are numerous warnings about false prophets, teachers, and doctrines, which are contrary to the Word of God. As God's people, we have a responsibility to be on guard against the subtle devices strategized by Satan to counterfeit the Truth (2 Cor. 2:11). We must be prepared with the Word to know how to combat the powers of darkness (Eph. 6:10-18), so that we will not be "tossed around by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men by craftiness in deceitful scheming (Eph. 4:14, 11-16). Jesus himself used the Word of God to defeat the lies of Satan (Mt. 4:1-11) and sets the example for us to do the same. Observe these Scriptural warnings!

- Deut. 13:1-5
- Deut. 18:20-22
- Prov. 16:25
- *Matt. 7:15-23
- Matt. 15:6-9
- Matt. 24:4-5,11
- Matt. 24:23-24
- Mk. 7:6-13
- Mk. 13:5-6,22
- *Acts 20:28-31
- 2 Cor. 2:17
- 2 Cor. 4:2
- *2 Cor. 11:3-4
- *2 Cor. 11:13-15
- *Gal. 1:6-9
- *Gal. 2:4-5
- *Gal. 3:1
- Eph. 4:14
- Phil. 3:2
- *Col. 2:8-10
- *Col. 2:16-23
- I Thes. 3:5
- *I Tim. 4:1-2
- *I Tim. 4:6-7
- *I Tim. 6:3-5
- 2 Tim. 2:14-18
- *2 Tim. 3:1-9
- 2 Tim. 3:13
- 2 Tim. 4:3-4
- *Titus 1:10-16
- Heb. 13:9
- *2 Pet. 2:1-3
- *2 Pet. 2:10-22
- *2 Pet. 3:3-4
- I John 2:18-24
- I John 2:26; 4:1
- II John 7-10
- Jude 4
- Jude 8
- *Jude 10-19

*Furthermore, notice the Biblical description of false teachers and their characteristics.

THE TESTS OF A PROPHET

TEST	CONFIRMED TRUE PROPHETS			ADDITIONAL PROPHETS
	Moses	Isalah	Jesus	
1. A true prophet prophesies only in the name of the God of the Bible. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:20)	Deuteronomy 6:4 ff	Isaiah 1:2	Luke 4:17 ff	Krishna Consciousness followers speak in the name of the Hindu god Krishna. Transcendental Meditation devotees speak on the authority of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his teacher Shri Guru Dev — whose mantras and ceremonies praise the Hindu gods.
2. A true prophet speaks only at God's initiative, only by revelation from God, never by means of the occult, astrology, etc. (Numbers 12:6; Deuteronomy 18:9-14, 20; Isaiah 8:19 ff; Jeremiah 14:14 ff, 23:16-40 ff, 27:9 ff, 29:8-23; Lamentations 2:14; Ezekiel 13, 22:28; II Peter 1:20 ff)	Exodus 4:12-16	Isaiah 7:3-11	John 3:34, 5:30, 8:26,38, 12:50	Jeane Dixon knows astrology and writes a horoscope column. Palm readers, as well as Ouiji board, crystal ball and Tarot card users prophesy by occult methods.
3. A true prophet has a high moral character consistent with God's holiness and righteousness. (Jeremiah 14:13-15, 23:9-16, 21 ff, 27:9-16, 29:8 ff, 21-23; Lamentations 2:14; Ezekiel 13; Malachi 3:5-12; Matthew 7:15-20; Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; II Peter 3:2; I Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:2 ff)	Exodus 32:19	He realized his sinfulness, God cleansed it, then he obeyed God's call. (Isaiah 6:5-8)	II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26; I Peter 2:22	Sun Myung Moon , head of the Unification Church, and David (Moses or Mo) Berg , head of the Children of God, encourage their followers to lie or cheat to further their cults. They believe that because only their cults are true Christians, God's grace has set aside their obligation to obey traditional moral and political laws and that it is all right to lie to an irredeemably wicked world. ¹⁰
4. A true prophet must receive a definite call from God to serve Him as a prophet. (Jeremiah 14:14 ff, 23:21-32)	Exodus 3, 4	Isaiah 6	Matthew 3:16 ff; John 8:29 12:50, 17:18	Guru Maharaj Ji proclaimed himself to be a manifestation of God at the death of his father, who also claimed that rank.
5. A true prophet has a message in harmony with God's previous revelations, neither adding to or subtracting from anything in the Bible. (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32-13:3; Proverbs 30:6; Galatians 1:6-9; I John 4:2 ff; II John 7; Revelation 22:18)	Genesis 1:1 ff, 6-10, compare with Job 38:1-11	God's holiness, compare Isaiah 6 and Exodus 19:10-24	Luke 4:16-21, compare with Isaiah 61:1 ff	Sun Myung Moon's followers claim he is the Messiah and he does not deny it, yet in John 4:25-26 the Bible names Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Herbert W. Armstrong of the Worldwide Church of God says that the doctrine of the Trinity is heretical, that Christ only began the plan of salvation at the cross, but that we must finish it ourselves. ¹¹ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi says, "[TM] is the only way to salvation and success in life; there is no other way." ¹² He also says, "We are all 100% Divine, consciously we do not know that we are Divine . . ." ¹³ Buddha taught that to reach enlightenment and freedom from reincarnation, man does not need any gods or God, but that he does it all through his own efforts. ¹⁴ Confucius taught a system of ethics based on the premise that man is basically good and that all men should work for the common good. He participated in traditional Chinese religious ceremonies, including ancestor worship. ¹⁵ Mohammad taught that there is no Trinity and that Jesus Christ was not God the Son, but only one in a long line of prophets. ¹⁶ Joseph Smith and Brigham Young of the Mormons felt that <i>The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants</i> and <i>The Pearl of Great Price</i> join parts of the King James Bible in making up the Word of God. They taught that God was once a man who has since been exalted and that Mormons will also be gods. ¹⁷ Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy claimed that her book <i>Science and Health, With Key to the Scriptures</i> was inspired by God and that the blood of Jesus Christ did not atone for our sins because man is basically good and already possesses salvation. ¹⁸ Unitarians do not believe in the Trinity and that Jesus Christ was either God and the Son or the Messiah. ¹⁹
6. A true prophet must have all his prophecies historically fulfilled (Some may be fulfilled in the distant future, but all must eventually come to pass). (Deuteronomy 18:21 ff, Lamentations 3:37)	Deuteronomy 18:15	Isaiah 7:14, 9:6 ff, 52:13-53:12	Matthew 24:2,11,24	Jehovah's Witnesses said that Jesus Christ returned in 1914. Jeane Dixon admits, "People have often asked me how I know that what I receive psychically will come true. The answer is: My predictions do not always come true." ²⁰
7. A true prophet calls people to repent and obey the Lord, no matter how his audience responds. (Jeremiah 23:14,17, 22, 29; Lamentations 2:14; Ezekiel 12:22-28 13:10-16, 22; II Peter 3:3-13)	Deuteronomy 5	Isaiah 1:16-20, 6:9-12	Matthew 5-7; Luke 4:16-29	Many modern theologians and proponents of the new morality feel that situation ethics can justify sin and that repentance is unnecessary.
8. A true prophet is discerned by believers in God as being a true prophet. (I Corinthians 12:10, 14:29; Thessalonians 5:20 ff)	Exodus 14:31	Isaiah 38:5, compared with 38:19 ff	Matthew 16:16; John 4:19, 6:66-69	Christians (defined as people who trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation) generally regard all of those mentioned previously in this column as not being true prophets.

WHAT IS A CULT?

The term "cult" has been greatly confused in our society. Newspapers, T.V., and radio have used such terms as "weird", "sinister", "authoritarian", "incomprehensible" in defining a cult group or any religious movement that is not regarded as "normative expression" of religion in our total culture. It, therefore, leaves the "judgment" vague, subjective and confusing because there is no established "truth source" which can be sought to determine the matter. People Magazine, therefore has called Campus Crusade, Colson's Prison Ministry, and Jesus for Jesus, "cults" (they're not!).

Cults, from a Biblical and historical Christian stand point, are religious groups "which claim authorization by Christ and the Bible, but neglects or distorts the gospel, the central message of the Savior and the Scripture" (Gordon Lewis).

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

To combine a variety of credible sources from a Biblical perspective, I have listed the most common characteristics that will help you to recognize a false cult.

1. Rejection of one or more of the fundamental doctrines of Biblical and historical Christianity. Such as: The Trinity, the Deity of the Holy Spirit, the Deity of Jesus Christ, the authority and inspiration of the Bible, life after death, sinfulness (depravity) of man, eternal life (heaven), eternal punishment (hell), salvation by faith in Christ's work on the cross.
2. Redefining words and terms in Scripture to fit their own interpretations and presuppositions contrary to Biblical and historical Christianity.
3. Minimizing the absolute authority of God's Word - diluting the Bible, saying "It's not that important", "It's been written too long ago", "The Bible/Jesus is a way".
4. Claiming to have extra-Biblical revelations - other angelic messages, prophetic utterances, prophecies, dreams, visions, books/writings (past and present) that are equal, if not more, authoritative and complete that Scripture. Note Jude 3-4; Heb. 1:1-3; Col. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:16 say those scriptures were/are complete. Furthermore, notice the warnings of adding or taking away from God's established Word. (Rev. 22:18-19; Deut. 12:32; Prov. 30:6). The Bible "plus" anything else always ends up minus the Bible.
5. Exalting a modern-day prophet or some individual to be equal to, if not a higher authority than Christ. The following of one man and making his statements or interpretations and explanations of Scripture the final authority, creates a false "Messiah" who will eventually "control" his followers. Biblical Christianity does not condone or accept a "dictatorship" in the church (3 Jn.). This means park your mind - you cannot read or interpret the Bible for yourself or disagree with "their" sole interpretation. Beware of those individuals who claim exclusively the inside track into understanding the Bible. Read: I John 2:20-27; Eph. 4:10-16; I Jn. 4:1-6; Heb. 12:2; 4:14; I Tim. 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:1-3.
6. A false view of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The core of cultism is found right here: "Who is Jesus Christ?" They will deny that He is (and always has been and always will be) 100% God and 100% man. They will deny His virgin birth, sinless perfection of His humanity, His substitutionary, sacrificial death on the cross as the final and complete payment for sin, His bodily resurrection, and His second coming. The rejection of just one of these doctrines, devalues and diminishes the person and work of Christ and would imply that He is a failure or a liar! (Heb. 1:1-3; Col. 2:9; Jn. 8:58; 10:30; 14:6; I Pet. 2:24; 3:18; Lk. 24:36-43; I Jn. 4:1-6).

7. The claim that only their exclusive special group will be saved - often they denounce all others who don't believe exactly the way their interpretations and beliefs are explained from their extra-Biblical authorities. They claim to have all the answers so all must believe the same. This teaching creates an intimidation factor, which establishes control over those who may disagree or challenge the teachings, or those who want to leave. "You'll burn in hell if you leave this group", is often what is said to hang on to followers.

8. Isolation - "Desert your family", "stay away from other churches". When a religious group demands such a separation of it's followers and cuts off all other input in some kind of "communal-censorship-control", it's time to get out!

9. Secretive (esotericism) - They practice closed membership or conduct secret meetings open only to the specially "initiated" or "enlightened". When outsiders or visitors are forbidden entrance into these "sacred sanctions" it contradicts the very example of Jesus Christ who "spoke openly to the world, and taught in the temples and synagogues and said nothing in secret"! (Jn. 18:20). Truth is to be spoken in love, not discriminatively! Jesus didn't say, Go into all the world and keep these secrets He said, "Make disciples teaching them all I have said"!

10. Over-emphasis on obscure or minor doctrines. Getting hung up on unnecessary details, rules, diets, days, dress, man's traditions and opinions ... will create extremists (Theologically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally) and legalism. They will be unbalanced, guilt-ridden, and tend to be "out of touch with reality" (Mk. 7:6-13; Mt. 23:23-28).

11. Demands total commitment to an organization. Calling all its members to submit totally to the dictator of the sect's leadership. Some economic exploitations subtly begins by controlling peoples income, finances and possessions contrary to the Scriptural motivations (I Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:2-5; 9:6-8). Whenever any religious dictatorship begins demanding exclusive loyalty and extreme degrees of submission in areas that God's Word doesn't authoritatively speak to, it's a violation of God's Word (Mt. 4:10-11; Acts 5:29; 2 Pet. 2:19).

12. Promoting Salvation by works or some subjective experiences. (a) Anyone proclaiming salvation (how one can have their sins forgiven and go to heaven) through any other source or even twists verses out of context causing contradictory and confusing ideas that are inconsistent with the whole counsel of God declared in the Bible is a cult. Subjective experiences have to do with finding "salvation" within yourself some mystical divine light within reach. Or it may have to do with some strange felling-oriented phenomenon that "zaps" you. Or it may be experienced through man doing something like chanting, speaking in tongues, meditation, fasting, or some act of law keeping. This kind of subjectivism makes man and man's experience the central focus of the salvation process. Biblical and historical Christianity acknowledges Jesus Christ as the focal point of salvation. It's what He did on the cross for me that I must put my faith in, not "something" that happens to me or by me (2 Cor. 5:19). We must walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7), and not lean on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6). (b) All cults deny complete salvation by grace and faith alone. They say you have to do some further works to eventually earn it or at least maintain it. They believe God will only accept many on the basis of his performance. If that were true, Christ died in vain - His work was not sufficient if man had to now "add to it" Why then, did Jesus say, "It is finished" or "Paid in full" (Jn. 19:30). Salvation by man's efforts only results in bondage to man's rules. Self imposed guilt causes them to do "more" and more all the time, "hoping" they'll make it. The Bible clearly teaches salvation is NOT based on man's performance/works (Titus 3:5; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9), but based on faith in Jesus Christ alone and His finished work, dying for our sin in our place (2 Cor. 5:21; Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 8:1-3; Rom. 3:20-26; 5:8). Good works are a result of true salvation (Eph. 2:10; Mt. 5:16), motivated out of love and gratitude for the gift of eternal life. Works can never earn or merit God's grace. If we had to do something to deserve it, it would no longer be free. And eternal life is a free gift (Rom. 6:23). Besides that, no one would ever know if they had it, if it depended on a "good enough" performance, yet the Bible says we can know (I Jn. 5:11-13)!

Therefore, in defining these common characteristics of a cult, one must certainly be careful to accurately obtain the facts! While not all these characteristics may be present in a particular group, if just one or two is clearly observed it should seriously raise a red flag and you should question it. If there is any doubt about a specific religious group, do not pursue it, but thoroughly investigate them from other credible sources. (A list of such sources is available.) So, in finalizing any conclusions, the absolute and final authority is the Word of God. Biblical and historical Christian theology is well documented and defined in numerous creeds and doctrinal statements of the true church. Any teaching that comes along deying, deleting, redefining, contradicting or adding to the scriptural doctrines of the Bible (39 books of the Old Testament and 27 of the New Testament) is false and therefore must be refuted and/or rejected as "cultic".

WHY IS THERE SUCH A RISING - THRIVING INCREASE OF CULTIC ACTIVITY?

WHY ARE PEOPLE DRAWN INTO THEM?

1. They are a sign of the end times (Mt. 24:3-5). "Doctrines of demons" will increase in the last days (I Tim. 4:1).
2. Most of God's people have not learned how to intelligently communicate their faith in Jesus Christ and logically explain why Biblical and Historic Christianity is the truth. The church has largely failed in its responsibility to obey Christ's mandate (Mt. 28:17-20; Acts 1:8; I Pet. 3:15). People know they're sinners and feel guilty - they need forgiveness! And we have the answer. If we don't tell it, the cults will fill the void!
3. People are genuinely thirsting and searching for personal security, significance and satisfaction. Scripture uses the terminology, strong desires (Js. 1:12-25). Call it happiness, pleasure, power, prestige, whatever! The bottom line is that man is driven by an inward emptiness that he longs to have filled. Unfortunately, Satan knows how to best lure every person away from the truth and the cults practically appeal to many of those needs in peoples lives.
4. People have a genuine interest in spiritual things; they are always looking for religious and philosophical answers to life - Who am I? Why am I here? Who is God? What is truth? The cults provide their answers to many deep and profound questions.
5. Some people are desperately vulnerable; they've come through painful hurts, and abuses in their life experiences with parents, family, relatives and are looking for hope, help and love from human relationships. Many times people end up believing anything just as long as they perceive their needs are being met, whether it is acceptance, love, or just feeling important.
6. The gradual erosion of moral standards, absolutes, and family values have weakened society as a whole and created a subsequent problem of disillusionment. In a day where nothing seems to work right and be the way it ought to be, people will gravitate toward that which touches them at the core of their being.
7. People are looking for a change. Not only a change in their own personal unfulfilled or boring lives, but also in society. Many people want to make a difference in this world. They want to have a worthwhile purpose and a significant impact on others. A group that marshalls together its resources for good and positive accomplishment with promises of a better life (eutopia) will powerfully attract and unify those who share those goals.
8. Our society also has many influential voices in the media and printed page. People look up to heroes, movie stars, musicians, authors, who often introduce and endorse certain false beliefs.

9. Cults are "attractive" and appealing. They make many promises to people. They demand a high level of commitment, involvement and sacrifice. They meet people where they're at. They use attractive literature and subtle ambiguous terms. They are well prepared and grounded in what they believe, so as to skillfully manipulate their arguments. Above all, they have a supernatural demonic influence which will deceive and trick people into a false sense of security!

10. Finally, cults thrive because most people don't know what or why they believe! They don't have any accurate theological knowledge or Biblical foundation on which to stand firm. The cults then come along with "right-sounding truths". Initially, they "bait the hook" and the unsuspecting, undiscerning seeker gets drawn in like a moth to a flame! Most people don't know enough about the warnings against false teachers or don't think through these "alternative beliefs" thoroughly enough to intelligently challenge them on a Biblical - Truth - Basis. Certainly, the more you know the truth (God's Word!) the more alert you'll be to error. In the U.S. Treasury, the worker is so familiarized with the real money that the counterfeit is identified immediately! Unfortunately, our society has rejected the truth for so long that they can no longer distinguish between right and wrong and so their vulnerability will be capitalized on by Satan who will tailor-make his doctrines of demons to fit whatever people desire.

For whatever reasons cults are thriving: Ignorance of the Truth, genuine spiritual search, philosophical questioning, personal needs (approval, acceptance, appreciation, attention, affection), change in life, internal desires for fulfillment and happiness, society and church breakdown causing disillusionment, guilt, hurt, escapism, lack of purpose and meaning in life, or personal problems which propel them to solutions, it can all be summed up in the fact that people are empty and thirsting. They're drinking from empty wells. Jesus said, "All you who are thirsty come to me and you'll find rest and refreshment" (Jn. 7:37-39; Mt. 11:28-30)!

WHY WOULD GOD ALLOW ALL THIS SPIRITUAL CONFUSION?

It is very important to read the following scriptures in order to get the "whole picture". Understanding God's answers to our questions is more complete when we examine the surrounding contents in the Word. (I'm simply stating an observation.) Believe it or not, God does permit false teachers and teachings to exist because of many specific Sovereign purposes which He has revealed. We will benefit greatly in spiritual maturity the more we understand and cooperate with what He desires to accomplish. God allows spiritual confusion:

1. To show the reality of the spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18) and the supernatural enemy, Satan. Scripture says God is not a God of "confusion" (I Cor. 14:33). Satan, by way of contrast, (but recognizing his limitations), represents sin, evil and wickedness to the fullest extent and therefore opposes God's "order" and will. Even though Satan is a defeated foe through the power of Christ (Heb. 2:14; I Jn. 3:8), he will nevertheless continue to promote unrighteousness in every form (Jn. 13:2; Acts 5:3). He is called the "prince of this world" (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and the "prince and power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). As the "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4) he "blinds the minds" of the lost. The "whole world lies" (Jn. 8:44), and therefore will deceive the world (Rev. 12:9; 20:3) by confusing, contradicting and counterfeiting God's truth in every way possible (2 Thes. 2:9). The "time table" of God in ultimately stopping him in the future is certain! (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). To understand more on this subject, see the study entitled, "A Biblical View of Our Enemy", and "Why Does God Allow Sin, Satan and Suffering to Exist?" Make no mistake about it, Satan definitely has a diabolical agenda to destroy peoples lives by getting their focus off Jesus Christ.

Therefore, don't attempt to preoccupy your time trying to figure him out, just realize that God's Word is all that we need, and be prepared with it to defeat the onslaughts of Satan! So, to return our focus to the topic at hand, why else does God

Therefore, don't attempt to preoccupy your time trying to figure him out, just realize that God's Word is all that we need, and be prepared with it to defeat the onslaughts of Satan! So to return our focus to the topic at hand, why else does God permit these cult groups?

2. To show the radical direction of man's thinking apart from God. People are volitional beings. That means we have the capacity to choose and make decisions based on an act of our will. Scripture genuinely holds forth the offer "whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). God in some sense, by way of contrast, allows man to go his own way (Isa. 53:6), resulting in the freedom to rationalize - think apart from God and thereby make choices. The results of Man's thinking and choosing apart from God's revelation, the Bible, are quite evident and that's why there are so many false belief systems, idolatries, philosophies, religions, heresies, cultic and occultic practices. (Prov. 16:25; 3:5-6; I cor. 2:14). Read Romans 1:16-32 to see the depravity of man's sinfulness and Romans 2:1-16 to see the response of God, and Romans 3:10-26 for God's solution! God does not force anyone to worship Him. So man, by rejecting God and His Word, is vulnerable to lies and will "fall for anything" in order to attempt to be in control of his own destiny! For example, man would rather believe we came from monkeys, than to face the reality of standing in the presence of a Holy God someday and giving an account of his life. The point then is that if man would trust in Jesus Christ as God's provision for the sin problem, he wouldn't "fear" judgement ... because of promised forgiveness (Rom. 8:1; Prov. 28:13; I Jn. 1:9). However, God gives man over to his choices. We're not puppets, and the variety of foolish thinking that's out there should drive one, all the more, to hunger and seek for "the way, the truth, and the Life" - Jesus (Jn. 14:6).

What are some futher sovereign purposes God desires to accomplish by allowing false teaching?

3. To test true believers (Deut. 13:1-5), to see who His people will follow and how we will respond. To expose what's in our own hearts!
4. To expose "heresy" and false teaching and reveal His truth by way of a sharp contrast (I Cor. 11:19).
5. To force intellectually honest, truth seekers into the Word of God (Acts 17:11; Jn. 5:39; 2 Tim. 2:15).
6. To cause us to be sharp, alert and discerning (I Jn. 4:1-6). Are we being obedient to "test the spirits"? We must examine and prove what is right and wrong!
7. To keep His people fixed steadfastly on sound doctrine (I Tim. 4:6; 10-16).

HOW ARE WE, AS CHRISTIANS, "COMMANDED" FROM SCRIPTURE

TO RESPOND TO FALSE TEACHERS/TEACHING?

The Word of God is not silent to these issues, unfortunately, most Christians would rather "bury their heads in the sand" and try to avoid any and all "confrontation" with the matter. You have, perhaps, heard the statement, "The easiest way for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing". While those exact words are not a quote from scripture - the principle is there - we are to "overcome evil by doing good" (Rom. 12:21). The church has sadly been slack in getting the gospel of Christ out to the world. In reality, most of God's people have dropped the "gospel baton" in the race (or may have never even picked it up!) and have given up to comfortably sit on the side lines.

I think that's one reason why the cults (as well as many other problems) have been on the increase. Hypothetically speaking, if God's people would have taken their spiritual commitment and responsibility more seriously by standing up for the truth and refuting the error (false teaching) aggressively (in love), the Word of God would have triumphed. We can not remain in neutral and cannot be disobedient to the following ways God tells us to respond.

Mt. 5:13-16

Mt. 7:15-20

Mt. 28:19-20

Acts 20:28-32

Rom. 1:16

Rom. 16:17-18

1 Cor. 14:29

2 Cor. 4:3-5

2 Cor. 5:20

2 Cor. 10:3-5

2 Cor. 13:5

Eph. 4:3

Eph. 4:11-16

Eph. 5:11

Eph. 6:10-18

Col. 2:5-7

1 Thes. 5:21

1 Tim. 4:10-16

1 Tim. 6:12

1 Tim. 6:20

2 Tim. 2:15,19

2 Tim. 2:21-26

2 Tim. 3:12-17

2 Tim. 4:2,5

1 Pet. 3:15

2 Pet. 1:10

2 Pet. 3:14

2 Pet. 3:18

1 Jn. 4:1-6

2 Jn. 10

3 Jn. 3-8

Jude 3

Jude 20-23

Titus 1:13

Titus 1:9

Rev. 2:14-16

The following statements sum up many of the previous scripture references. To further your personal spiritual enrichment, study the verses contextually, and organize your own thoughts on how God's Word instructs us to respond in these matters:

1. Know what you believe; why you believe it, and teach it to your children! (Deut. 6:1-9; Prov. 1:8-10; 2:1ff; 3:1ff; 4:1ff; Eph. 6:4).
2. (a) Know, to the point of intelligible conversation, key points of doctrine that common cults hold to which contradict Christian theology (because they initially present only similarities in beliefs which disguise deeper issues).
3. Live what you believe! The greatest witness, along with verbally communicating, is a life that exemplifies Jesus Christ. (A witness is both!)
4. Use your mind! Think, listen carefully, ask questions. Be alert to terms used and how they are defining them as well as interpreting the Scriptures. (See "Key Questions to Ask Cultists".)

5. Demonstrate love and concern for cult members, yet be factual, firm and consistent in your use of the Scriptures. Remember, they too are people with needs ... who Satan has blinded and deceived. They may be sincere ... but sincerely wrong enough to lose their soul for all eternity!

6. Learn positive lessons from the cults - many have strong commitment, bold confidence, sacrificial devotion, zealous motivation, thoughtful intellectual arguments and impressive determination (that puts many Christians to shame). Negative lessons show their isolation, censorship, brainwashing, and subtle control over their lives (money, food, sleep, schedule, mind, will, emotions). Those things create a distorted, unbalanced perception of reality which proves destructive!

7. Prayerfully depend upon the Spirit and power of God:

- in determining your involvement

"be ready always to give an answer" (I Pet. 3:15)

- in understanding how to use the Scriptures and available resources appropriately and effectively

"accurately handling the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 3:15)

- in breaking down the "cultic barrier"

"tearing down strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

- in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ

"you are my witnesses" (Acts 1:8)

8. If they reject the gospel and will not deal only with the fundamental issues from Scripture - cut off the relationship! They could no longer be considered intellectually/spiritually honest! (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:11; Col. 2:8; 2 Thes. 3:14-15; I Tim. 1:19-20; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-22; 3:1-13; Titus 2:12-14; 3:9-11; 2 Jn. 7-11; Lk. 10:2-16).

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK CULTISTS

"HOW TO TEST THE SPIRITS"

1. Who do they say that Jesus Christ is? (I Jn. 4:1-6)
2. Do they acknowledge that He is and was by nature eternally God? They may say He is the Son of God, but do they say He is God, the Son, second person of the Trinity?
3. Do they acknowledge that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed One of God who came in the flesh (I Jn. 4:1-3)?
4. Do they believe that His shed blood on the cross is the only basis for the forgiveness of sins?
5. Do they believe that He bodily rose again from the dead?
6. a. What do they believe about how a person can get to heaven?
b. On what do they base their salvation?
7. a. Do they teach the same thing as the Bible does about God?
b. Do they teach the same thing as the Bible does about the Holy Spirit?
c. Do they teach the same thing as the Bible does about salvation?
d. Do they teach the same thing as the Bible does about man?
8. What other "prophets" and "writings" do they also depend on?
a. What do they teach?
b. How do you know they are right?
9. Can they show you in Scripture what your reasons are for believing _____?
10. a. What/who is their final authoritative truth source?
b. How do they know it's true?
11. What other "possible reasonings" may be behind their pursuing this belief system, and why? REMEMBER! Anytime that any group talks about the nature of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, salvation, life after death, (heaven or hell) or any other related spiritual matters and their definitions/explanations are not consistent with what God has revealed already in the Bible, BEWARE! It is a false cult!

COMMON CULTIC (FAESE) CLAIMS & THE SCRIPTURES THEY CONTRADICT

"The Bible is not the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God" 2 Tim. 3:16
2 Pet. 1:20-21, Jn 17:17; Ps. 19:7; 119:89; Prov. 30:5-6; Lk. 16:16-17; Jn. 10
Lk. 1:1-4; Gal 1:12; Mt. 5:17-18

"The Bible is not complete - there are still more revelations needed" Heb 1:
Col. 1:17-19; 2:9+10; Prov. 30: 5-6; Rev 22:18-19; Jude 3.

"Jesus is a way" Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11; 1 Tim. 2:5, Rom 10:9-10, 13

"Jesus is not God" Jn 1:1-3, 14; 8:24, 52-59 (58:); 10:30-33; Rev. 21:5-6;
22:13 Rev. 1:13-18; Heb. 1:6 Mt. 4:10

"Jesus was not a man" Lk. 1:30-35; Heb 2:14-18; Acts 2:22-24; Phil. 2:5-11;
Jn. 1:14; Isa. 9:6-7; Mt. 4:2; 8:24; 9:36; 14:23; Jn. 11:33, 35; 12:27; 19:2
Heb. 5:7

"Jesus is not the Christ/Messiah" Mt. 16:13-17; Lk. 23:2-3; 2:11; Jn. 4:25-2

"Jesus' death on the cross was not enough for salvation" Jn. 19:30; Rom. 5:1
Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2; Rom. 3:23-26; 5:8-19

"Man is not that bad - "he's basically good, he's not a sinner", "he just needs
to find truth within himself" Rom. 3:10-12, 23; Mk. 7:20-23; Jer. 17:9;
1 Jn. 1:5-10; 3:4; 5:17; Js. 4:17.

"Sin is not that serious" Js. 1:13-15; Rom. 6:23; Math. 5:21-22, 27-28;
Ex. 23:7; Js. 2:10; Esek. 18:4; Heb. 1:13

"God would not judge people or send them to hell" Lk. 13:3; 16:19-31;
Mt. 25:30-46; Rev. 20:11-15; Acts 17:31.

"Man can achieve salvation by his own ability/efforts/works" Rom. 5:6, 8;
3:20-28; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Gal. 2:16.

"There are many gods" Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 43:10-13, 44:6-8; 45:5; 46:9-11;
1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5.

"The Holy Spirit is not God" (3rd person of the Trinity) Heb. 3:7-9; Acts 5:
13:2-4

"There is no Trinity" Gen. 1:26; 1:1-2; Col. 1:15-19; Lk. 1:35; Matt. 3:16-1
2 Cor. 13:14; Matt. 28:19.

TRUTH: The Father is called God (Jehovah; LORD) 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 1; 7
The Son is called God (Jehovah; LORD) Jn. 20:26-29; 8:58
The Spirit is called God (Jehovah; LORD) Acts 5:3-4.

The Trinity is also seen in their equality of the power of the resurrection
Jesus Christ:

The Father raised the Son (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:3
Rom. 4:24; 6:4; 1 Cor. 6:14)

The Son raised Himself (Jn. 2:18-22; 5:28-29; 6:39-40)

The Spirit raised Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18)

CHART OF DOCTRINES OF THE SECTS

	Traditional Christian	Seventh-day Adventism	Jehovah's Witnesses	Mormonism	Liberalism	New Thought	Christian Science	Spiritualism	Theosophy
Bible	Verbally inspired	Reluctant to affirm verbal inspiration; vague about status of Mrs. White (false prophet)	Verbally inspired	Inspired Bible and Book of Mormon	Not inspired	Not inspired	Bible inspired and <i>Science and Health</i> is its inspired interpretation	Not inspired	Not inspired— <i>Sacred Books of East</i> major sources
God	Three Persons in one Essence	Approximate by traditional Christian view	Uni-personal	Polytheism	Uni-personal	Tends to pantheism	Impersonal and Pantheistic	Impersonal, tending to pantheism	Impersonal and pantheistic tendency
Man	Body-soul, created good	Body-soul creature, created neutral or with inclination to evil	Body. Soul not distinguishable from body	Pre-existent soul takes body at birth in this world	Soul is evolutionary modification of body	Body-soul creature	Soul only; body is an illusion	Body-soul-spirit	An aspect of the pantheistic deity
Sin	Result of Adam's disobedience; corruption of nature and action	No clear doctrine of imputation of Adam's sin; man now polluted	Adam's sin brought liability to temporal death	Adam did virtuously in sinning but this brought mortality without guilt	Mistakes based on inadequate understanding	"Trouble-some desires"	"There is no sin"—it is illusion	Disobedience to natural laws	Personal transgression of law (Karma)
Christ	One divine person in two distinct natures (divine-human)	Like traditional view but represents human nature as having tendency to sin	First-born creature; changed into man at birth in this world	Called creator but only pre-existent spirit who took body at incarnation	Eminently holy human being	Christ is a principle; Jesus is a mere man	Christ is divine idea; Jesus is mere human	Jesus was a medium	A human and adept
Redemption	Faith in atonement as expressed by holy life	Believing in atonement made in heaven plus holy living including observance of Saturday Sabbath	Christ's ransom gives man chance to earn salvation	Atonement gives man chance to earn salvation	Salvation by following of Christ	Getting "in tune with the infinite"	Salvation by casting out idea of sin	Against atonement; little stress on morality	Evolution through trans-migrations
Church	Mystical union of all true believers; visible union of all professed believers	Seems to regard itself as true remnant church	Traditional church rejected; 144,000 Witnesses make up church	Other churches apostate; have efficient hierarchical organization	Association of followers of Christ	Leavening force more than an organization	CS is denomination like Protestant, R.C., and Jewish	Loose and tolerant view of church	Organized like lodge
Future	Eternal heaven; eternal hell; temporary purgatory (R.C.)	Annihilation of wicked; millennium in heaven and eternity on new earth	Earthly millennium during which final probation leading to annihilation or eternal life	Pre-millennial reign at Independence, Mo.; tends toward universal salvation	Universal salvation	Interested in this world and prosperity	Universal salvation in future when idea of sin gradually dies	Universal salvation via purgatories and trans-migrations	Ultimate salvation through many trans-migrations

TRUTH		Word of God		Word of God		
God	PERSONALITY OF THE GODHEAD			Sin	SIN	
	<p>In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Genesis 1:1). He is God; there is none else beside him (Deuteronomy 4:35). God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). Go . . . and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Jesus was baptized; the Spirit descended; the Father spoke (Matthew 3:16-17). Come, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech (Genesis 11:7). From the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me (Isaiah 48:16).</p>				<p>There is none righteous, no, not one (Romans 3:10). For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:10). If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8). Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death (1 John 5:17). Whatever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin (James 4:17).</p>	
	JESUS CHRIST				REDEMPTION	
Christ	<p>In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was God (John 1:1). When, as His mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18). Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16). And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth (John 1:14). No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18). And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4). And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain (1 Corinthians 15:17). Wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25). This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven (Acts 1:11; cf. John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).</p>			<p>We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19). Unto him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kingdom of priests unto God and his Father (Revelation 1:5-6). Without shedding of blood is no remission (Hebrews 9:22). Made peace through the blood of his cross (Colossians 1:20). This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified (Hebrews 10:12, 14).</p>		
	HOLY SPIRIT			Redemption		
	<p>When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, . . . he shall testify of me (John 15:26). When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8). When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth (John 16:13). The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, . . . he shall teach you all things (John 14:26). His spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 8:11). Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; see also 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 3:16). But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9; see also vv. 14, 16).</p>					
Holy Spirit				Salvation		
				SALVATION		
				RETRIBUTION		
			Retribution			
			SALVATION			
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"BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS"

"Beloved do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." I John 4:1

SOME CULTS AND RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY

(which "deny" or "add to" the authority of the Bible as God's Word)

Aetherius Society	Foundation of Human Understanding	Reorganized Church of Jesus
American Indian Religions	(Roy Masters)	Christ of Latter Day Saints
Ananda Marga Yoga Society	Freemasonry	Rev. Ike
Anthroposophical Society	Gurdjieff	Roman Catholicism*
Arica Institute, Inc.	Himalayan International Institute	Rosicrucianism
Armstrongism	of Yoga Science & Philosophy	Satanism
Asatru Free Assembly	(Swami Rami)	Sathya Sai Baba
(Norse Neopaganism)	Hinduism *	Scientology & L. Ron Hubbard
Ascended Masters	Holism	Seventh Day Adventism
Assemblies of Yahweh	Holy Alamo Christian Church	Self-Realization Fellowship
Association for Research and	Consecrated (Tony Alamo)	(Paramahansa Yogananda)
Enlightenment (Edgar Cayce)	Holy Order of MANS	Shintoism *
Astara	Human Potential Movement	Shree Rajneesh
Astrology	I AM Institute of Applied	Sikh Foundation/3HO Foundati
Baba-lovers & Meher Baba	Metaphysics	(Yogi Bajan)
Bahaism	I Ching	Silva Mind Control
Black Magic	International Community of	Snake Handlers
Black Muslim Cult	Christ/The Jamilians	Spiritualism/Spiritism
Branhamism	International Society of	Sri Chinmoy
British Israelism	Krishna Consciousness	Swami Kriyananda
Buddhism *	(Hare Krishna)	Subud/Renaissance
Children of God	Islam *	(George Gurdjieff)
(Family of Love)	Jehovah's Witnesses	Sufism Reoriented, Inc.
Christian Science	Judaism *	(Meher Baba)
Church of Armageddon	Kirpal Light Satsung, Inc.	Swedenborgianism
(Love Family)	Krishnamurti Foundation of	Taoism
Church of Bible Understand-	America	Theosophy
ing, (Forever Family)	Ku Klux Klan	Theime, R.B.
Church of the Living Word	Liberalism	Trance Channeling
Church Universal &	Life Training	Transcendental Meditation
Triumphant	Lifespring	UFO's
Cole-Whittaker, Terry	Macumba	Unification Church (Rev. Sun
Confucianism *	Manson, Charles, Cult	Myung Moon)
A Course in Miracles	Marital Arts	Unitarian Universalist Asso.
Crowleyism	Mind Sciences	Unity School of Christianity
Da Free John	Mormonism	Urantia
Divine Light Mission	Muktananda Paramahansa (Shree	Vedanta Society (Swami
(Guru Maharaj Ji)	Gurudev Siddha Yoga Ashram)	Vivekananda)
ECKANKAR	Neo-Gnosticism	Voodoo/Santeria
Eastern Mysticism	New Age Cults	The Way International
Esalen Institute	New Thought	Witchcraft
EST	Nichiren Shoshu/Soka Gakkai	Worldwide Church of God
Faith Healing	Nostradamus	(Armstrongism)
The Farm	Penitentes	Yoga
Findhorn Foundation	Primitive Religion	Zen Buddhism
The Forum	Ram Dass	
Foundation Faith of God	Rastafarianism	
(Foundation Faith of the	Reincarnation	
Millenium)		

* Considered to be World Religions

If you desire Biblically-based information on what these belief systems teach and how to use the Scriptures to witness effectively, please see Pastor Tom.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES ON THE CULTS AND THE OCCULT

Audio Tapes Available by Dr. Walter Martin (that I have)

Introduction to the Cults	Witchcraft and Satanism
Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus Christ & the Trinity	Astrology - Danger in the Stars
The Maze of Mormanism	Doctrines of Demons
Christian Science and Healing	Jean Dixon and Edgar Cayce
Spiritism	Charasmatic Movement
Armstrong & the World Wide Church of God	Christianity vs. Occultic Mysticism
Bahaism	Occult Philosophy & Mystical Experiences
Black Muslims	The Bible & Parapsychology
Scientology	Scriptural Misinterpretations
Unity	Psychic Phenomena
Unitarianism	ESP
Zen Buddhism, Hare Krishna & Meher Baba	Hypnotism - Medical or Occult
Meeting Mormon Missionaries	Rosicrucian & Theosophy
Mormon Priesthood and Authority	Church of Satan and the Bible
The Key to Mormon Theology	Tools of the Occult
Helpful Hints in Witnessing to Mormons	Dialogue on the Door Step with Jehovah's Witnesses 1 & 2
The Occultic Revolution	

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- Breese, Dave. Know the Marks of Cults. Victor Books, 1975.
- Enroth, Ronald Enroth, et al. A Guide to Cults and New Religions. InterVarsity Press, 1983.
- * Gerstner, John H. The Theology of Major Sects. Baker, 1960.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. The Four Major Cults. Eerdmans, 1963.
- * Larson, Bob. Larson's New Book of Cults. Tyndale, 1989.
- * Lewis, Gordon R. Confronting the Cults. Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1966.
- * Martin, Walter. The Kingdom of the Cults. Bethany, 1985.
- Passantino, Robert and Gretchen. Answers to the Cultists at Your Door. Harvest House, 1981.
- * Peterson, William J. Those Curious New Cults. Keats Publishing Co., 1973.
- Sire, James W. Scripture Twisting. InterVarsity Press, 1980.
- Tucker, Ruth A. Another Gospel. Zondervan, 1989.
- Van Baalen, Jan Karel. The Chaos of Cults: A Study in Present-Day Isms. Eerdmans, 1962.

* I have these books if you would like to borrow them.

Spiritual Counterfeit Project, Inc.

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510-540-5767 "The ACCESS Line" to call for information on specific cult groups & false teaching.

Mon. - Thurs. 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 (EST)

510-540-0300 Office

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