

SOME SUGGESTED DEFINITIONS  
AND FEATURES OF THE TERM "CULT"

1. "The system of outward forms and ceremonies used in worship" (Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary).
2. "Devoted attachment to, or extravagant admiration for, a person, principle, etc."(Ibid.).
3. "A group of followers" (Ibid.).
4. "A group of religious people follow teachings and practices that deviate significantly from historic Christianity and the central doctrines of the Bible" (Passantinos' Answers to the Cultist at Your Door).
5. "A group of persons gathered around somebody's interpretation of the Bible. It always claims to be in some way or another, in sympathy or harmony with Christianity, but it ends up by having one common trait... every non-Christian cultic system denies that Jesus Christ is God in human form" (Martin, Introduction to the Cults, tape).
6. "'Cults, new as well as old, are usually started by strong and dynamic leaders who are in complete control of their followers'" (Martin, The New Cults, quoted from Robinson, Are Mormons Christian?).
7. "All cults possess some Scripture that is either added to or which replaces the Bible as God's Word" (Ibid.).
8. "The new cults have rigid standards for membership and accept no members who will not become integrally involved in the group" (Ibid.).
9. "Cultists often become members of one cult after membership in one or more cults" (Ibid.).
10. "The new cults are actively evangelistic and spend much of their time in proselytizing new converts" (Ibid.).
11. "Often we find that the leaders or officials of the cults are not professional clergymen" (Ibid.).
12. "All the new cults have a system of doctrine and practice which is in some state of flux" (Ibid.).
13. "In harmony with Christian theology, the new cults all believe that there is continual, ongoing communication from God. However, the cults differ from the biblical Christian church in believing that their new 'revelations' can contradict and even at times supersede God's first revelation, the Bible" (Ibid.).
14. "The new cults claim to have truth not available to any other groups or individuals" (Ibid.).

15. "The last major characteristic of the new cults concerns cultic vocabulary. Each cult has an initiate vocabulary by which it describes the truths of its revelation. Sometimes the 'in words' of a particular cult are the words of orthodox Christianity, but invested with new meanings....At other times the cult may coin new words or phrases" (Ibid.).
16. "A cult is a group of people who embrace a particular doctrinal system taught by either an individual or a group. It has its origins from a particular world religion, but always ends up denying, justifiably or unjustifiably, the essentials of that world religion. In the case of a non-Christian cult, it always denies one or more of the constitutive/essential doctrines of the Christian faith as taught in the Bible" (Sivulka).

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