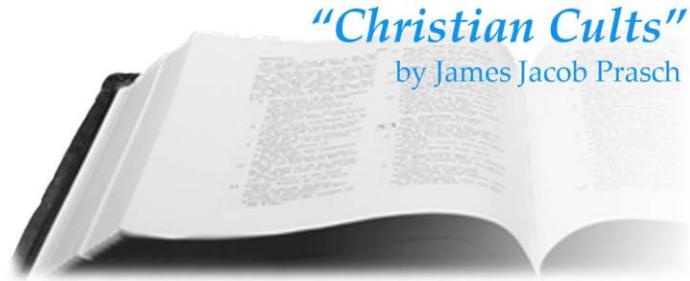




*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path."
Psalm 119:105*



"Christian Cults"
by James Jacob Prasch

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Introduction

In the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, Jesus warned about false teachers, false prophets, false Christs. Now when I was a young Christian it had been my basic assumption this meant Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, things like this. I have no doubt that the proliferation of cults that we have seen in the last century, particularly the last 20 years is, in itself, of prophetic significance; I do not question that. But those are not the false teachers and the false prophets He was mainly warning of. He was warning of those who would come in the Last Days, if possible, to deceive the elect. (Mt. 24:24)

Some, of course, have said that it is not possible for the elect to be deceived. That is a lie in itself. Jesus would not warn about something so much if it was not even a possibility it could happen. However, He warned about ones who would come to deceive Christians. If Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses deceive a Christian, it is basically someone who is newly saved who does not know anything. They are not going to get somebody who has been saved three years, four years, or five years, etc.

It Begins with Men

There is a theological definition of "cults" and a sociological definition of "cults". The two, at some point, inevitably converge.

Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Cor. 1:12-13)

"I of Paul", "I of Cephas", "I of Apollos", "I of Christ". Those who are saying "I of Christ" were the ones saying, "We do not have any leadership or need for leadership. Jesus is our Leader full-stop. We do not recognize any pastoral authority." There were some who were saying that while others were saying, "He's mine, he's mine, he's mine", making a man a guru.

What a cult does is shift the focus onto a man, sometimes even a dead man. There are cults today – and I mean Evangelical cults – which are more popular now than when their founders were alive.

The Assemblies of God rejected the ideas of people like William Branham when he was around. The ideas of E. W. Kenyon were abhorrent to mainstream Pentecostals. The Manifest Sons/Latter Day Rain deceptions – Restorationism, Kingdom Now, and the rest of it – these things were popularly rejected by the mainline Pentecostal denominations including the Assemblies of God in the 40's and 50's. They were seen as cultic. Now these things once seen as cultic and heretical have become increasingly mainstream and there are people today who are Branhamites.

The leader of the cult could be a dead person. These are not cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormon cults, these are cults where people believe the true Gospel. When somebody is saved through one of these groups there is a problem. When a Mormon is saved, no problem: Joseph Smith was a false prophet so we know that the whole Mormon church has gone the way of a lie. When a Jehovah's Witness gets saved, no problem: Charles Taze Russell was a false prophet so we know the whole Watch Tower Society is finished. But when people are born again through a Christian cult there is a big problem with groups which are theologically "churches" but sociologically "cults".

Eventually these groups which are theologically "churches" but sociologically cultic become heretical. Eventually these groups get into apostate doctrine. But in the beginning they begin with the true Gospel.

When somebody is born again through one of these groups the leaders or the leader has a tremendous amount of spiritual and psychological influence and even control over people because they really were born again.

I was born again through "The Children of God". For the first five years of my Christian life I was involved with groups like that. Another one was "The Church of Bible Understanding". Another Christian cult is called "The Bible Speaks", sometimes it is

called “Greater Grace”. What makes these things so dangerous and so bad is they preach the true Gospel. You cannot write them off entirely the way the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons can be written off entirely. There is a big problem. The people who have been in these groups and the people who have been saved through these groups are in bondage. They are in spiritual and psychological bondage to these groups.

The First Marks of a Cult

Notice the apostles like Paul went against this mentality. Did Paul save you? It is Jesus who saves, it is the Gospel which saves – it is not a church. The Roman Catholic Church claims it is the instrument of salvation, that the sacraments administered by their priests is how people are saved *ex opere operato*. These groups will preach Christ, but somehow the distinction is not made between the Christ and the cult.

Paul has a go at their first characteristic, something that later in Galatians he calls “a deed of the flesh”. (Gal. 5:19)

“...*factions*,” (Gal. 5:20)

Sometimes translated “partyism”, perhaps better translated this way as “factions”. The first mark of a cult is what Paul calls “the sin of party spirit”. The sin of party spirit is where the group claims a monopoly on biblical truth. With the party spirit and what will engender the party spirit is some form of Gnosticism, from the Greek word “*gnosis*” meaning “mystical knowledge”.

The Gnosticism in the Roman Catholic Church is called the *sensus plenior* – “the fullest sense” of Scripture. Now there *is* a fuller sense of Scripture, but what they claim is that the pope as an heir of Peter has the infallible insight to define what it is and to determine doctrine on that basis.

In Gnosticism it is not important what the Bible says exegetically, it is important what the **leader** says about the Bible.

John Wimber's movement called "The Vineyard Movement" is based on Christian Gnosticism, a heresy in the Early Church. For instance a basic teaching of the Vineyard and the Latter Day Rain Movement and the Kansas City Prophets is Restorationism and what they call "Joel's Army".

*The run on the cities, they rush on the walls,
Great is the army who carries His word.*

This is compared to locusts. In its historical setting this was Nebuchadnezzar's army, an army God used to judge an unrepentant Judah, but it is also a type of the army of the Antichrist in Revelation. The same locusts in Joel are replayed in Revelation. So whatever this army is in the Last Days it is the army of Antichrist and in Joel 2:20 God says, "I will destroy it. The stench will go up to heaven, I will cast it into the western sea". The Vineyard Movement teaches that this is them. Anyone desiring to be part of an army God is going to judge and destroy should join the Vineyard Movement; join the Manifest Sons of God or the Latter Day Rain Movement.

It does not matter to them what the **Bible** says it is, it only matters what the **gnosis** says it means. "God has shown **me**."

Copeland and Hagin both come from Kenyon. Forget about the fact Jesus said on the cross, "*It is finished*" (Jn. 19:30) and "*Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit*" (Lk. 23:46), the Kenyonites say, "God has shown **me** that Satan got the victory on the cross, not Jesus. Jesus was tortured in hell for three days and three nights as one nature with Satan and then this demon cum Jesus was born again in hell and rose from the dead." It is a different "Jesus" and a different gospel denying the Master who bought them.

The Prosperity preachers? "God has shown **me**." These things are all cultic.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (1 Pe. 21:20-21)

And right after this we have the Greek word “*parasaxousin*” – they put truth next to error. They make the interpretations of things like biblical prophecy a matter of their own interpretation. It is not important what the **Bible** says, it is important what the **leader** claims it says.

Men Establishing Themselves

When these two things (“party spirit” and Gnosticism) come together, look out – it is inevitable a third thing is going to come.

Jesus hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. (Rev. 2:6) Historically we cannot be sure who they were. Some have speculated they were followers of someone named Nicolaus who it is speculated was a son of one of the deacons listed in Acts 6, but nobody knows. Those are stories derived from tradition. What we **do** know is what “Nicolaitinism” means in Greek. “*Nico*” – “suppression” of “the laity” – the people. They set themselves up as overlords.

Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel...

(Now the Hebrew word for “shepherd” and “pastor” is the same.)

... ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. (Ez. 34:1-5)

Biblical leadership is by example, not lording it over others. Jesus castigated the Pharisees for this, yet it got into the Early Church.

When “party spirit” is present it is usually attached to something called “Gnosticism”.
“Oh, but he understands the Bible better than we do.”

There was one case where the guy went totally nuts and said things that were utterly heretical, yet he did have a lot of insight into the Bible. Beware of leaders who believe their own publicity. When somebody who is genuinely gifted allows people to put them on a pedestal, look out. “We don’t understand what he’s doing, but he’s closer to God than we are. He has more insight.” That may be true, but when that person is observed doing things directly contrary to Scripture, “Choose this day whom you will serve.” (Joshua 24:15) But by that point they are usually too far in bondage.

The next thing is Nicolaitinism, the heavy shepherding. “Who are you to question us? Who are you to challenge us? You have a spirit of rebellion.”

The Personality Type of a Cult Leader

I am sure a forensic psychiatrist would tell you the same thing, but the personality type of a cult leader is virtually identical to the personality type of a dictator. There have been forensic psychological autopsies on many dictators including Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin. When a team did the forensic analysis on the personality of Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin in the 1940’s for the British and American allies, they were united in agreement that neither Hitler nor Stalin would have had the guts to fight in the Battle of Stalingrad or the Battle of the Bulge, and certainly would not have been able to stomach doing themselves what they had others doing in concentration camps.

Cult leaders are like dictators – they are personally insecure. A cult leader is a personally insecure person who surround their self with others who are more insecure than they are so that he may control them and, through them, go to the people. A cult leader will very rarely deal with someone without his honchos with him to shout them down. A cult leader will send one of his parakeets who will basically just ape everything

the cult leaders tells them. The cult leader is insecure and his agents, his deputies, will always be insecure people who are easily manipulated.

Not everybody is the same, but one thing is for sure: when someone is born again they begin to change spiritually. And as they change spiritually they will change psychologically. God changes people from the inside out. As they grow in Jesus they become secure in Christ and then become secure in who they are in Christ. In a Christian cult this fails to happen, groups which in the beginning are theologically “churches” but sociologically “cults”. The people do **not** become secure in Christ. Their security becomes based on this relationship to the leader. It is only a matter of degrees, but they are all the same.

The only difference between most of the house church movements who are into Restoration theology is a matter of degrees as to how cultic they are. They all go the same way. The only thing different about Jehovah’s Witnesses or David Koresh is they have gone further down the road. Given enough time, although these churches are theologically “churches” and only sociologically “cults”, they **will** get into heretical doctrine. Not just minor error, but some kind of fundamental error. “The Children of God” did that, “The Church of Bible Understanding” did that, and given enough time such will engage in doctrinal error. But that is only the beginning.

These people are insecure so they will fear people who know things they do not.

We should not make a god out of education by any means. Apollos and Paul were formally educated, Peter and John were not. Yet the apostolic authority possessed by Peter and John was no less than Paul’s. However, as Peter says in his epistle, “These things are complicated; it is better for Paul to explain them”. (2 Pe. 3:15-16)

Once somebody’s background – their intellect – has been crucified, once a believer learns to trust Christ and not their intellect, their intellect becomes a very good servant. “Intellect” is a good servant but a dangerous master; but “ignorance” is a deadly master.

“Intellect” is a good servant but a bad master; “ignorance” is not only a bad servant and an even more deadly master.

These people will be found to automatically demean anything like a seminary or a Bible college, somebody who reads Greek – they will fear such people. They will have to demean them and put them down within their group and get others to laugh at them because they know they have encountered someone who knows something they do not. They know because someone can read the original Greek or Hebrew or been to seminary are a threat to them. It is much the same with dictators: they fear people who know something they do not so they have to demean it. “You don’t need this!” And they will point out things that are in and of themselves true: “Look at how the universities are filled with Ph.D.’s who know Greek and Hebrew who themselves are on their way to hell; they’re not even saved!” They will play that angle up, but they will not look at the other side of the coin. They will only emphasize things which suit their purpose to control people.

When dealing with the leader of a cult one is dealing with a personally insecure person who can only control people by making *them* insecure.

Beyond Doctrinal Error

Ultimately they will come to this doctrinal error themselves, but inevitably at some point one of two things, if not both, will occur, the first being financial misconduct as described in Ezekiel 34. “You butcher the sheep to eat well yourself, but look how they live”.

One example in America owned five airplanes and took holidays in the Bahamas with his second wife while the people were living in rat-infested slums in high-crime neighborhoods. Some lived in the worst neighborhoods in New York City cleaning carpets 14 hours a day giving all the money to the cult while saying it was supposedly for the children in Haiti. Well maybe some of it was, but it was also for five airplanes that only he and his wife flew.

Financial misconduct is the first. Almost inevitably that disparity will be found to exist. They give themselves a lifestyle they probably could not get in the secular world because they would not be clever enough, much like most of the Pentecostal ministers today. 90% of the Pentecostal ministers would not have the lifestyle they have if they were not Pentecostal ministers. They would not be good enough to make it in a secular business trade or profession.

The second eventually found with these people in most cases is sexual misconduct – immorality. It may go on secretly for some time before it is uncovered.

In the short-term of a cult, these are the warning signs to get out. There will be the sin of “party spirit” in some way related to Gnosticism. They will claim some slant on doctrine which others do not see and followers have to be initiated into it. Eventually it will be discovered that if people do not get out then, they will find financial impropriety and exploitation. Very often they will twist the Bible’s teaching on topics like tithing to do this. And there will be immorality, usually of a sexual nature, sometimes even of a deviant sexual nature.

How This Comes About

Before Satan paganized the church in the 4th Century, we know from the New Testament his first trick was to Judaize it. This is not the same as “Jewish-ize” because the church *is* Jewish theologically. Israel is the natural root. (Rom. 11) We should understand the Scriptures from a Judeo-Christian perspective, not a Hellenistic one. The Lord revealed His given Word through His people, a nation with a given culture, and we have to understand that. It is necessary to theologically understand biblical Judaism to understand biblical Christianity. Jesus fulfills the Law. Satan’s first seduction was to put people back under the Law instead of the Law pointing to Christ.

This has nothing to do with observances. As a family who are Israeli Jews whose children were born in Galilee, we keep the Passover for reasons of culture and testimony to unsaved Jews. There’s a *Mezuzah* on the door, we even speak Hebrew at home. We have Hanukkah, we have Purim, we have all the Jewish feasts. We go to a church on

Sunday but a Messianic fellowship on Saturday – *Shabbat*. This is not about people who are culturally Jewish keeping their own culture to witness to Jews in their own culture, that is not wrong. Neither is witnessing to Jews by people adopting that culture for testimonial reasons as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9. The issue is when someone either says it is necessary for salvation or for sanctification. “Well, you might be saved by grace, but...”

When it is asserted that it is necessary for salvation that is “legalism”. When asserting it is necessary for sanctification, where one is saved by Jesus but they also have to do “this”, “this”, and “this”, that is known as “nomianism” from the Greek word “*nomos*”.

Today there are two kinds of groups to be aware of who are trying to live under two covenants. One is the extreme axis of the Messianic Movement. This does not encompass the good Messianic Bible teachers such as Arnold Fruchtenbaum or people who help Christians understand the Jewish background of the New Testament. This does not involve those who worship in a Jewish cultural framework in order to evangelize Jews. The issue is with those who try to make people keep the Law in a compulsory way.

David Kriss is a dangerous, dangerous man located in Melbourne. But he is not the only Messianic extremist. In England they had Philip Sharp who wound up in jail. He abandoned his Israeli wife and children and had the people crown him King Messiah in a meeting. He’s a “Messianic Jewish Rabbi”. Some of these guys are nuts. There is some kind of Halachic community in Queensland I would not go near with a barge pole.

Again, this does not include the likes of Arnold Fruchtenbaum or Art Katz. This is not about the good guys but the nuts. But it is not only Messianic Jews who are doing this, out to rebuild the wall of partition. There is another group of people who are trying to live under two covenants: Seventh-day Adventists. Most of the followers of David Koresh were Seventh-day Adventists.

Once people get into one serious, fundamental doctrinal error like trying to live under two covenants, they become automatically prone to a more serious one. Once people accommodate one fundamental doctrinal error they automatically predispose themselves to something more serious and even more dangerous. It is only a matter of degrees.

It is hard to believe what went on when reading about Koresh, but there have been Evangelical cults that could get people to do things that are unbelievable. When the tragedy with Koresh occurred, 129 pages of Internet material were downloaded and read very carefully. David Koresh followed this pattern to a "T". Remember, Seventh-day Adventists claim to be born again or at least saved, but there is a lot of false doctrine: the "party spirit", the Nicolaitinism, and all the rest – going under the Law. He would hold 13 hour Bible studies always about the book of Revelation and always about himself. He would become violently angry, throwing chairs and things if people did not pay attention or fell asleep during the Bible studies. These Bible studies were all designed to brainwash people for a coming apocalyptic cataclysm of some description in which they were led to believe by insinuation, by nuance – never directly stated – that their salvation would come about through their relationship with him in this coming fate.

They were so brainwashed that when they shot it out with the FBI they believed that was this coming event in Revelation. But it did not begin that way. What will make people do this? He had to become the sole authority figure. He had these people believing that he was semi-divine. Talk about a Gnostic! Only **his** semen was divinely imbued, so only **he** should procreate children. He did not want husbands to be respected by their wives and children, so he got into this whole humiliation thing. He wanted people to only recognize **his** authority. He would have an attractive woman stand up in a meeting and make her lift up her dress then point to the men, "Who's been aroused by this?" And then he would begin castigating them publicly for lust. They guy was a nut.

He had a boudoir upstairs while the men slept in military style barracks and only the women would go up, whichever one he summoned. Except these were not always adult women – there were children as young as 11. Many of those people who were killed

were undoubtedly people he sired. So he had to berate these men so their wives would not look upon them as a spiritual authority.

Then he would humiliate women. He would do that differently. He made these Seventh-day Adventist style dietary rules which he would modify periodically. So if they went out and bought the wrong kind of chicken or something he would scream at the top of his lungs then post a list. Whichever names of the women were found on the list would be queued up, stripped, and beaten with a paddle. They would queue up every day if their names was on the list. Then they would have to come out undressed in front of their children and he would say, "Do you see what happens to bad mommies?"

How did he get them to do this? Once someone can get people to give them their 11 year-old daughter it is a natural next step that they will die for that person. How did it begin? One serious false doctrine. Once someone gets into one serious false doctrine they become predisposed to another one.

When reading something like *Kingdom of the Cults* and some of the stuff Joseph Smith did (another sex pervert), perverted sex is a big thing among cults.

The true Mormons are the fundamentalist ones. They are the ones who truly follow Brigham Young and Joseph Smith. Moriel USA was doing an outreach to Mormons at Manti, Utah and I met one with eight wives. How did these guys get these women to go along with this? It was not hard to understand because guess how old they were when they married them? These guys are pedophiles – that is how they do it.

When the Saved Do the Same Things

But there is something even more frightening than David Koresh or the Mormons. What about born again Christians – **saved** Christians, who did the same thing?

It was on the front page of the *New York Post* in 1978. A cult which broke away from the Lutheran church in Minnesota, Evangelical Lutherans, were putting children into a metal chair, tying them down and giving them electric shocks for not paying attention in

Sunday School and the parents would stand there watching the teachers electrocute the kids.

There was another one in California that would beat people to drive the demons out of them. The people would allow themselves to be beaten.

There was a young girl in England, a law student, who came to a few of our Bible studies who was originally from Gibraltar. She spoke Spanish. She graduated and became involved with a cult called Raima. Because she spoke Spanish they sent her to Chicago to the Spanish-speaking ghettos. Her friends told me they were really concerned about this group. They had good reason to be concerned. These were saved Christians, but the same pattern of Gnosticism, heavy shepherding, Nicolaitinism, and all the money went to the group. Because she was bilingual and well-educated she had more freedom than other women in the group. She was allowed to come out to meet me and my wife.

In this group the leaders were telling people who were clean to by faith marry people who were HIV-positive and just trust the Lord. They were marrying people with AIDS. They were contracting AIDS. Babies were born HIV-positive. People were dying. Their leaders arranged marriages and they actually signed their own death certificates with their marriage certificates and they died. These were born again.

I took her to meet my wife, I talked to her, I phoned her parents in England. I took her to a rescue mission and said, "Lock her up, don't let her out of here. I'll be back tomorrow." I gave them \$50 or whatever and got an airline ticket back to England. I took her to O'Hare Airport after calling her parents and told her, "If I catch you on this side of the Atlantic again, lady, that's 12-1/2 extra wide – guess what I'm going to do with it?"

They were telling people to marry people who were HIV! How do they get this kind of control? It did not happen overnight, it began with "party spirit" connected to Gnosticism connected to Nicolaitinism.

Taking It a Step Further

Once it is forgotten that Jesus is our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30) they begin looking to a man for the wisdom. When believers stop being a Berean, when they stop testing things, they forfeit to that person a kind of control over their life that God never wanted anybody to have except Himself. (Even He never forces Himself that way or manipulates.)

It gets to the point where even if they say and do things not biblical, people will not question. Even if they say and do things which are immoral, people will not question. They lose their capacity to think rationally. Again, it only becomes a matter of degrees between the so-called "Christian" cults and the ones which are obviously pseudo-Christian.

While in Utah last year the Mormons all had these t-shirts which read, "Brigham Young said it, I believe it, that settles it". Now whenever a Jehovah's Witness is cornered they change the subject; that is what they are trained to do. A Mormon will revert to their testimony, the subjective proclamation, "I have a burden in my bosom and I testify to you that the Church of Latter-Day Saints is true". That is supposed to settle every issue. No matter how many logical arguments you confront them with which they cannot answer, their testimony is supposed to be the ultimate explanation. It is completely subjective.

The Mormons came into Utah while we were there and I said, "I like your shirt" and they said, "Hallelujah" or whatever, to which I said, "So you believe there are Quakers living on the moon? You said if Brigham Young said it, you believe it. This man believes there are Quakers on the moon because Brigham Young said it!" Here it is, straight from the Mormon church's *Journal of Discourses* where Brigham Young and Joseph Smith said there were Quakers living on the moon to be a thousand years old. And Brigham Young said they're on the sun, too.

I saw a black guy and said, "You know what? The New Testament says the first non-Jew to accept Christ was a black African from Ethiopia. The first person not from any Jewish background whom Jesus saved was a black man. But do you know what the Mormon Church says, what Brigham Young said about you? You are a descendant of fallen

angels, you are ugly, mischievous, and a depraved nigger. Who do you want to follow: Jesus who loves you or a Mormon who says you are ugly, mischievous, depraved, the descendant of fallen angels, and who calls you racist names? Here, Brigham Young said it! You will believe it according to your shirt! This man is ugly, mischievous, and depraved because God made him black!" And how did the Mormon reply? "I testify to you I have a burning in my bosom! I know the Church of Latter-Day Saints is true!" And what did I say to him? "I have a burning in my bosom and I testify to you I know there's Quakers a-livin' on the moon!"

Logic goes out the window. The plain teaching of Scripture goes out the same window. Subjectivism steps in.

A Sobering Thought

*The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and **sober** spirit for the purpose of prayer. (1 Pe. 4:7)*

Remember the video of Rodney Howard-Browne and Copeland where they advise, "Just get drunk, don't pray"?

Therefore, prepare your minds for action...

...be **drunk** in spirit?

*...keep **sober** in spirit... (1 Pe. 1:13)*

*Be of **sober** spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Pe. 5:8)*

I was once riding in a 4 x 4 near Victoria Falls along the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe on my way to a speaking engagement at a church. We were going through the bush – lion country, and could see a giraffe. The person driving said, "It's getting dark now, at this time of night lions go after that kind of giraffe." So I am looking out for

lions and all of the sudden there goes the wheel. “Be sober in spirit. The lion is trying to get you.” If I ever wanted some whiskey it was then. This was no Tarzan movie. This was the **real** bush in **real** Africa with **real** lions, it was getting dark, and I was scared. Admittedly I could only say two things: “Lord Jesus” and “Jack Daniels”. But the last thing I needed to be was in an inebriated state where I would not be vigilant.

Three times Peter says, “Be sober”. Paul warns, “*But you, be sober*”. (2 Ti. 4:5) In fact this same Peter whom they quote in Toronto meetings they were drunk on the day of Pentecost says these men are **not** drunk. (Acts 2:15) They heard the mighty deeds of God, not drunken hysterics. So they are shown that the Bible says to be sober repeatedly and not drunk in the Spirit as Rodney Howard-Browne is teaching.

The pastor of Faithland in Melbourne was not into Toronto but had five friends who were – five Pentecostal ministers. Some of their churches I have spoken at in times past and they are all into Rodney Howard-Browne. I showed them the videos of Howard-Browne and Copeland in Toronto and they could not defend what was on it. They knew it was heretical, they knew it was carnal and even demonic, but they still insisted they were going to Toronto to see Howard-Browne. Why? They were not “blind”, they were **willfully** blind. These were the leaders, misleading whole congregations! Jesus Christ will hold them accountable as shepherds as it says in 1 Peter 5 for misleading the flock.

The fruit of the Spirit is *egkrateia* in Greek – “self-control”. (Gal. 5:22-23) So this is shown to them along with what it says in Peter: “Be sober”, “Be sober”, “Be sober”. But look at their answer. Did they answer biblically? No. Did they answer logically? No. Did they answer cultically? Yes. “I was blessed! I know it was right because of what happened to me!” What does a Mormon say? “I got a burnin’ in my bosom and I know it’s true!” It is not logical. Logic goes out the same window with the Bible. It is only a matter of degrees.

There is not much difference any more between the Assemblies of God and the Mormons, they have gone the same way, just further down the same road. Now there are some good, individual Assembly of God churches; I think they need to come out, in

my opinion. They are going down the same road. It is just a matter that one is further down the road than the other.

Further Down the Same Road

The psychological bondage which happens has a demonic character. When the people leave they are automatically ostracized by the other people still in the cult. It is like Catholicism. You left the one true church so it is a mortal sin, go to hell, go directly to hell, do not pass "Go", do not collect \$200. That is it – the unpardonable sin. The other people will turn against those leaving because those leaving are free while those remaining are in bondage. But are they free? No they are not, not right away.

A person can be taken out of the cult but they are so confused and have been so hurt and manipulated it takes a longer time to take the cult out of the person. It is like that rock song *Hotel California* – "you can check out any time you want but you can never leave". The person can be taken out of the cult but to take the cult out of them is not so easy. They remain in psychological and spiritual bondage to it, particularly if they were saved in it. And they cannot be accommodated in other churches because other churches cannot understand what they went through. There is a secret fear that they have, "What if they were right?" This battle takes place within and sometimes it goes on for years.

Sometimes people have had nervous breakdowns and become mentally ill because of it. Some have turned to alcoholism and drugs. Some have committed suicide. Marriages have broken up because of it.

Another common phenomena is they have been so hurt and so burned they can never trust another church or another leader again. The solution to a bad church then becomes no church. The solution to bad leadership becomes no leadership. Actually the right solution to wrong leadership is right leadership, and the solution to bad church is good church. But they cannot accept that. Others do not understand what they have been through. No one understands what is going on inside of them. They can come to a

church but they do not fit in until something happens. It takes time for that to happen, but it eventually happens.

This is a big problem and it is getting bigger. And before Jesus comes back it will be bigger still.

First formulated by a social psychologist named Leon Festinger, he was interested in the social psychology of religion and he identified the phenomena called “cognitive dissonance”. I do not know if he was a Christian or not, but even secular sociology and psychology can see the phenomena. Cognitive dissonance states when people become cemented to a sect with this heavy control by the leadership, and the leaders make predictive prophecies which fail to happen, instead of the people using their noggin and coming out, they will become even more committed to the sect.

One of the things to do when the Jehovah’s Witnesses come to the door is to show them back copies of *The Watchtower* where their leaders have predicted things which have failed to happen. You can show them from *The Watchtower* and *Awake* magazines where it quotes Deuteronomy 18, “Those predicting things in God’s name that don’t happen are false prophets”. (Dt. 18:22) They can be shown this from their own literature quoting the Bible. But when logic goes out the window, the Bible goes out the window. They cannot see it.

What can be done with the fact that men like Gerald Coates predicted an earthquake in New Zealand that never happened? In the Elim cult all forty-four churches were taking survival course lessons or something like that.

What do you do with the fact that Rick Joyner has made major predictions in his book *The Harvest* which failed to happen? He said Communism was going to be triumphant and five months later the Iron Curtain came down.

What do you do with the Kansas City Prophets, men like Paul Cain and Mike Bickle who said the greatest revival in Britain’s history would come to Great Britain in October of

1990 and fan out to Germany? In the last 10 years more mosques have been built in England than churches

What about men who are proven false prophets such as Benny Hinn prophesying falsely in New Zealand, or Rodney Howard-Browne seen on TV in Australia with Phil Pringle predicting revival that did not come? What do you do with these men who make predictions that do not happen? Deuteronomy 18 says to get away from them, do not be afraid of them, and have nothing to do with them. In a cult, though, it does not matter.

Is there any difference between what the Jehovah's Witnesses or the Mormons do and the people who will still listen to Benny Hinn or Rodney Howard-Browne? No, there is no difference. They have only gone further down the same road. This is known as "cognitive dissonance". Even secular psychology can identify it. Even the world sees it for what it is. They become even more committed to it.

They will always make an excuse to defend it or set another date or something like this. Then when that does not happen they will get that wrong, the same as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

These guys have been predicting revival for years. No revival comes so they predict another one. If Toronto does not come we will get the Alpha. If the Alpha does not work we will get the Pensecola. When Pensecola does not work we will get Pepsi-Cola®. When that doesn't work we will try Seven-Up®. It does not matter. There will always be the next fad. People will swallow anything. Why? Because they have become incorporated into a cult. It is cultic. It is following men.

"Yeah, but the Word of God says I shouldn't listen to you anymore." It does not matter to them because they are in bondage and it is terrible. Saved Christians are dead, Families and marriages have been destroyed by these kinds of people.

Not only that but these people are frauds and Charlatans themselves! They are highly insecure and usually do not know a fraction of what they want you to think they know.

They fear anybody who does know more than they do. That is why they will demean any kind of education or learning. They are as bad at one extreme as those who lift it up and make a god of it on the other.

It is like what Arnold Fruchtenbaum says, "I don't care if you are Plymouth Brethren, I don't care if you are Open Brethren, I don't care; but don't be ignorant brethren."

In the Same Manner as the Sanhedrin

If somebody was saved through this and it was the only thing they ever knew, it is understandable how this could happen to them. But what happens when people get into this who are not saved through it? That is even worse in terms of being even more pathetic.

Suppose you have been in one of these groups. It will follow the same pattern shown here. The way the leader operates, the fear of knowledge – anyone who knows what he does not, using others to be his messengers, he has some special insight into the Bible where if someone does not see it they are into rebellion because they do not submit to his authority, others turn against you to put you under condemnation or put a curse on you. (They will always tell you about the people who left the group and died; they will not tell you about the ones who stayed and died.) They are very selective about how they handle things. These people operate just like the Sanhedrin.

Jesus said to the Sanhedrin, "Why do you arrest Me and bring Me in here for a kangaroo trial? Why didn't you come after Me in the Temple where everyone could see it?" These guys will never openly debate in front of a video camera or in an auditorium in front of the open public; it always has to be in front of their cronies.

Michael Brown, the deceiver of Pensacola, a so-called theologian and great Hebrew scholar, when I talked with him discovered he could not even speak a word of Hebrew. He came to Israel some years earlier saying that the national forest fires which destroyed 22% of Israel's forests was the emblem of God's Holy Spirit being poured out on Israel. He had people waiting up all night for the second Pentecost. He was supposed

to debate me about Pensecola. The date was made at a church near New York mid-week so people could come from any church without missing their own church, a neutral venue. He finds out I have the Joe Chambers videos where Kilpatrick is caught lying about the vibrating girl and right away he cancels the debate, demanding it be held at a Pensecola place on a Sunday night. Why? Because cult leaders will only fight you on their own turf.

It will always be like the Sanhedrin putting Jesus on trial. They will never stand openly. It has to be only where they control people. They will never go into a fair fight; they do not have the ability or the guts. These are insecure people. That is how they operate. It is like being afraid of a tiger with no teeth. These people are frauds.

Recovery

Sometimes it takes months, sometimes it has even taken people years to take that person out of that central role in their life and put Christ in that role instead. These people are in unspeakable bondage. And unless you have been in that bondage you do not understand where they are coming from. You will not even be able to grasp what their problem is. Why can they not fit in?

Not only that, but they will even say a lot of true things. “The church is lukewarm.” “The cult was more zealous.” “You are Laodicea.” Well, that is true. That is the danger. They are not just telling “lie” lies, they are telling **Satan’s** lies – perversions of truth. But look at the results, look at the damage; it can be found every time.

They begin sociologically as “cults”, theologically “churches”, but give them a few years – not more than ten. Then you will find heresy, you will find financial corruption, you will find immorality. But maybe at the end of it you will find Jesus.

If you are in bondage to one of these groups the Bible says...

“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”. (2 Corinthians 3:17)

By virtue of the fact you are in bondage tells you that is not God's Spirit.. *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"*. If you are in bondage that tells you it is not of God's Spirit – it is a different spirit: a "party spirit", a deed of the flesh, a sin, the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit. The deeds of the flesh are the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit. You are in bondage.

It might take a couple of months and sometimes it has even taken people a couple of years, but the sum of the matter is this: you keep your eyes on Jesus and one verse will become a reality like you have never known...

"So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. (Jn. 8:36)

God bless. †††