



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

Vol. 25 No. 20

LORD’S DAY 16 MAY 2021

ORDER OF WORSHIP

	<i>Morning Service – 11am</i>	<i>Afternoon Service – 3pm</i>
<i>Call to Worship</i>	Psalm 24:7-10	Psalm 51:10-15
<i>Opening Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Jonathan Kim
<i>Opening Hymn</i>	“The Lord is King”	---
<i>Responsive Reading</i>	Psalm 112	---
<i>Scriptural Text</i>	Acts 12:12	Zechariah 7:5-6
<i>Pastoral Prayer</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong
<i>Sermon Message</i>	<i>The Power of Prayer</i>	<i>God or Self?</i>
<i>Closing Hymn</i>	“Soldiers of Christ, Arise”	---
<i>Benediction</i>	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 63

Q: Which is the Fifth Commandment?

A: The Fifth Commandment is, HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER; that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Scriptural Reference:

Exodus 20:12

MEMORY VERSE

Last Week

“... This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.”

Zechariah 4:6

This Week

“But in every nation he that feareth, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

Acts 10:35

Next Week

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.”

Zechariah 8:2

Cult Attractiveness and Avoidance

Introduction

In recent years, cults have made a surprising resurgence, and that with a big bang! When one would have expected them to retreat, fizzling out with time in the presence of freely available correct information, cults have done just the opposite! They seem to grow from strength to strength, easily surmounting hurdles which those holding to authentic truth fail to scale. There seems to be an outbreak of literary any and every cult, showing no sign of diminishing or reducing any time soon. What is worse is that these cults seem to grow in potency, influence and reach, capturing many gullible and naïve people, given the post modern context that allows for any and everything. Nothing is wrong or right in the times into which our lot falls. The startled Christian is right in enquiring why this should be so. Why should so much heresy and error flourish in the light of so much truth littered all over the globe, internet and in print? These and several other questions are what this paper is all about, or at least attempts to address.

Importance of Studying Cults

A consideration of cults is one of the most revealing, if not scary to this reader. Cults are more potent and closer to our door than we imagine or realise. They are literary all pervasive and have invaded about every sphere of life including the very means of communication whether electronic or otherwise. In addition, their vast global spread and popularity have been fostered by the all powerful global network of technological development. As though that were not bad enough, the context and culture in which they flourish fans them to higher heights. Post modern relative thinking has open the door to acceptance of about every practice whether good or bad. The spread is therefore rather fast akin to a lit match stick on a petrol doused cloth. These, among other reasons necessitate Cult study in order to effectively and competently manage or push back the deadly snares introduced by the cults, major or not. That is why we commend champions at the fire front of cult detection and combat.

Why Cults are Attractive

Why should cults prove to be so popular and attractive? Why should what is obviously erroneous be readily espoused and defended when the scripture, the ultimate guide for believers and non-believers is free available? This puzzle cannot be fully resolved, let alone satisfied because the reasons for this are as many as the questions themselves! However, in the following brief points, we attempt to highlight what we think could be the root causes as well as the probable propellers of this cult resurgence or 'revival' if you like.

The basic reason why cults are magnetic to people is to be found in the nature of human beings. After the fall in the Garden of Eden as demonstrated in the scriptures (Genesis 3), the human mind has been corrupted by sin to the extent that human beings' sense of judgment, preferences and desires are warped and inclined towards things opposed to God or His revelation (Genesis 6:5). In Genesis three, the effect of the fall is so devastating to the extent that human beings are said to be totally depraved though not absolutely. By '*total*' we mean that there is no faculty of a human being that was not left unaffected by the fall and thus affects the way one operates, interprets reality, values system, thought pattern or reasoning (though in and of themselves think that they are fine, objective and on track!). The sin nature has been devastatingly affected the heart towards evil at all times, preferring darkness rather than light. After all, don't we know from the scriptures that the heart of man is desperately wicked? (Jeremiah 17:9) Isn't it true to say that the heart and mind of a human being is darkened and hardened against the truth? Human beings, therefore are not essentially good in themselves

nor even primarily victims/products of their social environment as sociology or psychology would have us believe but are inherently affected by the ramifications of the fall. This fall therefore colours the mind, judgement and preferences. Thus, when error or heresy comes along, the fallen mind is not able to “judge all things” with a right discerning eye that comes about as a result of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Thus, we may further conclude and assert that when Cults come around with their alluring attractions, they easily find a fertile haven to survive, flourish and exponentially replicate. This Cult doctrine is craftily well designed to captivate the unsuspecting mind or eye thus easily entangled in its grip. This is the first and root cause of why cults appear attractive to the average eye, now that they are allowed to propagate themselves freely.

The second reason why cults are successful and easily proliferate is that they are carefully designed by expert people who have studied the human mind, needs and preferences. These professionals, with big names and titles, meticulously craft attractive well packaged products that the human eye fails to resist. Their bait comes across as harmless, solution based and ready to instantly sort out a problem when in fact they are sugar coated poisons that people drink into their consequent detriment. They discover too late that they are in the very clutches of Satan, in effect, are in a double bondage to Satan and sin. The worst part is that many of them never even get to realize that they are on the broad road leading to destruction.

The third broad reason is that cults are aggressive in the use of the cutting edge technology which they fully exploit to their advantage. While the people with authentic truth and genuine sound solutions to the world’s greatest needs are lingering or struggling to raise cash, the efficient, well financed cults hijack everything, pouring in billions of dollars into advertising or image building. Christians spend more time arguing, debating and finger pointing at times while the enemy insidiously swiftly moves along, only to catch saints napping, forcing them into the reaction mode, often times too late.

Fourth, cults use any and every method to capture their prey and target. They know all too well that people have different needs (whether psychological, physiological, cognitive or material etc.) and thus come close to them to offer help, psychosocial support, care and love, which recipients could not ever dream of getting anywhere, not even the Church! Thus, they prey on the vulnerabilities of people and exploit them to their own advantage.

Fifth, cults are extremely well funded, have invested heavily in about any and every profitable industry. The Roman Catholic Church, New Apostolic Church or the Jehovah’s witnesses for instance have invested heavily and thus minting millions of dollars which they use to advance their cause. They are exceptionally well organized around one central core where all resources are pooled and as we know, there is power and leverage in synergistic integration. The cults have mastered this and thus used it to their advantage. Thus, they have the critically needed financial muscle to succeed sorting out about anything thus naturally attracting the world's paupers.

Sixth, cults are very subtle in how they communicate their message(s), ensuring that all the rough suspicious edges are blunted, smoothed, veiled or removed from public view. Take the Mormons for instance or even the Free Masons, these are well resourced, well networked, and rich in philanthropic works. They will tell the public what they want to hear when in fact underneath that skin are the claws that dig deep into their hearts. Once these fangs get into one’s system, only God can set one free.

Seventh, cults operate around a clandestine unaccountable system. In as much as they do very good public relations, thereby blinding millions, they are aggressively secretive how they source their money or how it is spent.

Eighth, cults are built around an individual that followers can see, feel and identify with unlike the true Christian who walks by faith in Jesus. As much as they are mystical in their sacred secretive ceremonies and rituals, people are kept spell bound by the mysticism that surrounds these cults. Further, these cults have a well defined and organised structure or system ensuring continuity, far outstripping the Christian Church.

Ninth, although indirectly alluded to, cults are experts at mind control and know that if they can catch one there, they have the whole person. They use different methods and means, at times even good genuine subjects such as science but secretly introducing their deadly toxic doctrines in the process. The harmless looking pragmatic *Watch Tower* magazine is one case in point that has some good articles, purporting to answer important key life puzzling questions from various relevant aspects of life. Once one is subtly captivated, they then cannot resist the consequent *Awake* magazine and other JW literature which essentially is un-Christian. The same applies to other cults.

Tenth, cults have read the times and cleverly tailor their messages to attract the mind. In a post modern relative context, their materials ask leading and eye catching questions aimed at eventually captivating the reader. They may not come across dogmatically (which dogma the post modern mind detests), but gently introduce deadly doses of toxic venom in clever ways ensuring the poison is securely tacked away in the catacombs of the victim's mind. Unawares, the "faulty software" or thought begins to play on the mind and later leads one to perceive heresy as correct or acceptable. Error is sanitised at that point. The Christian must guard the mind!

Finally, these cults are intensely personal, interactive and will aggressively follow up a potential proselyte offering practical solutions, care or attention which is sadly absent even in the body of Jesus Christ!

How to Avoid this "irresistible" Cultic Allure

To escape all the different baits that the cults throw around, the Christian is strongly advised to prayerfully study the scriptures, know what they believe, be content with what they have and be busy in the vineyard of the lord. The Christian must also be careful how or what they expose their minds to. Unless they are well trained, mature or discerning, they do well to avoid all contaminating contact with cultic literature or media. It is a known fact that what we allow in our minds through the eye gate eventually finds a place in our brains progressively affecting how we perceive or interpret the world. The cults know that if they can capture the mind, then they have the whole man. There is need therefore to meticulously watch what we, our colleagues, family or church are exposed to via the ear or eye. Sadly, many churches have a huge appetite for money to the extent of idolatry but exposing the members to grave danger in due course. Granted, we all need money, it however matters how this message is packaged or communicated. Repetition eventually programs the mind into believing/considering something as true. We further suggest that once one lets the word of Christ to dwell in them richly, they may be somewhat equipped and able to discern error from afar. This gives them time to escape or institute the corrective antidotes.

Lethal Dangers of Cults

As highlighted above, cults are very deadly leading to bondage. Although what may seem at first to be innocent and harmless, it may eventually turn into a nightmare not stopping at anything short of swallowing the subject. Those that, peradventure, escape its grip come away with

serious claw marks and scars on their souls. One cannot escape unscathed hence, the best is, therefore, to avoid ever getting entangled with these cults in the first place. A further thought perhaps will do. Cults rarely come alone. Akin to demons mentioned in the Bible, cults often come in “legions” or with other secondary but harmful attachments. The New Age Movement “NAM” with its processed ‘tolerance’ mantra often opens a door to all manner of problems.

Lessons Learnt from or About Cult Power

From the foregoing, we can learn the following as take home lessons:

1. Cults are very powerful, influential and have a clear agenda.
2. Cults revolve around a central core or a potent individual. This significant individual dictates, controls adherents’ lives, literally commanding unquestioned loyalty among followers.
3. Cults often possess secret information available only to cult members.
4. Cults are very aggressive, subtle and far more organised, obviously better refined than many people realise. They can worm themselves into a good system and literary hijack it!
5. Christians need to learn from the persistence, consistency, zeal, sacrifice and innovation of cults, of course, retaining Biblical ethical balance.
6. Cults aim at the mind as an entry control point. Once one is entangled at cognitive or indeed, emotional, very few ever escape the cult’s grip.
7. Not only are cults aggressive but very careful in their planning and packaging their information, hiding away all the ‘rough edges’ only highlighting what the human eye wants to see or hear.
8. The effects of the fall in the Garden (i.e .Genesis3) are especially grave having affected human judgment. That is why cults find it so easy to penetrate the human soul unless the Holy Spirit transforms one then they will have the stamina to detect and with stand or repel heresy.
9. Usually, cultic information comes across as harmless at face value but is actually toxic beneath the sugar coating. The best is to avoid this entire toxin ever entering one’s mind and heart lest they end up in bondage.
10. More Christians need to be trained in how to detect, repel and avoid heresy no matter in what form it comes. A discerning eye is key granted only by the Holy Spirit.
11. In a poisoned relativistic environment, cults are poised to flourish even further because nothing is considered wrong or right. Anything goes and is allowed free reign, regardless of the damage it does to souls. Postmodernism is premised on humanistic evolution and thus ties in well with what the New Age inclined cults would teach or propagate.
12. Cults exploit the spiritual vacuum as well as vulnerability in the unregenerate and make inroads. They easily take over the person.
13. Cult members each have a sense of mission and work hard to contribute and thus earn their keep, salvation and recognition. The cults are so organised to keep the pressure on every one to keep doing something. Their succession plan is also superb and roams to life when needed. This reduces the vacuum or power struggles that often buffet organisations.

What Others have Written or said About Cults

Many have written on this matter including Dr Johnson Philip, Dr. Cheerian (whose great work has deeply informed this paper) and well known cultists like Dr. Walter Martin or Dave Hunt. They have investigated these cults, their nature and how lethal they are. Dr. Martin states in his *Kingdom of cults* that cults are consistently popping up with a special appeal, pragmatic and always inflexibly emphasising a point of view or so. Anyone who differs from them is treated or

perceived as an outsider, a danger. Cult power lies in mind manipulation and strategic isolation of adherents. Further, the said effective cultists have stated that fresh cults consistently coming up all the time, hence the need to keep a vigilant analysis on the landscape.

Conclusion

Cults are very potent today and will continue to be unless a Spiritual awakening takes place. Their ravaging effects must urgently be mitigated, checked, pushed back or stopped before worse things result. For as long as the Church remains “*asleep in the light*,” to borrow Keith Green’s apt phrase, heresy will continue to have a hey-day, doing much irreparable harm and damage in the process.

References

Johnson P.(2001). “Why are cults so attractive?” Available at: BrethrenAssembly.com.

Ravi Z.(2002). *Jesus among other Gods*, W Publishing Group.

Martin R. W.(2019). *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Bethany House Publishing.

Hunt D. and McMahon T.A.(2013). *The seduction of Christianity*, The Berean Call.

— Article adapted from Billy C. Sichone, *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*, Third Millennium Ministries

*For further reading - *Examining & Exposing Cultic And Occultic Movements*, Rev. (Dr.) Jack Sin

NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Worshippers, as the Church Premises reopens for Morning Worship Service please note that there will be strict social distancing measures put in place. Face coverings must be worn in the church at all times out of consideration for all worshippers.

For the time being, the 3:00pm Afternoon Worship Service will still be conducted online.

If you require the link to our online zoom services, or have any questions or require further clarity, please call the church manse, or email us at admin 'at' newlifebpc.org.uk.

Tithes & Offerings – There will be an offering box at the entrance to the Church Sanctuary for you to place your offerings in.

Worship Service Collections: 25/04/21 - £580, 02/05/21 - £1865, Church Maintenance - £100

Church Maintenance Fund Total: £6,860.50

CHURCH NOTICE

Dear fellow worshippers and friends,

We are pleased to inform the worshippers and visitors of New Life Bible Presbyterian Church that the church will resume holding worship services in the Church premise on Sunday mornings.

The church activities will take place as follows:

- Sunday Morning Worship Service, 11am – Church Premises & Online
- Sunday Afternoon Worship Service, 3pm – Online only

Provided that there is no worsening of the pandemic in London, we hope to start holding the Afternoon Worship Service and Fortnightly Bible Study within the church premises in the coming months.

Changes introduced to the Worship Services held at the church premises

In compliance with the current Government guidelines, the following changes have been introduced:

- Worship services will be limited to 60 minutes duration.
- No singing and offering collection during the worship service. Offerings can be made at the offering box when entering or exiting the church.
- All Bibles and hymn books will be kept and unavailable for use. Please bring your own Bible and remember to take it away with you after worship service.
- Adopt a 2-metre social distancing seating arrangement (household members may sit with each other).
- Face coverings to be worn in the church **at all times** out of consideration for all worshippers. For young children under the age of 11, the use of face covering is optional. **Please ensure you bring your own face covering.**
- No socialising with anyone outside of your household or support bubble within the Church premises.
- No socialising outside the Church premises.
- No food and drinks will be made available (Fellowship Lunch has been temporarily suspended).
- No access to non-essential areas of the church – this includes the Fellowship Hall and kitchen.
- New movement arrangements to be adopted (please follow directions).
- Temperature measurements will be taken for every worshipper and visitor.
- Worshippers and visitors are required to complete the contact details slip for the NHS Test & Trace service. These details will be kept securely in church for 21 days and then destroyed. They will only be submitted to Test & Trace if a Covid-19 case occurs.
- Alternatively, please download the NHS COVID-19 Mobile App and scan one of the QR codes in the Church entrance to check-in.

To join our online services or to obtain further updates, please visit the church website (www.newlifebpc.org.uk) or call the church manse (020 73280869).

With the Lord's blessing,

John Poh & Jonathan Kim
Task Force Members

The Lord is King!

The Lord is King! lift up your voice,
O earth, and all ye heavens rejoice;
From world to world the joy shall ring:
'The Lord omnipotent is King!'

The Lord is King! who then shall dare
Resist His will, distrust His care,
Or murmur at His wise decrees,
Or doubt His royal promises?

The Lord is King! child of the dust,
The Judge of all the earth is just;
Holy and true are all His ways:
Let every creature speak His praise.

He reigns! ye saints, exalt your strains;
Your God is King, your Father reigns:
And He is at the Father's side,
The Man of Love, the Crucified.

Come, make your wants, your burdens
known;
He will present them at the throne;
And angel bands are waiting there
His messages of love to bear.

One Lord and Saviour all secures;
He reigns, and life and death are yours,
Through earth and Heaven one song shall
ring,
'The Lord omnipotent is King!'

Josiah Conder
Tune: NIAGARA

Soldiers of Christ, arise

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty power;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.
To keep your armour bright,
Attend with constant care;
Still walking in your Captain's sight,
And watching unto prayer.

From strength to strength go on;
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day.
Then, having all things done,
And every conflict passed,
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone,
And stand complete at last.

Charles Wesley
Tune: DIADEMATA