

STUDY PACK 14

MODERN CULTS A Quick Look At Cultic Movements

Cultic Movements an Allegory by William C. Irvine

I was walking along the streets of Vanity Fair the other day and had my attention drawn to a huge edifice which was in the course of construction. Apparently, there was a strike on, as something had happened greatly to hinder the work. On enquiring what was the trouble, I was told that there was a dispute among the workmen. The men were holding a meeting, and as anyone was admitted, I went inside out of curiosity.

Some had returned to their work, others were divided in opinion as to what was best to be done. It seemed that some were in fear that the building might fall, saying that some of the workmen were tempering with the foundations; the others were laughing them to scorn, vehemently asserting that their friends were but resetting the foundations: which, they said, had never been truly laid.

On further enquiry I found out that the building was called the CHURCH, and that the workmen were divided into two camps which some called "Fundamentalists," and "Modernists." The great fear of the former was that the latter would remove the foundations, and on examining the damage already done I was persuaded that there was much reason for alarm.

I found several of the huge foundation-stones partly out of place. Indeed, one on which I had deciphered the words:

"The Virgin Birth"

was more or less broken, and almost entirely removed from its place: if moved a little more a great part of the building would be in jeopardy. Another had an inscription which was partly obliterated by the workmen's tools: it read

". . . spir . tion of . oly . . re"

A third which appeared to me to be the chief corner-stone was being vigorously attacked with pick and crowbar; it bore the words

"The Deity of Christ"

I drew the attention of some of those destructive workmen, many whom appeared to be scholars, to a notice the builder had left nearby. It read:

If the FOUNDATIONS be destroyed,
What can the righteous do?

But they scoffed at me, and muttered something about “Progress” and “Modern Building Methods,” and fell to with greater zeal than ever. I turned away sad in heart, feeling that this beautiful building was doomed.

But as I was about to step out into the street, a young man in shining garments touched me on the shoulder, and gave me a letter from the Builder of the edifice, bidding me read it. I broke the seal and read:

“NEVERTHELESS THE FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH SURE”
and “I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH; AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL
NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT.”

Much comforted by these words I passed on.

I. CULTIC MOVEMENTS

Sometimes people and churches act cultic without the organization and formal trappings of a cult. When a human being becomes dominant and takes precedence over the Bible a cult like movement develops. Even if it never takes the organizational nature of a cult people begin to act like they were part of a cult.

II. SCANDALS AND CULTS

It is amazing how common divorce (while in the “ministry”), sexual scandals and financial scandals are for the leaders of cults.

John Newbrough (*Oahspe*) divorced his wife in his later years and married a young follower. His primary successor, Francis Monck, was convicted of fraud and spent time in prison. He was also well-known for sexually manipulating his followers.

Eighteen years after Sun Myung Moon began having visions, he divorced his wife and married an eighteen-year old (he was 40).

Madam Blavatsky (founder of Theosophy) was a Russian medium born in 1831. She was divorced twice and had to flee Cairo, Egypt in 1871 after she was accused of bilking her followers out of large amounts of money. Her successor, Annie Beasant, abandoned her husband after a few years of marriage.

The House of David was established by “King” Benjamin Purnell in 1903 in Benton Harbor, Michigan. In his sixties, he was surrounded by teenage consorts. He lost several fraud cases in the courts.

Charles Taze Russell’s wife left him after seventeen years of marriage. She later sued him for divorce. This was granted after a bitter five-year legal battle. Russell was accused of adultery with several young women.

When Russell's Miracle Wheat scam was exposed by the Brooklyn Eagle, he sued the paper for fraud. He lost his case in court. He later sued Baptist pastor J. J. Ross for libel. The case was thrown out of court.

His successor, J. F. Rutherford and several other Jehovah's Witness leaders were sued for libel in 1939. They were found guilty and forced to pay damages.

Mary Baker Eddy's second marriage (Dr. Patterson) ended in divorce. So did Herbert W. Armstrong's marriage.

Alice Baily (founder of the Lucius Trust Publishing Company) divorced her first husband.

Carlos Castenada engaged in vicious legal battles with his first ex-wife.

Timothy Zell claims to have been united with five other people in a "six person marriage" (previously he was in a three person marriage).

Joseph Smith's life went from one scandal to another. For him adultery was a lifestyle. To escape the controversies over his many adulteries he invented the doctrines of polygamy and celestial and terrestrial marriages.

He was involved in a number of financial scandals.

These kinds of scandals are very common in the stories of both cults and cultic movements.

III. TIMELINE

A timeline of some significant cult developments.

1500 BC	Hinduism – no specific founder
560 BC	Buddhism – Gautama Buddha
550 BC	Taoism – Lao Tzu
599 BC	Jainism – Mahavira
50-100 AD	Gnosticism
150-250 AD	Modalism (Monarchianism) Sabellius, Praxeus, Noetus, Paul of Samosata
590 AD	Roman Catholicism – developed after Constantine; Pope Gregory
610 AD	Islam – Mohammed

- 1400 AD Rosicrucians – Christian Rosenkreuz (1694 U.S.) Rosicrucians – Master Kelpius, Johann Andrea
- 1515 AD Protestantism (Reformers) Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin
- 1650 AD Tibetan Buddhism – Dalai Lama
- 1700 AD Freemasonry – Albert Mackey, Albert Pike
- 1760 AD Swedenborgism – Emmanuel Swedenborg
- 1784 AD Shakers – Mother Ann Lee
- 1830 AD Mormonism – Joseph Smith
- 1830 AD Cambellites – Alexander & Thomas Campbell, Barton Stone
- 1838 AD Tenrikyo – Miki Maegawa Nakayama
- 1840-45 AD Millerites 2nd Day Adventists – William Miller then became 7th Day Adventists
- 1844 AD Christadelphians – John Thomas
- 1844 AD Bahai-Baha'u'llah (Adul Baha)
- 1845-1870 AD 7th Day Adventists – E. G. White
- 1848 AD Spiritualism – Kate and Margaret Fox
- 1870 AD Jehovah's Witnesses – Charles Taze Russell
- 1875 AD Theosophical Society – H. P. Blavatsky, Henry Olcott
- 1879 AD Christian Science – Mary Baker Eddy
- 1889-1924 AD Unity School of Christianity – Myrtle Fillmore
- 1900 AD Rosicrucian Fellowship – Max Heindel
- 1902 AD Anthroposophical Society – Rudolf Steiner
- 1914 AD Iglesia ni Cristo – Felix Manalo
- 1914 AD Oneness Pentecostalism – Frank Ewart, G. T. Haywood, Glenn Cook

- 1917 AD True Jesus Church – Founders Paul Wei, Lingsheng Chang and Barnabas Chang
- 1927 AD Mind Science – Ernest Holmes
- 1930 AD Black Muslims (Nation of Islam) – Wallace Fard
- 1934 AD World-Wide Church of God – Herbert W. Armstrong
- 1935 AD Self Realization Fellowship – Paramahansa Yogananda
- 1944 AD Silva Mind Control – Jose Silva
- 1945 AD The Way - Victor P. Wierwille
- 1945 AD United Pentecostal International – Howard Gross, W. T. Witherspoon (can be traced back to 1914)
- 1948 AD Latter Rain – Franklin Hall, George Warnock
- 1950 AD Urantia Book – Dr. Bill Sadler
- 1950 AD Lafayette Ronald Hubbard published his book *Dianetics-Scientology*
- 1954 AD Unification Church – Sun Myung Moon
- 1954 AD Atherius Society (UFOs) – Dr. George King
- 1955 AD Scientology – L. Ron Hubbard
- 1958 AD Institute of Divine Metaphysical Research – Henry Kinley
- 1958-1970 AD Church Universal and Triumphant – Mark and E. C. Prophet
- 1958 AD Henry Kinley begins (IDMR) the Institute of Divine Metaphysical Research
- 1959 AD Unitarian Universalist
- 1960 AD Transcendental Meditation – Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
- 1960 AD Enkankar – Paul Twitchell
- 1961 AD Unitarian Universalism was officially formed
- 1964 AD Eckankar *The Ancient Science of Soul Travel* (Eck), founded by Paul Twitchell

- 1965 AD Assembly of Yahweh – Jacob Meyer
- 1966 AD Church of Satan – Anton LaVey
- 1968 AD Kare Krishna (U.S.) – Swami Prabhupada
- 1968 AD Children of God – David (Moses) Berg
- 1970 AD Findhorn Community – Peter and Eileen Caddy – David Spangler
- 1970 AD Divine Light Mission – Guru Maharaj Ji
- 1973 AD CARP was established in the U.S. (The Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles) to introduce the teachings of Myung Moon.
- 1974 AD Assemblies of Yahweh – Sam Suratt
- 1979 AD Church of Christ International – Kip McKean
- 1980-1982 AD Tara Center – Benjamin Crème
- 1980 AD House of Yahweh (Abilene) – Jacob Hawkins