

DENOMINATIONS AND CULTS

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It is no wonder that the majority of people are not interested in church and Christianity since there are some many variations and contradictions. And there are cults, some of which are particularly evil. It has been said that, in 2005, there were 15,000 cults in the USA.

The ecumenical movement tried to bring churches together. But how can people agree when they have differing doctrines and practises? To quote the Bible, How can two walk together if they are not agreed. This movement also known as the World Council of Churches resulted in the dilution and ignoring of Biblical teaching and the teaching of Christ and the Apostles. The charismatic Anglican Michael Harper said that doctrine does not matter... only love does.

The fact that I have written this article is certainly not intended to set me up as a final authority but I have taken as both my starting point and concluding point the Holy Scriptures themselves. I have used the doctrinal position and church practises as set out in their own literature.

Obviously, I cannot include in this essay all denominations and cults.

It must also be emphasised that the Bible was completed before there was any established church and claims that the Bible was tampered with to suit the teachings of the Church is untrue although we have to say that translations have been misleading and that men and women have altered the Scripture to suit their own needs and variations of the truth.

1. CHURCH OF ENGLAND/ ANGLICANS

The Church of England bases its doctrine on the Nicene Creed of 325AD

There is One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God who for our salvation was made man, suffered, died, rose again and ascended into Heaven from whence He will come to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Ghost

This was modified at the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD which added

The Lord Jesus was made incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary and suffered under Pontius Pilate

The Lord Jesus sits at the right hand of God

We believe in one holy and Catholic Church, one baptism for the remission of sins and look for the resurrection of the dead and the life to come.

This creates a problem

Anglican baptism is infant baptism called christening, the one baptism which grants forgiveness of sins. Does not true repentance grant forgiveness of sins. How can an infant repent?

According to Anglican doctrine, infant baptism declares the child to be a follower of Christ but, as the child is too young to make that decision, godparents, who are committed Christians, make that decision and take responsibility for that child and support the parents in the child's upbringing. Christening does not make a child a Christian so why say that christening makes the child a follower of Jesus Christ?

I know many godparents who were not Christians let alone committed Christians!

The other stumbling block to many is the government of the Church of England. The Queen is the Supreme Governor and this power is exercised by the Prime Minister and Parliament.

But is every Prime Minister and Parliament totally Christian? Has it ever been?

The senior leader of the Church of England is the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of all England. Then comes the Archbishop of York. The governing body of the Church of England is the General Synod.

There are churches which are evangelical, traditional and liberal. Some have become charismatic.

Having been a member of the Church of England, I can testify that they do not have prayer meetings or Bible study, that the preaching of the Gospel is seldom proclaimed apart from the evangelical wing but rather that ceremony and valuable vestments are on display and there is concern about the colour of the altar cloths for each season more so that the salvation of men. I have heard vicars say that they do not preach the gospel because there is no need to preach to the converted all who have been confirmed. Most Sundays have a name which may be a saint's name and, therefore, the Church of England has a Christian calendar. Prayers are read from the Book of Common Prayer and, of course, there are candles and incense. These things may vary from church to church. Some are very close in doctrine and practice to the Roman Catholics and such churches are called high churches with statutes to bow before.

Thou shalt not make any graven image or bow down to it says one of the commandments. (Exodus 20. 4)

In recent years, there has been the ordination of women which has split the Church of England and many clergy have gone over to the Roman Catholics. The Labour Party introduced civil partnerships which means, in effect, the marriage of two people of the same sex and the Government has said that it will prosecute clergy who will not marry two of the same sex in church.

The Bible teaches that women cannot be priests in the sense that they cannot have a public ministry and, on another issue, homosexuality is condemned in the Bible as an abomination (Romans 1. 27)

Leviticus 20.13 tells that a man having sex with another man is sinful. In Judges 19.22 we read of men of Gibeah who wanted sex with a man. One of the commandments is Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20.14). Adultery is fornication outside of marriage. Fornicators will not go to Heaven (1 Corinthians 6. 9ff). The body is not for fornication (1 Corinthians 16.3). We must refrain from fornication (Acts 13. 20 etc.)

I corresponded with the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury about recent cases where Christians appeared in the Law Courts charged with sexual discrimination because they disapproved of homosexuality and were subsequently fined and warned. The office's reply was disappointing. Instead of upholding the New Testament, they said that this was the law which forbade sexual discrimination against gays.

And so God is wrong and homophobic!

2. ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Roman Catholic Church accepts the theory of evolution and, therefore, that God did not create the universe and each species after its own kind. They do acknowledge that God made each human soul.

They say that each Pope can be traced back to Jesus and the apostles and that the ultimate authority on all matters including doctrine is the Pope. As some Catholic doctrine disagrees with the Bible this makes the Pope and the Catholic Church superior to the Bible.

One belief is transubstantiation in which they state that the bread and wine at Mass actually becomes the Body and Blood of Christ. Yet the Biblical text makes it clear that the bread and wine were symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood.

(See article on [*Transubstantiation*](#))

Children from about the age of seven can have their first communion. The girls' dress up in a white dress and the boys are also to be smartly dressed. This is their acceptance into the church whereas one wonders if children can fully understand this. The Bible teaches that when we personally accept Christ as Saviour we become a member of His Body, the church.

Catholics teach that homosexuality is sinful (which agrees with the Bible) and that abortion is wrong as it is the taking of life. Baptism is performed in infancy whereas the Bible teaches baptism as a burial which involves total immersion in water (Romans 6) and that those who believed and confessed their sins were baptised thus meaning that baptism was for adults who were of age and believed. This is called believers baptism.

All Catholic clergy are male and unmarried although they will now accept married men with children who have transferred from the Church of England. They may get this teaching from Paul who it is assumed was never married. One wonders whether there would be less child abuse from Catholic priests if they were allowed to marry and have children of their own.

The desire of the Catholic Church is that all non-Catholics join the Catholic Church.

They believe in the Confessional Box and that the priest can hear your confession, give you a penance and grant you absolution. This is against Scripture for we read that only God can forgive sins. They teach that the Virgin Mary was conceived as sinless and that she did not die but ascended into heaven. This is not Scriptural. It is said that her status is below that of Christ but higher than all the saints. Catholics make saints and teach that we can pray to Mary and the saints who can make intercession for us. The Bible teaches that when we pray we say, Our Father and it is the Lord Jesus that makes intercession for us.

However, Catholics do worship Mary and this does not seem to be discouraged.

Sometimes she is called the Queen of Heaven whereas this expression in Jeremiah 7.18 refers to pagan god and does not refer to the Virgin Mary.

Contraception and birth control is, or was, disapproved by Catholics although this has been under review and is not held so rigidly. Perhaps it is no longer regarded as sinful. Divorce is a sacrament and divorce is considered a grave offence.

Salvation is dependent on faith and the practises of the church say Catholics. The New Testament teaching is different. Salvation is based on the grace of God and the individual's personal acceptance of Christ as Saviour. Catholics teach that salvation can be lost when a person knowingly commits a mortal sin but they can be regained through repentance and church sacraments

This is not what the New Testament teaches. Salvation is not obtained by keeping Catholic sacraments or the rules of any denomination.

Statutes and images of Jesus and the saints should be bowed to as a sign that the people they represent are to be venerated. One of the commandments is that we must not bow down to any graven image.

Another teaching is that of Purgatory which has been described as God's waiting room where souls are cleansed by purifying punishment before they can enter Heaven. Catholics pray for the souls of the dead in Purgatory and quote 2 Macabees 12.46. Indulgences is the partial and, eventually, the remission of temporal punishment and enabling the entrance into Heaven. The priest can be asked, and be paid to say Mass as often as is requested for that departed soul. Indulgences are the priests obtaining relief from the suffering soul in Purgatory. Over the years, priests have been paid millions of pounds for such services.

Salvation is a free gift of God's grace. Nowhere are we told to pray for the dead.

Sadly, one must remember the appalling Catholic Inquisitions where non Catholics and lapsed Catholic were tried and punished and put to death usually at the stake. Whatever excuses are made, that was not Christian and so, in this context, Catholics were certainly not Christians.

3. CONGREGATIONALISTS

Congregationalists emphasise government by the congregation, although they believe in the Sovereignty of Christ over the Church.

In 1648 the Massachusetts Bay Colony Puritans drew up the Cambridge Platform to formulate a common church policy based on Scripture and to protect their meetings from interference, They separated themselves from all hierarchical church government.

They put church policy before making a doctrinal statement and even today doctrines vary from one congregational church to another. One London church believes that our current Queen is descendant form the line of David.

Many congregational churches have now become united Reformed Churches which is Calvinistic which originated in Reformed Presbyterianism

4. CALVINISM AND THE REFORMED FAITH/PRESBYTERIANISM

Jean Calvin (1509-1564) was a French theologian who developed his system of beliefs which we now know as Calvinism.

The first letters of his five fundamental points spell TULIP.

1. Total depravity of man.
2. Unconditional Election. This states that from eternity past God had already chosen who was to be save and who was to be lost.
3. Limited atonement. This states that Jesus' death and atonement was limited to those whom God had chosen in eternity past to be saved.
4. Irresistible Grace. This states that saving grace is only available to those whom God has chosen to be saved.
5. Preservance of the Church. God will protect those he has predestined to be saved and no human or other force will prevent this

Predestination is also called election by Presbyterians.

They quote John 15.16 where Jesus says to His Disciples, “Ye have not chose me but I have chosen you” and Ephesians 1. 4 says that we were chosen before the foundation of the world.

Yet in Joshua 24. 22 we read, “Ye have chosen the Lord”. And in verse 15 the Children of Israel are given a choice, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, the Lord or other gods”.

Choice is the operative word in 1 Corinthians 28.9, “If ye seek Him (the Lord) he will be found of thee”.

God rewards those that seek Him.

Deuteronomy 4.29 indicates that the duty of man is to seek and find God, “Seek the Lord thy God and thou shalt find Him if ye seek for Him with all your heart”. Isaiah 55, 6, “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found”. And in the New Testament the same appeal is made. Acts 17.27, “they should seek the Lord and giving Him though He is not far from every one of us”. And there is that wonderful and definitive verse in John 12. 32 where the Lord Jesus says, “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me”.

This shows that the Lord Jesus is attractive.

And there is 2 Peter 3.9, “The Lord is long suffering not willing that any should perish but that all will come to repentance”. That annuls Calvinism as does Acts 2.21, “Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved”. This is repeated in Romans 10.13 and in 1 Titus 2.4 we read what God's will is “to have that all man be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”.

Arminianism is the opposite of Calvinism but Arminianism ties up with all the Scriptures we have quoted.

5. BAPTISTS

Baptists are so named because they believe in and practise baptism by immersion for believers.

There have been many fine Baptist ministers and theologians such as F B Meyer (1847-1929), W J Fullerton (1857-1932), Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) and Graham Scroggie (1877-1958). Martin Luther King was a Baptist as was the missionary Kathryn Kuhlman who latterly became obsessed with Divine Healing in an extremist way.

Many well known people started as Baptists such as Abraham Lincoln, Ava Gardner (1922-1990) had a mother who was a Baptist, Charles Colson, Brittany Spears had some Baptist upbringing as did Shirley MacLaine but these have fallen away.

While Baptists believe in the Lordship of Christ, the authority of the Bible, Believers baptism, the priesthood of all believers, modern day Baptists advocate belief in the independence of each church so that they differ and often differ very considerably. Some are traditionally evangelical, some are liberal, some are charismatic and some trendy. But that is the same with many denominations.

They encourage tolerance for differences of outlook and the diversity of practise is encouraged.

6. METHODISTS

John Wesley was born in 1703 and was a minister with the Church of England. With his brother, Charles, he founded the Methodist movement which originated from open air preaching and their connection with the Moravians.

The brothers visited Georgia in the USA in 1736 and meet Moravians on board and were impressed with the depth of their faith. In a storm at sea, the Wesleys noted the Moravians lack of panic.

Later, in a Moravian meeting in London, John Wesley listened to a reading of Martin Luther's introduction to the epistle to the Romans and was 'strangely warmed.' He aligned himself to the Moravians and visited their headquarters in Germany. After helping them set up the Fetter Lane Society, he broke with the Moravians in 1739 believing that they have fallen into heresy by supporting quietism, the state of imperturbable serenity. And so, Wesley formed his own society called Methodism.

He and other Methodists were persecuted by the clergy because Methodist preachers were not ordained. Some of this criticism was in print.

Wesley preached prevenient grace which means that everybody can be saved unlike the Calvinist position. He preached salvation through faith, the Arminianism position, the witness of the Holy Spirit and sanctification.

Methodism today is represented by a number of denominations and organisations. The difficulty is that modern day churches vary one from another ranging from evangelical churches to liberal ones.

Generally speaking, Methodists believe in the triune God and the Divinity of Christ and affirm both the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed. Baptism is christening, not believers baptism. They practise Holy Communion and insist that on becoming a Christian they must enter into some sort of work or service.

When it comes to the Scriptures they advocate the use of reason.

They have Covenant Services which is often an annual renewal of their contract with God.

Fifty years ago, you could go to any Methodist church and hear the gospel faithfully preached. Visiting thirty Methodist churches in 2010 the Gospel was not preached in one and none of the members wanted to talk about the Lord. None of these churches had a weekly prayer meeting or Bible study. The emphasis was on social functions, jumble sales and trendy sermons (Are doughnuts more enjoyable than going to Church?), meals for everyone after the morning service at £4.50 a head, outings, women's fellowship meetings with speakers talking about bee keeping, jam making, semaphore, and the history of marbles! There are ramblers groups and young peoples groups with activities such as going to the cinema which included films that are violent and full of sex and bad language including blasphemy. There is the hiring out of the church and the hall for all sports of activities including in one church martial arts in the church on a Sunday!

One recent innovation is Multiplex Worship where you have four choices:

1. Stay in the church for the whole service.

Attend the opening and closing hymn then

2. Go into another room for arts and crafts
3. Go into another room for a discussion group on any topic
4. Sit in the foyer and have coffee and read the Sunday papers!

7. SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army have a seven point doctrinal statement that agrees with Scripture.

The difficulties with this group is that members are called soldiers, wear uniforms and have ranks; they do not remember the Lord's Death and reject communion services; their main sphere of service seems to be social and they are renowned for being money orientated. They call local groups corps and their places of worships Citadels. Their magazine is called War Cry and it contains features about worldly pursuits such as the latest films and soap operas and some of these are unwholesome and not worthy of Christians. We are told not to love the world or the things in it (1 John 2.15). They do not have choirs but songsters who shake and rattle timbrels. Some corps which has brass bands are very popular.

William Booth (1829-1912) founded the Salvation Army in 1878 after being a Methodist preacher. He was the first 'General' of the Sally Army from 1878 until his death in 1912. He had been an apprentice pawnbroker but was always genuinely concerned for the poor and needy and his work in the East End of London was highly commendable.

The concept of ranks is odious. It elevates some and denotes others. It is judgemental although not intended to be. Romans 14 speaks against this.

8. CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

The Church of the Nazarene teach holiness and complete sanctification. They practise both infant and believers baptism. Each church has to have communion four times a year yet the New Testament says, This do ye often.

This church is said to be basically Wesleyan. They believe in Divine Healing which does not exclude medical services. Unlike the Pentecostals and charismatics they are opposed to entertainment evangelism and worship. They are not Pentecostal or charismatic. They teach that gambling is detrimental, that belonging to any secret organisation is unhelpful, that dancing could lead people astray and hinder spiritual growth as could alcohol and tobacco products and the use of drugs, not medically prescribed was disallowed and that marriage is to be permanent. They have a responsible opposition to abortion and exercise concern for the poor. They accept women leaders and preachers but are rightly particular about the modesty of women's dress. They value children and young people as well as all other age groups. They teach that euthanasia is incompatible with Christian teaching but that the withdrawal of life support systems can be permitted.

9. THE BRETHREN

Probably the true beginning of the Brethren Movement was in Dublin, sometime between 1825 and 1827.

The names of several men have come down to us as the possible founders of the Brethren. Such include Dr Edward Cronin, Edward Wilson, Francis Hutchinson, William Stokes, John Parnall, later known as Lord Congleton, J G Bellett and John Nelson Darby.

Around this time there were about six little meetings in Ireland and, in 1832, Darby went to England to meet some Christians of like mind at the request of Benjamin Willis Newton, a fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, Newton lived in Plymouth and had begun a work there. From this will be deduced how the name, Plymouth Brethren, came into being.

At first these two godly men, Darby and Newton, were friends.

In the early days of the brethren, Darby was the leading figure in Ireland, and Newton in England. As they were both highly educated scholars and of different backgrounds it was not long before they were at variance and this was mainly on prophetic subjects and with regard to the order of the church.

Newton taught that Christ took on sinful flesh and therefore Christ could sin whereas the New Testament states that in Christ was no sin (1 John 3. 5).

As assemblies increased so did difficulties concerning who could be received at the breaking of bread meeting. There were also differences about matters of discipline and internal arrangements.

But it was the matter of relationships between assemblies as taught by Darby that became known as exclusivism.

After the first happy years, standards were lowered and worldliness and pride crept in.

The division between Darby and Newton in December 1845 is the date from which we can date Darbyism or the Exclusive brethren..

It should be noted that the Plymouth Brethren was a name given to the brethren in the early days.

After the division in the 1840s there followed thirty years of real blessing for the Exclusives, or Darbyites. Missionary activity expanded and assemblies at home and abroad sprang up. Newton and therefore the Plymouth brethren entertained Calvinistic views and now it seems so did Darby and the Exclusives.

By the 1870s the exclusives began to ebb in their influence. There were endless schisms and groups such as the Bexhill group, the Greenwich group, the Glanton brethren, the Tunbridge Wells brethren, the Kelly brethren, the Lowe brethren, the Grant brethren, the Raven brethren and so on.

It is said that J N Darby was the originator of the Exclusive Brethren. They may be true in that he separated from the Open Brethren but it must not be taken that the Exclusives of today are Darbyites. Darby would have strongly disapproved of a lot of teaching that has arisen since his death in 1882 and some of that teaching arose very soon after his death. Darby was not an exclusive. They are discussed below.

Most brethren, other than the Exclusives, have doctrines which agree with the Bible

They believe that the 66 books of the Bible are the complete Scripture and contain everything that is necessary for doctrine and practise.

They believe in God as Creator of Heaven and earth and of every species separately. They do not believe in original evolution

They believe that the Godhead is God the Father, God the Eternal Word who became flesh, and the Holy Spirit.

They believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, that He performed miracles and taught as set out in the Gospels and that He willingly sacrificed Himself by His death on the Cross to save all who come to Him in faith; that He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven from whence He will come again to rapture His Church and set up His millennial reign

They believe that all three in the Trinity are eternal and divine.

Salvation is possible to all upon repentance and acceptance of the Lord Jesus as personal Saviour and the need to live a life that pleases God. They are not Calvinists

They believe in the two ordinances baptism of believers on their personal confession of faith and the breaking of bread which they conduct every Sunday morning. They believe that the Gospel should be preached every Sunday evening. They prefer that believers are baptised before they break bread but accept that there may be exceptions.

They believe the Scriptures that woman should have their heads covered and be silent in the churches

They believe that the gifts of tongues, prophecy in the sense of predictions, and new knowledge ceased with the completion of the Bible.

They do not accept clericalism but that each assembly has elders, or brothers, who are spiritual men to guide the assembly

They do not subscribe to entertainment evangelism and have their own hymn books which hymns are Biblically sound and also contain traditional hymns.

They put emphasis on the study of the Scriptures.

Some of these brethren are exclusive but not in the sense of the Taylorites. These honourable brethren may be particular about who breaks bread with them preferring them to having made prior full confession of their faith and been baptised by immersion..

Of all denominations these brethren are closest to the Scriptures and yet some people falsely call them a sect or a cult.

10. SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

Seventh Day Adventists were formed in the USA in the 1860s appear to be sound in basic doctrine. However, their day of worship is the Sabbath (Saturday) and they quote the fourth commandment to validate this. They give emphasis on prophecy given after the completion of the Scriptures with special reference to the American Ellen G White (1827-1915). She did much for education and health but claimed to have had visions in which she saw Adventists entering into Heaven, the New Jerusalem. Similar visions were experienced by her and she set herself up as an authority. People believed that she was ultra-special in the sight of God and therefore unique. She was a powerful and sought-after preacher. The apostle Paul states that women are not to preach but to be silent in the churches and another Scripture states that no woman should usurp authority over any man and the general tenure is that no one should be elevated since in all things Christ must have the pre-eminence.

11. CHRISTADELPHIANS

Christadelphian means brethren in Christ. They are a group developed in both the UK and USA in the 19th century. They are a relatively small group although they exist in about 120 countries.

The originator of this group seems to be Dr John Thomas (1805-1871) who emigrated from England to the USA in 1832.

Today, there is no centralised authority or definitive statement of doctrine.

But many of the doctrines which most hold are sound. They believe in God as Creator and that He is a separate Being from His Son, Jesus Christ and that the Holy Spirit is the Power of God used in salvation and the means to live the Christian life. They believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah and the fulfilment of Old Testament Scriptures and that He was sinless. They believe in the resurrection and ascension of Christ. They believe in repentance and that water baptism is by immersion for

confessing adults which is called believers baptism. They reject infant baptism and, rightly accept that the Holy Spirit is not person but a Spirit. A person is someone with a human body. They accept that not all charismatic gifts are available today

So far, so good.

But they reject the immortality of the soul, trinitarianism and the pre-existence of Christ, although in the beginning He was the Eternal Word. They believe that the devil is a reference to sin and all that is in opposition to God. Satan is merely a reference to adversaries of God. They believe in heterosexuality preferably between Christadelphians.

12. JEHOVAH WITNESSES

The Jehovah Witnesses (hereafter called JWs) claim to be Christians. They have a governing body which they claim is the faithful and discreet slave of Matthew 24 25. The Bible does not say that. There is only one reference to the word slave and that is in Jeremiah 21.14 where it refers to Israel "Is he a homeborn slave?" It is an American group based in Brooklyn, New York, which instructs its followers through the pages of their magazine, Watchtower. People are not to think for themselves but submit to the writings of the Watchtower. JWs believe that they are the only people on earth who are serving God.

There are a lot of rules and JWs must 'turn anyone in' who are breaking the rules. JWs can be disfellowshipped for premarital or extra marital sex, excessive alcohol intake, using tobacco products, celebrating Christmas, lying, stealing, joining the military, speaking to ex-members, reading religious material not published by Watchtower, running for political office and so on. Disfellowshipped members are lost for ever and not saved.

JWs will not allow blood transfusions for themselves and their children and many have died as a result. This is contrary to the teachings of the Lord Jesus who said, 'It is better to save life than lose it!' JWs are not allowed to sing the National Anthem or salute the flag. As we have said they are not allowed to celebrate Christmas, Easter or Thanksgiving. They are not allowed to associate with non-members even their own families.

They do not believe in the Trinity. They say that Jesus Christ is a created being. These doctrines are against clear Scripture teaching. They claim that the 144,000 in the book of Revelation, chapter 14, are all JWs who are the Anointed Class from Pentecost onwards and that they are the only ones who will reach Heaven from where they will rule over all JWs on the earth. They are not born out by Scripture and it serves only to elevate the JWs as the only ones who have the truth.

A recent TV programme revealed that thousands, if not more, of members of JWs are guilty of child abuse and sexual misconduct.

JWs emerged from the Bible Student Movement and originated in the USA, where most cults come from, and was formed by Charles Taze Russell around the late 1870s.

13. MORMONS

The Mormons are also known as the Church of Latter Day Saints. This is another product from America. Their 'prophet' Joseph Smith (1805-1844) had an angel called Moroni appear to him in 1823 who gave Smith a pair of special silver spectacles and golden plates and breastplates so that he could read these artefacts and transcribe them into the Book of Mormon. This book tells that after His resurrection Jesus appeared to the native Indians of North America who were the ten lost tribes of Israel.

Of course this is totally un-Biblical. Just before the Lord ascended into heaven He promised that He would return in what we call the Second Coming. If He had gone to North America that would have been His Second Coming whereas the Second Coming is in two parts... first to the air for His Church (1 Thessalonians 4. 13ff) and then to the earth in great glory to set up his millennial reign from Jerusalem.

Mormons are known for their polygamy although they published an edit in 1890s suppressing this practice for a while and those that abandoned polygamy were known as Fundamental Mormons.

Polygamy is still practised by many Mormons. A man can have many wives and dozens of children.

Mormons insist that the Book of Mormon was written before the Authorised Version of the Bible but the Book of Mormon quotes from the AV and has so many errors in it that it would take a large volume to set them out and explain why they are errors.

The closing chapters of the Book of Revelation heaps condemnation upon who add to the Bible which the Book of Mormon does. (Revelation 21.18)

Some of their doctrines are against the Bible. They say that Jesus' atonement cannot cover all sin and therefore His Sacrifice was inadequate and that Jesus is not God or the Son of God.

Smith began this movement in Salt Lake City. He was a military leader, an activist a politician, a city planner and a polygamist. He was assassinated in 1844 while waiting trial having been charged with treason and imprisoned.

14. PENTECOSTALISM AND CHARISMATICS

Pentecostalism is a very complex movement. It teaches the second blessing which they call the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and emphasise personal experience. It is a charismatic movement believing in spiritual gifts with a particular stress on speaking in tongues which they claim is the evidence that you have received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This they call the Full Gospel and, therefore, the complete Gospel.

They believe in three baptisms

1. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit brings you into the Body of Christ. In other words, the moment you are saved and become a Christian.
2. Baptism by water and by immersion on your personal confession of faith.
3. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit followed by the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues which is the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and those tongues may be an unlearned human language or a heavenly or angelic language. Is there more than one language in heaven?

There is one baptism in the Spirit (Ephesians 4. 5) which baptism is our conversions and brings us in the Body of Christ, His church (1 Corinthians 12.22, Romans 6.3)

They also advance dancing in the Spirit which has no Scriptural authority. David danced before the Lord and that was vile by his own admission (2 Samuel 6. 22). Dancing is a wordily act and usually sexual.

(see article on [David](#))

Pentecostals and charismatics also practise the slain in the Spirit when someone who wishes to be healed comes forward and the healer lays his hands on them and pushes them so they fall backwards. There is no Scriptural authority for this. When Jesus healed did He push the person backwards?

This is charismatics elevating themselves and playing to the gallery.

Pentecostals and charismatics emphasis personal experiences and draw attention to themselves. God resisteth the proud. What the world needs to know is what the Lord has done for them, not episodes from the lives of others in versions of This is Your Life!

This movement also started in the USA. In the early days, they were known as the Holiness Church and involved black people, women and poor people in ministry. We have already commented on women preachers. But the common factor and the greatest emphasis was on the speaking in tongues and, often, the Holy Spirit was elevated higher than the Lord Jesus.

The Elim Pentecostal Church was formed by George Jeffreys (1889-1962) in Monaghan, Ireland in 1915. Often it is called the Foursquare Church with four fundamental doctrines namely Christ as Saviour, Healer, Baptiser in the Holy Spirit and Coming King

The Pentecostals and charismatics put a lot of emphasis on personal experiences and entertainment with pop and rock music, disco lights, dancing and activities based on secular matters, television shows and the like. There are many groups who do not meet in churches but in homes and theatres and are called House Groups and give themselves all sorts of names. Their songs emphasise themselves.

The leader of the Full Gospel Business Men's Association, Demos Shakarian was investigated for fraud. Of all denominations, there are more frauds and charlatans in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements.

Aimee Semple MacPherson faked her own death and wanted a telephone in her coffin, Jimmy Swaggart solicited a prostitute for sex, Ted Haggard had 'liaisons 'with male prostitutes, Lonnie Frisbee was a gay adulterer and died from AIDS. Peter Popoff, like spiritualists and psychics, performed 'miracles' yet had an in-ear receiver and was being fed information. Morris Cerullo was a despicable man. He boasted that he had cured a girl of cancer and she died of that disease two months later. He also said that if you donated to him all your family would be saved and go to Heaven.

W V Grant was convicted of indecent exposure and molested people while he was baptising them. He was also a bogus faith healer.

No wonder people turn away from Christianity.

But that does not annul the truth about Christ and His moral standards.

15. ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

Assemblies of God is a large Pentecostal group which teach the Foursquare Gospel.

16. SNAKE HANDLING

There are some Pentecostal groups in the USA that practise snake handling quoting Mark 16. 17-18 and Luke 10.19

Apparently, this group was started by Charles Went Hensley (1880-1965).

These groups believe in the laying on of hands and Divine Healing, speaking in tongues, miracles and, as well as snake handling, occasionally drinking poison such as strychnine.

They have a dress code with uncut hair for women and ankle length dresses and no cosmetics and, for men, short hair and long-sleeved shirts.

Many of these snake handlers have been bitten and some have died and, in one incident, the cause of death was erroneously given as a heart attack.

17. VINEYARD CHURCH/KANSAS CITY PROPHETS

John Wimber (1934-1977) was a charismatic preacher and a founder of the Vineyard Movement noted for its adherence to the charismatic renewal.

He referred to his preaching as power evangelicalism and the third wave of the Holy Spirit. He taught the need for intimacy with God and that every believer should prophesy in the sense of making predictions and, heal the sick. He also preached Kingdom theology which meant that all believers had to proclaim and manifest the Kingdom of God on earth.

Major figures in the KCP are Paul Cain, Bob Jones and Mike Bickle.

Bickle claims to have heard the audible voice of God telling to raise up a new work.

Bob Jones claims that Jesus came to him and told him to get his mind back together (he was in a mental hospital at the time) and Jesus told him he had to KILL or forgive twelve people he hated.

Jones called Paul Cain the most anointed prophet in the world today and the leader of a new breed of Christians. Cain lived in a fantasy world of spiritualism claiming that he could tell anyone about the most private details of their lives. This is also a feature of the group known as the Latter Day Rain and Manifested Sons of God.

As in many Pentecostal and charismatic groups, there is a definite idol worship. Leaders are revered but reverence and worship is for God alone.

Their prophecies (predictions) have had no results to show that they are true or valid and yet the KCP are called super prophets and their churches are called end-time Omega generation super churches.

One meeting was nothing more than a pop concert with a backing groups of singing prophetesses and 40 dancing girls. No Scripture was read and the Gospel was not preached. There were no prayers or anything Scriptural.

I attended a meeting of John Wimber in which he talked about self, self and then... self.

At the end of the meeting, it was announced that the bar was open. When I left I walked passed an alley in which one of the prophetesses had hitched up her skirt and was having sex with a man who had been on the platform.

One prophecy told a woman that she must have her baby at home since the Lord said so. She did and the baby died.

18. CHILDREN OF GOD

The Children of God is another American cult now known as The Family. Its founder, David Berg

(1919-1994), began the group in the mid to late 1960s. It is a cult which practises sexual abuse, child abuse, child labour, physical abuse and mind control.

Ricky Rodriguez was born into this cult and wanted to kill his mother because of this. Eventually, he killed his childhood nanny and then himself. He has been systematically abused for years. He was the son of a leader and was known as the Prince and was being groomed to become a leader.

The doctrine was that Jesus taught Love Everyone which they took as permission and encouragement to free sex even with children. There are records of free sex with children as young as fifteen months old. Young girls of school age are tied to a bed and continually raped and their attempts to stop this cruelty also attracts physical abuse. Such children are sent out to child labour. One example is to lift and remove heavy rocks. Boys are raped mercilessly as well.

The groups live in communes and all their schooling and other needs are dealt with by members in the commune. They do not believe in doctors but say, If God made you, He can fix you.

There are detention blocks and severe punishments such as isolation and no food. Children are subjected to this with the excuse Spare the rod and spoil the child. The Family teach that beatings are necessary because the Devil had to be beaten out.

Members of this cult have committed suicide. Some have left it and escaped as if they were in Colditz.

The family issued an edict in 1986 banning sex but it still continued and continued to this day. The FBI have tried to investigate groups of this cult but, under threat, they move to another location such as Mexico and Puerto Rico.

19. BRANCH DAVIDIANS

The Branch Davidians believe that in the last days a final prophet will arise who alone will be able to open the Book of the Seven Seals as in Revelation. This, in itself is a contradiction for Revelation states that only the Lord Jesus is worthy and able to open this book.

This group accepted that David Koresh was this final prophet and this group met at Mount Carmel, Waco, Texas. He certainly believed that he was the final prophet. He had a lurid sexual affair with Lois Roden, the prophetess and leader of this sect, but then God instructed him that he had to marry Rachel Jones. He claimed to be the Son of God and that this is why he alone could open the Book of the Seven Seals.

He was charged with polygamy and child abuse. He had apparently fathered fifteen children with women and young girls. If anyone joined his cult he would annul their existing marriages.

The US government claimed that he was stockpiling weapons and President Bill Clinton was influenced by the Jesuits, the military arm of the Roman Catholic Church.

Over Easter 1993, Koresh was planning a mass suicide of his group presumably claiming that upon death they would all be safe and content in heaven.

On 19th April 1993, the US Army attacked the compound of this group killing helpless women and children. They used battle tanks, flame-throwers and poison gas. This was against US Law and Worldwide Convention. Almost 100 people died. Why did Clinton go to such lengths?

Koresh was seen jogging every day in the area and the group apparently welcomed visitors. They were a sect but did they pose a threat to national security.

It was reported that this group had in their compound an arsenal of weapons and America were afraid of a terrorist attack from them. This seems unlikely as the group had already committed themselves to mass suicide of the total membership.

20. MOONIES/THE UNIFICATION CHURCH

The Moonies were formed around 1954 and their founder was the Korean, Sun Myung Moon. While still in Korea, he formulated his views and, in 1946, was arrested by the Korean Police and served a prison sentence of 34 months. He moved to the USA in 1971. He has had sexual rituals with six married disciples practising polyamory. In 1982, he was convicted of fraud and conspiracy and sent to prison.

There were endless debates about whether the term Moonies was derogatory as, for example, was the word nigger.

The Moonies believe in God as Divine Creator, that Christ is the Messiah and the only Son of God, that there is a need for reparations for sins, that good works are essential and they believe in the Second Coming of Christ.

But they are also spiritualists and hold ancestor liberation ceremonies to allow spirits of dead ancestors to participate. Ceremonies are usually conducted by Hyo Nan Kim a woman who can channel spirits and the spirit of Soon Ae Hong, the mother of Sun Myung Moon's wife.

Throughout the years, the Unification Church have claimed that they have communicated with Confucius, the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and many more.

The Bible condemns spiritualism, mediums, efforts to contact the dead, witchcraft and the occult.

The Moonies are best known for their marriages and their marriage re-dedication ceremonies. The Blessing Ceremony was first held in 1961 with 36 couples in Seoul. There have been greater gatherings. One was when 2,500 Koreans were matched with Japanese members.

It has been said that Moonies are anti-Semitic.

They supported Richard Nixon in the Watergate scandal.

21. THE EXCLUSIVE BRETHERN/THE TAYLORITES

These are a sect or cult.

As with the Catholics and their selection of respective Popes, there has been a curious handing down of leadership in the Exclusives since the death of Darby from F.E. Raven through the Taylors and up to J Hales who died in 2002 and the leadership has passed to his son Bruce. There are some cases where the Exclusives are now making compensation payments to those they consider that they may have wronged but in some meetings leaders are being called priests.

But the two most despicable leaders of the Exclusives with the Taylors.

When F E Raven died in 1903, James (Jim) Taylor took over the leadership of the Exclusives. He was born in County Sligo, Ireland, in 1870 but emigrated to the USA. He believed in separation and in 1929 he said that Jesus Christ was not the Eternal Son of God.

He said that when Jesus was born He was not God. That is blasphemous. Taylor implied that Jesus

only received Divinity when He was 12 and in the Temple or when He was baptised by John. That is nonsense. He was the Eternal Word that existed before Abraham. He did not become God. He was God and always God.

Taylor perpetrated another serious doctrinal error, an error which the Pentecostals and charismatics still perpetuate. Taylor said that the Holy Spirit reveals new truths which the apostles knew nothing about Therefore the Bible is incomplete since God had left out things essential to our knowledge of Him. That is also blasphemous. He also said that he was God's elect servant and that it was a sin to reject new truths that the Lord had revealed to Him as His special servant. In this, the nonsense of the infallibility of the Pope bears a comparison.

In Pentecostal and charismatic churches, particularly with the erroneous speaking in tongues, people are hoodwinked into believing God has special servants to whom truth is revealed for the first time in prophecies and new manifestations of the Spirit. This is especially used in the fraudulent speaking in tongues; many examples of such fraud could be listed here.

Taylor was claimed to be God's sole representative on earth just as the Pope is so named as the Vicar of Christ. Every member of any Exclusive assembly had to submit to Taylor's teachings or they would be excommunicated, or, to use their term, 'put out of fellowship'.

This was a type of clericalism which the original brethren wanted to eradicate.

He also introduced the praying to the Holy Spirit which has no authority in the Scriptures.

He was also strict on the submission of women as taught in the New Testament that they should always wear long dresses or skirts to maintain modesty and at no time show their thighs unless in essential medical circumstances. I agree with this because it is clear Biblical teaching. But he went too far with how the women should wear their hair. The Bible teaches women having their heads covered so that the hair is not completely seen. How they wore it thus seems superfluous.

Taylor died in 1953 and six years later his son, another James, took over the leadership of the Exclusives. He introduced the doctrine that you could not have a meal with anyone over the age of 12 if they were not in an Exclusive assembly. This caused dreadful damage. It tore families and loved ones apart and it is certainly anti-scriptural.

But he went further. Children were not allowed to eat school dinners but could take a packed lunch or have a meal at the home of some Exclusives. Fishermen in Scotland who were Exclusive brethren could not eat with crew members who were not Exclusives and special tables were reserved for the Exclusives. This was also ridiculous.

About 8,000 left the Taylor brethren as a result of these absurd rules which have no endorsement in Scripture.

It did not stop there. Exclusives were told who they were to marry and, of course, it had to be another Exclusive. They were told how many children they could have and there were strict rules as to what activities the children were allowed to engage in at school. Further education, college and university were not allowed. You could not use a computer. You could not have professional qualifications. You could not belong to a Trade Union or any other body even if it were a charitable concern. You should have the minimum contact with people who were not Exclusives. If you lived in an apartment building you could not share a front door with an unbeliever. You were forbidden to tell a relative who was not an Exclusive of the death or funeral of a family member in the Exclusives.

But you were allowed to drink alcohol, and whisky and gin were recommended. In the 1960s Taylor

began making vulgar and lewd remarks in his addresses and some said that this was due to his drinking. His remarks became sexual and it was being said that he had an appetite for drink, women and sex.

In July 1970, Taylor travelled to Britain to take some meetings. He was drinking heavily and excusing himself by saying that alcohol was a pleasure God had given and so it was not wrong. From many a platform he cracked jokes, some of a very disgraceful nature. He entertained and made his audiences laugh. His father would not have approved. He made sexual remarks as to how Adam would look at naked Eve.

While staying in Aberdeen he had sex with a married woman and with the husband's apparent consent. At a meeting he made absurd gestures while a brother was praying, made abusive remarks about some of the people present and told dirty stories.

More people left the Exclusives who were now known as Taylor brethren. Those who stayed in the Taylor groups were known as Jims.

When Taylor died the leadership passed to James Harvey Symington. He introduced other rules. There was ban on any technology that used electromagnetic waves including remote garage door openers. Facsimile machines were banned. When some Taylor brethren visited me during Symington's leadership they said that television was banned. They were undecided about the radio. They said that I could not keep certain pets. When I asked about the stories of Jim Taylor's drunkenness they became angry and said that if I did not withdraw that remark they would leave at once. All sport was banned. I asked them about times of meetings which they were reluctant to give but eventually told me that the breaking of bread meeting was at 6 am on a Sunday and that meetings went on non-stop throughout Sunday. I asked why the meeting had no notice board outside or words of welcome. I was told that on some Sundays there were no meetings but that the whole fellowship would travel miles to another venue to have fellowship. I asked why all the windows of the meeting room were boarded up. I was told that this was to prevent any distractions in the holy place. They were rather dismissive of J N Darby and his teachings saying that they had moved on from there.

The next leader was John Stephen Hales who eliminated small meetings and removed other Taylor meetings both from South Africa and India to eliminate the expense of both visiting these meetings and supporting them. He made up a schedule of meetings and presided over the finances of all the assemblies. All Exclusives meeting were Taylor meetings although to confuse the issue there are some Exclusive meetings known as the Kelly brethren, after William Kelly, but they do not have extreme ideas. They are conservative evangelicals.

At one Exclusive conference, Hales was presented as the personification of the Holy Spirit.

But what was revealed was the mental abuse and health breakdowns connected with the Exclusives. In the early 1990s questionnaires were sent out to 295 former Exclusives and 244 were returned duly completed which is a large percentage, 82%. Here are some results:

77% felt that they had missed out on normal schooling.

77% believed that they had no choice but allow the leadership to think for them v

76% felt a sense of loss at leaving the Exclusives because it meant losing close friends.

73% felt a tremendous sense of relief at leaving

60% felt that being with the Exclusives had robbed them of the ability to think for themselves '-

50% are very disturbed and daily anxious at their upsetting days with the Exclusives. “

36% try not to think of the days of abuse with the Exclusives.

But J N Darby would not have promulgated these false doctrines which arose and increased after his death. Therefore it is wrong, in that sense, to call Darby an Exclusive or the originator of the Exclusives as they are today.

The Exclusives do not generally believe that they have to preach the Gospel to the world although I do know groups who preach in the open air.

Many groups do. They believe that the Lord's instruction for the apostles to go into all the world was Exclusive to those apostles. If anyone shows an interest in street preaching they may be invited to a member's house for further discussion. But when enquirers realised that the Exclusives have strict rules most of them are deterred.

A person in the Exclusives must not:

Be a member of any other religious company of any kind whatsoever.

Be a member of a trade union or professional association.

Be in any group benefit scheme with employer or employee.

Eat or drink with anyone who is not in the fellowship.

Have their business in the same building or share a common wall with another business whose owner is not in fellowship.

In business share any advertising costs with either a supplier or distributor.

Join any association where it involves them in membership with anyone not in fellowship.

Live in the same building where anyone lives who is not in fellowship. A semi-detached house is unacceptable because of sharing a common wall.

Live in the same home as your husband/wife/friend/family member who has been put out of fellowship. They must be legally separated from their partner who is not in fellowship before they can be brought back into fellowship.

Marry someone not in the fellowship.

Own shares in a company with any person not in fellowship.

Share a driveway with a neighbour.

Share profits in any profit making scheme.

Share a sewer with a neighbour if they connect before reaching the property.

Talk with anyone put out of fellowship.

Visit any other religious meeting

22. UNITARIANS

Unitarians are not Christians. They do not regard the Bible as the unquestionable authority but state that only some things in the Bible are true and that it should be read in the light of reason and Biblical criticism. They also state that Jesus was unequivocally human and He is not to be worshipped. Unitarians encourage members to find their own spirituality and spiritual journey which will be unique to them and to believe whatever they choose.

23. SPIRITUALISTS

Many Spiritualists call their meeting place a church which both untrue and deceptive. A church is a building or location for the worship of the Christian God, a mosque is for Islamic worshippers and a synagogue is for Jews to worship.

The majority of spiritualists do not believe in the God of the Bible and contradict the teaching of the Bible. They believe that the dead can speak to them which is in direct contradiction of New Testament teaching. Some believe in reincarnation which is denied in the Bible and some believe that they had past lives, a doctrine also denied in the Bible.

They are definitely anti-Christian and to call their meeting places churches is despicable.

(see articles of [Spiritualism](#))

24. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Christian Science is a misnomer to begin with. Science, in many aspects, is not Christian when, for example, you think of evolution and Darwinism and its products of eugenics and fascism. Darwinism contradicts the Bible. The application of science has resulted in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, for example, and given rise to the famous saying, Science is often the enemy of every natural living thing.

The originator of this cult was Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) who taught that

1. God has Made everything in His likeness
2. Prayer does not ask God for help but is only the means to learn more about spirituality the effects of which include Christian Science Health Care.
3. The preferred method of medical care is not through drugs or surgery but through Christian Science treatment. Is this not similar to the nonsense of spiritualists like Betty Shine?
4. The only awakening to truth is not through Adam or the Bible but through Christian Science.
5. God is both Father and Mother.
6. There is no Heaven or Hell.
7. Death is merely an illusion.
8. Jesus is not the Mediator between God and man.
9. Sickness is the result of fear, ignorance and sin.

Many Christian Scientists have died because they trusted in Christian Science treatment just as many have died believing in the alleged healing power of spiritualists and psychics.

As we said at the beginning, one can understand why people are not interested in either Christianity and churches and turn away from them. Current legislation has diminished Christianity but for all these denominations and cults the truth of the Gospel remains the same. You cannot blame God for the man made versions of the Bible and man's erroneous and immoral practices.

I also wish to make it clear that although some denominations do not accurately follow the Bible they do include many sincere, honourable and decent people.

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