

## 09 False Churches

Once you know the original telling the counterfeit becomes easy. Therefore, it is better to make effort to know the original than to focus on the counterfeits. But through knowing the counterfeits one can appreciate and value the original more. That is why it is important to know the truth of the true gospel. And there is also a great benefit in looking at false teachings.

### The problem of cult

1. Cults confront the teachings of the Bible and the doctrines of the church, challenge the authority of the Bible by offering new revelations or prophecies and give them higher authority.
2. Cults deny certain doctrines held by the church or overly emphasize them.
3. Cults tend to proclaim their own messiah other than Jesus by deifying their leaders as the messiah or the Second Coming Christ.
  - a. Mormons believe that Smith is the priest in the order of Melchizedek
  - b. The Unification Church (Moonies) believes in Moon Sun Myung and Shincheonji in Lee Man-hee to be the Second Coming Christ
  - c. Chunbukyo believes in Park Tae-seon as true god
4. Cults deny the institutional church or destroy the unity of the church
  - a. Dami Mission in 1992
  - b. The Salvation Sect that shook the Korean society in 2014

### 7 causes of occurrence for cults

1. Fulfilment of biblical prophecies
2. Corruption in the church
3. Liberal theology and faith

4. Extreme and closed legalism in the church
5. Unsatisfied members in the church
6. Fear from crises in the world
7. False interpretations of the Bible

### Major cults

#### 1. World Mission Society Church of God

Leader Ahnsahnghong (born January 13, 1918)

Based in Pango, the World Mission Society Church of God has Zahng Gil-jah as their leader (God the Mother) and Kim Joo-Cheol as Chief Pastor. They publish monthly a magazine called 144,000. Their membership is currently 2.5 million with 7,000 churches in 175 countries. According to their doctrines, Ahnsahnghong is believed to be the last Elijah, Second Coming Christ, and the Holy Spirit. They have a denomination called the Church of God, and interestingly, there is not a single cross in their church.

#### 2. Shincheonji

Shincheonji Church of Jesus, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony is a cult rooted in Park Tae-seon. Their leader is Lee Man-hee. The membership was at 186,000 in December 2017, and it runs Zion Christian Seminary, Christian Culture Center, Jumanna Mission Center, Cheonji newspaper. According to their doctrines, Lee Man-hee is the Second Coming Christ, the Holy Spirit, the savior of the end times, the promised shepherd. Only 144,000 can become the New Jerusalem and enter the New Heaven and Earth.

#### 3. Jehovah's Witness

Late 19th century, Charles Taze Russell (1852) struggled to accept the doctrine concerning hell while attending a liberal congregational church. If God created people, how could he send them to hell? This question led to the beginning of Zion's Watch Tower and eventually to the rise of Je-

hovah's Witness. In 2014, JW had 8.2 million members in 239 countries. In 1912, the Hollisters brought JW to Korea and the Watch Tower was officially recognized in Korea in 1957. In 2000, it was known to have 1,337 kingdom halls and 100,600 members.

The JW holds:

- Jesus Christ has already returned,
- Only Jehovah's Witnesses can enter the Kingdom.
- Their New World version is the best translation of the Bible.
- God should only be called 'Jehovah',
- Jesus Christ was created by God.
- The Holy Spirit is not a person but force, thereby denying the Trinity.
- One can only be saved by becoming a member of JW.
- Works such as evangelism are required for salvation.
- That accepting blood transfusions, observing national holidays, participating in wars, and saluting the flag should be prohibited.

#### 4. Mormons (the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

The founder is Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-1844). Mormonism began when Smith had his so-called visions and revelations. It is said that on September 22nd 1827, Joseph was told by angel Moroni to translate the golden plates. Smith would translate for the next 3 years, and the finished work was published in 1830 as the Book of Mormon. Smith started with 6 members in 1830 and in 1992 there were 4.5 million members in the US and 8.3 million globally. There are about 50,000 members in Korea.

Their doctrines:

- Hold the Bible, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price as their canon.
- Teach polytheism and that humans may become gods.
- Promote polygamy,
- Teach Jesus and Lucifer were brothers. "Every person who was ever born

on earth was our spirit brother or sister in heaven. The first spirit born to our heavenly parents was Jesus Christ, so he is literally our elder brother." (Gospel Principles, p.11)

- Teach that since God was once man he too had a wife. "Our Heavenly Father and mother live in an exalted state because they achieved a celestial marriage." (Achieving a Celestial Marriage Student Manual, p.1) The mother here is Mary.

#### 5. The Unification Church

##### (The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification)

Moon Sun-myung claimed that he would take over Jesus's unfinished work of physical salvation, and that the Unification Church seeks to establish heaven on earth under the leadership of Moon as True Parents. Currently there are 231 churches in Korea. The Family Federation estimates 300,000 members in Korea, which can go up to 1 million including associated semi-members, and 3 million outside Korea.

Their doctrines:

- Moon is the sole interpreter of Jesus's life as recorded in their canon, the Divine Principle.
- Jesus has failed to save humanity.
- The fall of Eve is essentially sexual.
- Salvation is achieved through Pikareum.
- Moon is the actual Second Coming Christ.

#### 6. Kim Kidong Berea affiliation

Kim Kidong taught that evil spirits are unbelievers who had died and reasons behind all illness. He publicly went out to drive out evil spirits. His ideas of demons and illness are essentially based on Korean shamanism, which resulted from subjective biblical interpretations and experiences.



## 7. Cults based on false eschatology

When the society becomes unstable and the church secularized and institutionalized without pure faith eschatology rooted in escapism begins to rise. Montanism in the 2nd century, Millerism (1830-1840), and Lee Jang-rim's Dami Mission in 1992 were known to deny the finality of the Bible and emphasize new revelations with the selfish tendency of claiming that only their own group would be saved. They announce the exact date of the Second Coming of Christ.

## 8. Lee Jaerock and the Manmin Central Church

Direct revelation and direct speaking on behalf of God – May 1983, Lee started to prepare to receive direct revelations. Lee was deified and the Manmin Central Church became specialized.

## 9. Park Tae-seon, Yoo Jae-yeol's Tempe of Tabernacle, Baek Man-bong's Recreation Sect, etc...

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### \*How the church should deal with cults

1. Restoration of the Word.
  2. Strengthening of the doctrinal faith.  
(It is important to know what one believes in)
  3. Establishment of healthy ecclesiology.
  4. Active recovering and nurturing of spirituality by the church.
  5. Well-balanced faith.
  6. Proper confession of faith (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Chalcedonian Creed, etc.)
  7. Small group communities of restoration and love.
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## The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic\* church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

*\*that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places*

