

Responses on Cult/Cultish nature of GGC/CTMI

I have always been reluctant to believe this is a cult. Mainly for following reasons:

- People seem to really get saved and commit themselves to holy living for Christ. They display an apparent joy in the Lord (but never seem to acknowledge the anguish and pain expressed by most saints and Christ himself in scripture - calling this "emotion of the flesh")
- Their understanding of Christ's work, justification, regeneration, repentance and faith cannot be faulted. My son was reading a James Montgomery Boice book on the gospel – an orthodox, reformed, protestant scholar.
- There is genuine love among them (despite that not spreading too much to those not part of them - most Christian friends of theirs who are not part of them feel the same "tolerated outsider" thing)
- They involve themselves in "works of mercy" and evangelism in Mauritius
- My son and his wife have displayed genuine spiritual strength, grace and fortitude in this suffering - real fruit.

However when I shared the whole story with wise and qualified pastors and psychologists internationally they responded as follows:

“A quick off the cuff response - your eloquent and brutally honest expressions of the heart of a rejected father seeking to maintain whatever connection is on stingy offer as an (only just) tolerated outsider, are very moving and laden with pathos. How painful is that! The pain you must feel knowing that is not your son behaving but a program he has been conscripted into for whatever reason, which must be so hard to understand. Your grasping and seeking to suck the juice from whatever contact you can get, however mean, inauthentic and painful speaks of your large heart. Your refusal to buy into the version of family that is central to maintaining the "integrity" of the cult's discourse or to behave in any way that would provoke the response they seek from you that would justify their distortions and deceptions is self sacrificial and loving. Many parents would be unwilling to tolerate the unjust and painful ambiguity that goes with seeking to love in the face of such rejection and would choose the lesser painful path of stepping away from the relationship rather than be constantly faced with the suffering and rejection. I'm amazed and drawn by your persistent and self sacrificial care in the face of its ongoing potential to wreak havoc with your emotions and sanity. In that sense you have enlarged yourself to become accepting of this abnormal reality, for the sake of your boy/s.

The pattern you describe of alienating every other authority and especially parental influence is very typical of these cults. This is not about God and his Kingdom, but about a charismatic narcissistic and psychopathic (to some extent) leader who employs whatever religious views he has available to him to exploit and control others. He's shrewd enough not to overplay his hand with his followers and seems to know how to take it to the edges of their tolerance and keep them committed. By God's grace there is some fruit in the grains of truth that happen to be scattered amidst the deceptions of the demonic. This is not about reasoning towards truth but mind control. Truth is dangerous so discussions about Biblical views etc are irrelevant and only interpreted as a direct attack on the official discourse. Questions represent resistance which are met with a sense

of justified "counter" attack. By God's grace and your persistently open heart and your boy's illness you are able to maintain a link which is abnormal for the situation. The connections you have are a gift, not normal to be having with your offspring webbed in a cult like this. A gift that says a lot about you, though.

Perhaps my reflections are not really appropriate and could be quite unhelpful. Let me know your reactions. I don't know how i would cope in a similar situation and i see God in the pain of your holding on and appealing to whatever bit of reality lies embedded in your father-son relationship, though buried very deep beneath the surface and almost inaccessible. I really appreciate your letting me into the full picture of where you are at and filling in the missing bits related to the saga of around Stu's illness.

I am very privileged to know you”

“Thanks for the in depth sharing. i am moved by your appeal to win back your son's respect on the basis of your love, reasoning, and grace. Again i'm deeply struck by the suffering provoked by this terribly hurtful situation. i guess i have two quite conflicting responses at the same time. One is a sense of admiration for your systematic attempts to deal biblically with these folks, and your persistent attempting to reason with grace and your appeal to the scripture. You demonstrate trust in the process of doing things correctly. I would be unable to exercise such trust under the circumstances.

The other is to wonder if you get it, by that i mean whether you "get" what you are facing here. Could there be an element of denial amongst you guys of the extent of the dysfunction of the system you are up against, and the spell these folks have fallen under. There is something very dark at work here, i'm looking for words, not meaning to be too literal, but people don't behave like this normally, and especially if they are led by the Holy Spirit and hold some sort of normal human decency. I'm afraid that you had set your self up for further hurt by expecting some sort of normal and reasonable responses from a system that is incapable of producing them without visible evidence of a radical transformation. The system is based on a paranoid fantasy, and that may be quite core to the leader's style. The Christian language means little to the system except its value in achieving the cult's dysfunctional aims. I was interested in the unfolding story how Bas tries to portray a semblance of normality, playing the leader-to leader game by the rules, but then the inevitable hostility and blame explodes forth, no matter how safe you try to make the situation. The hostile convictions about the world and hatred of others lies just beneath the surface.”

“I think that you have been amazingly patient and gracious in your approach to all of this. I can understand how you feel toward your children and you do not want to push them further away and I can only advise that you keep on showing them the endless love that they have always experienced from their father. They will not go far from this.

However I do think that you need not feel compelled to defend this church in any way. They may have some right doctrine (or lots of it) but it is not just incorrect doctrine that makes a cult out of religion. We assume that because a church preaches a reasonable doctrine that there must be something basically good there. However I think (and this is purely my opinion) that it is not only what you believe but how and why you believe it that determines whether you are cult like. Cults are all about the power and authority of

the leader. The leader usually is a man with much pent up anger towards the world. He says he wants to be different and if he is an orthodox christian wants to be Christ like. It is his anger that propels him and not love. He fools many people - especially the young because they see his dedication and noble acts. However because his energy for all this springs from anger and not love it is evil and must be condemned. Paul says "the love of Christ constrains me."

The followers are impressed because they see things happening, they are sincere people who want to be Christ like - like your boys. They experience a close fellowship which is interpreted as love. They feel secure with their leader because he knows right from wrong and they think he listens to God (more than other pastors they have known). In this case God gave the leader the knowledge of the given life which us lesser pastors have never heard of before. Because of all the good works they do, they feel fulfilled and think that this must be right.

However anger will always lead to discord. His wife cannot take the pressure - the closer you get to such a man you will soon see there is no gentleness in him but a demanding spirit. When people in the group get close to Bas they will experience the same pressure and then he will force them out saying that they cannot live the given life.

As for your family let them see love that is genuine. You do not have to match this group for good works - you wont. You live a far more balanced life than a cult allows its followers to live and you have way too much fun for a cult - all of which are God's gifts to us to enjoy. Let your whole church love them and accept them. I pray that they will soon realise the truth of their situation."

Found following on marks of cult – quite scary and uncannily descriptive of CTMI/GCC

- The group displays excessively zealous and unquestioning commitment to its leader and (whether he is alive or dead) regards his belief system, ideology, and practices as the Truth, as law.
- Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or even punished.
- Mind-altering practices (speaking in tongues, denunciation sessions, and debilitating work routines) are used in excess and serve to suppress doubts about the group and its leader(s).
- The leadership dictates, sometimes in great detail, how members should think, act, and feel (for example, members must get permission to date, change jobs, marry—or leaders prescribe what types of clothes to wear, where to live, whether or not to have children, how to discipline children, and so forth).

- The group is elitist, claiming a special, exalted status for itself, its leader(s) and members (for example, the leader is considered the Messiah, a special being, an avatar—or the group and/or the leader is on a special mission to save humanity).
- The group has a polarized us-versus-them mentality, which may cause conflict with the wider society.
- The leader is not accountable to any authorities (unlike, for example, teachers, military commanders or ministers, priests, monks, and rabbis of mainstream religious denominations).
- The group teaches or implies that its supposedly exalted ends justify whatever means it deems necessary. This may result in members' participating in behaviors or activities they would have considered reprehensible or unethical before joining the group (for example, lying to family or friends, or collecting money for bogus charities).
- The leadership induces feelings of shame and/or guilt in order to influence and/or control members. Often, this is done through peer pressure and subtle forms of persuasion.
- Subservience to the leader or group requires members to cut ties with family and friends, and radically alter the personal goals and activities they had before joining the group.
- The group is preoccupied with bringing in new members.
- The group is preoccupied with making money.
- Members are expected to devote inordinate amounts of time to the group and group-related activities.
- Members are encouraged or required to live and/or socialize only or primarily with other group members.
- The most loyal members (the “true believers”) feel there can be no life outside the context of the group. They believe there is no other way to be, and often fear reprisals to themselves or others if they leave (or even consider leaving) the group.

One of the most devastating experiences someone could face is to have a loved one involved in a cult. What are some ways we can know that a certain group is in fact a cult.

The devil always hides behind a mask; and he seldom carries an ID card. If this statement is true, it is of utmost importance for us to discern a cult when we see one.

The first mark of a cult is its **manipulation of Scripture**. The Bible is twisted to fit the leader or group's interpretation. Private interpretations are forbidden because the leader of the cult is the only one, of course, who is able to understand God's voice properly. Their teachings distort the historic, orthodox claims of Christianity.

Second, many times cults **manipulate people's minds**. There is little concern for individual thought and development. Education is usually discouraged while the convert is bombarded with the cult's doctrine and literature. Members are called to leave or neglect their old family and life-style for a brand new one.

A third mark is the **manipulation of time**. Since salvation comes exclusively from the teachings of the group, in many cults members **spend much of their time working for their organization**. Family, school, leisure, sleep, and even food are most often neglected.

Finally, cults typically manipulate reality. They tend to have an **exclusive "us"/"them" mentality in which society and old associates are all out to get them. Anyone outside of the group is suspect.**

If a religious group exhibits one or more of the marks mentioned above, that group may well be considered a cult. Jesus Christ said that in the last days many false prophets would arise and deceive many ([Matt. 24:11,24](#)). To avoid the deception of the cults, we should be rooted in the teachings of the historic Christian faith, and receive Jesus Christ, God the Son, second Person of the Trinity, as Lord of our lives.

In his "Building Resistance to Manipulation", the psychologist Steve K.D. Eichel created a checklist of signs of a sect designed to [brainwash](#) its members into loyal followers:

- Isolate them in new surroundings apart from old friends or reference-points; **(Mauritius – Pages vs our place)**
- Provide them with instant acceptance from a seemingly loving group;
- Keep them away from competing or critical ideas;
- Provide an authority figure that everyone seems to acknowledge as having some special skill or awareness;
- Provide a philosophy that seems logical and appears to answer all or the most important questions in life; **(“this gospel of the cross”)**
- Structure all or most activities so that there is little time for privacy or independent action or thought, provide a sense of "us" versus "them";