

RELIGION, SECTS AND CULTS

From freedom of conscience to mind manipulation

Page edited by [Touria PRAYAG](#)



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The legal battle between Hayley Goddard's family and the leaders of the "Eglise Chrétienne", has brought to the surface the debate about the border between religious freedom and cultish manipulation. All sides have accepted to put their points of view across in Straight Talk.



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Moral and sects freedom

[T. P.](#)

The phenomenon is nothing new, nor is it banal. However, it only grabs the headlines when there is a spectacular episode of criminal intrigues attributed to sects. We can all recall the death of 88 members of the Branch Davidian cult, the suicide or assassination of 53 members of the Solar Temple in Canada and the collective suicide of 923 members of the People's Temple in Guyana.

Headlines, investigation, shock and outrage. And then there is a quasi- general indifference as cults insidiously carry on with their daily activities. They continue to thrive, exploiting the distress of some of those who have been psychologically weakened by some trauma or disappointment and are willing to allow themselves to be deceived by the apparent spirituality of sects or the illusion that inside the ' prison' walls, they will find the answer to all their problems.

Back home, the "Eglise Chrétienne" made the headlines on and off between 1997 and 2000 namely in the cases of the Alladee and Attisse children.

The same allegations of forced adoptions, kidnappings, abduction and fraudulent acts. Today, public opinion is no clearer about what happened than it was in 2000. Then silence. Until Hayley made the headlines.

The dividing line between the expression of moral freedom and manipulation is indeed very fine. One is only a step away from the other. And therein lies the difficulty for the State. How much moral freedom is a citizen allowed to exercise while, at the same time, being protected from crossing the line into manipulation and falling in the claws of cults? I approached this dossier with no preconceived ideas, in spite of my strong aversion to any form of moral manipulation and my inherent belief that cults pose a real danger to individuals and society. I tried to apprehend the moving, complex and often disguised reality as well as possible pretences of this phenomenon.

My interaction with the "Eglise Chrétienne" has been cordial but peculiar. While I normally pick up the phone and gently 'coerce' a minister, an M. P. or a busy CEO to participate in Straight Talk, I had to go through a plethora of barriers and give a dozen assurances of good faith before I received the texts to be published. The hierarchy seems almost insurmountable.

Still, I believe that the "Eglise Chrétienne" did help the Hardys out of their marital trouble and I believe Mrs.

Hardy and Hayley when they talk about having found happiness. After all, happiness is a state of mind which one's brain can be persuaded into believing in. However, all said and done, my heart went out to Steve Goddard, a father who is heart- broken and is prepared to do anything to get his daughter back. His sense of loss is real. His distress could be that of any of us. As a parent, I feel for him and wish there is an investigation into the allegations he is making and into the dangers of cults in general, followed by measures to protect society, particularly children, from moral manipulation. One should not be deterred by the difficulty in defining the term ' cult' or ' sect'. It is a false obstacle. Where there is a danger, be it physical, moral or psychological, the State has a duty to find a response adapted to it. In this case, increased vigilance is required on behalf of the authorities.

The State and the victims of sects



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We think we know what a democratic State is or should be. But what do we know about sects, the synonymous term for cults? A recent article in " l'express" explained that a sect functions like a Mini- State within one or more States. Do sects respect human rights? In the " Eglise Chretienne"/ CTMI, Audrey and Miki Hardy are the unchallengeable and so far unchallenged leaders who wield vast powers and direct influence upon its members. How and why do they seem to be so powerful whilst their members are so meek? Why is their predatory organisation so immensely wealthy? These questions can be answered.

The ways of the Lord are said to be mysterious. Indeed so mysterious that many have preferred to conclude there is no Lord. Many others choose otherwise.

Faith in a God is one thing.

Membership of a sect is something else. The strategy and tactics of sects to recruit victims, including children, can be exposed. Their insatiable inclination to acquire material wealth, often with the complicity of allegedly " passive friends" in high places need not remain a mystery forever. In France, in Belgium, in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, sects have been investigated.

Miki Hardy jubilates that there is no legal definition of what a sect is.

Legislators in Mauritius have not addressed this societal cancer. Not yet.

Sects display specific traits that are so repugnant to human rights that the intervention of the State is necessary.

The right to practise religion has never meant that an individual has the right to become a slave. Sects are totalitarian in structure and thrive on master- slave dependency. Members are recruited by various forms of enticement or deception.

They are separated from families, friends and colleagues. Their parents can hardly recognize them. The grief caused is immense.

Thus, parents too become victims of the sect. The leader/ master demands total submission whilst free thinking is systematically excluded. In an e- mail dated 9th December 2008, Hayley Goddard wrote the following to Miki Hardy: "... so you know that my life is completely submitted to you and the elders and there is nothing I want to do without the support and approval of you all... Love you Miki and thank you so much for your heart for me it blows me away..." Such a complete submission to Miki Hardy/" Eglise Chrétienne" resembles too closely what a master requires of his slaves. The same loss of freedom and the same domination. It illustrates perfectly the traits common to many sects.

Hayley's father, Steve Goddard, her mother, Heather Goddard, our parents, our youth, our teachers, our people, our Government have a right to now know what was never found out by the Parliamentary Select Committee set up in 1997 to investigate APSA/" Eglise Chrétienne". The minister responsible for Health has a particular public duty to be vigilant. All ministers should be. Public funds and large amounts of

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money from the European Union are involved.

The State today still has the urgent responsibility to investigate. Remedial action, proportional to the catastrophic harm to be avoided, is as urgent. Banning a sect prevents the practice of a specific form of slavery.

Let us not forget that violations of human dignity have so often been wrapped in the cloth of freedom to practise freely the religion or philosophy of one's choice.

By Jean- Claude Bibi, of Counsel to Steve Goddard

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Wolf in sheep's clothing



My family was a close, loving family of four. My daughter, Hayley, at 16 was invited to attend a " Church Team Ministries International (CTMI) branch in Durban.

She seemed happy there and we supported her by attending sometimes with her and funding two Mauritian trips for seven months. We hosted CTMI members during a Durban conference and provided our vehicle and mountain cottage for them.

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During a few weeks in October 2008, we received disturbing feedback about CTMI. Local pastors were troubled and after a joint gathering, a number of them warned their congregations about the cultish tendencies of CTMI. We were also shocked to hear that one of the young ladies whom we hosted was engaged to be married three weeks after telling us she had no romantic interests.

We conducted research on cults.

We were disturbed to discover that CTMI aligned closely with the universal descriptions of a cult.

Hayley agreed to see a pastoral therapist only if accompanied by a CTMI " spiritual mother". This therapist was shocked at the degree of CTMI control and influence in her life. We wrote to Miki Hardy about our concerns and met with their local pastor. They brushed us off, denied being a cult and suggested we leave Hayley to " follow her heart". A little later, Hayley was advised to take out a restraining order against us. We were losing the loving daughter we once knew. In December 2008, she was pressured to not spend three weeks with us on holiday, something we as a family have always enjoyed. She was coerced rather to leave our home to live with her " spiritual mother and father", the Fitzroys.

We discovered families in our community with very similar stories. We began meeting together and formed the Concerned Parents' Group*. After 8 months of living in various CTMI homes, Hayley was manipulated to attempt to come home in exchange for an apology from us to CTMI for the Concerned Parents Group Activities. We refused to bow to this deception. Later, we discovered she had already booked her ticket to Mauritius.

In a November front page newspaper article exposing CTMI, Hayley was quoted not being under pressure to make major decisions and that she was unsure of her future. Three days later she called us to announce she was to be married to a young man we had never met! When this young man called two days later, I indicated that I could not give the blessing requested before getting to know him, his family and friends. Being unable to contact Hayley and knowing CTMI's reputation for arranged marriages, I decided to fly to Mauritius to investigate.

I enquired for an address at the CTMI church office which took 45 minutes while they discussed with the elders what to do. Eventually, Hayley agreed to meet for lunch but I was prevented from speaking to her alone! She admitted her sim card had been removed and could not explain why.

When I arrived the next day, I was escorted out by the police. Meetings were set up with lawyers, clergy, government officials, the media and people in Mauritius whose families had also been damaged by CTMI. Hayley publicly declared her allegiance to the Fitzroys and her rejection of me. This web of secretive deception and manipulation of young people weaved by CTMI in many families has to be stopped.

This is my daughter and will never give up. I appeal to all those adversely affected to speak out and help expose this dangerous group for what it is. I also appeal to government to expose this wolf in sheep's clothing.

* www.ctmiconcernedparents.com

By Steve Goddard, Hayley's father

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Serving Jesus with all my heart

I am 19 years old. I grew up in Durban, and as a family we never used to go to church. I attended church on and off with friends but I really committed my life to Jesus in 2007 while attending a meeting at Grace Gospel Church in South Africa. Ever since that day, I have wanted to serve Jesus with all my heart. The first time I came to Mauritius was for a youth camp in 2007 and, while I was here, I went to church at "Eglise Chrétienne" and was amazed to see the love of the people and their sincerity in serving the Lord. I was encouraged to meet other young people who have also been changed by Jesus and wanted to serve Him the right way! What I love with "Eglise Chrétienne" is that I am free to be myself, to live according to my convictions and not feel judged by anyone. People have never put expectations on me. Also, I love how the pastors show us the way to serve the Lord. They are simple and easy to talk to. There is no fuss made about them.

The homes of the Christians, and even those of the leaders, are open and we can enjoy fellowshiping with one another in homes.

We share meals, have fun and good laughs together... The gospel that we hear and is being preached is one of grace and freedom. It shows us how we are and teaches us to desire to become more like Jesus. We are not given a list of do's and don'ts, or told what to give but we are encouraged to support the missions, projects of the church and the needy according to the desire of our hearts.

I have been in the church for two and a half years.

This whole story of "brainwashing", "abduction" and "arranged marriage" is a pure invention of people who have been influencing my parents for the past few months... my father even admitted in a conversation that it was only after people started telling him things about the church that he started to persuade me to leave.

Levi and I met in South Africa and have known each other for two years. We love each other and that is why we have decided to get married. I was never forced to do anything by anyone! When my father asked me on the phone when we would get married, I thought he meant in the church. I did not know. As for the civil marriage, I thought that he had looked in the civil status office where the bans had been published for fifteen days! For the marriage in church, I had no idea! If my parents really wanted me back, they would not carry on perpetrating lies, for if anyone knows they are lying, it is I. They know me well enough to know that this will put me off and draw me away from them... But once they stop playing this game, there can be a basis for our relationship to be restored, which I hope will be soon. If they really love me, they should rejoice, for I have never been happier in my life!

By Hayley (Goddard)

The gospel has saved my marriage!



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I have been part of the "Eglise Chrétienne" since I became a Christian in 1977. Before that, my husband and I were both very involved in the Catholic Church. We had everything in life: money, a home, friends and successful careers but our marriage had become very shaky! During some charismatic meetings organized by the Catholic Church at Loreto Convent in 1977, the gospel touched my husband deeply. He repented and received Jesus as his Saviour. My turn came a little later and everything changed from then on. With a few others, who were in the same situation, we left the Catholic Church at the Bishop's request, and later cofounded the Christian Centre, today known as the "Eglise Chrétienne". Without the gospel that challenges us to change, I know for a fact that Miki and I would have divorced long ago. We are so different! Today, I can say that we are one, that the Lord has united our hearts in a mighty way and that we have become best friends. We realised recently that, amongst the 400 couples in the church, 150 of which got married in the church, there have been only two divorces since 1977! The only explanation is that it is the fruit of the gospel we hear.

The "Eglise Chrétienne" is like a big family where the gospel has broken the barriers of class, race and age! To

know and be close to people from different walks of life is something very precious. For many, that is still a dream but for us, it has become a reality.

Concerning the rumours about the church, I think it is sad that people are prepared to pass on unsubstantiated hearsay, particularly Father Labour who has labelled us as a sect. I invite him to come and see for himself what we are living, then draw conclusions based on facts, not suppositions. As for Patrick Monassie, for the record, he left the church and made all kinds of accusations against us in 1997, then regretted and came back to the church, where he was openly accepted.

This proves one thing: that we have nothing to hide and that we are ready to forgive and forget.

Another fruit of the gospel.

1 Peter 4 v 15- 16 says, " Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." In this time of persecution, where we are being falsely accused of all kinds of things, where people feel free to say what they want about us, we are thankful and very encouraged by the wonderful support we have received, not only from Christians, but also from Indian, Muslim and Catholic friends as well as relatives.

Those trying to defame the Church have clearly been reduced to inventing far- fetched stories about forced sterilisation, brain- washing, and arranged marriages! If there were genuine allegations against us, they would never have invented such stories.

Considering all the dramatic occurrences in Mauritius these days, it is very sad that a few news agencies persist in voicing such ridiculous accusations against our church.

Do they have a hidden agenda?

by Audrey Hardy, member of the " Eglise Chrétienne"