

The Occult Cults: A Very Brief Overview

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Introductory Overview

Cults come in all sorts of forms and shades. Some are clearly deadlier than others although all cults in general, are to be loathed because of their deleterious effect on the individual. In a separate series of papers, we have taken a detailed series defining and describing what constitutes a cult and as such, we omit that detail here. Readers are encouraged to seek out the series in question to acquaint themselves. In the present paper, our focus is on a slightly different category of cults; the Occult. This is because the occult cults are especially dangerous given that they have the capacity to invade one's psychological and cognitive system, eventually mentally crippling or destroying them.

Occult Cults Described

What exactly are the Occult cults? How different or similar are they to the normal standard defined cults? How is the Christian to detect and avoid them? Although we do not deeply delve into all the legitimate questions thus far raised, we none the less make a stub, an attempt at deciphering them. This is critical for equipping and inoculating the saint desiring to please the master. Simply described, the occult cults are those cults sometimes involving exhilarating psychic experiences through various methods such as meditation, yoga, Eckankar (ECK) or even Transcendental Meditation (TM). These cults promise tremendous power, soul travel, esoteric peace of mind and out of body paranormal experiences among others. In short, they are more spiritual in nature where adherents interact with other spirits at a plane different from the natural world. For some time, their normal bodily functions are suspended or hibernate as they take off into the trans normal orbit, the spiritual highway necromantically¹ interacting with other like nebulous spirits in that particular '*spiritual cyber space*'. This is definitely quite an experience and definitely exhilarating resulting in one strongly desiring yet another much deeper experience after the previous encounter. From initially say, once a week kick, the frequency progressively rises

¹ I have created a word here derived the well-known word *Necromancy*. By that token, Necromancy is the etymological root word for the crafted word. Feel free to discard or disregard it but know that I use it here in that sense.

to twice, thrice four times or even daily in some cases. Before they know it, it becomes their cup of tea, taken several times a day, with attendant thrills of course! For sure, a person may acquire some of those potencies but in the long run, they themselves are destroyed by something that should build them. The probably reason is that this practice is mingled with some legitimately good things such as good health, wellness among others. That said, we need to say that the nature of the occult is that the person practicing them increasingly becomes possessed and in every sense, a property and agent of Satan.

A Closer look at the Nature of the Occult

Having briefly described the Occult above (with its attendant practices or experiences), how would we more clearly describe an Occult? Granted, definitions and even descriptions vary contingent on the author. Jill Martin Rische (2008) has given some helpful leads to that end in highlighting some attributes of an occult (i.e. the quick facts section). She says the following and I quote verbatim: *“The word occult comes from the Latin word occultus, meaning hidden or secret things.”* Clearly, this description gives more of the etymology rather than definitively defining the occult in itself. For this, we have to look elsewhere within the same book² where she says (p xvi): *“God defines the occult as having its origin with Satan, the devil.”* Still, this description does not give a definitive definition. Let us give it another attempt by tilting the question this time: How dangerous or different is the Occult from Christianity? Jill Martin Rische says: *“Occultism often denies the Trinity, the deity of Christ, His atonement on the Cross for our sins, and His bodily resurrection, but it may also promote a blend of Christian and occult belief”* Yet another source describes the Occult with respect to magical powers, incantations, mystical or supernatural powers, obviously outside the normal realm of life. The reader will immediately realize that just this later description raises a deep red flag for the spiritually alert saint because God forbids all such acts! The Bible, especially the Old Testament is replete with cautions and prohibitions for the Children of Israel³ as they were re-entering Canaan, part of the Ancient Near Eastern Levant region whose lands were at the time already inhabited by polytheistic peoples. Before long however, spiritual contaminations ensued. One just has to review the narratives in the book of Judges, Deuteronomy or Numbers to catch a glimpse of what we are here alluding to.

How Occult Cults Differ from Other Regular Cults

As hinted at in the previous section, unlike the other cults that affects one's thinking centre or practice, the occults include the possession⁴ and control of

² i.e. *The Kingdom of the Occult*, 2008

³ And all God's children in general.

⁴ Of the individual or subject.

Satan, otherwise known as Lucifer. The subject is bonded to Satan, worships and serves him. Sacrifices, ritual practices and even soul travel becomes a reality. These occults are prevalent among the Eastern and oriental religions but have gathered clout in recent times even within the western world as some of their practices increasingly incorporated into normal daily living practice such as yoga⁵ practice to reduce stress. Very few people know that this has occultic, and therefore, Satanic roots in nature although at face value, may appear harmless with extremely high returns, it works adherents exclaim! The interesting feature about these types of cults is that they empower an individual to perform paranormal feats in the process granting them clout. The fearful thing however, is that even some Christians have subscribed to this originally pariah occultism practice to further their “Christian Ministries.” In largely animistic contexts (though mostly syncretic in urban settings) like Zambia, these sorts of things find a rich haven to thrive. But we need hasten to something else, leaving the enquirer to dig into works by Hunt, Martin, Jill M. Rische, Johnson Philip among others. For now, we transition, without much ado to briefly trace the historical developments of the said cults.

History and Development of These Cults

Cults have different historical roots and reasons. Some are triggered by a group or set of people that feel aggrieved and tangent from main line thought patterns. Others claim to receive special inspiration⁶ or claim to have access to some restricted secretly clandestine information sources. These cults generally tend to take a very strong inflexible stands over a give position that they unapologetically disseminate around to who ever will. Still others grow and flourish in specific climates or environments such as the post modern, pluralistic society that give legitimacy to all views brought to the fore. These cults (depending on the type and nature) appear to quickly adapt and exploit fast means of communication compared to the established accepted religions or faiths. Thus, we can see that cults start and develop with an agenda at hand that is inflexibly held on to and propagated. We know this is a very high level summary, hardly giving any detail. The best way to illustrate is by way of a case study but, we however shy away from this in this discourse. Suffice to say that original propagators often claim some extraordinary supernatural experience leading them to what they teach or hold. For example, the Theosophical society, that contributes to the New Age Movement is said to have been begun by restless and curious individuals (i.e. Madam Helena P. Blavatsky &/or Colonel Olcott in New York, 1875. They later emigrated to India, Chennai in pursuit of Indian and other East Asian religions) seeking extraordinary experiences and knowledge⁷. That is the way of the Occult, always focusing on the unseen,

⁵ This is a relatively harmless (according to adherents) practice that involves breathing techniques with immense health benefits for the regular practitioner.

⁶ Or even revelation

⁷ They dubbed themselves as “the Unsectarian seekers after Truth”

touching on the inner resources for perceived greater ends. Cults like Free Masonry, ECK, TM, Satanism or even the Scientology fall into this bracket although this list is a mere tip in the iceberg for new Occults are consistently being generated and churned out.

Why these Cults Ought to be Loathed and Avoided by Christians

All cults, without exception, are to be avoided like a plague because once they captivate an individual, it is nearly impossible to disinfect oneself from their grip (Philip n.d.). They not only capture the mind but cripple the reasoning faculty to the extent that one enters into bondage. These cults are extremely sophisticated and designed to deceive, entice, arrest and firmly bind someone. Different baits are dangled before the prospective subject, such as meeting felt needs and once they ingest the sink, hook and liner, they are bound for life, unless of course they are liberated by the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Never allow cults to encroach near your door or to any of your loved ones! The best defense against them is to first know the truth which will sensitize the detectors of lurking danger at every turn. Eternal vigilance, to borrow a phrase from Philip, is essential. Christian or not needs to watch out but more so, for the unregenerate.

Examples and classes of Occultic cults

Examples

There are myriads of Occult cults present with many others daily churned out. To keep track of this is a herculean task but for our purposes, we list only a few as examples of deadly cults:

1. Theosophical society
2. Free Masonry
3. Christian Science (of Mary Eddy Baker) & Scientology (this point is somewhat connected to (1) above.
4. Eastern Mysticism & New Age Movement (Although strictly speaking encompasses all others in this list; Jill M. Rische p 189- [Chapter 6]). Read what Rische () says on page 193 about the NAM: "*The New Age movement is an all-pervasive, all-encircling philosophy, birthed from Theosophy and Hinduism. New Age groups comprise a united syncretistic religion; everything comes together under one philosophy. Their divine absolute principle is not a person; it is not God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The absolute principle is an impersonal entity that inhabits all creation, whether they call it consciousness, energy, vibrations, spirit, force, Mind, Brahma, or the One. Esoteric philosophy does not reject deity*

within nature; it only refuses to accept any single faith, like Christianity, as the only way of salvation. In contrast to the true God who created man in his image, the New Age philosophy re-created God in man's image and likeness. The core of New Age theology is the integration of all religions, practices, mythology, superstition, and the occult found in the world. It refuses to bow the knee and worship the biblical God of creation.” In our view, this is an apt and correct description or assessment.

5. Various forms of Astrology (see Rische on Chapter 8 from page 269 ff).
6. Goddess worship, Wicca & Witch craft
7. Spiritual Warfare (here we include groups like the Word of Faith Movement, etc. or groups where individuals like Rebecca Brown Belonged)
8. Kabbalah (Hollywood; Jill M. Rische p 129- [Chapter5])

Classes of cults:

Having listed some of these cults (in general) we now transition to list the classification of these cults. We do not classify from the list given earlier but basically mentions the classes. This is done to make our work relatively easy for mastery and identification. We are indebted to Johnson Philip for this part though we make no attempt to give narratives beyond the incomprehensive but representative list of classes:

- i. Black magic
- ii. White magic
- iii. Paranormal phenomena

Practices in the Occult

The occult use different practices such as meditation, soul travel or some such practices that demand concentration or some regular exercise. As hinted at earlier in our paper, at face value, these practices appear innocent and harmless, given that even Christianity practices form of symbolism⁸, but in fact may not be. A person must take extreme precautions as they encounter whatever occult at their disposal as it may easily expose them to spiritual danger, confusion or demonic influence (Dickason 1975). We resist a detailed treatment here but point readers to other helpful sources including *The Kingdom of the Occult, the Occult Invasion* or some such.

⁸ Such as the Crucifix or cross, blood atonement, covenants, the Fish or some such.

Strategies these Cults exploit to Expand their Scope of Influence

As alluded to at earlier point, cults have a tremendous determination and will to grow, flourish and capture as many minds as possible. For some reason, these cults appear to promise liberty, wealth and peace that all humans crave. They also seem to have access to a lot of money, power and influence to the extent that they swiftly and efficiently carry out their agenda. Thousands are soon swept away in the subtle but deadly deception, plummeting over the smooth slippery slope. Furthermore, cults exploit cutting age technology, media and whatever avenue they can use to promote their brand globally. For instance, Transcendental Meditation (TM) and yoga are increasingly accepted without question in the Western world⁹ where previously they could not have been tolerate just a few decades ago. What has changed in the intervening period? What has happened? The simple best basic answer is that pluralism, tolerance and post modern thinking have generated a fertile ground for the occult to freely spread. The strategy then is to exploit the tolerant climate, exploiting available tools that most established faiths and denominations neglect such as social media, cable networks, and to some extent, the print media (i.e. News papers). The occult promise immediate solutions and answers to life's perplexing questions/puzzles. Who can resist such a pull? You need to be extremely spiritually grounded to detect the lethal poison from afar. Even more, you need the right stamina and firmly internalized biblical world view to push back on the push and pull forces. Only *Jehovah* grants such determined holy tenacity.

What Others have Said and Written over these Cults

Apart from Dr Philip or Walter Martin, Dave Hunt has written extensively of the occult presence and practice. Hunt highlights the occult principles exploited by EW Kenyon in the 1890s to a point where occult practices are common place and unawares integrated into the Christian world. Very few people ever question the source of some of these extraordinary powers flouted by supposed "Men of God" in our day. Dave Hunt suggests that the source is Satan as sorcery makes its modern debut on the "miracle" crazy Christian public. Dr Philip writes with penetrating insight and accuracy on the occult cults, demonstrating how potent, acceptable and deleteriously toxic and damaging these are on the human being. Sadly, the Christian Church, in some cases, seems to support and encourage these bizarre happenings in the name of "*the work of the Holy Spirit*"¹⁰. Some very well meaning and respectable Christian figures have not even attempted to hide the source of their powers. Men like Benny Hinn have publicly disclosed that he derived his powers from the grave of one late Catherine Colman, and the Christian public applauds or simply casts a blind eye. The bewitching thing about

⁹ And now even in "Christian Nations" like Zambia, as at 2022.

¹⁰ That is not to suggest that the Holy Spirit never works today, not at all!

this phenomenon is that it responds to what the human being desires and wants. Again, we ask, who would oppose what is a perceived good and solution to one's physiological needs?

Lessons Gleaned from this Consideration

Several hair raising lessons can be learnt from a sober consideration of this subject. Below are some take home points and lessons:

1. The Occult is powerful and all pervasive today. All classes of people, whether educated or not deeply or at some level engage in it.
2. The Theosophical society and its offshoots e.g. Baily's Lucifer Trust are popular today but extremely deadly being anti-Christian in nature.
3. The New Age Movement (NAM) is opposed to Christianity and is today a growing force.
4. The New Age has affected practically every tenet of life like sociology, theology, philosophy, medicine, science and technology etc.
5. Its goal (i.e. NAM) is to unify the world under one head.
6. The occult takes different shades but essentially the same and eventually harms the person, destroying the Christian faith.
7. The well known forms of occult are classified as: Black (harms others) and White (helps the subject) magic as well as the Paranormal healing activity.
8. The occult has evolved over time but has always been from the Beginning-Even in the garden of Eden, so Philip and others posit.
9. Some people worship Satan but hate God.
10. In India and other places, the occult is on the rise a kind of revival has taken place. This should be concerning for the Biblical Christian.
11. Many people are supporting wrong and harmful things including the occult. This is a characteristic mark of the age. Relative thinking always has such effects.
12. The Lucifer Trust is now called the 'Lucis Trust' a Latin rendering of the word "Lucifer" or Satan.
13. The New Age Movement is preparing ground for the anti-Christ, so Hunt and Philip claim.

14. Occults come in different shapes and subtly anti-Christian in nature. They may not overtly come across as such but in their intrinsic nature are deadly poison to the soul.
15. Human beings are said to be divine and not sinners. Most cults hold this view, though with variations.
16. Some occult movements include: Freemasonry; Theosophical society; erstwhile movement; Lucifer Trust; Christava Vandetta (india)
17. The Church needs to discern and wake up! Syncretism is certainly on the rise and may eventually choke out pure Biblical Christianity.

Our work is now ended; we need to transition to the conclusion. We urge our readers to consider carefully the propositions and thoughts we have advanced in this and other papers. It may just be a contribution to recuing the now error-buffed Church of Christ around the world. That said, if the Son sets free, one is free indeed (John 8:32 & 36)! Onward to the conclusion then!

Conclusion

Although all cults are to be avoided, the occult cults have proved to be more deadly because they eventually destroy the subject. Their lethal captivating nature and practice may at first appear exciting on face value but are very deadly in effect; they can cause untold damage to the soul including death, madness or some other deformities. Occults can invade ones' psychic, distort faculties (or noetic structure) leaving permanent scars on the person. They are best avoided, opposed or rejected by any and every person whether Christian or not. These occultic practices appear to give supernatural powers whose source may be Lucifer, the arch enemy of Christ.

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