



New Religious Movements: Introduction

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

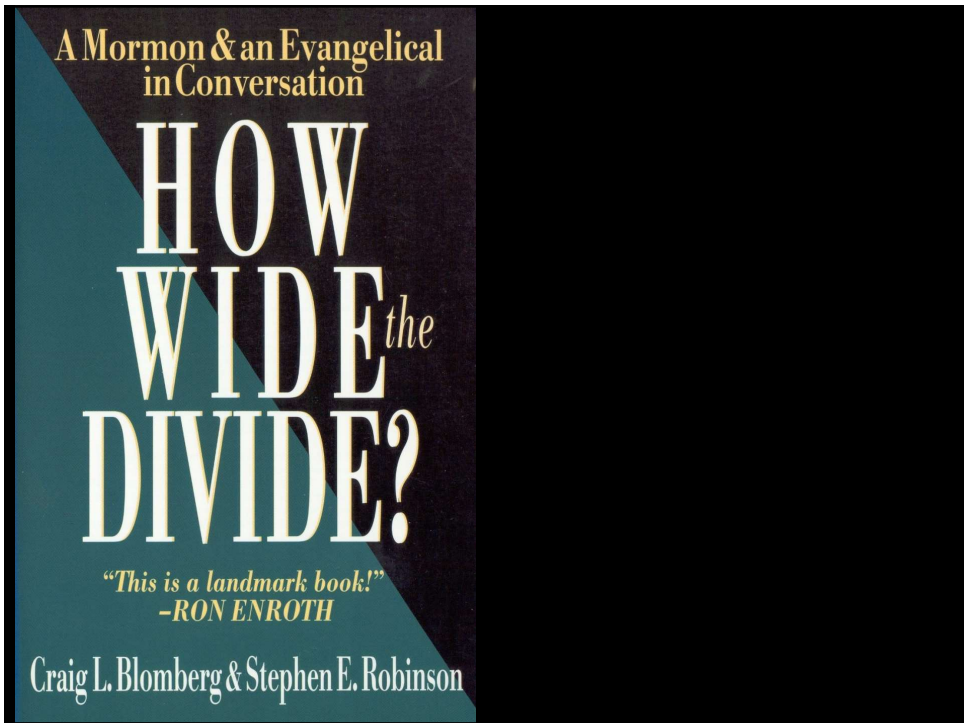
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Charlotte, NC



Preliminary Matters



The Need for Understanding New Religious Movements and Cults



because it produces no works.

If members of both our communities can avoid these twin pitfalls, substantial progress in dialogue is possible. If there is not enough in all this for reciprocal fellowship, there may at least be enough to recognize in each other's traditions a joint legacy (however misshapen in our individual estimations) of the same basic theological traditions and of the same basic commitment to Christ and his gospel (especially as filtered through nineteenth-century restorationism), however differently we may understand them. And if even that proves too ambitious, there is at least enough common ground to begin talking to one another, learning each other's theological language, and treating one another civilly in the process.

Conclusion

[ROBINSON & BLOMBERG]

JUST BEFORE WE BEGAN TO DRAFT this joint conclusion, Prof. Blomberg was describing our project to a young man in his Sunday-school class, who nodded with approval. "All through junior high and high school," he explained, "my best friend was a Mormon. We shared the same interests in school, the same favorite sports, and the same moral standards. We talked a lot about our spiritual beliefs. Neither of us ever convinced the other to 'convert,' but we liked each other anyway. We each discovered that not everything our churches had taught us to believe about the other 'side' was true, though some of it certainly was. But we also both found that most of our friends in our respective youth groups couldn't understand why we would want to be such good friends when we didn't share the identical faith."

That conversation epitomizes some of the discoveries we made as we worked together on this project: having more in common than we expected, sharing numerous social and moral standards as well as many of the same theological doctrines, recognizing that not everything Evangelicals and Mormons say about each other is true, though some of it is. We have both explained to each other in some detail what we believe, but neither of us has "converted" the other. We have sought to debunk stereotypes, to correct misinformation, to separate peripheral issues from central ones, to trust that neither of us is lying to the

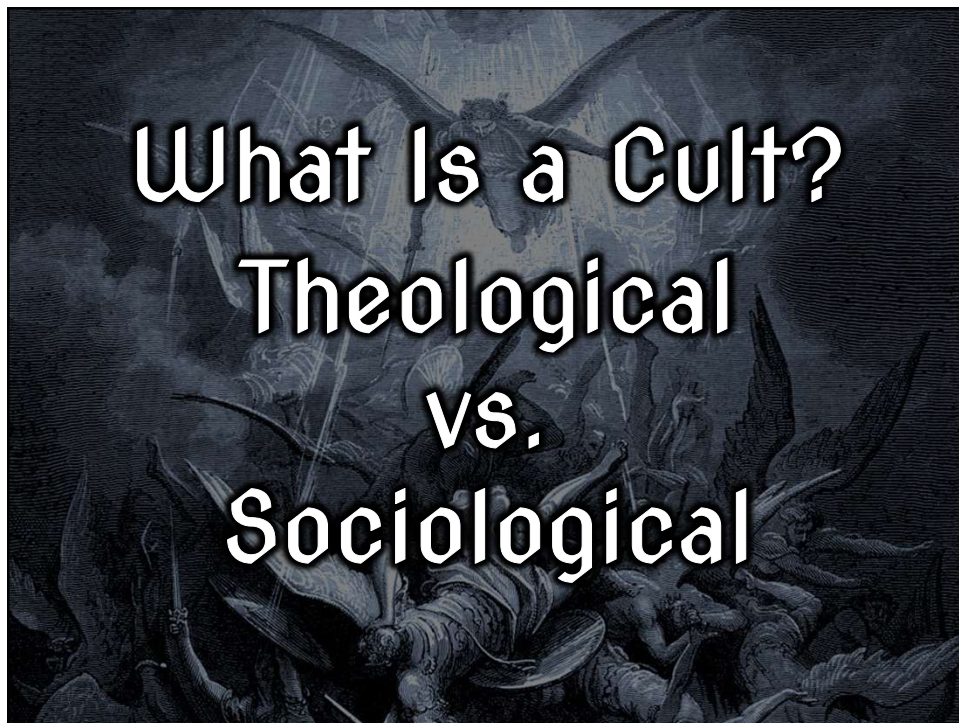
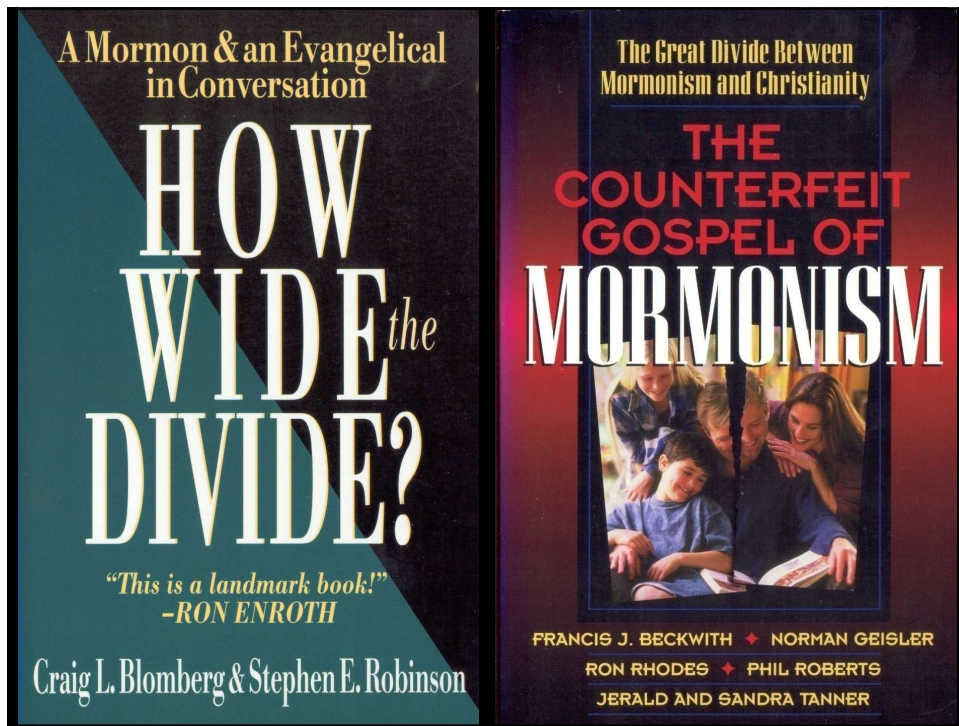
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Theological vs. Sociological



Sociological

a group that has certain aberrant or destructive physical, psychological and/or sociological traits such as mind control, social alienation, paranoia, or even murder/suicide.



Sociological

Jim Jones and the People's Temple



Sociological

David Koresh and the Branch Davidian



Sociological

Marshall Applewhite and Heaven's Gate



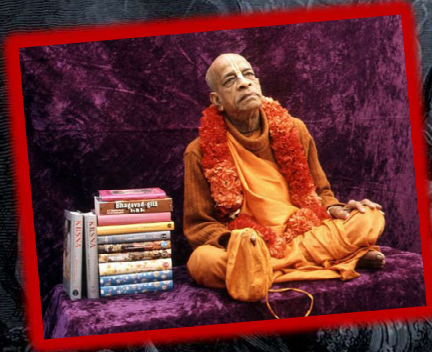
Theological



Broad sense
any group with false
religious teachings, other
than a World Religion, that
stands in opposition to the
historic, orthodox
Christian faith

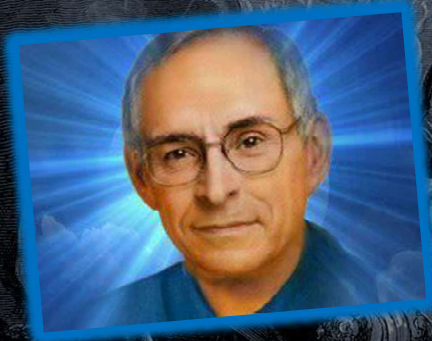
Theological

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and the
International Society of Krishna Consciousness



Theological

Sri Harold Klemp and Eckankar



Theological

Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan



Theological



Narrow sense

a group that is an offshoot of Christianity

Theological



Narrow sense

denies one or more of the cardinal doctrines of historic, orthodox Christianity

Theological



Narrow sense

usually considers itself the only true expression of Christianity

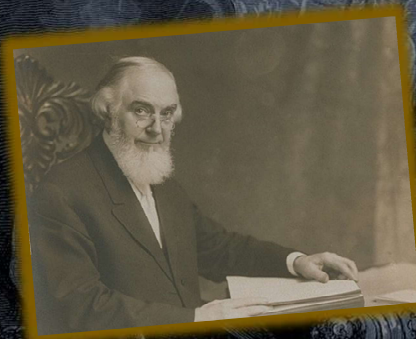
Theological

Joseph Smith and Mormonism



Theological

Charles Taze Russell and Jehovah's Witnesses

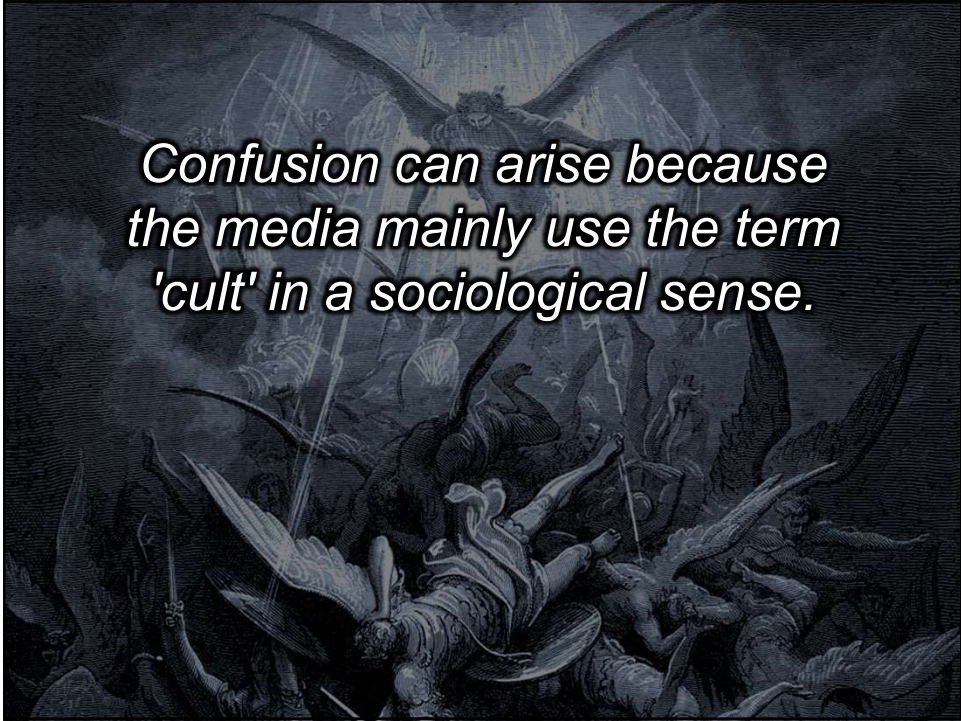


Theological

Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church



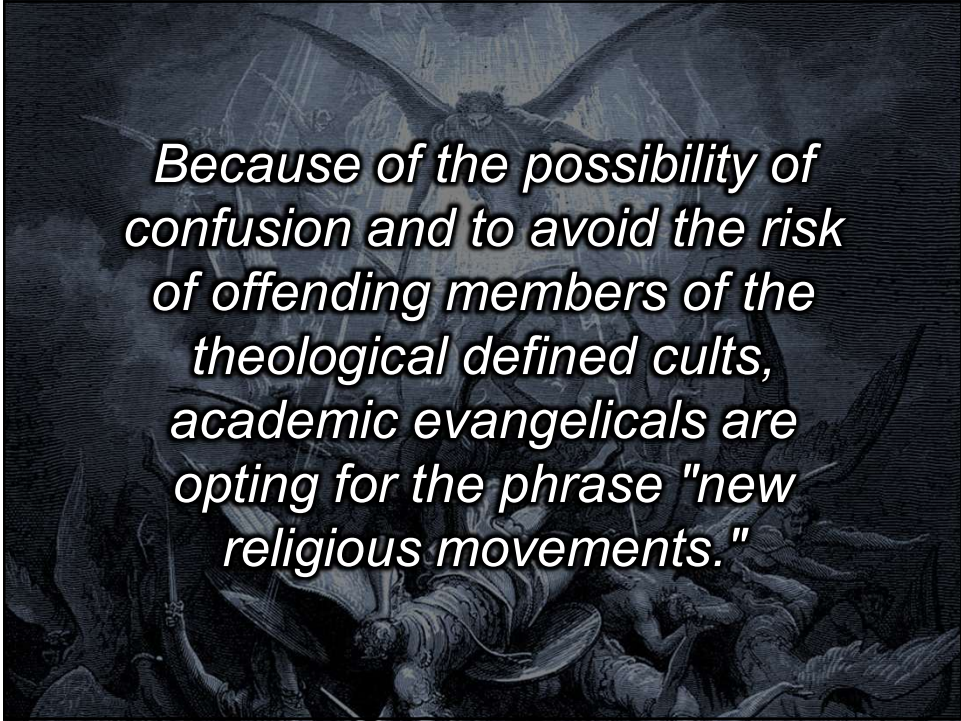
A given group can exhibit aspects of both definitions.



Confusion can arise because the media mainly use the term 'cult' in a sociological sense.



In this presentation, I am using the term in a theological sense.



Because of the possibility of confusion and to avoid the risk of offending members of the theological defined cults, academic evangelicals are opting for the phrase "new religious movements."

Cult vs. "Cultic"



Cult
an organization (as described above) that one can join and become a member of

Cult vs. "Cultic"



Cult
 exhibiting the characteristics
 and/or doctrines of a cult
 without necessarily being an
 actual organization that one
 can join and become
 a member of

TREE OF LIFE
 Birmingham
Mind Body & Spirit
Festival
 An uplifting
 day of joy,
 inspiration and
 connection.
 Many fantastic
 stalls & exhibitors.
FREE transformative
 workshops all day.
Saturday 4th April 2009
 10am - 5pm

at
 St Columba Hall,
 Corner of Clooney Rd/Alexander Rd,
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Tree of Life Festival Party!
 All welcome
 Saturday 4th April 2009
 from 7pm

Dr Catherine Bell, Moseley Village B13 8DQ
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 Please bring yourself & drink to share.
 Entrance £5

entry £2 / £3 cover
 pay on the door

Dr David Hamilton,
 specialist in control of
 your hand call
 your hand

Heidi Preece,
 spiritualist,
 clairvoyant,
 channeler

Veronica, Stanton
 Yoga teacher in
 Bow Road expert

Sarah Vincent,
 African dancing
 & singing workshop
 teacher

Robert Hughes is
 a nurse, MSc,
 Medicine in 1977
 trainee

Berley Fisher
 spiritual teacher
 in personal
 development
 mentor

Anna de Marco,
 14 CMA in England
 teacher

Angela Bala is
 Marlene Bergmann,
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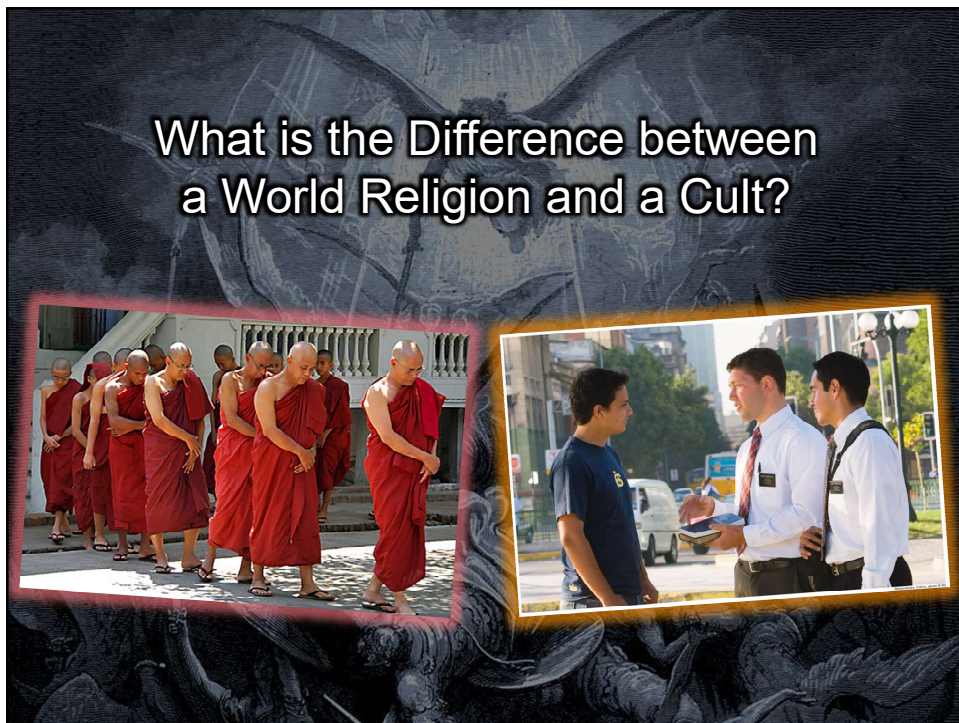
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What is the Difference between a World Religion and a Cult?

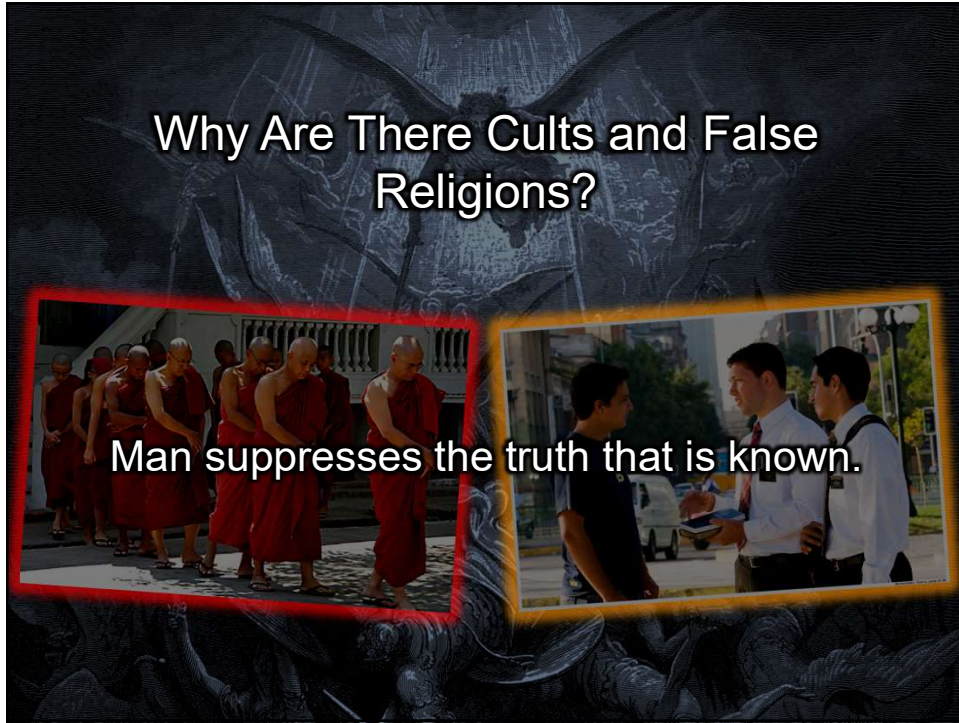
A World Religion usually has little in common doctrinally with Christianity while a cult (in the narrow sense) ostensibly mirrors Christian doctrine.

What is the Difference between a World Religion and a Cult?

A World Religion usually has a significant number of adherents around the world while a cult (even in the broad sense) has relatively fewer.

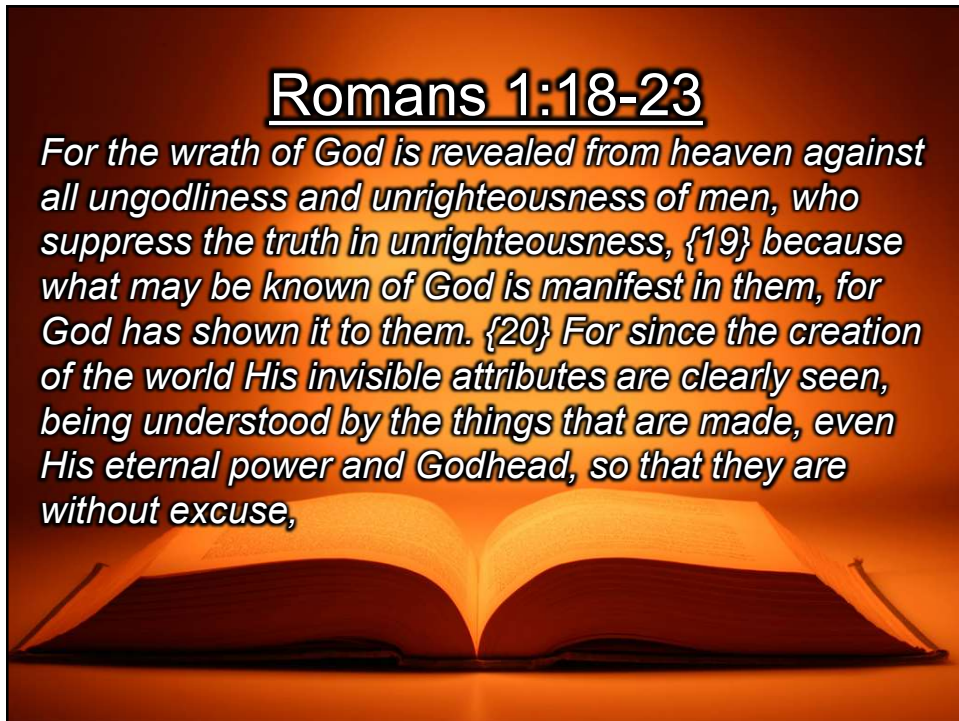
Why Are There Cults and False Religions?

Man suppresses the truth that is known.



Romans 1:18-23

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, {19} because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. {20} For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,



Romans 1:18-23

{21} because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. {22} Professing to be wise, they became fools, {23} and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.



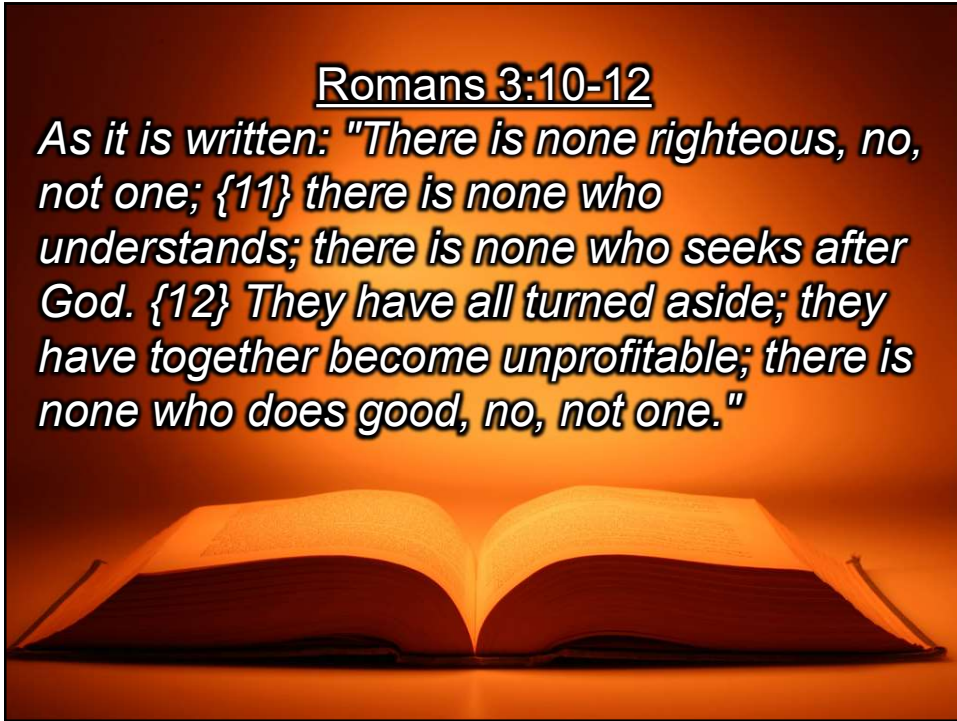
Why Are There Cults and False Religions?

The presence of cults and false religions is evidence of man's flight from God, not man's search for God.



Romans 3:10-12

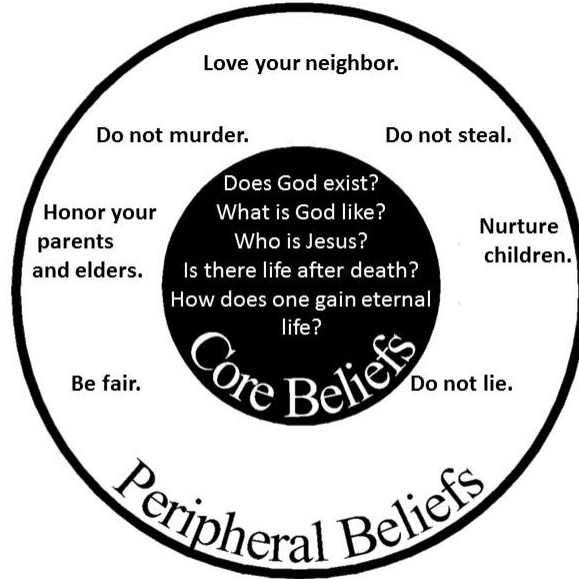
As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; {11} there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. {12} They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one."



Aren't All Religions Saying
the Same Thing at the Core?



Core vs. Peripheral Beliefs



How Do We Know Truth?

Knowledge in General

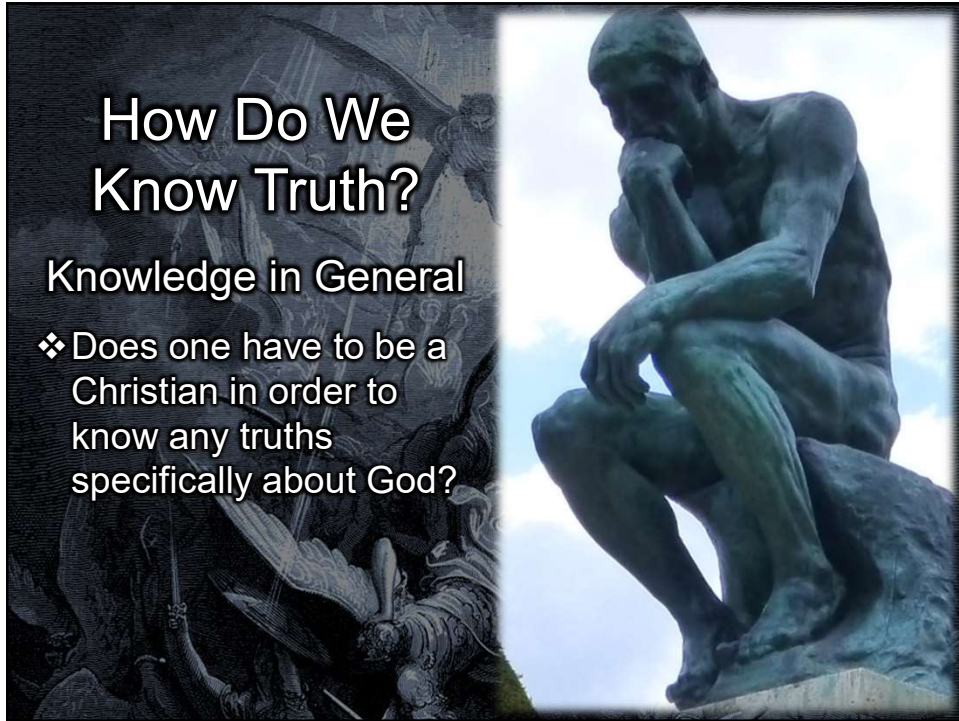
- ❖ Does one have to be a Christian in order to know any truths of reality?



How Do We Know Truth?

Knowledge in General

- ❖ Does one have to be a Christian in order to know any truths specifically about God?



∞ Romans 1:20 ∞

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Psalm 19:1

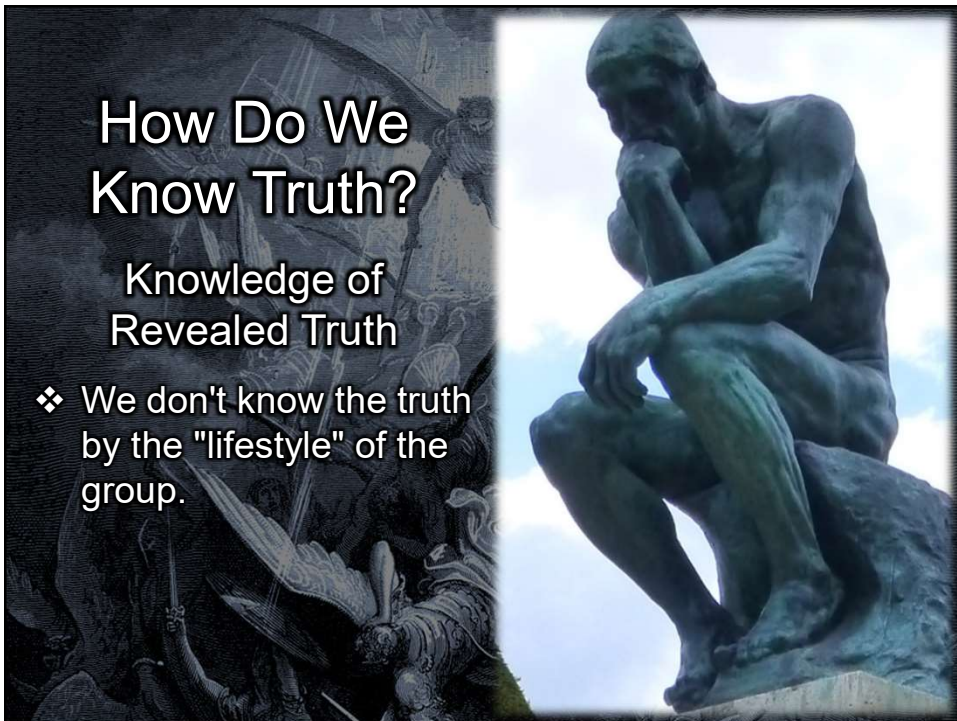
The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.



How Do We Know Truth?

Knowledge of Revealed Truth

- ❖ We don't know the truth by the "lifestyle" of the group.



☞ 2 Cor. 11:13 - 15 ☞

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

How Do We Know Truth?

Knowledge of Revealed Truth

- ❖ We don't know the truth by pragmatism.
- ❖ Just because something enhances my life, does not mean that it is of God.



Jeremiah 44:17-18

"But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem.



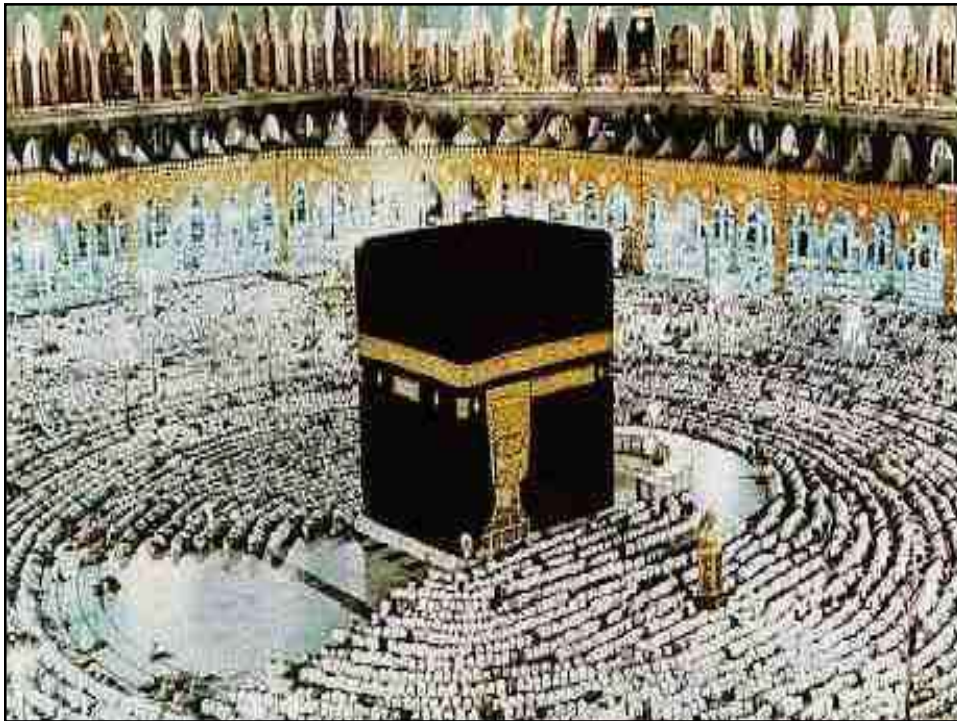
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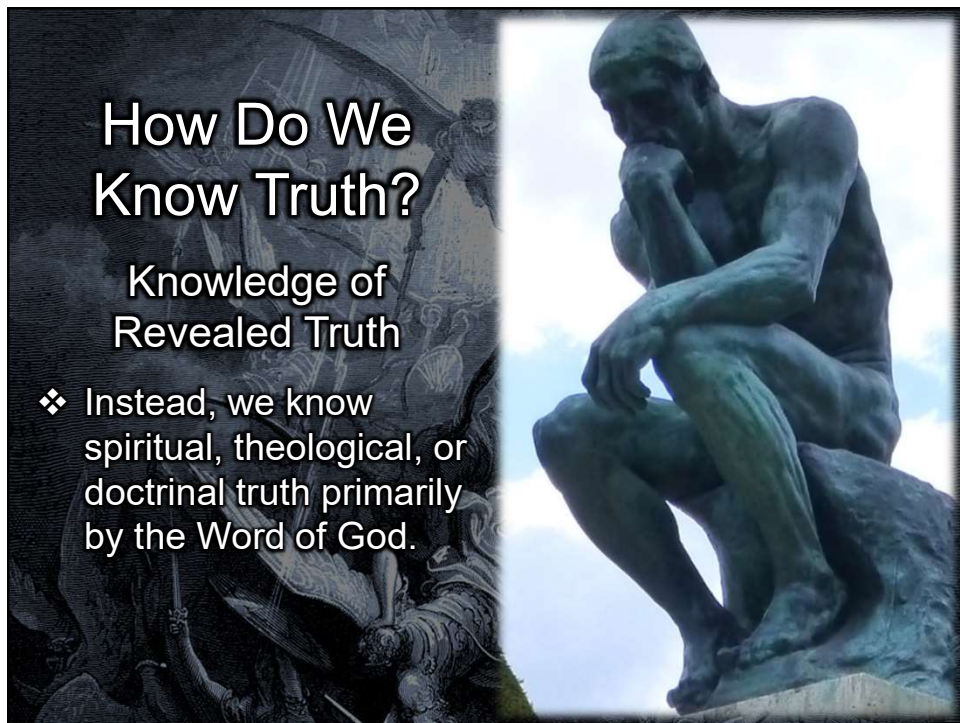
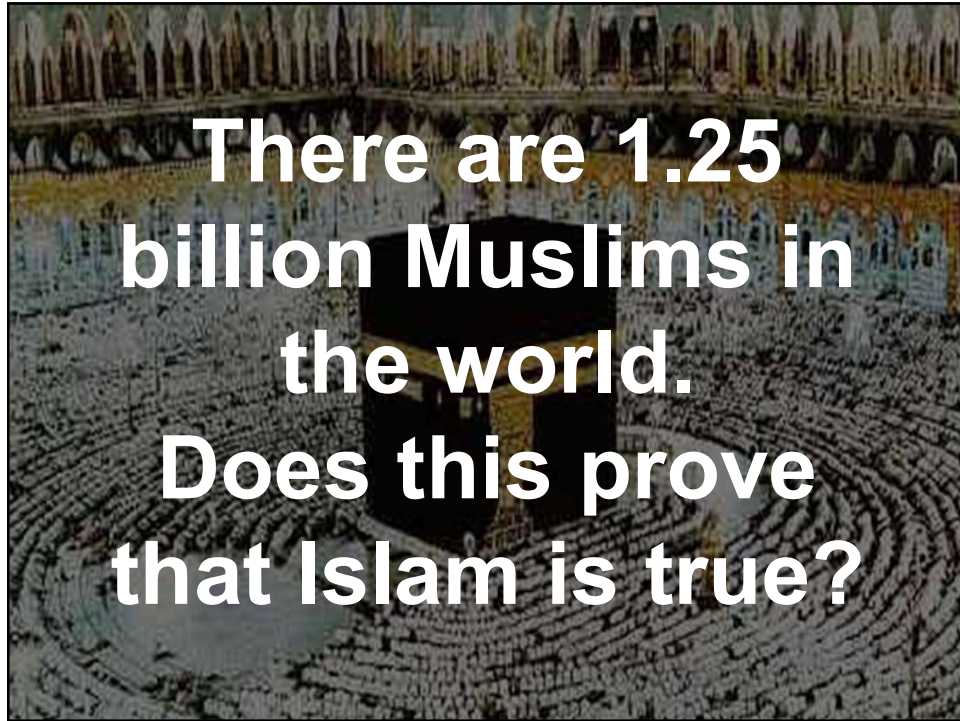
"For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."





☞ Acts 5:38 - 39 ☜

And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."






Romans 14:1	Romans 16:17
Receive	Avoid
one who is weak in the faith but not to disputes	those who cause divisions and offenses
doubtful things	the doctrine which you learned

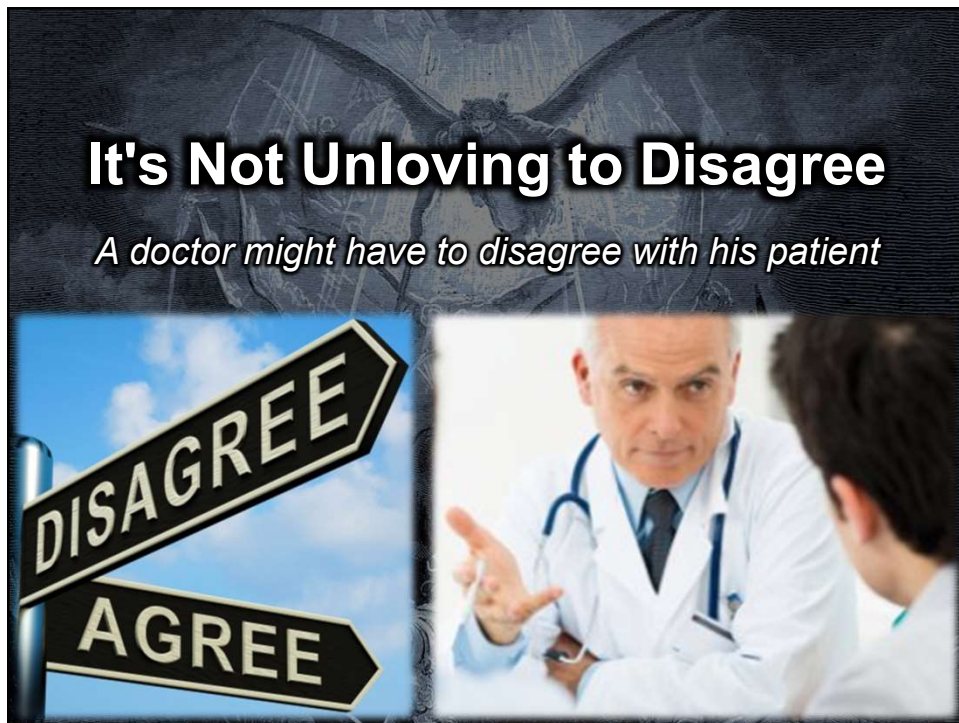

1 Timothy 4:16


Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.



❧ 1 John 4:5 - 6 ❧

They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.



It's Not Unloving to Disagree

Jesus sometimes disagreed with people.



✠ Matthew 22:29 ✠

*Jesus answered and said to them,
"You are mistaken, not knowing
the Scriptures nor the power of
God."*



**"Judge not, that
you be not judged."
(Matt. 7:1)**



**"Let two or three
prophets speak,
and let the others
judge."
(1 Cor. 14:29)**



