

TWELVE MARKS OF CHRISTIANITY BASED CULTS

Biblically compare the twelve marks of Christianity based cults with original true Christianity. Expound each point and use scriptures to support your answers.

1. A Charismatic Leader - A leader with personal magnetism and motivational abilities; an example is Joseph Smith, and Mr. Armstrong was also included in the article.
2. New Revelation - Charismatic leader thinks he must have new truth; unwilling to accept tradition; enormous ego and ambition; does not accept original teaching so comes up with a new belief system.
3. One True Church - One "little flock" called out of the world; all other churches under the influence of Satan.
4. Last Days Belief - End time; given commission to warn the world of its impending doom; only they will be spared in the Tribulation and will be able to take part in God's government.
5. Zealous Evangelism - Proclaim good news of coming kingdom, but stress more the bad world we live in now; distribute literature on the subject.
6. Separation from the World - Willing to suffer persecution; rigorous lifestyle, no alcohol, drugs, sex, tobacco, materialism; many live in communes.
7. Total Commitment - Forsake all; turn all over to the church; multiple tithes cause people to deprive themselves.
8. Intensive Indoctrination - Constant supervision, lectures, seminars; hypnotizing and brainwashing are common practices; constant outpouring of information.
9. Authoritative Government - Government from the top down; submission to cult authorities; fear is used to keep order and to eliminate breaking away.
10. Persecution Complex - Leaders are paranoid, especially of the press; those who question doctrine are disciplined or disfellowshipped.
11. Works Righteousness - Right standing with God by faith **plus** works; reach out with compassion to those outside organization; religion of law.
12. Defective Christology - Distort picture of Christ by compromising his deity--call everyone a potential Christ; Exult church leaders instead of Christ.

***NOTE:** These points are taken from the writings of Joseph Hopkins. Hopkins admits in his writings that points #1-8 are like early Christianity and characterize the first century apostolic church. Points #9-12 characterize the modern era cult.