

CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CULTS

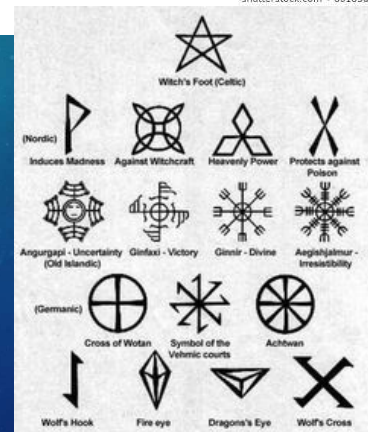
A list of seven ways to recognize the difference between a religious community and a cult. Written down, the signs seem clear:

1. **Opposing critical thinking**
2. **Isolating members and penalizing them for leaving**
3. **Emphasizing special doctrines outside scripture**
4. **Seeking inappropriate loyalty to their leaders**
5. **Dishonoring the family unit**
6. **Crossing Biblical boundaries of behavior (versus sexual purity and personal ownership)**
7. **Separation from the Church**

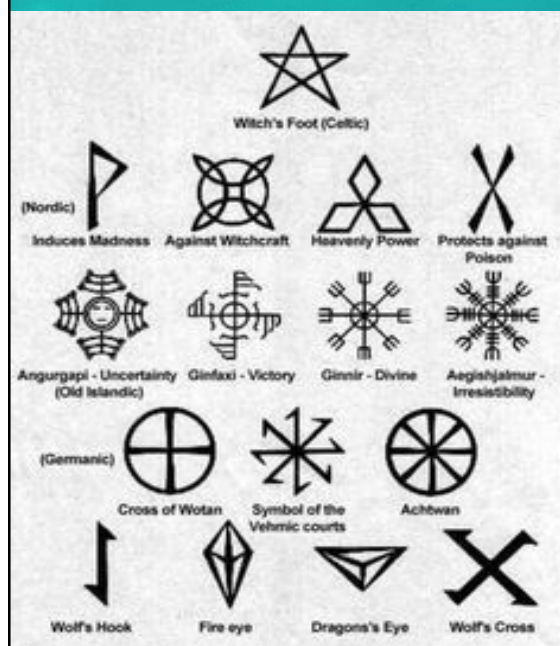
But when it's your friends, your faith, your community, it's not so obvious.



shutterstock.com • 601850150



CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CULTS



CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CULTS

There are several types of cults in Christianity....

Religious cults

Religious cults are marked by belief in a god or some higher being, salvation, and the afterlife, sometimes combined with an apocalyptic view. The leader reinterprets Scripture (from the Bible, Koran, Talmud, or Cabala) and often claims to be a prophet, if not the messiah.

Political, racist, or terrorist cults

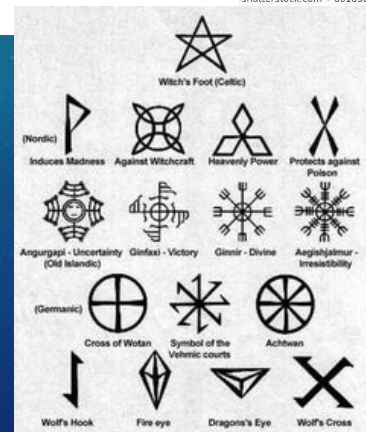
Political, racist, or terrorist cults are fueled by belief in changing society, revolution, overthrowing the perceived enemy or getting rid of evil forces. The leader professes to be all knowing and all powerful.

Psychotherapy, human potential, mass transformational cults

Psychotherapy, human potential, mass transformational cults are motivated by belief in striving for the goal of personal transformation and personal improvement. The leader is self-proclaimed and omniscient, with unique insights, sometimes a "super-therapist" or "super-life coach."



shutterstock.com • 601850150



CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CULTS

There are several types of cults in Christianity....

Commercial, multi-marketing cults

Commercial, multi-marketing cults are sustained by belief in attaining wealth and power, status, and quick earnings. The leader, who is often overtly lavish, asserts that he has found the "way."

New Age cults

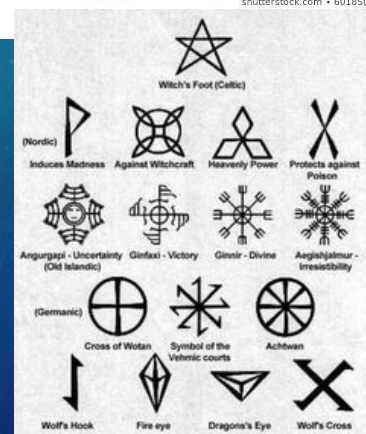
New Age cults are founded on belief in the "You are God" philosophy, in power through internal knowledge, wanting to know the future, or find the quick fix. Often the leader presents herself or himself as mystical, an ultra-spiritual being, a medium, or a superhero.

Occult, satanic, or black-magic cults

Occult, satanic, or black-magic cults are generated through belief in supernatural powers, and sometimes worship of Satan. The leader professes to be evil incarnate.



shutterstock.com • 601850150



CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CULTS

There are several types of cults in Christianity....

One-on-one or family cults

One-on-one or family cults are based in belief in one's partner, parent, or teacher above all else. Generally an intimate relationship is used to manipulate and control the partner, children, or students,

Cults of personality

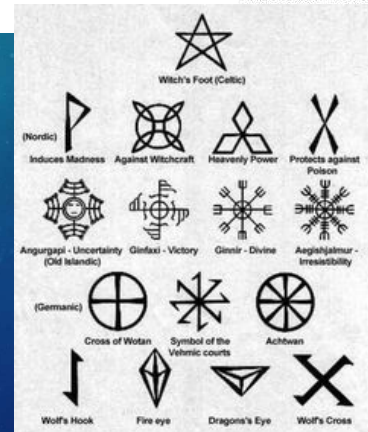
Cults of personality are rooted in a belief that reflects the charismatic personality and interests and proclivities of the revered leader.

Eastern cults

Eastern cults are characterized by belief in spiritual enlightenment and reincarnation, attaining the Godhead, and nirvana. Usually the leader draws from and distorts an Eastern-based philosophy or religion



shutterstock.com • 601850150



CHRISTIANITY AND ITS CULTS

HEAVEN'S GATE CULT

Heaven's Gate – founded in San Diego in 1972 by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Nettles – was based on the premise that aliens would escort members of the group to the “Kingdom of Heaven” via extraterrestrial spacecraft. In March 1997, the group carefully planned and then executed a mass suicide, timed to coincide with the arrival of the Hale-Bopp comet, which members thought would conceal the alien spacecraft on its way to earth. Clad in black tunics and Nikes, 39 Heaven's Gate members ate applesauce mixed chased a sedative with vodka, covered their heads in plastic bags and died.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=73NYZIXkNc8>



shutterstock.com • 601850150

