

Last week a man named Travis, who calls the radio program often, went on our facebook page and said that Glen Burnie was a “cult” and that people shouldn’t have anything to do with a “cult”

I looked up the definition of a “cult” and #1 is :

a relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or sinister.

As in, "a network of Satan-worshiping cults“

Now we fit part of this definition.

There are those who regard us as being obsessed
with following the Bible.

They, on the other hand, think you ought to follow
some of it, but certainly not all.

For instance -- Act 2:41 Then they that gladly
received his word were baptized: and the same day
there were added unto them about three thousand
souls. (KJV)

NET note on “gladly received” Or “who
acknowledged the truth of.”

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Think about how many people you know who won't gladly receive that passage!

Or take Eph 5:19-20 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (20) Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Think about how many people you know who won't gladly receive that passage!

In fact Travis, in a later post, said, “there is no place in the New Testament where it says not to use instrumental music.”

And that’s true!

But he certainly doesn’t like

Col 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Mat 15:7-9 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: (8) 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. (9) 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

Whose doctrine is the use of instrumental music in worship in the NT if God didn't say to use it in the NT?

Think about how many people you know who won't gladly receive that passage!

Some folks think that this regard for the Scriptures is “sinister” as it would be that _____ (you fill in the blank with grandma, aunt, cousin, best friend) is going to be lost because they didn’t think too much of that passage either.

And then there are those who say we are “a relatively small group of people.”

Now that's true as well since there are only about 1.3 million adherents in churches of Christ in the US, but 2 million worldwide. And that's small compared to the number of believers in Jesus around the world which is about 2.4 billion.

Mat 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

1/3 of the world's population (7.2 billion) are believers in Jesus to some degree. That doesn't fit the definition given by Jesus at Mt 7.13-14

a relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or sinister.

On the whole, it appears to me that churches of Christ fit most of this definition of the word “cult”.

That’s especially true of the word “strange.”

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:
(KJV)

1Pe 2:9-10 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (10) Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

a people for his own possession, -- now you are
God's people

There is something “peculiar” about God’s people

2Co 6:17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be
separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no
unclean thing; then I will welcome you, (18) and I
will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and
daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

The second definition was:
a misplaced or excessive admiration for a
particular person or thing.

"a **cult of personality** surrounding the leaders"

Now that's something we're absolutely guilty of –

1Ti 6:15 ... he who is the blessed and only
Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, (16)
who alone has immortality, who dwells in
unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen
or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion.
Amen.

However, it is not misplaced admiration for a
particular person or thing!

1Ti 1:17 To the King of the ages,
immortal, invisible, the only God, be
honor and glory forever and ever.
Amen.

Heb 1:1-3 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, (2) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. (3) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

On the other hand, Paul said other styled Christians a sect.

Act 24:14 "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets;

Act 26:5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

Act 28:22 "But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."

The word sect, in the religion of the Jews, comes closest to the idea of denominationalism, or non-denominationalism within what the world calls “Christianity.”

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

the admonition that we must give to the denominations— repent and do God's will or be eternally lost.

Mat 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.

Rev 3:3-4 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

(4) 'But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

The latest and largest “Directory of Churches of Christ (acapella)” appears to divide the church into “sects.”

The distinguishing marks in the Directory are non-institutional, black, military, one cup, non-Bible class and of course, the ones who never make it into the “Directory” in the first place – the instrumental churches.

Some of these marks are doctrinal and others are difficult to fathom as different.

And so the question comes, are all sects ok with God. And I must conclude they are not.

Act 5:17 But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

Act 15:5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

Mat 22:23 On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him,

Mat 22:29 But Jesus answered and said to them,
"You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.

So what happens to the sects in the church of our Lord?

The distinguishing marks in the directory are non-institutional, black, one cup, non-Bible class and of course, the ones who never make it into the “Directory” in the first place – the instrumental churches.

2Pe 3:15-16 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, (16) as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

We in churches of Christ must take to heart the admonition that we give to the denominations— repent and do God's will or be eternally lost.

Perhaps you're here this morning and you have not humbled yourself to obey God's will.

Don't let your arrogance keep you
from standing justified before God by
the blood of His Son.

Humble yourself to do His will.

Act 22:16 'Now why do you delay?
Get up and be baptized, and wash
away your sins, calling on His name.'

