

Ideological Cliff Diving - The Stigma Of "Cult"

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While at work, I was talking to a coworker who is about the same age. I mentioned that I am taking a "course" online, and that it is eating up all of my time so I can't play "chess" with him. He asked what kind of course it was, so I played dumb for a while but eventually told him it was a "course" to prepare people for marriage in our church.

He then mentioned is that something ya'll do in your "cult", but quickly changed his lingo and said "culture", but I knew what he meant.

There is a certain stigma, associated with belonging to a non-major religion

that has strict rules and believes in non-popular things. I heard in Japan for instance if your company finds out that you belong to a few said churches you can lose your job, and that HR cannot bail you out. Corporate religious discrimination is legal in Japan. But I live in the US, so I guess I am quite lucky.

I was just going to say that while the idea of belonging to a "cult" is "unpopular", and can create a lot of gossip at work and in social circles, the value of belonging to a church is pretty cool.

I don't think anyone joins a "cult" or a church for any foolish reason, I believe that whatever initiated the ideological cliff diving, had a lot to do with the individuals' value system, and that the possibility of creating a world of harmony and attaining self-peace was a greater reward than whatever sacrifices they made in the process. I know some of the people in our church, don't talk to their parents anymore, or couldn't talk to their relatives for a while. They were shunned by their family for joining a church that believed in strange things by social convention at the time.

Fast forward now the same relatives that shunned the parents, looked at the kids eventually born out of the movement, and say wow look at those kids, they're honest, hardworking, and they even finished college.

Ok I went way off topic here, but I just wanted to say that even if you receive criticism, that you belong to a "cult" or whatever, I say be proud of being in a church that believes in values, that grows hope, and is still making an effort to change some negative aspects of society.

If you look at most conventional church's now, they are more secluded than our "cult" is. They only gather in one building, and some have exclusionist policies based on how much money they make and how much they can contribute.

Although times were harsh in the past, when people could totally rip on you for being a "Moonie" or whatever, I think now is the time to be proud of the fact that we belong to a legitimate religion, and that we are doing things greater than our immediate circles.

I know that some people do not have the luxury of revealing their religious affiliations with their peers, but I feel as if you are doing the right things, and living the right way, it shouldn't matter if people know who you are or not.

In conclusion, the "cult" or church united people for a reason, and that was because people had an ideal. Everyone who joined the church were "idealists" and the people in it still are "idealists" as well. Although idealism, can be confused with naivety, they are definitely not the same thing. A willful surrender of owns one biases, and inviting humility are totally different than brainwashing, and forced coercion.

Although I have struggled at times, this is my contribution to this topic.