

CULTS: **RECOGNISING** **DECEPTION**



christian
unions
ireland
PART OF IFES

Why Have We Made This Booklet?

Because it's a current issue of some known cults & harmful groups who are:

- Targeting active Christians in their early 20s
- Particularly on college campuses
- In-person and online

We are providing this information to draw attention to warning signs, but not to guide people away from great partnership with other campus ministries, churches, or other youth organisations of course!

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”

*Matthew
7:15*





How to Know If...?

Red flags for recognising these cults:

- **Online:** A stranger messages you randomly and initiates conversation because you are Christian, and...
In-person: is doing surveys that include a question related to God, and...
- ...then, invites you to a **one-to-one** bible study with an implied expectation/demand of very **high commitment** (2-3 times a week, maybe with another person “coincidentally” attending)
- They **don't ever** tell you what church or organisation they themselves are currently part of. (They are very good at **dodging/misdirecting** your questions if you ask about themselves or their organisation)

In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories.

.....
2 Peter 2:3a

What Makes Their Meet-ups Different from e.g. Campus Ministries??

If you've already gotten involved/met up with someone, you would then start to notice:

- **High control** environment (e.g. guiltning you for missing Bible study, discouraging you from sharing with friends and family, increased regularity and demanded commitment to Bible studies)
- **Bible study** including a third member who seems “younger in the faith” who is actually part of the cult (perhaps an acquaintance from before; a friend, a college coursemate, an old schoolmate).
- **Twisting of Bible passages** to tell you to lie to friends/family and not be open about where you are and what you are doing. They slowly try to isolate you from your communities.

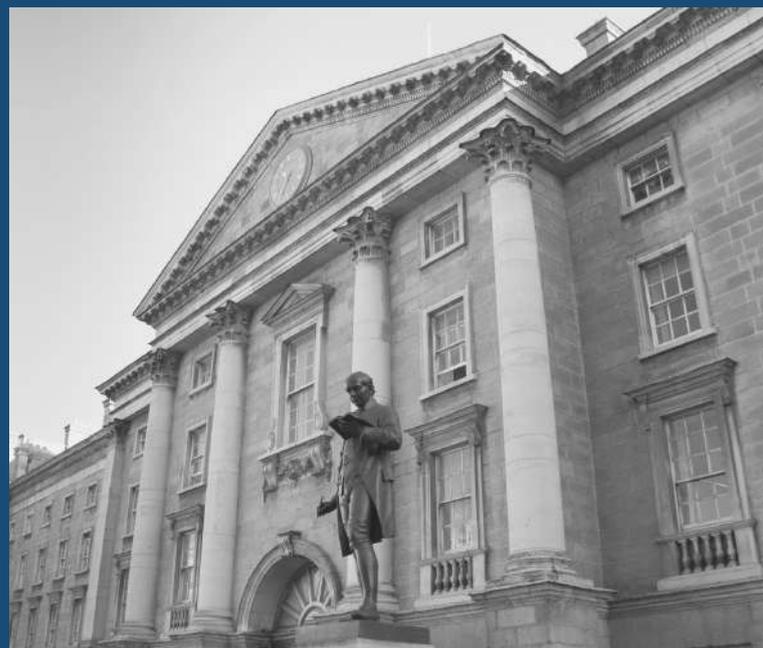


Being Wise

Some good practice is:

- If someone - even a friend - asks you to do a Bible study to investigate faith more deeply, check what they're doing and if you do, do something specific like Uncover Mark or another study you can follow together.
- Don't give your number to people you just met. Just arrange to meet in a coffee shop if you think that's ok but tell someone else that you're doing that, and maybe bring that person with you.
- Ask **questions** such as: Will this person tell me what church they are part of (by name)? Is it a church that is part of a mainstream denomination/supportive of my campus ministry (e.g. CU)?

Ask yourself: is this person being more intense with me than other people are?



What To Do

If you're uncertain
about anything:

- Talk to your pastor or CUI Staff Worker
- Talk to your Christian friends/people you trust
- Message CUI
- Ask for their organisation/church and do some research

If you're concerned
for a friend:

- Talk to someone
- Continue to be a good friend to them, pointing them to Jesus, encouraging and challenging them where possible.
- Pray!



Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:1

Is This Really an Issue?

Yes, and it could easily be you who comes into contact with them or knows someone!

- On the surface, they may seem very knowledgeable and trustworthy. For the first few weeks (usually 4) their teachings are correct and true. They will quote lots of scripture to support their teachings and gain your trust.
- However, given time, many of the red flags will appear and they will slowly begin to twist and manipulate the Bible. This causes subtle and gradual, but severe, brainwashing where the person is convinced everything is correct and can be explained (the twisting of Scripture, the abnormally high commitment, the deceit, the withdrawal from the world).
- God is good and people have, by his grace, escaped the grips of these groups, but there are real stories of young people who have been greatly affected.



You can read the real story of an Irish student [here](#).



For a short video summarising the current situation around Ireland including helpful pointers - [click here](#)



For more information about Christian Unions Ireland - who we are, what we believe, and why we exist, please go to www.cui.ie



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