

Are the churches of Christ a Cult? – Pt 3

The Group as the Exclusive Community of the Saved

The Four Major Cults

- Written by Anthony Hoekema
- Professor of Systematic Theology, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Bibliography of Four Major Cults, cites *thirty-one pages of references* from the book.
- This is regarded as “the standard work” on cults in the English Language.

What are the “Four Major Cults”?¹

1. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
2. The Seventh Day Adventist Church
3. The Church of Christ, Scientist (Christian Scientists)
4. Jehovah’s Witnesses

¹Hoekema, Anthony, The Four Major Cults, Grand Rapids Michigan, Eerdman’s Printing Company, November 1986

The Distinctive Traits of a Cult

**The Group as the Exclusive Community
of the Saved**

The Group as the Exclusive Community of the Saved

“A fourth distinctive trait of the cult is that it absolutizes itself as the exclusive community of the saved. Hutten points out that the anti-ecclesiastical polemic which is so characteristic of the cult is but the converse side of its own self-justification. Since the cult is convinced that it is the only true community of God’s people, it must try to show that the church is either an apostate organization or an actual instrument of the devil.¹⁹ There is among the cults no appreciation for the Biblical doctrine of the “one holy catholic Church” – that is, of the universal church of Christ, composed of Christ’s true people of all ages and from all the nations. Every cult say, “We alone are the people of God.” The cult, so to speak, takes God by the arm, insisting that His evaluation of people must agree with its own.²⁰”

¹⁹ *Glaubenswelt*, p. 78 (Dutch translation. P. 81)

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52 (Dutch translation, p. 54)

The Group as the Exclusive Community of the Saved

“Whenever a group takes the position that it is the only community of the saved, however, it violates an important aspect of Scripture teaching. Christ Himself warned against this type of bigotry when His disciples said to Him, “Master, we saw one casting out demons in Thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.” Jesus replied, “Forbid him not; for he that is not against you is for you” (Lk. 9:49,50). We should therefore remember that whenever a denomination slips into a kind of thinking similar to that described above, it reveals a tendency toward cultic behavior.”

¹Hoekema, Anthony, The Four Major Cults, Grand Rapids Michigan, Eerdman's Printing Company, November 1986

Will Only members of the church of Christ be saved?

- The polarizing nature of this question:
 - It is designed to divide
 - It is designed to prejudice
 - It is designed to produce bias
 - It is designed to slander
- Will only Christians be saved?
- Will only the elect be saved?
- Will only the saved be saved?



Will Only Members of the churches of Christ be Saved?

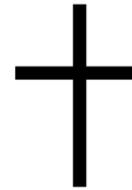
Patriarchal Period

Faithful Patriarchs



Mosaic Period

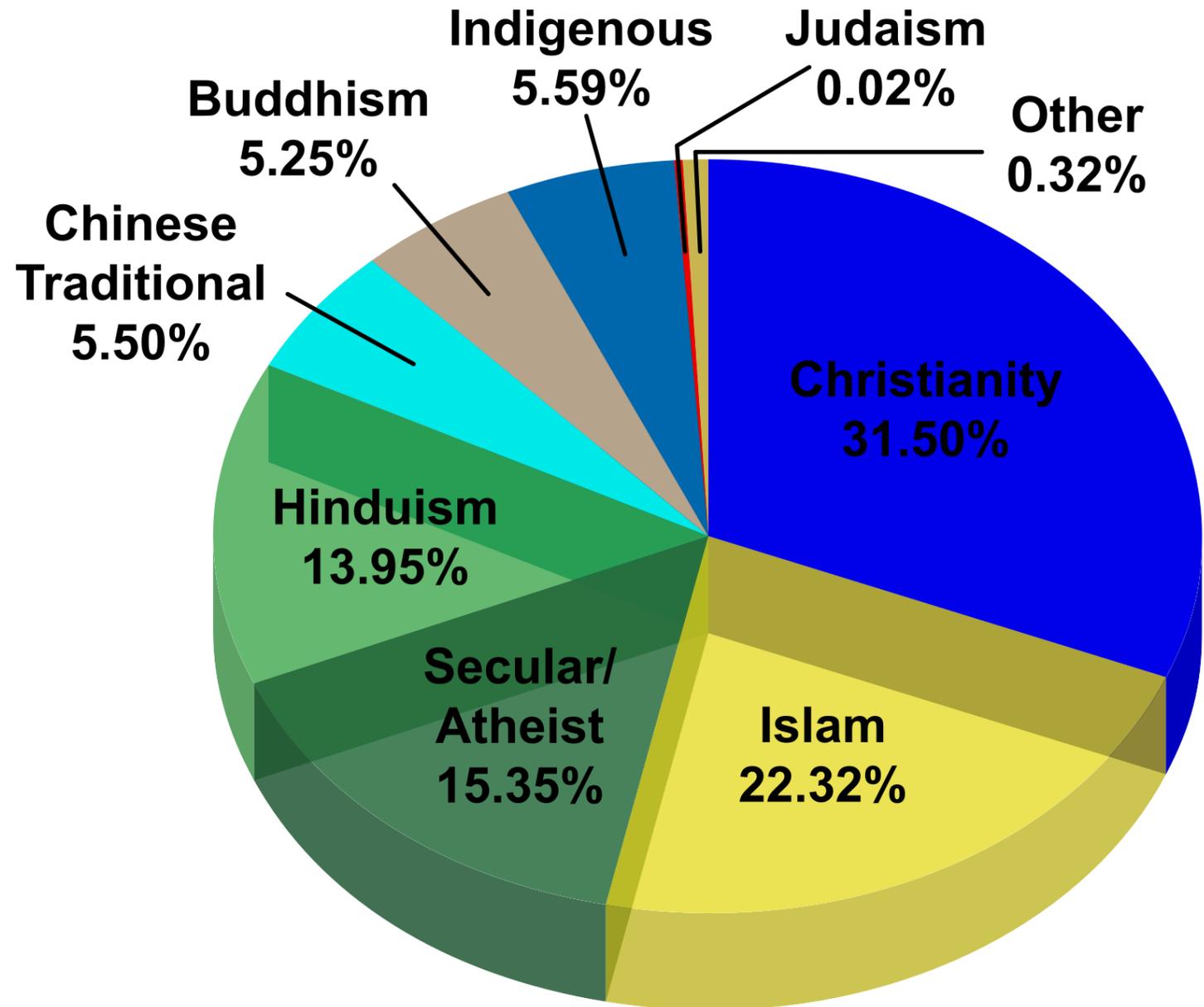
Faithful Gentiles and Faithful Jews



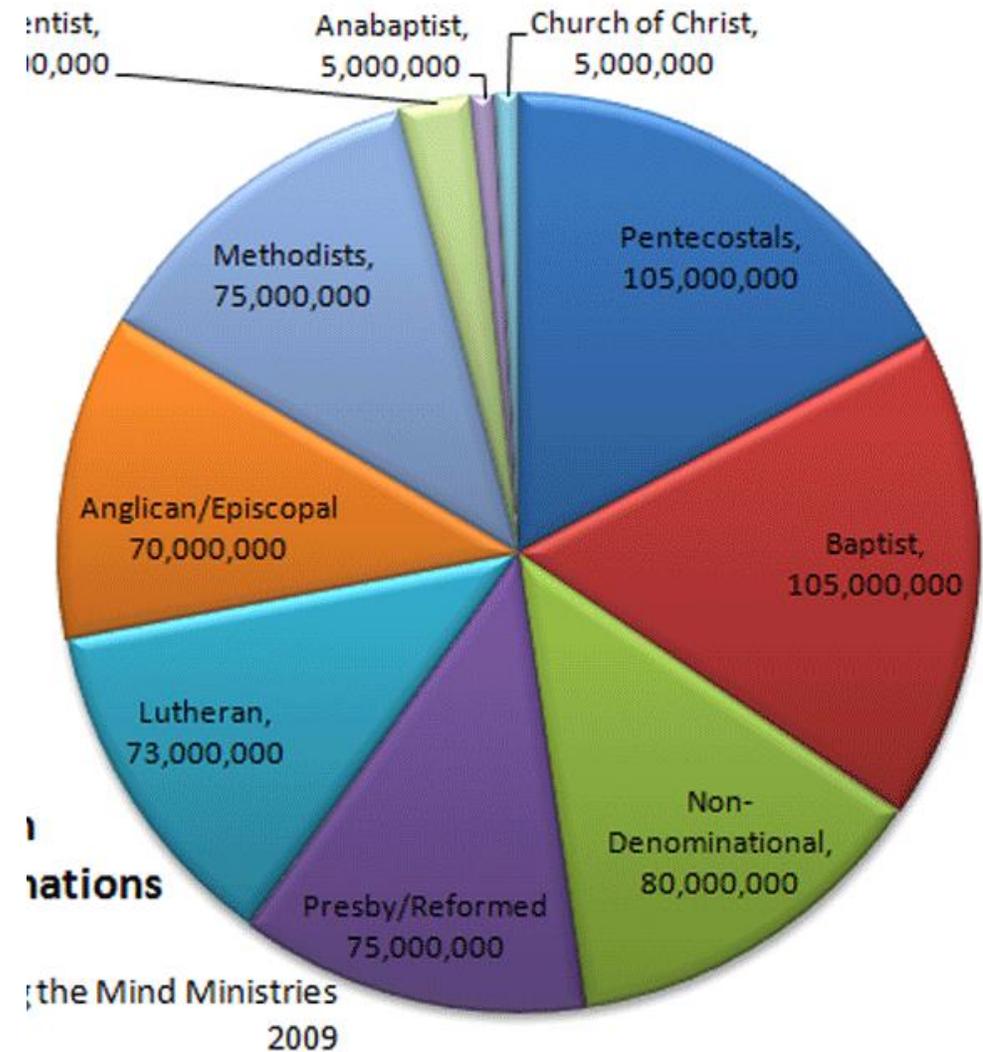
Christian Period

Faithful Christians

The World's View of Salvation



The “Ecumenical” View of Salvation



Paul's View of Salvation

Galatians 1:6-9

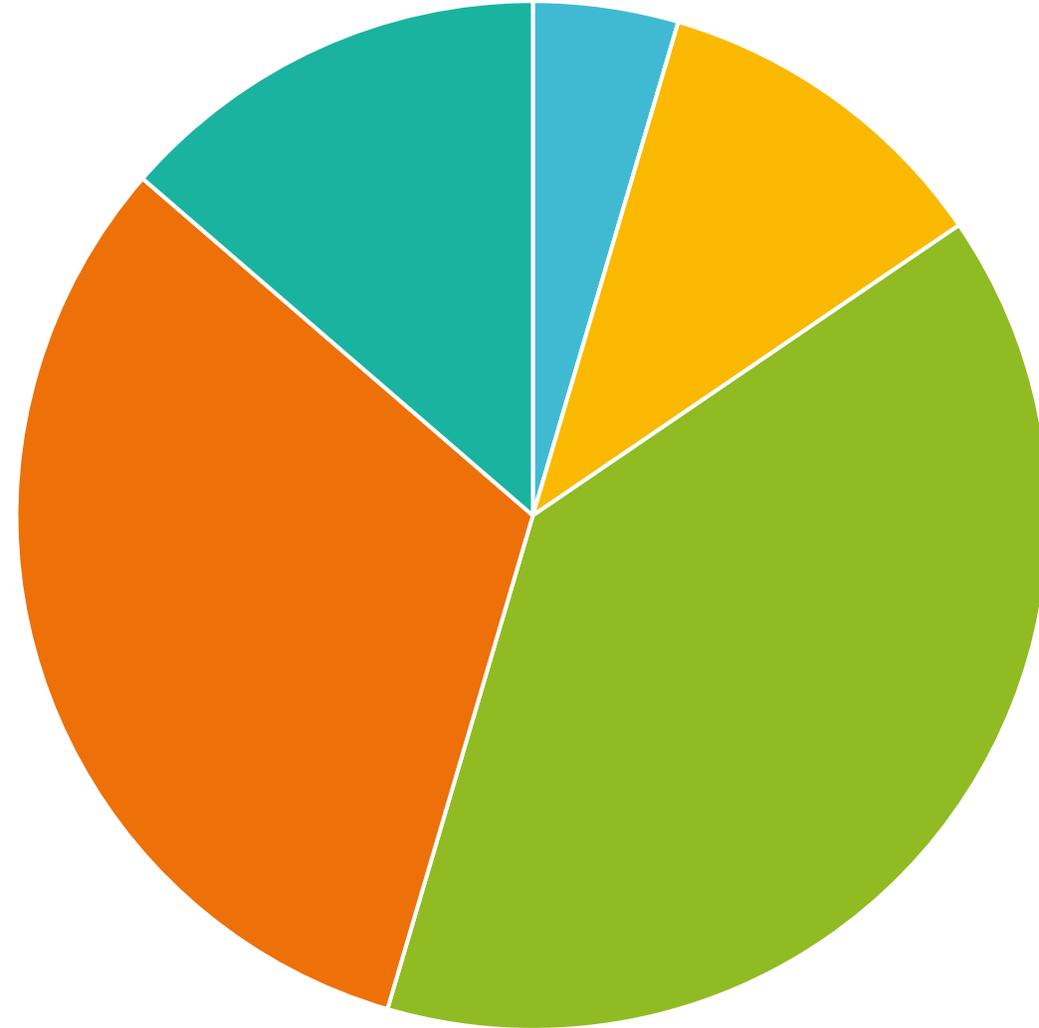
The Grace of
Christ

The diagram features a large blue circle on the left containing the text 'The Grace of Christ'. Two yellow arrows originate from this circle: one curves upwards and to the right, and another curves downwards and to the right. Both arrows point towards a smaller red circle on the right. The red circle contains the word 'ACCURSED' in white, all-caps text. The background is white, with a vertical grey bar on the far right edge.

ACCURSED

The First Century Saved*

First Century Christians



■ The Way ■ The churches of God ■ The churches of Christ ■ The church ■ The church local

*For illustrative purposes only, actual figures are unknown

Who Deserves to be Saved?

No One!

- We are lost because we have sinned. (Romans 6:23)
- We will only be saved, by God's grace. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- He has provided Christ as payment for our sin. (John 3:16)
- We are lost if we reject Christ. (John 8:24)
- No one can merit salvation. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- We must accept His sacrifice.
- We must obey His terms. (Matthew 7:21)
- He alone is the Judge of our salvation! (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Who *Will* be Saved?

(21) “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. (22) On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ (23) And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

Matthew 7:21-23 ESV

- Not everyone who wants to be saved.
- Not everyone who tries to be saved.
- Not everyone who profess Christ!
- Only those who do the will of Jesus' Father in heaven!

What Must One Do to be Saved?

- 1. HEAR THE GOSPEL—ROMANS 10:14**
- 2. BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST—JOHN 3:18, 36; 8:24**
- 3. REPENT OF YOUR SIN—LUKE 13:3,5; ACTS 2:38**
- 4. CONFESS JESUS CHRIST—MATTHEW 10:32,33**
- 5. BE BAPTIZED—MARK 16:15-16; ACTS 2:38**
- 6. LIVE FAITHFULLY—MATTHEW 10:22; REV. 2:10**