

Would You Have Recognized This ‘Trauma-Busting’ Cult Leader?

Despite defense attorneys blaming his conviction on a “media campaign” that spawned an unfair trial, the cult leader NXIVM cult leader Keith Raniere was sentenced to 120 years in prison on Tuesday.

NXIVM is not a church, but a professional development company that held seminars focusing on helping people overcome trauma. Essentially, it’s a multilevel marketing company that promotes large-group awareness training, but allegedly became a recruiting platform for a secret society called DOS in which women were forced into sexual slavery.

NPR reports, “Victims painted a picture of a charismatic self-help guru who lured followers with promises that he would help them take control of their lives. But once ensconced in his orbit, many of the women were indoctrinated by Raniere, who pressured them to have sex with him, and even branded his initials on their skin with a cauterizing pen.”

The Rise of Cults

Not all cults are religious in nature, but many are. The flood of cult activity should urge you to sharpen your cult identifications skills. Most Christian cult followers had no idea what they were getting into until they were already brainwashed adherents to the warped religions.

ABC’s *20/20* exposed shocking truth about life inside Warren Jeffs’ Fundamentalist Latter-Day Saints Church. The cult leader was convicted and jailed for sexual abuse of young girls, yet his 8,000 followers continue to believe he’s a persecuted prophet. He’s known for ordering married couples to

stop having sex and handpicked 15 men to father all of the cult's children. That's clearly a cult.

Fox News reported earlier members of a Bolivian cult that reveres human skulls has held a rite to close out a Roman Catholic religious festival in honor of the dead. The cult's followers believe the skulls have miraculous powers that help them find a job or even help their favorite soccer team win. That's clearly a cult. And Scientology continues to generate news reports.

I'd highly recommend heading over to Mike Bickle's teaching library and listening to the message for yourself. I've summarized the points of "How to Recognize Cults: 7 Characteristics" below in order to get the message out to more people. When I first heard Mike's teaching on Christian cults, it really opened my eyes. I pray this will open your eyes, too.

Seven Characteristics of a Cult

Bickle defines a cult as "a group that deviates from the doctrines and practices of historic Christianity and has an inordinate loyalty to one leader, whose beliefs are not found in Scripture (as affirmed by historic Christianity). Cult leaders, or false teachers, often believe that they alone possess the truth. If a group displays even one of these seven characteristics, they are a cult or have cultish tendencies." Here are the seven characteristics of a cult as Bickle outlined them:

1. Oppose critical thinking versus demanding that people think for themselves: Cult members must accept what the cult leader believes without ever challenging their doctrines. They do not want their members to think critically for themselves.

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