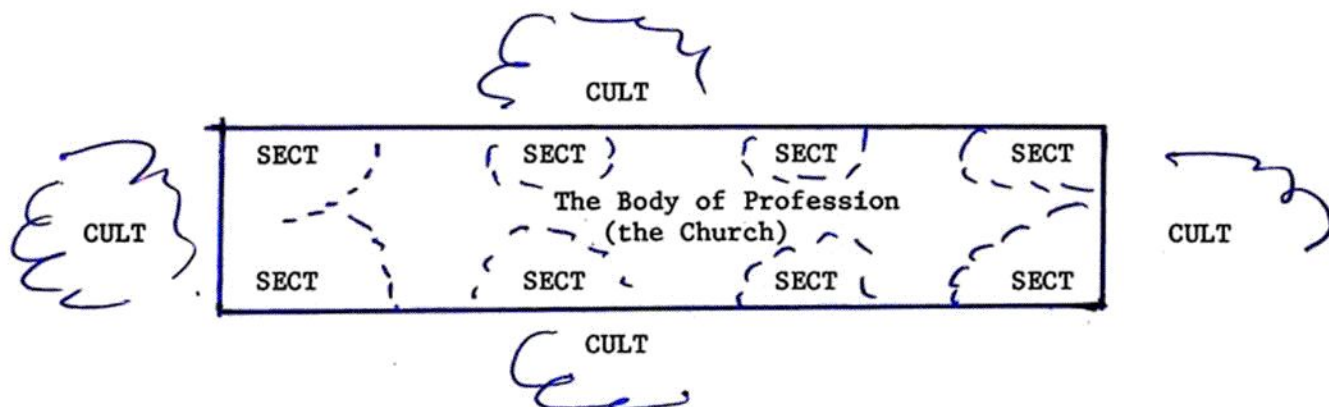


A sketch discussing sects and cults, etc.

The convenient rule is to know that sects are divisions within the body and cult are living centers external to the body. The cult usually gains its vitality from some organic attachment to the body but develops externally...generally as a replacement for the body. The sect distinguishes itself with a titular capacity that gives it the appearance of being the church while in reality it is only part of the church. The terms are used interchangeably in our day and you are wasting your time to argue over it but the actuality of the distinction is important for your own understanding and response in the light of the many challenges of the day.

Accurate information for both groups is often hard to get in that we often do not have their writings and must depend on the quotations of those who wrote against them...hardly the most reliable information. The more writing foes, of course, the better the data. It is easy to assume that a group was "good" if it had a "good name" such as the Paulinists. But we often discover that the worst bodies may take the best names!

The CULT (a living nucleus external to the body politic) requires the following:

- An absolute leader who has the enlightenment..
- A movement away from the societal body which is seen as limited and ignorant..
- An emphasis on special understanding not available in the major body..
- An attachment to a particular life style of artificialism..
- A stigmatization of those outside the cult..
- A demand by the cult on the totality of the life of the follower..
- A source of mandated continuing revelation to which all coming are obligated..
- A promotion of the cultic source or ideal beyond ordinate means.

Some of these are a bit arbitrary in expression and some of them may show up in orthodox bodies as sidelines. Altogether they spell cult.