

Religious cults

By Brian Lockhart

Most people are born into a religion.

Whichever denomination or belief system happens to be held by the parents is passed on to their children ? that is a normal course of events.

Whether you like to admit it or not, the beliefs taught to you by your parents will stick with you for life, even if you choose a different path ? you'll still retain those early teachings in some form.

Remember the first time you scolded your child and realized, ?I just sounded exactly like my mother/father??

I know plenty of people who, although they haven't attended church in years and don't practise their assigned religion, suddenly announce the christening of a new baby. It seems that even if they don't attend a church or practise religious observances, those teachings you learned early in life mean you still want to have your baby sprinkled with magic water that will ensure their place in heaven.

Whether you choose to stay along a path or seek other avenues, for the most part people are pretty tolerant of the decisions others make in life, as long as they are chosen for reasons that are guided by common sense and logic.

If you make a decision to earn a living by selling drugs or robbing banks at gunpoint you're not going to be on top of the list of achievements that family members will brag about.

However, switching from the Anglican Church to become a Presbyterian or the other way around because the person you decided to marry is of a different faith, probably won't cause a huge rift in most families.

We were given the endowment of rational thinking and the gift of free will.

When a person or a group tries to remove that free will and demand you follow the man-made laws of a ?church' or religion or face the wrath and punishment of whatever their rules dictate, the faith and teachings of a church have taken a back seat to the doctrine and control of a group of people who don't have their adherents' best interests in mind.

There are plenty of religious groups in Canada who demand a cult-like following from adherents.

The Western provinces for some reason have more than their share of groups who practise the old method of terrorizing adherents by requiring submission or risk losing everything.

One group in Alberta lives communally, which at first glance doesn't seem so bad. That is until you realize that every man in the commune must get the permission of the group elders to leave the property for such mundane things as taking a child to the dentist. If you're a grown man who must ask permission to go for a ride, something is seriously wrong in your life.

The needless and preventable recent deaths of two women in Quebec underscores the tragic consequence of what happens when the need to control your adherents outweighs the moral obligations of those who are in control.

Both women died after childbirth from loss of blood and resulting complications. Attending doctors said they both could have been saved through the use of blood transfusions but according to religious ?teachings' by their controlling overlords, blood transfusions are not allowed lest you be damned to hell, even though REAL Biblical scholars agree that the Old Testament passages regarding the use of blood is in reference to not taking part in or copying pagan rituals of the time.

It sure is easy to demand adherence to doctrine when it's someone else's life that is on the line.

Then there is the recent case in British Columbia where a man and his wife were both sentenced to prison for taking a 13-year-old girl to the U.S. to marry a 49-year-old man.

These cults and their affiliate associations in the U.S. use all sorts of methods to coerce and brainwash adherents and family into believing that what everyone else calls child abuse, is normal and somehow supported in Biblical references.

This type of control used with other methods such as cutting off adherents from knowledge, higher education, and involvement in community and country, is one big scheme to keep them from learning certain truths that just might shake up the status quo in the hierarchy.

Freedom of religion is one of our basic concepts in Western society and it's anyone's right to choose.

However, when that freedom to choose is usurped by someone claiming authority and they demand you submit to their man-made rules or risk being cut off from family and friends, maybe it's time to do a little more reading ? and not from the literature published at the club headquarters.