

## Helene Morris post on Advocates for the Truth Facebook site

Birmingham, United Kingdom

I read a post by a gentleman distressed at the naming of his faith as a cult... there is a difference between faith and church. I am glad that he, and others, have something to hold onto in their struggles as survivors. We all have different strategies to survive - for me it is not the church. (I'm afraid I cannot refer to this in any of the traditional ways that people in it do.)

However... church is just scaffolding to stand on, faith is something else altogether. This scaffolding is very rickety, rusty and dangerous. It saddens me that the two get confused.

According to the Cult Education Institute, this construct/church ticks the boxes of a cult.

Absolute authoritarianism without accountability

Zero tolerance for criticism or questions

Lack of meaningful financial disclosure regarding budget

Unreasonable fears about the outside world that often involve evil conspiracies and persecutions

A belief that former followers are always wrong for leaving and there is never a legitimate reason for anyone else to leave

Abuse of members

Records, books, articles, or programs documenting the abuses of the leader or group

Followers feeling they are never able to be "good enough"

A belief that the leader/authority figure is right at all times

A belief that the leader is the exclusive means of knowing "truth" or giving validation.

I cannot change anyone's journey but personally.... the best, most healing, most empowering and also one of the hardest things I've ever done..... **was to escape it**. And yes, that is my word of choice. That is what it felt like.