

Recognize aggressive religious recruitment

Recognize an aggressive group

So how do you know whether a group is right for you? Ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Does the group seem too perfect? Do people agree and accept all orders cheerfully?
- In the group, do you find yourself without enough private time? Enough nourishment? Enough sleep?
- Does the group say that your parents and friends cannot understand or help you with religious matters?
- Is it unacceptable to have doubts about what the group teaches or does?
- Does the group view all aspects of your former life as bad? Is the group reluctant to accept you as you are? Do you feel pressure to change?
- Is it proper to deceive people for the sake of the group?
- Are you uncomfortable with the group's attitude towards women or a particular racial or ethnic group?
- Does the group encourage you to put their meetings before all other commitments, including studying?

If you can answer 'yes' to one or more of these questions, you should seriously consider not getting involved.

Know the signs

You are most vulnerable to high pressure groups when...

You're lonely:

- You're new to Toronto or Canada and you're homesick for familiar friends and places

You're hurting:

- You've had a disagreement with your family or close friend
- You've suffered a loss
- You're experiencing stress
- You're having a "faith crisis"

You're having a difficult time socially:

- You haven't made any good friends in Toronto
- You don't know how to become part of the university community
- You're stuck in a dull routine of class, dinner, homework, bed, repeat

You aren't doing well academically:

- You're under pressure to do well
- You feel like a failure because your grades are lower than what you expected

Choose a supportive group

- When choosing a group, make sure you find one that meets the following criteria:
- Encourages and respects relationships with family and friends outside the group
- Helps you through some of life's inevitable crises
- Invites open and thoughtful investigation of beliefs and welcomes a critical approach to faith
- Encourages you to be a responsible and contributing member of society