



## The Cult of COVID

After four months of lockdowns, mask mandates, and other measures allegedly imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the facts could not be any clearer: The virus is [not a significant threat to anyone under age 65](#). Its [death rate](#) is comparable to that of the seasonal flu. The number of daily deaths from the virus continues to [shrink](#). Masks not only are [useless](#) but also may have [adverse side effects](#).



Yet despite these facts, millions of Americans continue to be in thrall to the coronavirus panic, hanging on every pronouncement from Dr. Anthony Fauci, avoiding face-to-face interaction with others, and denouncing anyone who deviates from the fearmongers' line. How can this be?

The answer is simple: Belief in the apocalyptic threat of COVID-19 and the need to do absolutely anything to stop it, no matter how illegal, illiberal, or ill-advised, has become a religion.

Every religion needs at least one god, and for COVID-19 believers — let's call them Covidians — the one and only true god is The Science. "Believe the science," they tell us, as if science were some monolithic, infallible entity that hasn't changed its mind or been just plain wrong on COVID-19 repeatedly in the last several months. [Millions of Americans](#) were supposed to die from the virus — until they didn't. Asymptomatic carriers were supposed to be a [grave threat](#) to others — until [they weren't](#). Surfaces had to be disinfected constantly to prevent transmission — until [they didn't](#).

The Covidians' sacred text consists of bulletins from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). (The *New York Times* will serve in a pinch.) As with The Science, however, only certain CDC and WHO pronouncements are considered canon. Those that claim [masks are ineffective and should only be worn by those caring for others with the virus](#), for example, are deemed apocryphal.

CDC and WHO officials act as the prophets of the new religion, dispensing the words of The Science to the great unwashed. For Covidians, [Fauci's word](#) is gospel — never mind the fact that it is based on [faulty data](#), that Fauci himself has made [laughably incorrect predictions](#) about past diseases, and that he has some serious [conflicts of interest](#) that call his objectivity into question.

The Covidian priests, who interpret the oracles of the prophets for the people and tell them how to apply these messages to their daily lives, are the governors, mayors, and assorted other potentates who have ordered Americans to stay home, shutter their businesses and churches, and cover their faces when they dare leave the house lest they catch the dreaded virus, for if they do, they shall surely die. Proving that they are a higher caste, these priests can get away with issuing [arbitrary](#), [illogical](#), and [contradictory](#) dictates; [disobeying their own edicts](#); and [exempting those whose political objectives they share](#).

The Covidian faith — one might even call it a cult — demands that its adherents participate enthusiastically in various rituals. Covidians must wash their hands constantly and carry around industrial-sized bottles of hand sanitizer to use whenever they are unable to scrub up. They must



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engage in social distancing — even though the six-foot recommended distance is “not consistent with the underlying science,” according to the [Center for Evidence-Based Medicine](#) — and under no circumstances may they touch, let alone hug or kiss, someone with whom they do not live. They must wear masks and gloves at all times, even in the car or outdoors alone. And they must repeat various mantras: “Stay home; save lives.” “We’re all in this together.” “Stay safe.” Those who practice these rituals are assured of life.

This definition of righteousness obviously implies that those who do not participate in the Covidian rituals are sinners. Even more heinous are those who question or criticize the rituals, especially if they marshal facts to buttress their case. All sinners must be harangued until they repent — “politely, but also forcefully,” urged [Michigan High Priestess Gretchen Whitmer](#) — or [reported to the authorities](#), who in some jurisdictions may [pummel them into compliance](#). Those who continue in their sin will, it is expected, reap their reward of death by COVID-19.

So, dear heretic, feel free to spend half your day on social media arguing with your Covidian friends. But no matter how many well-sourced facts you present to them, don’t expect to change their minds. Covidianism, like most cults, is impervious to evidence.

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