II

The Nature of New Religious Movements

The best way to gain knowledge about new religious movements is to read some of the many excellent book-length studies available about specific groups (e.g., Lofland 1977; Wallis 1977; Barker 1984; Rochford 1985; Wilson and Dobbelaere 1994; Lucas 1995; Maaga 1998; Reader 2000; Bainbridge 2002). By way of preparation, the two readings in this section of the book will alert you to several of the most basic features of NRMs, and provide a preliminary sense of the diverse beliefs and practices of these groups. In addition, the readings highlight aspects of the social scientific study of NRMs that we need to keep in mind.

There is little consensus about what constitutes a "cult." This is due in part to the background and agenda of those writing about them (see chapter 1). But it also reflects the problems posed by the great diversity of NRMs operating in contemporary societies. "Cults" come in many shapes, sizes, and styles. The religious imagination knows few bounds, and in an age of global travel, communication, and immigration the religious traditions of the world (both old and new) are being transplanted and transformed in complex and unanticipated ways. To bring a measure of order to seeming chaos, some scholars have tried to classify the thousands of new religions into groups according to their family resemblances. Various NRMs share beliefs and practices that tie them to certain religious traditions. J. Gordon Melton (1993), for example, distinguishes eight "family groups": (1) the Pentecostal family, (2) the communal family, (3) the Christian Science–Metaphysical family, (4) the spiritualist, psychic, and New Age family, (5) the ancient wisdom family, (6) the magic family, (7) the Eastern and Middle Eastern families, and lastly (8) a category for new and unclassifiable religious groups. This approach to the classification of different types of NRMs is largely historical and descriptive. As such it helps to familiarize us with the range of possibilities, while demonstrating that there is a measure of order and cultural continuity to the seemingly endless variety of new forms of religious life.

But scholars have also found it useful to categorize NRMs in more abstract ways, according to certain common features revealed by their analysis (see Dawson 1997). One of the best known of these alternative schemes of classification is delineated by Roy Wallis in the first reading of this section (chapter 3). Focusing on how NRMs tend to view their relationship with the rest of society, Wallis proposes that there are three different types of new religions: world-rejecting, world-affirming, and world-accommodating. An NRM "may embrace the world, affirming its normatively approved goals and values; it may reject that world, denigrating those things held dear within it; or it may remain as far as possible indifferent to the world in terms

of its religious practice, accommodating to it otherwise, and exhibiting only mild acquiescence to, or disapprobation of, the ways of the world" (Wallis 1984: 4). It is these differences in attitude, Wallis suggests, that most fully account for the differences in the organization and behavior of these groups, and how they are treated by the societies in which they exist. In making his case Wallis provides a rich introduction to the specific beliefs and practices of a wide array of new religions and their leaders. He also demonstrates why and how theoretical insights need to be introduced to the study of NRMs, to allow for more manageable and effective comparisons between groups and the development of more general propositions about the nature and functioning of these kinds of religious groups.

These substantive and methodological themes are developed further in the second reading in this section, William Sims Bainbridge and Rodney Stark's essay "Cult Formation: Three Compatible Models" (chapter 4). Substantively, Bainbridge and Stark suggest that we can learn a great deal about the nature of NRMs, individually and as a type of religious organization, by grasping the social and psychological dynamics that may have brought these groups into existence in the first place. The analysis Bainbridge and Stark offer is unique and very engaging. Methodologically, they demonstrate the advantages of exercising some theoretical ingenuity in the face of the great complexity of data available about NRMs. Like Wallis, they employ a few well-crafted ideal types, in this case models of religious innovation, to systematically stipulate a large number of pertinent empirical generalizations about the way NRMs function. They propose three different conceptions of why and how NRMs are formed: (1) the psychopathology model, (2) the entrepreneur model, and (3) the subculture-evolution model. These models are based in turn on a set of even more general theoretical propositions about religions as social systems of exchange in which members and the groups participate to secure certain scarce rewards. In each model the rewards exchanged, and the costs incurred, differ. In the end, however, Bainbridge and Stark stress, these models are essentially compatible. For it is unlikely that any one model adequately reflects the motivations for starting any specific movement. It is more likely that elements of all three models must be invoked in different combinations to explain the origins of any NRM. The models are not replicas of reality. They are conceptual frameworks for stimulating and guiding empirical research and organizing the results into coherent explanations of religious innovation. The specific explanations derived from their application to actual cases will in turn influence the theoretical process of creating other models, augmenting the capacity of such models to suggest and frame even newer and more specific lines of research. Many of the other readings included in this book were written with the same objective. Researchers in this new field are striving to elevate the study of NRMs beyond the mere description of new religious activities to the development of more generalized principles of explanation for this type of social phenomena.

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CHAPTER THREE

Three Types of New Religious Movement

ROY WALLIS

. . . I propose to provide a characterization of . . . three types of new religion, illustrating the characteristics of each type from actual movements which appear to approximate them particularly closely, or to embody features of the type in a sharply visible form.

The World-Rejecting New Religion

The world-rejecting movement, no matter what religious tradition it draws upon, is much more *recognizably* religious than the world-affirming type. It possesses a clear conception of God as at the same time a *personal* entity but yet radically distinct from man and prescribing a clear and uncompromising set of moral demands upon him. For example, in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) – the saffron-robed devotees of Swami Bhaktivedanta (also known as Prabuphāda), an Indian guru who travelled to America in 1965 to spread devotion to Krishna and the ecstatic practices of his worship, such as chanting the Hare Krishna mantra – Krishna 'is not an idea or abstract principle but a person not unlike every human, however unfathomably greater, more magnificent, opulent and omnipotent he may be' (Reis 1975: 54).

The Children of God derive from a quite different tradition, that of American fundamentalism, adapted to the counter-cultural youth revolt of the 1960s. Founded in 1968 by David Brandt Berg (later known as Moses David, or Mo) in California among the youthful rebels and drop-outs of the West Coast, it subsequently spread nomadically throughout the world. The deity of the Children of God is a variation upon the traditional Judeo-Christian God, highly personalistic even when referred to more impersonally as 'Love' and possessed of the same whims, emotions, arbitrariness, and tendencies to favouritism as any human being.

The Unification Church, whose followers are popularly known as the 'Moonies', also emerged from within the Judeo-Christian tradition. But in this case fundamentalism was syncretized with Asian religious conceptions in Korea where the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, its founder, was born. Although missionaries of the church arrived in America late in 1959, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that it began to expand significantly and to attain an almost unrivalled public notoriety. For all its novel features, however, the deity of the Unification Church is a Heavenly Father, to whom conventional attitudes of prayer and supplication are taken.

The world-rejecting movement views the prevailing social order as having departed substantially from God's prescriptions and plan. Mankind has lost touch with God and spiritual things, and, in the pursuit of purely material interests, has succeeded in creating a

polluted environment; a vice-ridden society in which individuals treat each other purely as means rather than as ends; a world filled with conflict, greed, insincerity and despair. The world-rejecting movement condemns urban industrial society and its values, particularly that of individual success as measured by wealth or consumption patterns. It rejects the materialism of the advanced industrial world, calling for a return to a more rural way of life, and a reorientation of secular life to God.

Moses David, leader of the Children of God, observed in disappointment after a visit to Israel, that it:

reminds us more of America than any country we visited with all its busy materialism, its riches, power, and armaments, its noisy traffic and air pollution, and its increasingly materialistically-minded younger generation. (Moses David, 'The promised land?', 4 February 1971)

God's government is going to be based on the small village plan . . . Each village will be virtually completely self-contained, self-controlled and self-sufficient unto itself, like one big happy family or local tribe, just the way God started man out in the beginning. His ideal economy, society and government based on His own created productive land for man's simple necessities.

We're going to go back to those days with only the beautiful creation of God around us and the wonderful creatures of God to help us plow and power and transport what little we have to do to supply our meagre needs. (Moses David, 'Heavenly homes', 21 October 1974)

These sentiments are echoed by the Krishna Consciousness movement in its references to New Vrndāvana, its model agricultural community established in West Virginia, to

show that one need not depend upon factories, movies, department stores, or nightclubs for happiness; one may live peacefully and happily with little more than some land, cows, and the association of devotees in a transcendental atmosphere of Krishna Consciousness. (*Back to Godhead*, 60, 1973: 14)

Jonestown in the Guyana jungle was viewed as a potential rural paradise by Jim Jones's followers in the Peoples Temple. The prospect of a communist agrarian idyll where food would be plentiful, prejudice and discrimination non-existent, and all would share as they had need, was attractive indeed for underprivileged black ghetto-dwellers in northern California, and for white middle-class radicals alike.

Rather than a life pursuing *self-interest*, the world-rejecting sect requires a life of *service* to the guru or prophet and to others who likewise follow him. Through long hours of proselytizing on the street or distributing the movement's literature, through an arduous round of devotional ritual before the deities or unpaid domestic duties for leaders or other members, the devotee will suppress his own desires and goals in expression of his commitment to the greater good of the movement, or love of God and His agent. Reis observes of the Krishna Consciousness devotee that:

Although one has a duty to provide financial support for the maintenance and expansion of the organisation, this is not done for the self, the fragile illusionary ego, but out of love for Krishna and his personal representative, Prabhupāda. (Reis 1975: 159–60)

Such a movement may anticipate an imminent and major transformation of the world. The Children of God, for example, expect a progressive movement toward the prophesied End Time with the rise of the Anti-Christ shortly to occur or even now under way, the confirmation of the Covenant in 1985 and the inauguration thereby of the final seven years of world history. In 1989 the Tribulation will begin as the Anti-Christ demands to be worshipped as God, turning against the saints; and in 1993 Jesus is to return. Many members of the Unification Church, too, regard themselves as living in the Last Days (Edwards 1979: 80–9) in which the Lord of the Second Advent is destined to take up the task which Jesus failed to complete because of his crucifixion. Jesus was able only to establish God's spiritual kingdom on earth when his mission

had been to establish both a spiritual *and* a physical kingdom. The Christian tradition has held – in some of its varieties – to a conception of the physical return of Christ at the Second Coming to establish his millennial reign after defeating the forces of evil. Members of the Unification Church see the Reverend Sun Myung Moon as occupying the role of Christ (rather than being Jesus returned), and engaged in a God-directed mission to establish the basis for the physical kingdom of God, and the restoration of the world to His dominion after wresting it from Satan.

The world-rejecting movement expects that the millennium will shortly commence or that the movement will sweep the world, and, when all have become members or when they are in a majority, or when they have become guides and counsellors to kings and presidents, then a new world-order will begin, a simpler, more loving, more humane and more spiritual order in which the old evils and mistakes will be eradicated, and utopia will have begun. These examples illustrate the close link between religious and political aspirations among world-rejecting sects. Their rejection of the world clearly embraces secular institutions. Since their aim is to recover the world for God, they deny the conventional distinction between a secular and a religious realm, the secular must be restored to its 'original' religious character. Their tendency to reject a distinction between the religious and the political also follows from a conception of mundane events as implicated in a cosmic plan, one based on a struggle between God and evil, truth and illusion, now near culmination. Political differences thus mirror cosmic positions in this struggle, with communism typically seen as the Satanic representative on earth. It also follows from this that, with the final struggle so close, the faithful cannot hope to change the world sufficiently one soul at a time. Thus, although they seek to convert among the world's masses, they also address themselves to the influential, who are in a position to affect a much wider range of people and events and thus to meet the pressing cosmic timetable more effectively.

Hence, a number of such movements have cultivated the company of the powerful. Judah quotes a Krishna devotee on the benefits of such a policy:

> So the idea is that the politicians . . . take advice from Krishna Consciousness . . . Just try to conceive for a moment the potency of a political candidate running for office having spiritual advisers who are telling him that his only goal should be to serve Krishna. (Judah 1974: 119)

The Unification Church, too, has sought to gain a role for some of its members as advisers to, and confidantes of, prominent American politicians. The Children of God have also seen themselves as aides and counsellors to rulers and, more especially, to the world-ruler they believe to be about to rise. After Armageddon and the return of Christ, they believe that 'we, the Children of God, shall rule and reign with Him . . .' (Moses David, 'Daniel 7', May 1975).

So active have some groups been in this direction that their claim to a *religious* mission comes to be regarded as little more than a front for political aspirations. Such accusations have been levelled against Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church, who have been vigorous in their opposition to communism, and their support for anti-communist figures and regimes such as Richard Nixon, and successive South Korean military dictatorships. Jim Jones, founder of the People's Temple, was courted by many Californian politicians. Manson's gory group are not perhaps readily conceived as 'religious', but it appears that Charles Manson did view himself as a composite of Christ and Satan, returned to earth in preparation for the imminent cataclysm of Armageddon (Bugliosi 1977: 581), which would largely consist of a terrible violent revolution of the blacks against the whites in America. Thereafter his political role would emerge. He is said to have believed that the American blacks, having vanquished the whites, would eventually have to turn to him to guide them.

Meanwhile, in such movements, characteristically the faithful have come out of the

world until Armageddon or the millennium transpires, setting themselves apart from it, anticipating utopia in the communal life wherein they can keep themselves separated, uncontaminated by the worldly order, able to cultivate their collective spiritual state unmolested. The religious involvement of members is thus a full-time activity. The committed adherent will need to break completely with the worldly life in order to fulfil the movement's expectations, and separation may result in a rift with family and former friends, with conventional education and career. The movement is a 'total institution', regulating all its adherents' activities, programming all of their day but for the briefest periods of recreation or private time. Not only will the member live in the community, normally he will also work for it. Although this may sometimes mean taking a job 'in the world', the risks of this are quite high for a movement that so heartily condemns the prevailing social order. Usually an economic base for the movement will be devised which limits involvement in the world. Often this can be combined with proselytizing, as in the case of the Krishna Consciousness devotees who offer copies of their magazine, books, or flowers, or the Children of God who offer copies of their leader's letters printed in pamphlet form, in return for a donation. Contact with non-members can then be highly routinized and ritualized. It is, anyway, transient; it can be interpreted in terms confirmatory of the movement's beliefs as, for example, when a hostile response is received from someone approached on the street, which serves only to confirm the evil nature of the world; but such forms of fundraising do provide the opportunity for contact with people who may show some interest in, or sympathy with, what they are being offered, and thus provide occasions for conversion.

An alternative approach is to separate economic activity and proselytism, or to establish an independent source of income, for example, farming, as in the case of some Jesus People groups, or various manufacturing activities such as those conducted by the Unification Church. Most movements tend to have multiple economic bases, often also

deriving income from the possessions of new members handed over to the collective fund on joining; donations from sympathetic or unwary businessmen; and remittances from parents of members; as well as the street sales and manufacturing enterprises. Despite their rejection of the world and its materialism, members are often encouraged to collect state welfare payments, rent subsidies, child allowances, etc. Two hundred of the Jonestown, Guyana residents were receiving social security benefits.

Street solicitation became a major initial economic resource for many of the youthful world-rejecting new religions (Children of God, Unification Church, ISKCON, The Process) for a variety of pressing reasons. Unlike the world-affirming movements they had no commodity or service to purvey. Unlike earlier generations of world-rejecting movements, this cohort emerged into a world where readily available, cultivatable land for producing their own subsistence had virtually disappeared. What remained was, at best, marginal land impossible to farm satisfactorily without agricultural expertise lacking among the primarily urban-raised membership (Whitworth 1975). While they could support themselves for a time through handing over their resources to a communal fund, most of those recruited were economically marginal and thus had few resources and little capital to offer. Working at conventional jobs for support entailed a consequent loss of time for spreading the word, for proselytizing others. They lacked funds initially for investment in other income-producing enterprises such as forms of manufacture. Hence, what they required was an economic base which needed little capital investment; made use of their only resources – people and enthusiasm; and which, if possible, brought them into contact with potential members. Street solicitation – seeking donations in return for some low-cost item such as leaflets, magazines, candles, or flowers – met this need. Later, when investment capital had been secured by this means, some of these movements invested in viable agricultural land and book publishing (ISKCON), fishing and manufacture (Unification Church), etc., which

supplied some of their resources. The Chidren of God continued to combine witnessing and fund-raising through the practice of 'flirty fishing': demonstrating 'God's love' through sex, and encouraging the beneficiaries of their favours to provide financial and other assistance in return (Wallis 1979a: ch. 5).

The Peoples Temple illustrates the pattern of severe economic self-renunciation characteristic of such movements, particularly in their early years:

> Finances for People's Temple members were fairly simple: everything went to Jim Jones. Families signed over homes, property, and pay-checks to the temple. To raise additional money for the cult, some members occasionally begged on street corners.
>
> Members who did not live in the church had to tithe a minimum of 25 percent of their earnings. Those living on church property gave everything to Jones, who returned to them a two dollar weekly allowance. (Kerns 1979: 159)

The lifestyle to be found in world-rejecting movements – despite its deviant appearance – is characteristically highly organized and controlled. The need to generate adequate financial support often imposes severe rigours on members, particularly when combined with an ascetic ethic. Thomas Robbins et al. (1976: 115) argue of the Unification Church, for example, that, 'Life in a communal center is disciplined and most of the day is devoted to activities such as "witnessing" on the street, giving and listening to lectures, and attending other functions.'

The rigours of fund-raising in the Unification Church have been described by Christopher Edwards, a former member:

> I had been flower selling for a week now. At the end of each afternoon, we would return to the van, exhausted. For dinner – if lucky, we would receive a generous donation of unusable burgers someone had begged from the McDonald's franchise down the road by telling the manager we were poor missionaries. If we weren't so lucky, we might dine on donated stale doughnuts and cold pizza.

> Our group was collecting over a thousand tax-free dollars daily.
>
> Each morning we picked up our order of roses from the San Francisco flower district. We slept in vans at night, eight in a row, brothers at one end, sisters at another. When Family members were on the road for several days, we couldn't change clothes or shower. To even change a shirt in this crowded, smelly vehicle could tempt the sisters to fall again, might stir and excite the sexual drives now buried deep within our unconscious.
>
> Night after night we worked until two in the morning, doing bar runs – blitzing, as we called it, coaxing drunks to buy wilted roses for the angry wives awaiting them at home. At 2.30, we would drive to a local park, praying in unison in the darkness . . . After the gruelling ritual ended, we settled down for a night's sleep, a full hour and a half, for we must soon be up for pledge service Sunday morning. (Edwards 1979: 161–2)

Success in fund-raising becomes an indicator of the member's own spiritual condition rather than of his worldly skills. Fund-raising is interpreted by members less as an economic necessity than as a method of spiritual growth (Bromley and Shupe 1979: 123). A Unification Church member reports that:

> Fund-raising was a powerful experience for me. I was out on my own and had to make a decision: do I believe in the *Divine Principle* and am I willing to go through this? To me, fund-raising was a very spiritual experience in that it reaffirmed my faith. Every day I had to question what I believed. (Bryant and Hodges 1978: 62)

Daner (1976: 77) asserts that in Krishna Consciousness too, 'A devotee must be prepared to give his entire self to lead a life of day to day obedience and service'. Indeed, in the face of the increasing competition from groups and movements offering forms of 'easy' enlightenment, ISKCON'S magazine, *Back to Godhead*, has laid *increasing* stress on the necessity of spiritual discipline (Reis 1975: 133).

The disciplined character of the communal life may extend to the use of physical sanctions to encourage the achievement of movement requirements. When 'litnessing', i.e. the distribution of literature in return for donations, was a major aim of the Children of God, members who failed to reach the quota set for them were, at times, sent out again after a day on the streets and forbidden to return to the colony (i.e. the commune) until the quota target in literature distributed, or daily financial quota, was met. Synanon is a movement that began life as a communal drug-rehabilitation programme in California, which developed a religious self-conception and philosophy only subsequently. It has thus undergone considerable changes during the course of its development which I shall discuss later, but, during its most explicitly world-rejecting phase, physical violence was occasionally inflicted on deviant members. As the Peoples Temple, too, became more world-rejecting over the course of its development, so physical violence became more normal as a means of social control (Kerns 1979: 157, 185). This was also, of course, the case in Manson's Family. None the less, the demand for discipline only rather infrequently issues in the routine use of violence in new religious movements. The reason is not far to seek. These movements are voluntary communities living usually in densely populated societies with strong central state authorities. They cannot effectively coerce those who can make their wish to dissent or abandon membership known; they cannot normally hope to isolate effectively members who rebel or resist authority; nor can they compete with the means of violence available to the state if they infringe upon the liberties of members to the degree where they call upon its aid. They must retain their following by persuasion – albeit some may see such persuasion as entailing forms of blackmail – or by the instilling of fear at the prospect of departure. Followers must be given reasons to remain when they cannot in general be coerced. And since *enthusiasm* is normally a prerequisite for the survival and growth of the movement, love, rather than fear, is much the more frequent means of persuasion.

The communal lifestyle of the world-rejecting movement exhibits a high level of diffuse affectivity. Members of such movements kiss each other and hug in greeting, hold hands with other members, or call endearments and offer constant encouragement. Typically, this highly visible affectivity is coupled with a strongly puritan moral code which permits it to go no further than public display. Or, when sexual relationships are permitted, it is normally primarily for the purpose of reproduction. Married members of the Krishna Consciousness movement, for example, are allowed to engage in sexual intercourse only at the wife's most fertile point in the monthly cycle, and even then only after extensive ritual preparations. Sexual relationships are subordinated to *collective* rather than private, *personal* ends, so that, in the Unification Church and the early Children of God, members were willing to have marriage partners chosen for them even from among complete strangers. In the Unification Church, moreover, members will normally lead lives of rigorous chastity, often for a number of years before marriage.

Married members of Synanon and the People's Temple, on the other hand, were prepared to divorce their mates and take new spouses at their leader's direction. But even when, as in the later Children of God, the movement has become sexually antinomian, such apparent self-indulgence may in fact itself be largely a matter of service. The liberal sexuality of the Children of God is employed at least in part to win converts and to increase the solidarity and commitment of members, and personal pleasure therefore remains a *secondary* consideration to helping others and serving God.

In this quotation, Moses David stresses the use of sex as a means of 'saving souls' and serving God:

> Who knows? – When all other avenues of influence and witnessing are closed to us this may be our only remaining means of spreading the Word and supporting the work, as well as gaining new disciples and workers for the Kingdom of God.

What better way to show them the love of God than to do your best to supply their desperately hungry needs for love, fellowship, companionship . . . affection, a tender loving kiss, a soft warm embrace, the healing touch of your loving hands, the comforting feeling of your body next to theirs – and yes, even *sex* if need be! (Moses David, 'King Arthur's nights: chapter one', 29 April 1976)

Even earlier he had indicated that monogamous marriage was by no means sacrosanct in the Children of God, and could not be permitted to endanger the solidarity of the movement:

We do not minimize the marriage ties as such. We just consider our ties to the Lord and the larger Family greater and more important. And when the private marriage ties interfere with Our Family and God ties, they can be readily abandoned for the glory of God and the good of the Family! . . . partiality toward your own wife or husband or children strikes at the very foundation of communal living – against the unity and supremacy of God's Family and its oneness and wholeness. (Moses David, 'One wife', 28 October 1972)

Moses David is quite explicit about the role sexual relationships can play in generating solidarity in the Children of God, as in his letter reflecting on 'The real meaning of The Lord's Supper!' (Moses David, 1 October 1978):

Boy, there's a hot one for our Family!: One in the flesh, one body, and one in spirit! . . . in our Family we are one body, all the way! Sexually as well, really one Bride of Christ, One Wife, One Body! How much more could you be one body than *we* are, amen? PTL! *We're one all the way!* . . .

Thank God, in our Family . . . we are not only one in spirit but one in body, both in sex and sacrificial service to others.

The Manson Family – to take a yet more extreme case – also employed sexual promiscuity as a means of eliminating the individual ego and subordinating all individual personality and goals to those of the collectivity, as formulated by Charles Manson:

The lack of sexual discrimination among hard-core Family members was not so much gross animalism as it was simply a physical parallel to the lack of emotional favoritism and attachment that Charlie taught and insisted on. As long as we loved one person more than the others, we weren't truly dead [to self] and the Family wasn't one. (Watson 1978: 70)

Manson's Family also employed sexuality instrumentally as a means of attracting converts (Zamora 1976: 79). Through sexuality the Children of God believed they showed God's love, and the Manson Family the love of Charlie (Watson 1978: 68–9).

The life of the world-rejecting movement tends to require considerable subordination of individual interest, will, and autonomy in order to maximize collective solidarity and to eliminate disruptive dissent. Naranjo (1979: 27) reports from her observations that 'members are expected to learn that Synanon places the explicit needs and demands of the community over and above the needs of any individual'. A common theme in world-rejecting movements is that of having been *reborn* on joining the group. A complete break with past desires, interests, statuses, with any past identity, is made by dating one's birth from the moment of joining (as, for example, in the Love Israel movement, a small Seattle-based, counter-cultural, communal, religious group). A new identity will be acquired incorporating as its central features the beliefs, norms and values of the collectivity joined. Typically this nascent identity is signified by the convert taking a new name as in the Children of God, Love Israel, Krishna Consciousness, The Process, and the Manson Family.

The ego or former self must be completely repudiated. The Children of God employ the term 'forsake all' to mean not only the process of handing over all worldly possessions to the movement on joining, but also the renunciation of the past and of all self-interest. Enroth reports from some reflections of a COG 'lit shiner' (i.e. a distributor of the largest number of MO Letters in her area at a time when members were encouraged to maximize their output), her aspiration to do even better: 'I'm

sure it's possible to hit 12,000 a week. I know it. *I have to die more to myself* and put more hours in' (Enroth 1977: 51, my emphasis). Even the exclusiveness of the marital bond must be abandoned for the collective good. As Moses David, leader of the Children of God, put it in one of his letters to his disciples: 'it's the last vestige of forsaking all to forsake even your husband and wife to share with others' (Moses David, 'One wife', 28 October 1972; on sex and marriage in the Children of God, see Wallis 1979a: ch. 5). Giving up any exclusive claim upon particular others was an important part of abandoning the self. In similar vein, Watson recounts the beliefs of the Manson Family:

True freedom means giving up ourselves, letting that [*sic*] old ego die so we can be free of the self that keeps us from one another . . . 'Cease to exist', Charlie sang in one of the songs he'd written. 'Cease to exist, come say you love me.' The girls repeated it over and over – *cease to exist, kill your ego, die* – so that once you cease to be, you can be free to totally love, totally come together. (Watson 1978: 54)

Abnegation of personal identity, or self-renunciation, to this degree renders more comprehensible the awesome mass suicide of Peoples Temple members in Jonestown, Guyana. When the cause and the movement are everything, and the self is nothing, giving one's own life may be a small price for what one has had, or for what may be achieved by the gesture.

When individual identity is so thoroughly tied to a collective identity and subordinated to the will and authority of a leader personifying that collective identity, and threat to the leader or the community is a threat to the self. Life is far less important than protection of the leader, defence of the movement's ideal, or indictment of its enemies. The logical extreme of 'forsaking all' for the common good is not – as Moses David supposes – the abandoning of an exclusive sexual claim upon a spouse, but rather it is the *suicidal act*. Members of the Unification Church and the Children of God

are warned that they may have to die for their movement or their faith:

We know that some will suffer and some will have to die for Thee and Thy Gospel. You promised it, Lord, but you said 'Great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you! (MT 5: 12).' (Moses David, 'The happy ending', February 1979)

The deindividuation, subordination of self, and the correlated sense of rebirth, of complete break with the past are highlighted, in the case of the Manson Family, by a recollection of Tex Watson. A prolonged intimate relationship normally results in the partners acquiring substantial background knowledge of each other, yet Watson observes of the girl specially assigned to him by Manson that, 'During the months that Mary and I were more or less together, I learned practically nothing about her past. The past was non-existent for the Family, something to discard along with all the materialistic middle-class programming and the ego that it had built' (Watson 1978: 61).

A collective identity may be fostered by various means as Rosabeth Kanter (1972) has shown, including a common mode of dress and appearance. This is seen at its clearest in Krishna Consciousness, wherein temple residents wear Indian dress and men shave their heads but for a topknot. Observers often commented on the similarity in dress and appearance of members of the Unification Church in its early years of notoriety. To a considerable extent this was also true of the Children of God who might not all look precisely alike, but for whom there was a considerable commonality in style. Another expression of this deindividuation is to be seen in the practice in the Manson Family of keeping all the clothes not in immediate use in one large pile on the floor (see, for example, Watson 1978: 29). This is echoed in Edwards's (1979: 97) account of induction to the Unification Church:

I left the shower room house, wearing the crumpled old clothes I had pulled out of the

collective laundry hamper . . . All our clothes were thrown together and we dressed on a first-come, first-serve system, those newest in the Family choosing the shabbiest clothes to show humility and Family leaders picking out the finest as a sign of their status.

Another typical means of fostering and marking collective identity, so usual as almost to be a defining characteristic of the world-rejecting movement, is that of new members handing over on joining all belongings (Unification Church, Children of God, Krishna Consciousness, Manson Family, etc.), or major assets and income (People's Temple). Equally general is the conceptualization of the movement as a family in which other members are closer than any physical brothers and sisters, and in which the leader occupies the status of father with an appropriate authority over his 'children'. By this means movements as diverse as the Love Family (in Seattle), the Unified Family – a designation employed by the Unification Church; the Manson Family, and the Family of Love – a later name taken by the Children of God, have sought to describe the close, emotional bonding and corporate loyalty felt by members of the group.

Movements such as these, mandated by God through the medium of a messiah, prophet or guru to fulfil His demands, tend to be highly authoritarian. The resulting constraints of the communal life and an authoritarian leadership provide a basis for the claim by hostile outsiders that the youthful members have lost their identity, personality, and even their 'free will' in joining. Such claims have formed a major part of the rhetoric of the 'anti-cult' movement (Shupe, Spielmann and Stigall, 1977; Wallis 1977) . . .

The World-Affirming New Religion

The other end of the continuum presents a sharp contrast. The style of the world-affirming movement lacks most of the features traditionally associated with religion. It may have no 'church', no collective ritual of worship, it may lack any developed theology or ethics (in the sense of general, prescriptive principles of human behaviour and intention – although see Tipton 1982 on *est*). In comparison to the world-rejecting movement, it views the prevailing social order less contemptuously, seeing it as possessing many highly desirable characteristics. Mankind, too, is not so much reprobate as needlessly restricted, containing within itself enormous potential power which, until now, only a very few individuals have learned to utilize effectively, and even then normally only by withdrawing from the world, and subjecting themselves to the most rigorous disciplines. Silva Mind Control is a training involving techniques of self-hypnosis and visualization, which is transmitted in 40–48 hours and which:

> can train anyone to remember what appears to be forgotten, to control pain, to speed healing, to abandon unwanted habits, to spark intuition so that the sixth sense becomes a creative, problem-solving part of daily life. With all this comes a cheerful inner peace, a quiet optimism based on first-hand evidence that we are more in control of our lives than we ever imagined. (Silva and Miele 1977: 12–13)

The method – which brings one 'into direct, working contact with an all-pervading higher intelligence' (ibid.: 17) – was invented by a Mexican American, Jose Silva, in the 1950s. An advertising leaflet for Silva Mind Control avers that:

> In 48 hours you can learn to use your mind to do *anything* you wish . . . There is no limit to how far you can go, . . . to what you can do, because there is no limit to the power of your mind.

Transcendental Meditation (TM) involves – as its name makes clear – a meditational technique taught to those who are initiated in a relatively brief ceremony in which the initiator conveys to the new meditator a 'personal' mantra, in fact selected according to the new meditator's age, on which the individual med-

itates for twenty minutes each morning and evening. The technique was brought to the West by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the late 1950s, but achieved celebrity mainly as a result of the Beatles becoming initiated and visiting the Maharishi in India in 1968. Although their interest shortly waned, numbers undertaking initiation into TM increased dramatically in the late 1960s and 1970s. (For data on the expansion of TM in the USA, see Bainbridge and Jackson 1981.) A pamphlet published by one of the organizations of Transcendental Meditation announces the super-normal powers to which it provides access:

The TM-Siddhis programme . . . creates the ability to function from the level of . . . unbounded awareness. Any thought consciously projected from that unbounded awareness will be so powerful, will be so supported by all the laws of nature, that it will be fufilled without problems, without loss of time. (Mahesh Yogi 1977)

Movements approximating the world-affirming type claim to possess the means to enable people to unlock their physical, mental and spiritual potential without the need to withdraw from the world, means which are readily available to virtually everyone who learns the technique or principle provided. No arduous prior period of preparation is necessary, no ascetic system of taboos enjoined. No extensive mortification of the flesh nor forceful control of the mind. At most, a brief period of abstention from drugs or alcohol may be requested, without any requirement even of continued abstention after the completion of a training or therapy period.

est (the italicized initial lower-case form is used even at the beginning of a sentence) is the commonly used designation for Erhard Seminar's Training, an organization which provides a 60-hour training, the purpose of which is 'to transform your ability to experience living so that the situations you have been trying to change or have been putting up with, clear up just in the process of life itself'. While it is one of the less transcendental of the new world-affirming salvational movements,

est is clearly part of the same domain as its more overtly religious counterparts among movements of this type. As will be argued subsequently, movements of this type tend to possess a more secularized and individualized conception of the divine. Moreover, they offer access to supernatural, magical and spiritual powers and abilities which legitimize the attribution to them of the label 'religious'. Participants in the *est* training are not expected to submit to any severe preparatory trials or rigours. They are required merely to observe a series of rules during the 60 hours the training involves (normally spread over two weekends in four approximately 15-hour days). They may not smoke in the training room, eat except at the specified meal break, drink alcohol or take any drug (except as medically prescribed) during the training period and the intervening week. The 'asceticism' involved in securing enlightenment through *est* goes no further than being permitted breaks for smoking or the lavatory only three or four times during each 15–16 hour day; being required to sit in straight-backed chairs during much of the training with the consequent mild physical discomfort; and being obliged to raise one's hand, be acknowledged, and stand to use a microphone before speaking. Persons wishing to be initiated into Transcendental Meditation are asked to cease drug use for fifteen days beforehand.

Just as no rigorous discipline is normally involved, so, too, no extensive doctrinal commitment is entailed, at least not at the outset. There may even be no initial insistence that the adherent *believe* the theory or doctrine at all, as long as he is willing to try the technique and see if it works. Examples are readily available in Transcendental Meditation and in *est*:

No one is required to declare a belief in TM, in the Maharishi, or even in the possible effects of the technique in order for it to work. *It works in spite of an individual's disbelief or skepticism.* (Robbins and Fisher 1972: 7)

Q. Do I have to believe the training will work in order for the training to work?

A. No. *est* is not a system of beliefs or techniques to be learned and practised. Some people approach the training with enthusiasm, and some with skepticism – and some with both. Your willingness to be there is all you need. (*Questions People Ask About The est Training*, 1977, no pagination)

Nichiren Shoshu, also known as Soka Gakkai, is a movement of Japanese origin which – although formed prior to the Second World War – only flourished with the return of religious liberty to Japan under the postwar American administration. From 1951, it began an aggressive programme of proselytization which led to rapid expansion in Japan and the conversion of some American service men, often married to members of Soka Gakkai. It was largely as a result of their return to America, bearing their new faith, that it spread to the West (Dator 1969). From interviews, I understand that it was by a similar process that the movement was brought to Britain. Soka Gadkai members believe that by chanting the Lotus Sutra, believed to be the highest and most powerful scripture, and the mantra *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* ('Adoration be to the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wondrous Law'), Before the *Gohonzon* (a copy of a scroll representing the Buddha, the original of which was inscribed by Nichiren, the thirteenth-century monk, founder of this branch of Buddhism) (White 1970: 30), kept in a household shrine, they can attain personal happiness, economic improvement, and other this-worldly goals as well as spiritual rewards. Individuals drawn into an initial discussion meeting by Nichiren Shoshu proselytizers are customarily told:

These meetings are to get you to experiment with the practice, not to believe in it. The reason for having you come to this meeting is to get you to try and test the practice. We don't expect you to believe in it right away, but we do want you to give it a try. (Snow 1976: 236)

While followers of such movements may object to some limited aspects of the present social order, the values and goals which prevail within it are normally accepted. They have joined such a movement not to escape or withdraw from the world and its values, but to acquire the means to achieve them more easily and to experience the world's benefits more fully. Snow (1976: 67) argues that, for most rank and file members, the philosophy of Nichiren Shoshu of America is:

usually interpreted and defined in terms of the various things which collectively yield a sense of personal satisfaction and well-being in one's everyday life in the immediate here and now. For most, happiness or value creation is thus constituted by the attainment of a semblance of material well-being, family harmony, friends, good health, inner security, and a sense of meaning, purpose and direction.

In world-affirming movements, the social order is not viewed as entirely and irredeemably unjust, nor society as having departed from God as in the world-rejecting case. The beliefs of these movements are essentially individualistic. The source of suffering, of disability, of unhappiness, lies within oneself rather than in the social structure. This view is stated for TM by Forem (1973: 235), but could be duplicated for many movements of this type:

When individuals within a society are tense, strained and dissatisfied with life, the foundation is laid for conflict in its various forms: riots, demonstrations, strikes, individual and collective crimes, wars. But a society composed of happy, creative individuals could not give rise to such outbreaks of discord.

Hence, it follows that producing social change is dependent upon producing individual change. The individual must 'take responsibility' for the circumstances around him and for transforming them:

While it does not as yet provide them with political power, NSA [Nichiren Shoshu of America, the corporate name in America for Soka Gakkai] philosophy does teach that responsibility lies with the individual . . .

rather than despairing or complaining, individuals are encouraged to think about and discuss solutions to the problems they see, chant for them and work in any capacity they can, where they are, to bring about better societal conditions. (Holtzapple 1977: 138)

Transcendental Meditation articulates its version of this theory through the notion of the 'Maharishi Effect', which refers to the social consequences of the practice of TM by a significant proportion of the population (once 10 per cent was aspired to, but, more recently, as the following quotation shows, the movement has lowered its recruitment expectations):

The phenomenon known as the Maharishi Effect is the basis of Maharishi's prediction that every nation will soon become invincible in the growing sunshine of the Age of Enlightenment. This phenomenon has been verified in about 1,100 cities around the world, where it was found that crime, accidents, sickness, and other negative trends fell sharply, as soon as just one per cent of the population began the Transcendental Meditation technique. The Maharishi Effect on a global scale results in ideal societies everywhere and invincibility for every nation. (*World Government News* No. 8, August 1978: 4)

Leading Transcendental Meditators, called 'Governors of the Age of Enlightenment', have been despatched in large numbers to areas of civil crisis. There they in no way participate in relief programmes or in providing physical assistance, but rather engage in meditation and the 'Siddhi programme' (a more advanced set of practices which produce magical abilities, such as levitation), and thus:

Without going out of their comfortable hotel rooms, the Governors of the Age of Enlightenment enliven the ground state of natural law deep within themselves and produce the gentle impulses of coherence which neutralize turbulence and disorder in collective consciousness . . . Violence naturally calms down.

(*World Government News*, issue No. 2, Nov./Dec. 1978, Jan. 1979: 6)

The 'Governors' then educate local leaders in the virtues of TM and the 'Siddhi programme', and secure their assistance in teaching these in that locale. By such means world peace is ensured.

Similarly the Hunger Project sponsored by *est* engages in promotional activities connected with ending starvation in the world, and raises money for that purpose. However, the Hunger Project does not send money to feed the starving, nor otherwise directly provide aid to the underdeveloped world, nor even advocate any particular social or economic remedy:

It is not the purpose of The Hunger Project to feed hungry people . . . but rather to speak to the world on behalf of hungry people . . . Your contribution to the Hunger Project goes directly to generate the most important process on our planet – creating the end of hunger and starvation as an idea whose time has come. (*A shift in the wind* [The Hunger Project Newspaper], 4, February 1979: 15)

The Hunger Project exists to convey to the world that hunger can be ended within twenty years. Its purpose, that is, is to change our *consciousness* about the possibility of ending starvation. World hunger is inevitable only because we believe it to be inevitable. The Hunger Project therefore exists 'to create a context of commitment among a critical mass of people, to create the elimination of death due to starvation as "an idea whose time has come"' (Babbie 1978: 16).

This should not be taken to mean that world-affirming movements never have genuinely reformist aims. A number of groups within the Human Potential tradition have aspirations which combine the personal and the political. Human Potential enthusiasts often see a need for action to effect liberation at the level of social structure as well as that of personal psychology. Such issues as feminism, the ecology, peace, siting of nuclear power stations or nuclear weapons facilities,

race, and community action are often part of the agenda of such groups as Re-evaluation Counselling, which devotes resources to publicizing precisely these issues and educating its members and others in their implications. Even a movement such as Scientology has undertaken campaigns for the protection of the civil rights of mental patients, although, as in so much of the activity of this group, it is sometimes difficult to disentangle a disinterested desire for social reform from the pursuit of enhanced power and security for Scientology.

However, characteristically in world-affirming movements, the individual is responsible not only for the environment around him but for everything he is and does. The individual's nature and behaviour is not viewed as a composite of predispositions, situations, and a psychological biography, but simply in terms of free choice at the point of performance. *est*, for example, even views stories about predispositions, situations and psychological biographies as part of the individual's 'act', by means of which he avoids experiencing what is happening to him. The individual is the only one who experiences (for him) what is happening to him, and hence he is responsible for (his experience of) life's vicissitudes for him; even his disasters and his illnesses. The individual therefore chooses his (experience of his) circumstances, his illnesses, etc. And as one chooses to be and to behave, so one can choose to change. Linda Dannenberg (1975: 20) observes from a Silva Mind Control lecture: 'You are free to change . . . and can make anything of yourself that you wish. You will be as happy, sad, beautiful, ugly, rich or poor, relaxed or nervous as you make up your mind to be.'

The spiritual dimension in particular is a matter of individual experience and individual *subjective* reality rather than social reality or even social concern. Moreover, God is not perceived as a personal deity imposing a set of ethical prescriptions upon human society. If God is referred to at all it is primarily as a diffuse, amorphous and immanent force in the universe, but present most particularly within oneself. Mind Dynamics, for example, encour-

ages its followers to bring their minds into states where they produce alpha waves. Its founder argues that 'when you are working dynamically in Alpha you are in touch with Higher Intelligence . . .' (Silva and Miele 1977: 37), although Higher Intelligence may be less than God Himself. For many of these groups and movements, the self is the only God there is, or at least the only one that matters. One observer of the Human Potential Movement notes that, rather than 'God', adherents are likely to refer to 'my ground of being, my true nature, the ultimate energy'; and that, 'The most common image of God is the notion of cosmic energy as a life force in which all partake' (Stone 1976: 102). He also relates the experience of one follower: 'A psychiatric social worker said she formerly used terms like *God* to explain suffering and the source of happiness and love. Subsequent to the *est* (Erhard Seminars Training) training, she did not use these terms so often, sensing that she is god in her universe and thus creator of what she experiences' (Stone 1976: 103). Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder and leader of Transcendental Meditation and the Spiritual Regeneration Movement, makes the same point, that 'the inner man is Divine, is fully Divine . . .' (Mahesh Yogi 1962: 7), although he may not always know it consciously (Mahesh Yogi 1962: 14). John-Roger, the American founder of the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness, associated with the Insight training, announces to his followers that 'we are the Holy Spirit, we are Gods in manifestation' (John-Roger 1976: 18). According to Ellwood (1974: 107), in Nichiren Shoshu (Soka Gakkai), 'All the promises of religion are made to apply to this world. All divine potential is within man, it is said, and can be unleashed.'

These movements, then, share a view of man as inherently *perfectible*. People possess a potential far beyond their current level of functioning. The key to attaining the level of their potential lies not in modification of the social order or the structure of social opportunity, but in facilitating the transformation of *individuals*. Moreover, such a transformation is believed to be possible on the basis of tech-

niques and theories which can be rather quickly transmitted and learned.

The world-affirming movements emphasize the *present*, what Kurt Back (1972) refers to as the 'mythology of the here and now'. They are often hostile to intellectualization and rational evaluation, seeing these as a defence against, or barrier to, feeling and experience. Understanding, Werner Erhard observes of the *est* training and of life in general, 'is the booby prize'. The world-affirming movement offers immediate and automatic benefits of a concrete kind through the practice of some formula or recipe: chanting 'Namu Myoho, Renge Kyo' (Soka Gakkai); fifteen minutes' meditation on a mantra morning and evening (TM): or merely by 'keeping your soles in the room and taking what you get'(*est*). Holtzapple summarizes these characteristics in the case of Nichiren Shoshu of America (Soka Gakkai):

> The emphasis within NSA is on practice, i.e. 'doing', 'acting', not theorizing. The 'benefits' which can be achieved are not just in the future. They are here and now, because any goal can be accomplished through the universal mystic law of cause and effect. The right attitude and right effort automatically lead to the right effect. (Holtzapple 1977: 139)

It follows from this ethos of individual self-realization that collective activities have little or no sacred quality and indeed are likely to have only a small place in the enterprise unless it is particularly centred upon some group-based or interpersonal technique, such as encounter groups; and even here the group is of importance only as a means to self-liberation. *est*, for example, is presented to 250 trainees at a time yet requires minimal inter-personal contact, and indeed develops a thoroughly subjective idealist theory of knowledge and of the world. So subjective is its epistemology that it appears at times to verge on solipsism. Its ontology, as noted above, rests on the claim that 'You're god in your universe. You caused it' (Erhard 1973: n.p.). Scientology, one of the most notorious of the world-affirming new religious movements, was developed by L. Ron Hubbard in America

from his lay psychotherapy Dianetics – presented to the public in 1950 – which briefly attained the proportions of a craze in the USA. Scientology, although it describes itself as a church, has only the most rudimentary of religious practices in any conventional sense. So, too, its activities are principally of an individualistic character, with little value placed upon collective or communal enterprise. Its central activity, 'auditing', is undertaken between an 'auditor' and 'pre-clear' on a one-to-one basis, or even by the pre-clear auditing himself; and even training in the theory and practice of Scientology is organized in such a fashion as to enable the student to pursue his course quite alone. Moreover, involvement in Scientology, too, is oriented primarily to the pursuit of individual goals of success, greater power and ability and personal spiritual attainment (Wallis 1976). Such developments in therapy and spiritual search have been characterized as a 'new narcissism' (Marin 1975; see also Tom Wolfe's amusing essay deflating many of the pretensions of such movements as *est* in Wolfe 1977).

It follows that the world-affirming movement rejects the dualism of the world-rejecting movement, with its concrete conception of the transcendental realm and of the coming transformation of the earth in a physically tangible millennium. Indeed, it rejects the materialist assumptions upon which such a view is predicated. Its philosophy is idealist to the degree that perfection is merely the result of realizing that everything is *already* perfect. John Weldon quotes Werner Erhard from an *est* seminar, expressing a sentiment which, with minor modification, could be found in many other cases:

> Life is always perfect just the way it is. When you realize that, then no matter how strongly it may appear to be otherwise, you know that whatever is happening right now will turn out all right. Knowing this, you are in a position to begin mastering life. (Weldon, n.d.: 5)

Three themes can be identified which seem, albeit in varying degrees, to be central to the beliefs and ethos of the world-affirming

movement. Although these can be distinguished analytically, they none the less sometimes co-occur empirically, perhaps as major and minor themes within the same movement. There is first the theme of coping with the demands made upon us to succeed in modern capitalist societies, of coping with the dilemmas of *individual achievement.* Underlying much of the rhetoric of 'awareness' and 'realizing potential' is the theme of personal success in securing the valued goals of this world: improved income and personal relationships, greater confidence and self-esteem, enhanced ability to cope with life's vicissitudes (Wallis 1979b). Intelligence will be increased, social capabilities immeasurably improved, psychosomatic illnesses and psychological disabilities eliminated. The Inner Peace Movement, founded in 1964 by Francisco Coll, provides methods for spiritual and psychological growth through the medium of a pyramid sales corporation which encourages recruits to move into leadership roles marketing the movement's product of spiritual growth and inner peace (Scott 1980: 24). Scott argues that 'Success and its achievement . . . are emphasized repeatedly in IPM programs and songs' (1980: 73).

> To achieve success, the IPMer is encouraged to develop certain personality attributes, such as being positive, enthusiastic, hard working, assertive, dynamic, motivated, committed, confident and organized . . . Given these success concerns, many IPM classes center around success, such as an ALC [American Leadership College] class entitled 'Success, Goals, and Motivation'. Many techniques are designed to show participants what they need to do to obtain success . . . (Scott 1980: 74–5)

A small sample of Scientologists completed a questionnaire in Wallis's (1976) study, which included a question asking them what kinds of problems they hoped Scientology would solve for them. Twenty-five of the twenty-nine who answered this question indicated a wide range of problems to which they had been seeking solutions (they could indicate more than one):

Problem	*No.*
(a) Loneliness	8
(b) Financial	4
(c) Marital	5
(d) Other interpersonal relationships	14
(e) Psychological	15
(f) Physical illness	11

(Adapted from Wallis 1976: 170)

Re-evaluation Counseling was founded in the early 1950s by Harvey Jackins, a one-time associate of L. Ron Hubbard. Re-evaluation Counseling appears to lean heavily upon Dianetic theory and to develop central features of its practice, notably co-auditing – or, as it is called in Re-evaluation Counseling, 'co-counseling' – by lay peers. A member of Re-evaluation Counseling, interviewed by the author, presents this achievement theme in somewhat lower key:

> People who come into Counseling are functioning quite well, but they know they could be functioning better. They know they're just not achieving their potential; they're not doing things as well as they could do; they're not behaving to other people as well as they could. Things aren't just quite right. But to all external intents and purposes, they're doing very well.

In some movements this theme of coping with the expectations of individual happiness and achievement prevailing in the Western world appears in the form of its converse, i.e. the dominant theme is one of the *reduction of expectations* from life to a realistic level. This has its clearest embodiment in *est* which encourages participants to make the most of their present experience, to live for the present rather than future aims or past aspirations. *est* assures its adherents that 'This is all there is', and they might as well enjoy it rather than constantly compare their present condition unfavourably with some other, non-existent state of affairs. Even if they did achieve the new job, wife, home, image they want – *est* informs them with considerable, if mortifying, realism – they would only be happy with it for a couple of days before they began to feel as

dissatisfied with that as they are with what they have now. Werner Erhard assures his followers that 'Happiness is a function of accepting what is'. Moreover, 'Life is a rip off when you expect to get what you want. Life works when you choose what you get' (Erhard 1973: n.p.).

A second theme, clearly closely related to the desire to achieve one's full potential, is that of coping with our sense of constraint, of facilitating the desire for liberation from social inhibitions, of breaking free from the bonds of social roles to reach the 'real' person beneath. The individual will be released from conventional ritual; from habitual modes of speech or interaction; from inhibitions acquired in childhood; from repressions of instinctual life; or from a learned reserve. He will thereby be enabled to 'get in touch with' his feelings, his emotions; and encouraged to express the 'authentic' self beneath the social facade; to celebrate spontaneity, sensual pleasure and the indulgence of natural impulse.

The shifting congeries of groups, organizations and activities which form the Human Potential Movement take this to be a fundamental assumption. Human beings possess vast potential by way of ability, awareness, creativity, empathy, emotional expressiveness, capacity for experience and enjoyment, and the like. The pristine human being possesses these characteristics and qualities, but is believed to lose or to repress them as a result of the impact of society and the constraining structures it imposes upon the individual. Oscar Ichazo, founder of Arica, a gnostic school drawing much upon Gurdjieff, but eclectic in its synthesis of concepts and practices, has said that:

A person retains the purity of essence for a short time. It is lost between four and six years of age when the child begins to imitate his parents, tell lies and pretend. A contradiction develops between the inner feelings of the child and the social reality to which he must conform. Ego consciousness is the limited mode of awareness that develops as a result of the fall into society. (Interview with Sam Keen see Keen 1973)

Arica provides practices, exercises, ritual and a conceptual system which will enable the individual to transcend mere 'ego consciousness', and thus to recover some of his capabilities from before the fall. Bernard Gunther, author of two best-selling books on the topic of sensitivity training and a major teacher in the Human Potential Movement, has commented on his own approach as follows:

I guess largely I feel that most people in our culture tend to carry around a lot of chronic tension, and that they tend to respond largely on the basis of *habit* behavior . . . what I call sensory awakening is a method to get people to . . . let go their tension and focus their awareness on various parts of the body. And of experiencing the *moment*, experiencing what it is they are actually doing, as opposed to any kind of concept or conditioned kind of habit behavior (Back 1972: 81).

In his book, *The Human Side of Human Beings*, Harvey Jackins provides an illustration of the interrelated themes of a desire to achieve one's full capacity, held to be vastly greater than is manifested at present, and a belief that this achievement is to be gained through liberation from those constraints upon our powers which society has imposed upon us. Reminiscent of early Dianetics, Jackins (1978: 19–20) argues that,

if any of us could preserve in operating condition a very large part of the flexible intelligence that each of us possesses inherently, the one who did so would be accurately described as an 'all round genius' by the current standards of our culture. This is not, of course, the impression that most of us have been conditioned to accept. We have heard, from our earliest age, that 'Some have it and some don't, Where were you when the brains were passed out?'. 'Don't feel bad, the world needs good dishwashers, too', and similar gems. These impressions and this conditioning, however, seem to be profoundly wrong. Each of us who escaped physical damage to our forebrain began with far more capacity to function intelligently than the best operating adult in our culture is presently able to exhibit.

Successful adults, Jackins calculates, are operating on only about 10 per cent of their 'original resources of intelligence, ability to enjoy life and ability to enjoy other people' (Jackins 1978: 59). Re-evaluation Counseling offers a method which will enable its practitioners to recover this enormous inherent capacity.

Arianna Stassinopoulos, a recruit to Insight, an American self-realization movement which she subsequently introduced to Britain, represented particularly sharply the theme of liberation at a public presentation in London in 1979, when she announced that the purpose of Insight could be summarized as 'getting free'. It offered, she said, freedom from the melodrama which goes on in many of our heads most of the time, the fear, anxiety, guilt and recrimination; the burden of the past which continues to dominate our present responses, and produces exaggerated or inappropriate reactions to current circumstances. Freedom from 'self-limiting images and beliefs' which make us feel we are not terribly worthwhile; which sabotage us at points of crisis, by making us feel we simply cannot do whatever the situation requires. But also, from contrary images of ourselves as perfect, leading to self-judgment, guilt and a burden of blame. It offered freedom from the sense of oneself as victim, as the passive recipient of life's circumstances. Thus, like *est* on which it is substantially based, the Insight training purveys the view that we are 'totally responsible for our lives'. Finally, the training offers, it was claimed, freedom from the limitations imposed by a rationalistic and cerebral culture; realization that the heart is equally an 'energy centre', and thus the opportunity to celebrate one's emotional nature.

A third theme is that of coping with the pervasive loneliness of life in modern society. The desire for liberation, therefore, readily shades over into that of attaining a sense of *intimacy*, of instant if highly attenuated community. In a safe, secure environment – or at least one sufficiently separated from the normal world and normal routine so that rebuff or failure can be effectively isolated from everyday reality – individuals seek not only to discover *themselves*, but to make contact with others, to

open themselves to relationships which have hitherto seemed threatening. The activities of these movements may provide opportunities wherein with barriers lowered, participants may find it possible to make contact with others without elaborate and socially sophisticated preliminaries, and indeed without any necessary long-term commitment or enduring responsibilities. Kurt Back (1972: 33) has argued, for example, that 'Encounter groups have become a respectable "lonely hearts club" for newcomers or those without roots in a community.'

Many 'graduates' of the *est* training undertake voluntary work for the movement and Adelaide Bry (1976: 76), a sympathetic commentator, describes how intimacy forms at least one reward of such continued participation:

> Working at *est* means instant friends, confidants, and people who sincerely are interested in one another . . . Someone would burst into tears and immediately find both a sympathetic ear and assistance in getting whatever the tears related to. The problems shared were intimate ones – a bad trip with parents, a lover, a boss. Nothing seemed too private, too embarrassing, too crazy to [have to] hide.

As the world-affirming movement does not reject the world and its organization, it will quite happily model itself upon those aspects of the world which are useful to the movement's purpose. The salvational commodity includes a set of ideas, skills and techniques which can be marketed like any other commodity since no sense of the sacred renders such marketing practice inappropriate (as it might, for example in, say, the idea of marketing the Mass, or Holy Communion). The logic of the market is wholly compatible with the ethos of such movements. Thus the salvational product will be tailored for mass-production, standardizing content, instructional method, and price, distributing it through a bureaucratic apparatus which establishes or leases agencies, just as in the distribution of Kentucky Fried Chicken or Ford motor cars. Scientology, for example, possesses a substantial bureaucratic structure

which invests a great deal in the collection of statistics, maintenance of records and the implementation of a considerable body of rules. Professional practitioners may operate as employees of the central organizations of the movement, as 'Field Auditors', i.e. relatively independent practitioners teaching and auditing the lower levels of Scientology, or they might establish 'franchises', expected to send a proportion of their receipts to the central organization in return for assistance, preferential discounts and other concessions (Wallis 1976: 127–56).

The Inner Peace Movement is organized on the model of the modern multinational corporation. Like Scientology, it possesses an elaborate fee structure, offering introductory courses as 'loss-leaders' at rates as low as $1.00 per hour, but moving up to as much as $600 for advanced courses. Like Scientology too, it employs modern methods of marketing:

> Besides soliciting business from those already committed, the group makes a major effort to recruit newcomers through newspaper, TV and radio promotions . . . This kind of hard-driving promotional push draws heavily from the corporate business model and systematizes the selling of spiritual growth. (Scott 1980: 38)

The methods of mass instruction employed in universities or mail-order colleges are drawn upon for pedagogic technique by world-affirming movements. The outlets are situated in large cities where the market exists, rather than reflecting an aspiration for a return to the rural idyll. And, as with the sale of any commercial service or commodity, the normal round of life of the customer is interfered with as little as possible. Courses of instruction or practice are offered at weekends or in the evenings, or during periods of vacation. *est* offers its basic training over two consecutive weekends, albeit at the rate of 15–16 hours for each of the four days. TM is transmitted on the basis of an initial lecture, a talk with the initiator explaining it in more detail, an initiation an practice session lasting perhaps a couple of hours, and brief checking sessions

thereafter, a total of probably no more than 12–15 hours. Encounter and other forms of human potential training are usually programmed to take place over a maximum of a fortnight at a time, in the evenings. Although clients may sometimes subtly be encouraged to engage in further participation, full-time involvement and complete commitment are not normally required. Membership is a leisure activity, one of the multiple role-differentiated pursuits of the urban dweller. His involvement will be partial and segmentary rather than total.

Such movements tend to employ quite normal, commercial means for generating income. Their followers are mostly in orthodox employment, and the movement simply sells them a service or commodity for an established price plus local taxes, sometimes even with facilities for time-payment or discounts for cash! Only for the staff of full-time professionals employed by the organization will life normally approximate to any degree the 'total institution' setting of the contemporary world-rejecting religions.

It is evident, then, that in the context of a Christian culture, the world-rejecting movement appears much more conventionally religious than the world-affirming movement. Christianity has tended to exhibit a tension between the church and the world, based in part on the institutional differentiation of Christianity from society, which leads us to expect religious institutions to be distinct in form. This differentiation is much less evident in Hindu and Buddhist culture, where, too, the more immanent conception of God, the idea of each individual as a 'divine spark', and that of the existence of hidden wisdom which will lead to salvation, are also familiar. Many of the world-affirming movements have been to some extent influenced by Hindu and Buddhist idealist philosophies. But they have also drawn substantially upon developments in modern science and psychology for their beliefs and practices – or at least for the rhetoric of their presentation – and, marketing a soteriological commodity in quite highly secularized surroundings, the tendency has been to emphasize the *scientific* character of

their ideas and techniques, and to suppress the more overtly religious aspects, although an attitude of pragmatism has informed their practice in this regard. Transcendental Meditation, for example, was first presented in the West in much more explicitly religious terms than it is today (see, for example, Mahesh Yogi 1962), the religious rhetoric being dropped largely on marketing grounds. Robert McCutchan (1977: 146) makes the observation that:

> Publications dating from the late fifties are overtly religious and spiritual . . . Other early publications such as *Love and God, Commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita, The Science of Being* and *Art of Living*, are overtly Hindu and religious. After about 1970, however, the movement focused entirely (at least in terms of its public face) on the scientific verification of psychological, physical, and social benefits of TM. None of the more recent publications even mentioned God, much less Hindu cosmology. Simply, one could say that the Hindu cosmology remained, but expressed in more 'sanitized' language. God became cosmic creative intelligence; *atman* became the pure field of creative intelligence within; *karma* became the law of action and reaction; *Brahman* became the ground state of physics.

Scott (1978: 217) presents evidence of the rationale behind this shift. He reports a conversation between Professor Robert Bellah and an official of the Maharishi International University in which the latter replied to Dr Bellah's inquiry concerning why TM denied its religious nature, by stating that this was for 'public relations reasons'. He also reports a public lecture by Charles Lutes, a leading figure in TM, in which Lutes declared: 'The popularization of the movement in non-spiritual terms was strictly for the purpose of gaining the attention of people who wouldn't have paid the movement much mind if it had been put in spiritual terms.' (See also Spiritual Counterfeits Project, 1976, for a report of the affidavit from which this evidence derives. See also Woodrum, 1977, for an analysis of the phases through which the TM movement has

passed.) TM has even unsuccessfully fought a legal action to defend itself from being declared a religion in New Jersey, since this would inhibit its presentation in public schools. Scientology, on the other hand, was made more explicitly religious when it seemed this would be a useful public-relations device in the face of government hostility an intervention (Wallis 1976; see also the case of Synanon discussed later).

The world-affirming movements could perhaps be conveniently called 'quasi-religious' in recognition of the fact that, although they pursue transcendental goals by largely metaphysical means, they lay little or no stress on the idea of God or transcendent spiritual entities, nor do they normally engage in worship (Soka Gakkai is an exception here, since for this movement worship at the sacred shrine of the *Gohonzon* is a very significant element of its practice). As Donald Stone notes, these movements tend to prefer the term 'spiritual' to 'religious' as a self-description. They straddle a vague boundary between religion and psychology, and which side they are held to fall upon will depend entirely on the nature of the definition of religion employed.

The World-Accommodating New Religion

The world-accommodating new religion draws a distinction between the spiritual and the worldly in a way quite uncharacteristic of the other two types. Religion is not construed as a primarily social matter; rather it provides solace or stimulation to personal, interior life. Although it may reinvigorate the individual for life in the world, it has relatively few implications for how that life should be lived, except that it should be lived in a more religiously inspired fashion. Any consequences for society will be largely unintended rather than designed. While it may strengthen the individual for secular affairs and heighten his enjoyment of life, these are not the justifications for its practice. The benefits it offers are not of the thorough-going instrumental variety to be found in world-affirming

movements. Michael Harper, a leader in Charismatic Renewal, has said that:

> Its main strength, and for many its attractiveness, lies in its spontaneity, and in the fact that it is so far comparatively unstructured. It is not basically a protest movement, but a positive affirmation of faith in God and His power to change people and institutions. It is a new style of Christian life. (Quoted in Quebedeaux 1976: 71)

Neo-Pentecostalism, or the Charismatic Renewal Movement, comprises a wide range of bodies, organizations and groups both within and beyond the major denominations (including the Catholic Church), which have flourished since the early 1960s. They typically consist of individuals who, although committed Christians before joining the Renewal Movement, felt something to be lacking in their spiritual loves, particularly an active *experience* of God's power working within them and within the church. Involvement in the Renewal Movement was often motivated by the desire for experience of the power of the Holy Spirit, the most obvious and characteristic sign of which was normally glossolalia, the 'gift of tongues'. It would also be accompanied by enthusiastic participation in worship – other religious activities of a less formally structured and more fully participatory kind than the normal religious services – which they would often also continue to attend, perhaps even more zealously than before. Fichter, speaking of the Catholic Pentecostal movement on the issue of its social consequences, argues that:

> The goal of the renewal movement is personal spiritual reform not organized social reform, but this does not imply the absence of social concern. The movement's basic conviction is that a better society can emerge only when people have become better, yet it would be completely erroneous to interpret this as an individualistic and self-centred attitude. (Fichter 1975: 144)

Nevertheless, while its beliefs and the benefits of practice are personalistically oriented, the form of practice in worship or ritual will characteristically be collective.

At a conscious level at least, the innovatory religious movement with a world-accommodating orientation will be seen not so much as a protest against the world or society, but as a protest against prevailing religious institutions, or their loss of vitality. These are seen to have abandoned a living spirituality, to have eschewed experience for an empty formalism. The new movement restores an experiential element to the spiritual life and thereby replaces lost certainties in a world where religious institutions have become increasingly relativized. The membership of such movements is drawn from the 'religiously musical' middle and 'respectable' working classes, firmly integrated into the prevailing social order, who are not entirely unhappy with it, but who seek none the less some experiential reassurance of their general spiritual values. Movements approximating this type are likely to draw their associational forms from traditional social models of churches or other religious voluntary associations. Religious activities will tend to be regular and frequent but none the less leisure-time commitments.

As I indicated earlier, all actual cases are likely to be mixed in some degree, but the Charismatic Renewal or Neo-Pentecostal Movement embodies this orientation to a significant extent. Meredith McGuire (1975), for example, argues of the former that:

> pentecostal Catholics can be considered a cognitive minority relative to the rest of American society in general because of their insistence on a religion which over-arches all spheres of everyday life. With the rest of society, hoverer, the pentecostal Catholics tend to accept most of the prevailing social and political system, but interpret it within their religious framework. Nevertheless, the pentecostal belief system, with its emphasis upon interior spiritual concerns, has an inherent bias toward accepting the status quo in 'worldly' affairs.

Fichter's survey of American Catholic Pentecostals showed them to be predominantly strongly attached to the church before

becoming charismatics and for the most part *even more* so afterwards. Eight out of ten affirmed the Pope to be the infallible Vicar of Christ (Fichter 1975: 25); 76 per cent reported that they attended mass, and 77 per cent that they received Holy Communion *more* than before joining the Charismatic Renewal (ibid.: 30). Fichter argues that the movement originated in the middle classes and that there has been a gradual spread down into the working classes. His sample showed the following distribution (ibid.: 49)

	%
Professional–Managerial	40.5
White collar	29.4
Blue collar	30.1

Bradfield (1975: 98) found 65 per cent of his sample of members of the Protestant Neo-Pentecostal Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship to be in professional–managerial occupations (on Catholic charismatics, see also Hammond 1975).

Such movements need not be of Christian origin. Subud, for example – a Muslim mystic movement introduced to the West by an Indonesian, Pak Subuh – seems to fit this category. A slightly greater admixture of world-rejection produces a group like the Aetherius Society (Wallis 1974). The Aetherius Society is a movement founded by a Londoner, George King, in the mid-1950s, on the basis of an eclectic synthesis of ideas drawing heavily upon the Theosophical tradition but modified to the degree that the Masters were now to be found not in the Himalayas, but in space craft. Members engage in rituals designed to transmit energies for the good of humanity, and undertake – at set times of the week and in special pilgrimages and ceremonials – a cosmic battle against the forces of evil. The rest of their time, they, by and large, conduct themselves conventionally as accountants, shopkeepers, housewives, and the like (Wallis 1974). This movement is world-rejecting to the extent that it advances a critique of contemporary greed and materialism which have led to violence and ecological despoliation, and mobilizes its efforts to produce social,

political and environmental changes, albeit by magical means. But the world is ameliorable. Its ills can be remedied if treated in time, and thus the followers of the Aetherius Society do not cut themselves off from the world around them. Their response to the world is one of accommodation, while they pursue their mission of striving to save it from its self-inflicted fate.

An interesting contrast is formed by the Western supporters of the Japanese movement, Soka Gakkai, called in America Nichiren Shoshu of America (NSA), and in Britain Nichiren Shoshu of the United Kingdom (NSUK). In this movement, transition to Western, particularly American, culture has led to substantial changes in style which render it an apparently stable combination of world-accommodating and world-affirming types. While its main message is one of individual self-improvement through the chanting of the movement's *mantra*, it began during the late 1960s to recruit larger numbers of American followers and to undergo considerable adaptation as a result. The early membership of the movement in the USA was among Japanese-Americans, many of whom were GI brides, and in some cases their converted husbands. Proselytization was predominantly among the Japanese community. During the late 1960s, the movement attracted a large number of Caucasian Americans, mostly single, under thirty, and often students or lower white-collar workers (Snow 1976: 133–4).

In the course of this revolution in its social composition, the movement sought self-consciously to accommodate to American society and to ingratiate itself with Americans. The Japanese-born president of the movement in America became a United States citizen, and changed his name to George Williams. Members are encouraged to dress in a respectable middle-class fashion. English is now used, rather than Japanese as formerly, at meetings. The American flag is prominently displayed in movement buildings. NSA participated actively in the American bicentennial celebrations. Thus, by every possible means, it seeks to foster 'the impression that its values, aims, and conduct are in conformity with, or

at least not incongruent with certain values, traditions, and normative standards within its community or society of operation' (Snow 1976: 190).

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CHAPTER FOUR

Cult Formation: Three Compatible Models

WILLIAM SIMS BAINBRIDGE AND RODNEY STARK

The origins of the great world faiths are shrouded by time, but cult formation remains available for close inspection. If we would understand how religions begin, it is the obscure and exotic world of cults that demands our attention. This essay attempts to synthesize the mass of ethnographic materials available on cult formation [arguing that] . . . three fundamental models of how novel religious ideas are generated and made social can be seen dimly . . .

The three models of cult formation, or religious innovation, are (a) *the psychopathology model*, (b) *the entrepreneur model*, and (c) *the subculture-evolution model*. While the first has been presented in some detail by other social scientists, the second and third have not previously been delineated as formal models.

Cult formation is a two-step process of innovation. First, new religious ideas must be *invented*. Second, *social acceptance* of these ideas must be gained, at least to the extent that a small group of people comes to accept them. Therefore, our first need is to explain how and why individuals invent or discover new religious ideas. It is important to recognize, however, that many (perhaps most) persons who hit upon new religious ideas do not found new religions. So long as only one person holds a religious idea, no true religion exists. Therefore, we also need to understand the process by which religious inventors are able

to make their views social – to convince other persons to share their convictions. We conceptualize successful cult innovation as a social process in which innovators both invent new religious ideas and transmit them to other persons in exchange for rewards.

Religions as Exchange Systems

Human action is governed by the pursuit of rewards and the avoidance of costs. Rewards, those things humans will expend costs to obtain, often can be gained only from other humans, so people are forced into exchange relations. However, many rewards are very scarce and can only be possessed by some, not all. Some rewards appear to be so scarce that they cannot be shown to exist at all. For example, people act as if eternal life were a reward of immense value. But there is no *empirical* evidence that such a reward can be gained at any price . . .

Faced with rewards that are very scarce, or not available at all, humans create and exchange compensators – sets of beliefs and prescriptions for action that substitute for the immediate achievement of the desired reward. Compensators postulate the attainment of the desired reward in the distant future or in some other unverifiable context. Compensators are treated by humans as if they were rewards. They have the character of IOUs, the value of

which must be taken on faith. Promises that the poor will be rich following the revolution or that the mortal will be immortal in another world are such compensators.

Just as rewards differ in the value accorded them by humans, so do compensators. Furthermore, compentsators vary in the extent to which they are specific (substituting for specific, limited rewards of moderate value) or general (substituting for a great number of highly desired rewards). A magical "cure" for headaches is a specific compensator, while Heaven is the most general compensator, promising an unlimited stream of future rewards to those humans fortunate or virtuous enough to be admitted. Relatively specific compensators are offered by many kinds of secular institutions, as well as by religion, while the most general compensators seem to require the supernatural agencies postulated by religious doctrines.

We define religions as social enterprises whose primary purpose is to create, maintain, and exchange supernaturally based general compensators (Stark and Bainbridge 1979). We thus eliminate from the definition many non-supernatural sources of compensators, such as political movements. We also exclude magic, which deals only in quite specific compensators and does not offer compensators on the grand scale of Heaven or of religious doctrines about the meaning of life (cf. Durkheim 1915).

We define cults as social enterprises primarily engaged in the production and exchange of novel and exotic compensators. Thus not all cults are religions. Some cults offer only magic, for example psychic healing of specific diseases, and do not offer such *general* compensators as eternal life. Magical cults frequently evolve toward more general compensators and become full-fledged religions. They then become true *cult movements*: social enterprises primarily engaged in the production and exchange of novel and exotic general compensators based on supernatural assumptions.

Often a cult is exotic and offers compensators that are unfamiliar to most people because it migrated from another, alien society. Here we are not interested in these *imported cults* but in those novel cult movements that are innovative alternatives to the traditional systems of religious compensators that are normal in the environment in which the cult originated.

Having briefly described our theoretical perspective and defined key concepts, we are now ready to understand the three models of cult innovation and to see their common propositions.

The Psychopathology Model of Cult Innovation

The *psychopathology model* has been used by many anthropologists and ethnopsychiatrists, and it is related closely to deprivation theories of revolutions and social movements (Smelser 1962; Gurr 1970). It describes cult innovation as the result of individual psychopathology that finds successful social expression. Because of its popularity among social scientists, this model exists in many variants, but the main ideas are the following.

1 Cluts are novel cultural responses to personal and societal crisis.
2 New cults are invented by individuals suffering from certain forms of mental illness.
3 These individuals typically achieve their novel visions during psychotic episodes.
4 During such an episode, the individual invents a new package of compensators to meet his own needs.
5 The individual's illness commits him to his new vision, either because his hallucinations appear to demonstrate its truth, or because his compelling needs demand immediate satisfaction.
6 After the episode, the individual will be most likely to succeed in forming a cult around his vision if the society contains many other persons suffering from problems similar to those originally faced by the cult founder, to whose solution, therefore, they are likely to respond.
7 Therefore, such cults most often succeed during times of societal crisis, when large numbers of persons suffer similar unresolved problems.

8 If the cult does succeed in attracting many followers, the individual founder may achieve at least a partial cure of his illness, because his self-generated compensators are legitimated by other persons, and because he now receives true rewards from his followers.

The psychopathology model is supported by the traditional psychoanalytic view that magic and religion are mere projections of neurotic wish-fulfillment or psychotic delusions (Freud 1927, 1930; Roheim 1955; La Barre 1969, 1972). However, the model does not assume that cultic ideas are necessarily wrong or insane. Rather, it addresses the question of how individuals can invent deviant perspectives and then have conviction in them, despite the lack of objective, confirmatory evidence.

All societies provide traditional compensator-systems which are familiar to all members of the society and which have considerable plausibility, both because their assumptions are familiar and because of the numbers of people already committed to them. Why, then, would some persons reject the conventional religious tradition, concoct apparently arbitrary substitutes, and put their trust in these novel formulations? The psychopathology model notes that highly neurotic or psychotic persons typically do just this, whether in a religious framework or not. By definition, the mentally ill are mentally deviant. Furthermore, especially in the case of psychotics, they mistake the products of their own minds for external realities. Thus their pathology provides them not only with abnormal ideas, but also with subjective evidence for the correctness of their ideas, whether in the form of hallucinations or in the form of pressing needs which cannot be denied.

A number of authors have identified occult behavior with specific psychiatric syndromes. Hysteria frequently has been blamed. Cult founders often do suffer from apparent physical illness, find a spiritual "cure" for their own ailment, then dramatize that cure as the basis of the cult performance (Messing 1958; Lévi-Strauss 1963; Lewis 1971). A well-known American example is Mary Baker Eddy, whose invention of Christian Science apparently was a successful personal response to a classic case of hysteria (Zweig 1932).

In other cases a manic-depressive pattern is found. John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Oneidia community, had an obsessive need to be "perfect," and in his more elevated periods was able to convince a few dozen people that he had indeed achieved perfection and that he could help them attain this happy state as well. But the times of elation were followed by "eternal spins," depressive states in which Noyes was immobilized by self-hatred (Carden 1969).

Clssical paranoia and paranoid schizophrenia also have been blamed for producing cults. A person who founds a cult asserts the arrogant claim that he (above all others) has achieved a miraculous cultural breakthrough, a claim that outsiders may perceive as a delusion of grandeur. For example, L. Ron Hubbard announced his invention of Dianetics (later to become Scientology) by saying that "the creation of dianetics is a milestone for Man comparable to his discovery of fire and superior to his inventions of the wheel and arch" (Hubbard 1950).

Martin Gardner has shown that the position of the cultist or pseudoscientist in his social environment is nearly identical to that of the clinical paranoid. Neither is accorded the high social status he demands from conventional authorities and is contemptuously ignored by societal leaders or harshly persecuted. Gardner notes that paranoia actually may be an advantage under these circumstances because without it the individual "would lack the stamina to fight a vigorous, single-handed battle against such overwhelming odds" (Gardner 1957).

Many biographies of cult founders contain information that would support any of these diagnoses, and often the syndrome appears to be a life pattern that antedated the foundation of the cult by a number of years. However, the symptoms of these disorders are so close to the features that *define* cult activity that simplistic psychopathology explanations approach tautology. Lemert (1967) has argued that social exclusion and conflict over social status can *produce* the symptoms of paranoia. It may be

that some cult founders display symptoms of mental illness as a *result* of societal rejection of their cults. Another problem faced by the psychopathology model is the fact that the vast majority of mental patients have not founded cults.

The simplest version of the model states that the founder's psychopathology had a physiological cause. Religious visions may appear during psychotic episodes induced by injury, drugs, and high fevers. If an episode takes place outside any medical setting, the individual may find a supernatural explanation of his experience most satisfactory (Sargant 1959). Innumerable examples exist. Love Israel, founder of a cult called The Love Family, told us that his religious vision was triggered by hallucinogenic drugs which enabled him to experience a state of fusion with another man who subsequently became a prominent follower. The stories of some persons who claim to have been contacted by flying saucers sound very much like brief episodes of brain disorder to which the individual has retrospectively given a more favorable interpretation (Greenberg 1979).

More subtle variants of the psychopathology model present psychodynamic explanations and place the process of cult formation in a social context. Julian Silverman (1967) outlined a five-step model describing the early career of a *shaman* (sorcerer, witch doctor, magical healer) or cult founder. In the first stage, the individual is beset by a serious personal and social problem, typically severely damaged self-esteem, that defies practical solution. In the second stage, the individual becomes preoccupied with his problem and withdraws from active social life. Some cultures even have formalized rituals of withdrawal in which the individual may leave the settlement and dwell temporarily in the wilderness. The Bible abounds in examples of withdrawal to the wilderness to prepare for a career as a prophet. This immediately leads to the third stage in which the individual experiences "self-initiated sensory deprivation," which can produce very extreme psychotic symptoms even in previously normal persons. Thus begins the fourth stage, in which the

future cult founder receives his supernatural vision. "What follows then is the eruption into the field of attention of a flood of archaic imagery and attendant lower-order referential processes such as occur in dreams or reverie . . . Ideas surge through with peculiar vividness as though from an outside source" (Silverman 1967: 28). In the fifth stage, *cognitive reorganization*, the individual attempts to share his vision with other people. If he fails, he lapses into chronic mental illness, but if he finds social support for his supernatural claims, he can become a successful shaman or cult leader. If his followers reward him sufficiently with honor, the originally damaged self-esteem that provoked the entire sequence will be repaired completely, and the cult founder may even become one of the best-adapted members of his social group.

The theory of revitalization movements proposed by Anthony F. C. Wallace (1956) is similar to Silverman's model but adds the important ingredient of social crisis. Wallace suggests that a variety of threats to a society can produce greatly increased stress on members: "climatic, floral and faunal change; military defeat; political subordination; extreme pressure toward acculturation resulting in internal cultural conflict; economic distress; epidemics; and so on" (Wallace 1956: 269). Under stress, some individuals begin to go through the process outlined by Silverman, and under favorable circumstances, they achieve valuable cultural reformulations which they can use as the basis of social action to revitalize their society. While Wallace advocates a pure form of the psychopathology model, he concludes "that the religious vision experience per se is not psychopathological but rather the reverse, being a synthesizing and often therapeutic process performed under extreme stress by individuals already sick" (Wallace 1956: 273).

The importance of the psychopathology model is underscored by Wallace's suggestion that many historically influential social movements, and perhaps *all major religions*, originated according to its principles. This view is held by Weston La Barre (1972) who says that every religion without exception originated as

a "crisis cult," using this term for cults that emerge according to the pattern described by Wallace. Among many examples, he specifically describes even Christianity as a typical crisis cult. Writing in an orthodox Freudian tradition, La Barre identifies the source of a cult founder's vision: "A god is only a shaman's dream about his father" (La Barre 1972: 19). He says the shaman is an immature man who desperately needs compensation for his inadequacies, including sexual incapacity, and in finding magical compensations for himself, he generates compensators for use by more normal persons as well (La Barre 1972: 138).

Claude Lévi-Strauss, an exchange theorist as well as a structuralist, emphasizes that the shaman participates in an economy of meaning. Normal persons want many kinds of rewards they cannot obtain and can be convinced to accept compensators generated by fellow citizens less tied to reality than they. "In a universe which it strives to understand but whose dynamics it cannot fully control, normal thought continually seeks the meaning of things which refuse to reveal their significance. So-called pathological thought, on the other hand, overflows with emotional interpretations and overtones, in order to supplement an otherwise deficient really" (Lévi-Strauss 1963: 175). In shamanism, the neurotic producer of compensators and the suffering normal consumer come together in an exchange beneficial to both, participating in the exchange of compensators for tangible rewards that is the basis of all cults.

The Entrepreneur Model of Cult Innovation

The *entrepreneur model* of cult innovation has not received as much attention from social scientists as the *psychopathology model*. We have known for decades that the psychopathology model could not explain adequately all cultic phenomena (Ackerknecht 1943), but attempts to construct alternate models have been desultory. Of course, it is difficult to prove that any given cult founder was psychologically

normal, but in many cases even rather lengthy biographies fail to reveal significant evidence of pathology. While the psychopathology model focuses on cult founders who invent new compensator-systems initially for their own use, the entrepreneur model notes that cult founders often may *consciously develop new compensator-systems in order to exchange them for great rewards.* Innovation pays off in many other areas of culture, such as technological invention and artistic creativity. If social circumstances provide opportunities for profit in the field of cults, then many perfectly normal individuals will be attracted to the challenge.

Models of entrepreneurship have been proposed to explain many other kinds of human activity, but we have not found adequate social-scientific models specifically designed to explain cult innovation. Journalists have documented that such a model would apply well to many cases, and our own observations in several cults amply confirm that conclusion. Therefore, we shall sketch the beginnings of an entrepreneur model, with the understanding that much future work will be required before this analytic approach is fully developed. The chief ideas of such a model might be the following.

1 Cults are businesses which provide a product for their customers and receive payment in return.
2 Cults are mainly in the business of selling novel compensators, or at least freshly packaged compensators that appear new.
3 Therefore, a supply of novel compensators must be manufactured.
4 Both manufacture and sales are accomplished by entrepreneurs.
5 These entrepreneurs, like those in other businesses, are motivated by the desire for profit, which they can gain by exchanging compensators for rewards.
6 Motivation to enter the cult business is stimulated by the perception that such business can be profitable, an impression likely to be acquired through prior involvement with a successful cult.
7 Successful entrepreneurs require skills and experience, which are most easily

gained through a prior career as the employee of an earlier successful cult.

8 The manufacture of salable new compensators (or compensator-packages) is most easily accomplished by assembling components of pre-existing compensator-systems into new configurations, or by the further development of successful compensator-systems.

9 Therefore, cults tend to cluster in lineages. They are linked by individual entrepreneurs who begin their careers in one cult and then leave to found their own. They bear strong "family resemblances" because they share many cultural features.

10 Ideas for completely new compensators can come from any cultural source or personal experience whatsoever, but the skillful entrepreneur experiments carefully in the development of new products and incorporates them permanently in his cult only if the market response is favorable.

Cults can in fact be very successful businesses. The secrecy that surrounds many of these organizations prevents us from reporting current financial statistics, but a few figures have been revealed. Arthur L. Bell's cult, Mankind United, received contributions totalling four million dollars in the ten years preceeding 1944 (Dohrman 1958: 41). In the four years 1965–1959, the Washington, DC, branch of Scientology took in $758,982 and gave its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, $100,000 plus the use of a home and car (Cooper 1971: 109). Today Scientology has many flourishing branches, and Hubbard lives on his own 320-foot ship. In 1973 a small cult we have called The Power was grossing $100,000 a month, four thousand of this going directly to the husband and wife team who ran the operation from their comfortable Westchester County estate (Bainbridge 1978). In addition to obvious material benefits, successful cult founders also receive intangible but valuable rewards, including praise, power, and amusement. Many cult leaders have enjoyed almost unlimited sexual access to attractive followers (Orrmont 1961; Carden 1969).

The simplest variant of the entrepreneur model, and the one preferred by journalists, holds that cult innovators are outright frauds who have no faith in their own product and sell it through trickery to fools and desperate persons. We have many examples of cults that were pure confidence games, and we shall mention examples of fraud in three kinds of cult: audience cults, client cults, and cult movements.

Audience cults offer very specific and weak compensators, often no more than a mild, vicarious thrill or entertainment, and they lack both long-term clients and formal membership. *Client cults* offer valued but relatively specific compensators, frequently alleged cures for particular diseases and emotional problems, and they may possess a relatively stable clientele without counting them as full members of the organization. *Cult movements* deal in a much more elaborate package of compensators, including the most general compensators based on supernatural assumptions, and they possess committed membership. In terms of their compensators, these three levels of cults can be described conveniently in traditional language: audience cults provide *mythology*; client cults add serious *magic*; cult movements give complete *religion*.

In 1973, Israeli prestidigitator Uri Geller barnstormed the United States presenting himself as a psychic who could read minds and bend spoons by sheer force of will. As James Randi (1975) has shown, Geller's feats were achieved through trickery, and yet untold thousands of people were fascinated by the possibility that Geller might have real psychic powers. The whole affair was a grand but short-lived audience cult.

Medical client cults based on intentional fraud are quite common. A number of con artists not only have discovered that they can use the religious label to appeal to certain kinds of gullible marks, but also have learned that the label provides a measure of protection against legal prosecution (Glick and Newsom 1974). In many of these cases it may be impossible to prove whether the cult founder was sincere or not, and we can only assume that many undetected frauds lurk behind a variety

of client cults. In some cases the trickery is so blatant that we can have little doubt. Among the most recent examples are the Philippine psychic surgeons Terte and Agpaoa, and their Brasilian colleague, Arigo. These men perform fake surgery with their bare hands or brandishing crude jackknives. In some cases they may actually pierce the patient's skin, but often they merely pretend to do so and then spread animal gore about to simulate the results of deep cutting. Through a skillful performance they convince their patients not only that dangerous tumors have been removed from their bodies, but also that the surgeon's psychic powers have instantaneously healed the wound. But their failure actually to perform real operations in this manner must be clear to the psychic surgeons themselves (Flammonde 1975).

Arthur L. Bell's cult movement was a fraud based on the traditional Rosicrucian idea that a vast benevolent conspiracy prepares to rule the world and invites a few ordinary people to join its elite ranks. Bell claimed only to be the Superintendent of the Pacific Coast Division, in constant communication with his superiors in the (fictitious) organizational hierarchy. In this way he was able to convince his followers that they were members of an immensely powerful secret society, despite the fact that the portion of it they could see was modest in size. Like several similar fraudulent movements, Bell's cult did not originally claim religious status, but only became a "church" after encountering legal difficulty (Dohrman 1958).

In order to grow, a cult movement must serve real religious functions for its committed followers, regardless of the private intentions of the founder. Many older cults probably were frauds in origin, but have been transformed into genuine religious organizations by followers who deeply believed the founder's deceptions.

But fraud need not be involved in entrepreneurial cult innovation. Many ordinary businessmen are convinced of the value of their products by the fact that customers want to buy them, and cult entrepreneurs may likewise accept their market as the ultimate standard of value. Many cult founders do appear to be convinced by testimonials from satisfied customers that their compensator-packages are valuable. This was probably the case with Franz Anton Mesmer, who saw astonishing transformations in his clients, apparently the beneficial results of his techniques, and who found in them ample evidence of the truth of his theories (Zweig 1932; Darnton 1970). Practitioners of all client cults frequently see similar evidence in favor of their own ideas, no matter how illogical, because all such cults provide compensators of at least some strength (Frank 1963).

Another source of confidence for the cult innovator is his experience with other cults. Early in their careers, innovators typically join one or more successful cults, and honestly may value the cults' products themselves. However, the innovator may be dissatisfied with the older cults and come to the sincere opinion that he can create a more satisfactory product. Despite their often intense competition, cult leaders frequently express respect and admiration for other cults, including the ones with which they themselves were previously associated. For example, L. Ron Hubbard of Scientology has praised Alfred Korzybski's General Semantics, and Jack Horner of Dianology has praised Hubbard's Scientology.

Once we realize that cult formation often involves entrepreneurial action to establish a profitable new organization based on novel culture, we can see that concepts developed to understand technological innovation should apply here as well. For example, a study of entrepreneurship and technology by Edward B. Roberts (1969) examined the cultural impact of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the preeminent center of new technological culture. Over 200 new high-technology companies had been founded by former MIT employees who concluded they could achieve greater personal rewards by establishing their own businesses based on what they had learned at MIT. The current cult equivalent of MIT is Scientology, studied by one of us in 1970. Cultic entrepreneurs have left Scientology to found countless

other cults based on modified Scientology ideas, including Jack Horner's Dianology, H. Charles Berner's Abilitism, Harold Thompson's Amprinistics, and the flying saucer cult described in the ethnography *When Prophecy Fails* (Festinger et al., 1956). Scientology, like MIT, is a vast storehouse of exotic culture derived from many sources. Social scientists studying patterns of cultural development should be aware that an occasional key organization can be an influential nexus of innovation and diffusion.

Future research can determine the most common processes through which entrepreneurial cult founders actually invent their novel ideas. We suspect the main techniques involve the cultural equivalent of recombinant DNA genetic engineering. Essentially, the innovator takes the cultural configuration of an existing cult, removes some components, and replaces them with other components taken from other sources. Often, the innovator may simply splice pieces of two earlier cults together. In some cases, the innovator preserves the supporting skeleton of practices and basic assumptions of a cult he admires, and merely grafts on new symbolic flesh. Rosicrucianism affords a sequence of many connected examples (McIntosh 1972; King 1970). In creating the AMORC Rosicrucian order, H. Spencer Lewis took European Rosicrucian principles of the turn of the century, including the hierarchical social structure of an initiatory secret society, and grafted on a veneer of symbolism taken from Ancient Egypt, thus capitalizing on public enthusiasm for Egyptian civilization current at that time. His headquarters in San José, California, is a city block of simulated Egyptian buildings. Later, Rose Dawn imitated Lewis in creating her rival Order of the Ancient Mayans. In great measure, she simply replaced AMORC's symbols with equivalent symbols. Instead of Lewis's green biweekly mail-order lessons emblazoned with Egyptian architecture and Egyptian hieroglyphics, she sold red biweekly mail-order lessons decorated with Mayan architecture and Mayan hieroglyphics.

The highly successful *est* cult is derived partly from Scientology and well illustrates the commercialism of many such organizations in contemporary America. Werner Erhard, founder of *est*, had some experience with Scientology in 1969. Later, he worked for a while in Mind Dynamics, itself an offshoot of José Silva's Mind Control. After Erhard started his own cult in 1971, he decided to emulate Scientology's tremendous success and hired two Scientologists to adapt its practices for his own use. We should note that conventional businesses, such as auto companies and television networks, often imitate each other in pursuit of profit. Erhard's research and development efforts were rewarded, and by the beginning of 1976, an estimated seventy thousand persons had completed his $250 initial seminar (Kornbluth 1976).

We suggest that cult entrepreneurs will imitate those features of other successful cults which seem to them most responsible for success. They will innovate either in nonessential areas or in areas where they believe they can increase the salability of the product. In establishing their own cult businesses they must innovate at least superficially. They cannot seize a significant part of the market unless they achieve product differentiation. Otherwise they will be at a great disadvantage in direct competition with the older, more prosperous cult on which theirs is patterned. The apparent novelty of a cult's compensator-package may be a sales advantage when the public has not yet discovered the limitations of the rewards that members actually will receive in the new cult and when older compensator-packages have been discredited to some extent. Much research and theory-building remains to be done, but the insight that cults often are examples of skillful free enterprise immediately explains many of the features of the competitive world of cults.

The Subculture-Evolution Model of Cult Innovation

While the *psychopathology* and *entrepreneur* models stress the role of the individual innovator, the *subculture-evolution model* emphasizes group interaction processes. It suggests

that cults can emerge without authoritative leaders, and it points out that even radical cultural developments can be achieved through many small steps. Although much social-psychological literature would be useful in developing this model, we are not aware of a comprehensive statement on cult innovation through subcultural evolution, so again we will attempt to outline the model ourselves.

1   Cults are the expression of novel social systems, usually small in size but composed of at least a few intimately interacting individuals.
2   These cultic social systems are most likely to emerge in populations already deeply involved in the occult milieu, but cult evolution may also begin in entirely secular settings.
3   Cults are the result of sidetracked or failed collective attempts to obtain scarce or nonexistent rewards.
4   The evolution begins when a group of persons commits itself to the attainment of certain rewards.
5   In working together to obtain these rewards, members begin exchanging other rewards as well, such as affect.
6   As they progressively come to experience failure in achieving their original goals, they will gradually generate and exchange compensators as well.
7   If the intragroup exchange of rewards and compensators becomes sufficiently intense, the group will become relatively encapsulated, in the extreme case undergoing complete social implosion.
8   Once separated to some degree from external control, the evolving cult develops and consolidates a novel culture, energized by the need to facilitate the exchange of rewards and compensators, and inspired by essentially accidental factors.
9   The end point of successful cult evolution is a novel religious culture embodied in a distinct social group which must now cope with the problem of extracting resources (including new members) from the surrounding environment.

In writing about juvenile delinquency, Albert K. Cohen (1955) described the process of *mutual conversion* through which interacting individuals could gradually create a deviant normative structure. This process may result in criminal behavior, but it may also result in the stimulation of unrealizable hopes and of faith in the promise of impossible rewards. Thus, *mutual conversion* can describe the social process through which people progressively commit each other to a package of compensators which they simultaneously assemble. It begins when people with similar needs and desires meet and begin communicating about their mutual problems. It takes place in tiny, even imperceptible exploratory steps, as one individual expresses a hope or a plan and receives positive feedback in the form of similar hopes and plans from his fellows. "The final product . . . is likely to be a compromise formation of all the participants to what we may call a cultural process, a formation perhaps unanticipated by any of them. Each actor may contribute something directly to the growing product, but he may also contribute indirectly by encouraging others to advance, inducing them to retreat, and suggesting new avenues to be explored. The product cannot be ascribed to any one of the participants; it is a real 'emergent' on a group level" (Cohen 1955: 60.)

Cohen says all human action "is an ongoing series of efforts to solve problems" (1955: 50). All human beings face the problem of coping with frustration because some highly desired rewards, such as everlasting life, do not exist in this world. Through mutual conversion, individuals band together to solve one or more shared problems, and the outcome presumably depends on a number of factors, including the nature of the problems and the group's initial conceptualization of them. We suspect a cultic solution is most likely if the people begin by attempting to improve themselves (as in psychotherapy) or to improve their relationship to the natural world, and then fail in their efforts. Criminal or political outcomes are more likely if people believe that other persons or social conditions are responsible for their problems.

The quest for unavailable rewards is not reserved for poor and downtrodden folk alone. Many elite social movements have been dedicated to the attainment of goals that ultimately proved unattainable. One well-documented example is The Committee for the Future, an institutionally detached little organization that formed within the network of technological social movements oriented toward spaceflight. Founded in 1970 by a wealthy couple, the CFF was dedicated to the immediate colonization of the moon and planets and to beginning a new age in which the field of man's activity would be the entire universe. The biggest effort of the CFF, Project Harvest Moon, was intended to establish the first demonstration colony on the moon, planted using a surplus Saturn V launch vehicle. Ultimately, high cost and questionable feasibility prevented any practical accomplishments. In struggling to arouse public support, the CFF held a series of open conventions at which participants collectively developed grand schemes for a better world. Blocked from any success in this direction, the CFF evolved toward cultism. The convention seminars became encounter groups. Mysticism and parapsychology replaced spaceflight as the topic of conversation. Rituals of psychic fusion were enacted to religious music, and the previously friendly aerospace companies and agencies broke off with the Committee. Denied success in its original purposes, and unfettered by strong ties to conventional institutions, the CFF turned ever more strongly toward compensators and toward the supernatural (Bainbridge 1976).

Cults are particularly likely to emerge wherever numbers of people seek help for intractable personal problems. The broad fields of psychotherapy, rehabilitation, and personal development have been especially fertile for cults. A number of psychotherapy services have evolved into cult movements, including those created by some of Freud's immediate followers (Rieff 1968). Other independent human service organizations may also be susceptible to cultic evolution. The best-known residential program designed to treat drug addiction, Synanon, has recently evolved into an authoritarian cult movement that recruits persons who never suffered from drug problems.

Two important factors render cultic evolution more likely. First, the process will progress most easily if there are no binding external constraints. For example, psychiatrists and psychologists who work in institutional settings (such as hospitals or universities) may be prevented by their conventional commitments from participating in the evolution of a cult, while independent practitioners are more free. Second, the process will be facilitated if the therapist *receives* compensators as well as gives them and thus participates fully in the inflation and proliferation of compensators.

A good example is The Power, founded in London in 1963, which began as an independent psychotherapy service designed to help normal individuals achieve super-normal levels of functioning. The therapy was based on Alfred Adler's theory that each human being is impelled by subconscious *goals*, and it attempted to bring these goals to consciousness so the person could pursue them more effectively and escape inner conflict. The founders of The Power received the therapy as well as gave it, and frequent group sessions brought all participants together to serve each other's emotional needs. The Power recruited clients through the founders' pre-existing friendship network, and the therapy sessions greatly intensified the strength and intimacy of their social bonds.

As bonds strengthened, the social network became more thoroughly interconnected as previously distant persons were brought together. The rudiments of a group culture evolved, and many individuals contributed ideas about how the therapy might be improved and expanded. Participants came to feel that only other participants understood them completely, and found communication with outsiders progressively more difficult. A *social implosion* took place.

In a social implosion, part of an extended social network collapses as social ties within it strengthen and, reciprocally, those to persons outside it weaken. It is a step-by-step process. Social implosions may be set off by more than

one circumstance. In the case of The Power, the implosion was initiated by the introduction of a new element of culture, a "therapy" technique that increased the intimacy of relations around a point in the network. Correlated with the implosion was a mutual conversion as members encouraged each other to express their deepest fantasies and to believe they could be fulfilled. The Adlerian analysis of subconscious goals was ideally designed to arouse longings and hopes for all the unobtained and unobtainable rewards the participants had ever privately wished to receive. The powerful affect and social involvement produced by the implosion were tangible rewards that convinced participants that the other rewards soon would be achieved. Concomitant estrangement from outside attachments led The Power to escape London to the isolation of a ruined seaside Yucatan plantation. Remote from the restraining influence of conventional society, The Power completed its evolution from psychotherapy to religion by inventing supernatural doctrines to explain how its impossible, absolute goals might ultimately be achieved. When the new cult returned to civilization in 1967, it became legally incorporated as a church (Bainbridge 1978).

Since non-religious groups can evolve into religious cults, it is not surprising that cults also can arise from religious sects – extreme religious groups that accept the standard religious tradition of the society, unlike cults that are revolutionary breaks with the culture of past churches. An infamous example is The People's Temple of Jim Jones that destroyed itself in the jungles of Guyana. This group began as an emotionally extreme but culturally traditional Christian sect, then evolved into a cult as Jones progressively became a prophet with an ever more radical vision. Of course, either the psychopathology or entrepreneur models may apply in this case. But the committed members of the sect probably contributed to the transformation by encouraging Jones step-by-step, and by demanding of him the accomplishment of impossible goals. Even when a single individual dominates a group, the subculture-evolution model will apply to

the extent that the followers also participate in pushing the group toward cultism. In this case, the needs of the followers and their social relationships with the leader may have served as a *psychopathology amplifier*, reflecting back to Jones his own narcissism multiplied by the strength of their unreasonable hopes.

Conclusion

Each of the three models identifies a system of production and exchange of compensators. In the *psychopathology model*, a cult founder creates compensators initially for his own use, then gives them to followers in return for rewards. In the *entrepreneur model*, the cult founder sets out to gain rewards by manufacturing compensators intended for sale to followers. The *subculture-evolution model* describes the interplay of many individual actions in which various individuals at different times play the roles of producer and consumer of novel compensators.

While the models may appear to compete, in fact they complement each other and can be combined to explain the emergence of particular cults. After a cult founder has escaped a period of psychopathology, he may act as an entrepreneur in promoting or improving his cult. An entrepreneur threatened with loss of his cult may be driven into an episode of psychopathology that provides new visions that contribute to a new success. The subculture-evolution model may include many little episodes of psychopathology and entrepreneurial enterprise participated in by various members, woven together by a complex network of social exchanges . . .

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