CULTS

In this paper on cults, I have purposely omitted any mention of the Peoples Temple and the Rev. Jim Jones and the horrendous happenings in Jonestown last November. I felt we all were only too familiar with all the details and I found in my readings on the various cults that the Peoples Temple was very similar in so many ways to the cults I will tell about today.

Probably most of us have had the experience at a big city airport of having a couple of young people, usually attractive and personable, try to pin a flower in our lapel or press it into our hands and ask for a donation in return. Whether the young people are Moonies or from some other cult we aren't too sure because they move fast and once they have cornered us and hopefully intimidated us into making a contribution they are off to the next unsuspecting traveler.

There are literally hundreds of cults existing in the United States today - some very obscure and having a very limited membership to the huge international ones like the Moonies or the Hare Krishnas.

Cults are unorthodox religious groups with definite religious beliefs led by resident messiahs or gurus that are in no way part of the mainstream of American christianity or Judaism.

A cult has a living leader and he enjoys absolute authority over the members. He often lives in a grand, luxurious style while the members live in near poverty.

A cult promises a system in which a convert may work to save the world and humanity but actually sponsors no community improvement programs.
The daily work of nearly all cult members is demeaning and uses none of their potential in terms of education or training.

To be a cult member a person must cut himself off from his family, job, friends and education.

Methods of ego-destruction and thought control are part of a religious cult's recruiting and indoctrination practices.

Cult rituals are psychologically unwholesome and can be dangerous if they involve drugs.

Rabbi Maurice Davis of the Westchester Jewish Community Center in White Plains was one of the first clergymen in the United States to encourage a concerted effort against the new religious cults because he believes they rob young people of their individuality and freedom. His profile of a cult member is as follows:

Upper middle class, white, a boy or girl 18-25, someone with a great hunger for peer approval. Someone who isn't comfortable in a permissive society, someone who needs a strong father figure - someone for whom the world is a little too big such as a college freshman away from home for the first time or a senior in college or the kid about to enter a profession he never really wanted. Someone who has had an unhappy love affair, someone who is finding himself. The cult member is someone who has a lot of goodness in him, who'd like to see a better world, who yearns for the time when he was a Boy Scout - that's the kid.

Many of the cults have had their origin in California and one of the more prominent and distressing cults was called the "Children of God". This cult marked the debut of Ted Patrick as a deprogrammer, a new profession in which both parents and deprogrammer feel justified in breaking laws to right the wrong
they feel has been done. Mr. Patrick has received nationwide publicity as the man who literally kidnaps a young person from a cult and returns him to his parents after first deprogramming him so I'll start with him and how he became involved in this particular work.

In the summer of 1971 in California, Ted Patrick was Gov. Ronald Reagan's Special Representative for Community Relations in San Diego and Imperial Counties in Southern California. In this capacity he tried to provide services in general for a very far-reaching constituency for every class, every race, every walk of life. When cult troubles began to surface it was only natural for frightened and distraught parents to come to him seeking help. Mr. Patrick had not had any knowledge of the various cults operating in California. His first introduction was when his 13 year old son came home with some literature that had been handed to him on the beach in San Diego. Several days after that a woman came into Mr. Patrick's office to file a complaint about the disappearance of her son. He had disappeared on the evening of July 4 from Mission Beach and was last seen with a group of young people who were carrying bibles and guitars. The police had been notified but decided the young man - he was 19 - was a runaway and they couldn't do anything about runaways. The FBI told the family to call the police so it was a vicious circle with no agency willing to help. Five days after the young man disappeared the family received a call from their son. He was calling from a commune belong to the Children of God. "I am not coming home," he said, "because my problem is in my home - you and Dad are living in sin and I have found my new family, a real spiritual family." Then someone describing himself as an Elder came on the phone and said - "we are a Christian family
called the COG. Your son is 19 years old, he is here of his own free will and there is nothing you can do about it. He has found God, is serving the Lord and is free from Satan once and for all."

Mr. Patrick tried to hunt this group down but all the law enforcement agencies knew nothing about them. He knew the group had a commune, that they printed pamphlets, that they accosted youngsters on the street but it wasn’t until he called the local Crisis Center that he had a lead. The Center reported that several families had been in touch with them because their children were missing and by pursuing this lead Mr. Patrick met with families whose children had followed the COG group. The complaints about this group fell within the realm of Mr. Patrick’s duties and he decided that he would find out for himself about the operation of this group. He made up his mind to join the cult.

He joined the crowds of people on the beach the next weekend and wandered over to a group of four young men, neatly dressed wearing coats and ties who were talking to a couple of young people. At their question - "don't you want to serve the Lord?" Mr. Patrick assured them he did and he was led over to a bus marked in big letter COG. When he got on the bus he found perhaps 25 to 30 people, mostly young boys and girls between the ages of 16 to 25 but with a sprinkling of older people. Mr. Patrick, who was 41 years old at the time, was the only black.

The bus took off for Santee, a suburb of San Diego, where the same cult owned a home on 4 acres of land. There were 5 huge army tents on the property and on one side of the house was
a field filled with automobiles, buses, motorcycles and jeeps. These had all been contributed to the cult by converts and were being sold to dealers as quickly as possible. Mr. Patrick estimated the cost of these vehicles at $50,000 and figured if only half the converts contributed cars and the converts averaged 100 each weekend (a very conservative estimate as it turned out) then the cult was taking in $200,000 a month just from the sale of the donated vehicles. One of the army tents was stocked like an electronic store with TV sets, stereos, cameras, speaker systems. This second-hand retail operation made it seem as though religion was very secondary. Turning a fast buck came first.

The house was largely empty - the walls filled with quotations from the scriptures and pictures of Fred Jordan and David Berg, the organizers of the COG. Berg was a former Baptist minister and Jordan head of a religious enterprise that produced a weekly TV show in California.

For the founders of the COG, religion was not the issue. Psychological kidnapping was - brainwashing, white slavery, prostitution, fraud, false advertising and alienation of affection - turning the young people off completely from their families. The cultist is urged to become a revolutionary, to destroy the institutions of society in the name of David Berg or some other phony god. The cult's aim is discord, division, hatred and grief.

For the new converts, the brainwashing began immediately. Forms had to be filled out listing one's assets - do you own a home, a car, how much money do you have in the bank, do you
own any furniture, etc. They were told by the Elders that parents are the enemy that everything must be given to God. You would think that all this concern over a prospective convert's financial situation would alert him but the indoctrination is cleverly orchestrated - while you are being asked about your financial status you are listening to a very loud tape recording of Bible verses, being pleaded with by another member to pray and praise the Lord and being hugged by yet another member who tells you that he loves you, brother. It is all very confusing and for one tired and hungry and bewildered it is a mental blitzing and you soon really don't know what you are saying or doing.

The converts are not left alone for a minute, not allowed to sleep and it is constant repetition of Bible verses distorted to the cult's benefit. The food is meager - small portions of oatmeal mixed with powdered milk and water - served with constant denunciations of the world society. Mr. Patrick says you get frantic for silence and then your senses begin to get numb and your conscious mind stops functioning out of weariness and that is when the programming really begins to become effective. When a convert is allowed to sleep it is only for a few hours with the tape recorders playing constantly at high pitch.

After two days Mr. Patrick told the elders that he wanted to go home to get his car and stereo and all the money he had in the bank because "he wanted to serve the Lord 100 percent." The cultists always travel in groups less to prevent anyone from escaping - because after a couple of days they are so brain-washed they actually like what they are doing and can no longer
distinguish between life in the commune and life in the real world - than to discourage an accidental meeting with a friend or relative who might try to physically abduct the convert. They drove Mr. Patrick into San Diego and when they got to the bus station he said he thought he had better call ahead to make sure no one was at home and so he walked in one door of the bus station and kept right on walking out the back door.

He tried everything to impress on the authorities the dangers of the COG cult but no one was very interested. There was some helpful publicity but freedom of religion is an issue politicians just don't want to touch.

As a result of his experience at Santee, the number of parents pleading with him to help them rescue their children from the cult, and the seemingly indifferent attitude of the government in the face of the grief and torment these parents were going through, Ted Patrick gave up his job and went into the business of rescueing and deprogramming the young people whose parents came to him for help. At that time and for the first few years he did not charge for his services - only travel and living expenses while on the job. Now, because he has a large family to support and expenses are so high, he does charge a fee - $1,500 to deprogram a young person and higher if circumstances warrant it.

A word about deprogramming - it is talk, a lot of talk. The person being deprogrammed is with his family, and he is fed well. Limiting his sleep is basic in deprogramming - he gets as much sleep as he did in the cult but that's very little. Almost all cults use fatigue as a strategic weapon and the person, being constantly brainwashed. In cult indoctrination everything possible is done to prevent the person from thinking.
In deprogramming, the aim is to do everything possible to start the person thinking for himself. Deprogramming usually lasts only two to three days, sometimes shorter, maybe longer. Once a person is deprogrammed he is free to do whatever he wishes - go to school, go to work, whatever. Ted Patrick says "All I want and all I do is to return to them their ability to think for themselves, to exercise their free will which the cults have put into cold storage. I thaw them out and once they are free of the cult, with few exceptions, they begin again to lead productive lives."

The usual procedure once a young person has been "snatched"- which means taken forcibly from the cult, and the snatching can't take any more than 30 seconds or too many people who might notify the police are alerted - is to take him to a rented room, not his parent's home. Sometimes persons sympathetic with what Mr. Patrick has tried to do will loan their home for the deprogramming. All windows in the room or home are nailed shut, the lock is removed from the bathroom door, the mouthpiece from the phone. Legally it is vital to have the parent[s] present and it is important psychologically because the victim has constant pressure on him just by the parents' presence, the parents tears and arguments and expressions of love and help. Also present are former cult members who know in advance all the victim's arguments and responses and can counter them effectively. If, for instance, a daughter is being deprogrammed, typical sleeping arrangements would be for the mother to sleep with the daughter in one bed in the bedroom, the father in the other with his bed pulled over so that it blocks the door, and the helpers asleep on the floor right outside the bedroom door.
The cult has brainwashed the convert into renouncing his parents who, the cult says, are followers of Satan and evil. The person doing the deprogramming stresses how unnatural this is - that the Bible says we should honor our father and mother. The convert will usually reply that this means honor your spiritual mother and father and shun your real parents and have nothing to do with them. The cults take certain selected verses from the Bible out of context and distort their meaning and constantly, thru the cultists themselves and thru tapes which are played all the time, pound that message into the new convert. Deprogramming can be very difficult - the young person can become very violent and destructive or he can just sit for hours staring at the deprogrammer without saying a word. It takes great patience and skill to do the work that Mr. Patrick does but it is very rewarding when the young person sees the light and wants to rejoin his family and make a new and better start in life.

Most of the Children of God are in Europe now, including their founder, David Berg. They began fleeing the United States in 1973 arguing that the comet Kohoutek was heralding the destruction of the United States. Actually they didn't leave for that reason but rather because of the impact of the Charity Frauds Bureau report to the New York State's attorney general, Louis Lefkowitz, which they knew would discredit their operation once and for all. This report was a direct result of Ted Patrick's all-out war on cults. Under the heading of mind manipulation, the Charity Frauds Bureau report stated:
"The COG engages in a particularly reprehensible course of conduct by tampering with the personalities of converts. They proceed in a calculated, systematic manner, albeit without even the informal consent of the victims, to change established behavior patterns. By manipulation and constant monitoring of thought processes, by making younger members uncomfortable and exposed to psychological cruelties such as bodily deprivation of all sorts and forced memorization of biblical passages, a total assault on the psyche is accomplished. Brainwashing techniques are deliberately employed under the rationalization that it is in the service of a good cause."

Another cult of interest was called the New Testament Missionary fellowship. It was founded by Hannah Lowe who had been an evangelical missionary in South America for forty years. She was an elderly woman who organized a sect operating out of New York City which preyed upon exceptionally intelligent Ivy League students. As an example, all incoming freshmen at Yale in 1973 received a copy in the mail of a newspaper called the "Yale Standard". It was put out by Hannah Lowe and professed to tell the religious history of Yale and suggesting that, as Christians away from home, they might be interested in the New Testament Missionary Fellowship and find it a haven among friends whose spiritual personalities had something in common with theirs.

The whole process of involvement and entrapment was much slower than that of the Children of God and the membership was very limited. It was highly sophisticated and subtle. An interested student was gradually isolated from the rest of the student body as a result of very frequent Bible study sessions
and prayer meetings. Then gradually the student was turned against his family and that made him feel guilty so he turned to the group even more. The prayer sessions would increase in intensity as time went by - up to 4 to 5 hour sessions were common and the converts were left mentally and physically exhausted. Then the leaders would indoctrinate them when their resistance was broken and condemn the university, their families and the institutions of government, all of which they were told were of Satan. Members of the fellowship (and this included members from the other Ivy League schools) met weekly at Hannah Lowe’s apartment in New York city. She also owned an estate in Yonkers and a farm in Colombia, South America, to which members were sent from time to time. All of the members worked at part-time jobs and gave all their money to the group. The father of a member - a research professor of nuclear medicine at Boston University - says "the fellowship absolutely insists on a sort of religious blackmail - that children separate from the family unless the family signs up too."

Ted Patrick was brought to court when a "snatch" as it is called was a failure. It involved a boy from Yale whose parents pleaded with Mr. Patrick to rescue from Hannah Lowe’s cult. The Parents and Mr. Patrick attempted to take the boy one icy, snowy night from in front of his apartment. For many reasons it didn't work - (mostly because the parents didn't follow Mr. Patrick’s instructions) - and Mr. Patrick was taken to court. Among the witnesses called by the District Attorney was Dr. William McGill, President of Columbia University, who expressed the view that the members of the Fellowship were a fine group of young people and he also said that as a matter of
religious liberty he would not use force to remove his own child from a group such as the Fellowship. Also testifying was the Rev. Dean Kelley who is the religious liberty director of the National Council of Churches. He stated that he felt it was a blunt offence against religious liberty to use force in seeking to remove a young person from a group such as the Fellowship, even if done by parents. Fortunately, for Mr. Patrick, he was found not guilty. Interestingly, the judge in this case was Judge Bruce Wright who this year received a lot of publicity in the New York papers as a very lenient judge and was nicknamed "turn 'em loose, Bruce." As a result of undesirable publicity, Hannah Lowe has gone to Bogota, Colombia, and lives extremely well on her $250,000 estate.

One of the worst cults is the Church of Armageddon in Seattle, Washington. The leader of the sect or commune was Paul Erdman who called himself Love Israel. Disobedience was met with beatings and converts being locked up in closets. Children were punished excessively for not behaving. One of their pasttimes was to connect themselves to an electrical device to see how much electricity they could stand to pass through their bodies. If a member's eyes were defective he was forbidden to consult an ophthalmologist, the reasoning being that if God wanted him to have good vision he would have given it to him. Some with dental problems. If a cult member became pregnant, she was not allowed to see a doctor and babies were always delivered without assistance in one of the cult's houses. This cult also shared with other cults the same characteristics - censorship of mail, persuading members to sign over bank accounts and other assets and, of course, hatred of
parents — all this combined with intense bible study. In this
case, in the Bible God’s name was stricken out and Love Israel’s
put in its place. Steve Allen’s son was one of the members of
this cult and when Steve Allen was pressed for comment on this
he said — it’s fine with me that my son and grandchildren are
living in a religious commune. I decided that if it was reason-
able and productive for him it was fine by me. These people
are living something 24 hours a day which is a distinction from
the other religions which usually practice 45 minutes on Sunday.

On street corners in the big cities you will find the
devotees of Krishna Consciousness. You see the young people
beating drums, shaking rattles and tamborines, chanting Hare,
Hare, Hare. They are dressed in saffron colored robes, their
heads shaved, beads around their necks, singing and dancing and
all the while chanting.

The founder and leader of this international movement was
an elderly religious entrepreneur who came from Bengal to
the United States from India in 1965. He died last year. Their
new leader, KIRTANANANDA SWAMI BHAKTIPADA, the former Keith Ham
of Peekskill, N. Y. was a doctoral student in American religious
history at Columbia University. He met the founder of the
Hare Krishnas in 1968 in a store front temple on Second Avenue in
New York city.

The Krishnas preach a life of severe discipline — they
practise a rigorous program of self-denial abstaining from meat,
drugs, alcohol and sex, except for once a month when the woman is
ovulating. They meditate for hours at a time chanting and finger-
ing prayer beads. And a big part of their lives is devoted to
fund-raising. They have one of the world’s most lucrative pub-
ishing enterprises — they own the largest incense factory in the
United States and his Divine Grace, the leader, is a multi-millionaire.

The Krishnas had a school in Dallas, Texas, to which followers from all over the world sent their children. It was called the Gurukula and all the students were children under 10 years of age. None of them was protected by state law. It was a private school and none of the teachers had to be qualified by Texas educational standards. The children rose at 4 in the morning, having slept on the floor, and chanted Krishna hymns and prayers for 2 hours. They then had breakfast and went to classes. The school was run by an ex-marine who said and I quote - "We do not teach any science and very little history or geography - they are unnecessary complications of a child's life. They are allowed to read only our religious books - no fairy tales or nursery stories are permitted and no television. The children see their parents only once a year. This separation is how we show them that they can still love someone deeply even without physical touch - the parents and children are drawn together spiritually."

The children stayed in Dallas until they were 10 and then they were moved to the Hare Krishna commune in West Virginia to complete their education and at 15 they went out on the streets fund raising and spreading the good word of the Hare Krishnas. Subsequent legislation and public sentiment forced the closing of this school and the children were sent to other centers for their private schooling.

The focus is always on fund raising. A reporter infiltrated a group in Frankfurt, Germany, and found the average earnings per day per man was $228 except in the summer when they worked the beaches and the average went up to $380.
This past September an ornate palace, built entirely by the cult members, opened in Limestone, West Virginia, on 2,000 acres of land. It cost $500,000 in materials and consists of Italian marble floors, walls inlaid with Iranian onyx, gold-leafed column caps, stained glass windows in the shape of peacocks, numerous crystal chandeliers and downspouts outside in the shape of elephant heads. The Krishnas, besides having a lavish place to pray, hope to make this into a religious Disneyland to be called Krishnaland.

Their life style is disciplined to say the least. They rise at 3 A.M., chant in a small temple and read scripture until breakfast at 6 A.M. They go to the temple again at noon and in the evening and the rest of the day is given over to work - they cook, clean, work on the farm and the self-trained craftsmen in the group work in sophisticated shops they have for plating gold and polishing marble for the palace construction. The plan is to build more than 150 fountains on the property and eventually 7 temples. About half of the community of 250 members are married and the children live separately in a nursery and school.

Not all their neighbors are pleased to have them there and they have had to give up fund raising in nearby Wheeling because of, as they say, too much hassling by the police.

The Holy Spirit Association for Unification of World Christianity - Unification Church, Sun Myung Moon, Founder, with 2 million members worldwide, about 30,000 active members in the United States. The Rev. Moon is a former South Korean industrialist and Presbyterian turned evangelist. Although his followers say in public that Moon never claims to be the
Messiah, in training sessions of the converts he is repeatedly referred to as the Messiah and the Lord of the Second Advent. Although he calls himself a Christian he has been denounced by Christian churches all over the world. Moon claims that when he was 16 he had a vision and God told him that he was supposed to finish the work that Christ failed to accomplish. He established the Unification Church in 1954 based on Divine Principle, a book that is a collection of Mr. Moon's works. The main theory of Divine Principle is that Jesus was the first Messiah but that a second Messiah will be coming soon. That Messiah will have been born in Korea in 1920, which incidentally is the year and place of Mr. Moon's own birth.

He has stated over and over again that he wants to rule the world. He and the late President Park were old friends and a former cultural attache for the South Korean embassy in Washington said - "Moon started from scratch and accumulated his wealth under the Park regime, not before". In the spring of 1974 Moon figured that President Nixon probably would escape impeachment. He organized huge demonstrations in Washington in Nixon's behalf and took out large advertisements in newspapers all over the country in support of President Nixon. In return, Nixon invited him to the White House and they were photographed together. Moon is after power and he is mainly political.

The term "brainwashing" came from Korea during the Korean War and so many of the cults today use the same brain washing techniques, especially the Unification Church - namely fatigue, psychological fear, isolation, repetition of political dogma and so forth.
There are chapters on college campuses in just about every state of the union. On the campuses his recruiting takes the name of the Collegiate Association for Research of Principle or CARP as the group calls themselves. But the name of the Rev. Moon is omitted in their promotional material, lectures or initial discussion sessions and it isn't until enough time has gone by that students find this out. By that time enough indoctrination has occurred so that the students are unable to make a truly free choice of whether or not they want to join.

Recently the New York Times had an article which stated that 38 members of the Rev. Moon's church are attending leading divinity and graduate schools in the United States as the church tries to develop its own education for the next generation. Tuition is paid by the church which has its own seminary in Barrytown, N. Y. which has been denied accreditation by the New York State Board of Regents.

The Rev. Moon basically doesn't have anything to do with religion - he's a businessman running a big business operation. In Korea he owns a munitions factory, factories that produce Ginseng tea, pharmaceuticals, air rifles, titanium products and more. But in America the bulk of his fortune comes from the unpaid labor of the kids he has on the streets of all the big cities. The church's own estimate is that their yearly budget runs around $15 million dollars. He owns 3 expensive pieces of real estate in upstate New York, 2 yachts, the old New Yorker hotel on 8th Avenue in New York City, and a huge, sprawling estate in Barrytown.
Moon’s Church Rebuts
Testimony on Income

Officials of the Unification Church
led by the Korean evangelist Sun
Myung Moon denied an assertion by a
former member of the church that the
organization had raised between $109
and $219 million nationally last year
through street solicitation. They said
the figure was close to $20 million, an
increase of about $12 million since 1975.

The higher estimates were given
earlier this week by Alan Tate Wood, a
former member of the church who is
now employed as a “deprogrammer”
to encourage church members to leave.
Mr. Wood, who left the church in 1973
after becoming a minor official in it,
gave the figures in State Supreme
Court in Manhattan where the church
is appealing a City Tax Commission
ruling that eliminated tax exemption
for its property.

In April of this year there was an article in the
Home News stating that New Brunswick
become the site of a new center for the Unification Church. The state
director of the church said - "I would like to start a
sister center in New Brunswick - that would be the next
place". The church’s main headquarters in New Jersey is
now in Hackensack.

Society must ask itself if it has a responsibility to
regular totalitarian groups that require absolute obedi-
ence to a living godhead and which foster contempt for our
laws and values. Should the family be undermined as these
groups attempt to do, and should people tolerate recruiting
methods that are intimidating and as deceitful as sales
methods that consumer agencies seek to protect us against.
Is spending 12 hours a day on a street corner begging for
money a realistic way to serve God and does any group
that calls itself a religion have the right to control and
dominate all of a person's time during the years when he could be building a foundation for a productive and satisfying life?

On the other hand, when a consenting adult, with all the information before him decides to follow a particular cult, no matter how controversial, should he be allowed to do this in peace? And if these religious cults continue to expand and grow, shouldn't they have to conform to our laws?

Religious freedom demands that any religion, no matter how strange its theology, be allowed to flourish. The first amendment of the constitution protects this right. How should we, as a society believing in religious freedom for all, deal with these new religious movements that have surfaced outside the umbrella of religious establishment?