Growing Up in Contemporary Sectarian Movements:

An Analysis of Segregated Socialization

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores changes in group boundaries when children are born into sectarian movements, and how these changes affect the movements and their young members. Over time sectarian groups may 'denominationalise' or remain sectarian. The resulting dynamics, within the sect and between the sect and society, affect the people born within these sects, and their (perceived) level of inclusion or exclusion within society. This point is illustrated throughout the thesis on several levels, describing internal pressures on sectarian groups as well as external pressures - offering a variety of case studies involving legislation, regulation, intervention, and their outcomes. In turn, attitudes towards sects differ according to the state's position, public perception, and what information is provided and used in deciding on action. Tension between the state and sects can shape the childhoods of those within the sectarian groups. How these tensions are resolved has a strong influence on the range of options second-generation adults have regarding their affiliation with the group in which they were raised; whether they stay, leave, are expelled, can choose their own level and mode of adherence, and so forth. This is the first comparative exploration of the different options presented by a variety of sectarian groups and by the types of support available within the wider society for second-generation members who have decided to leave. The thesis raises questions about the effects sectarian socialization can have on future social affiliations and the role of the support mechanisms in the young people's subsequent adjustment to the wider society. It illustrates, on the level of the individual, the significance of primary and secondary socialization regarding the transmission of values and world-views and, most interesting sociologically, a person's perception of society and his or her place within it.

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INTRODUCTION

In a diverse society one finds a variety of world-views, beliefs and practices, within a patchwork of conceptual territories and enclaves; consequently, one finds a range of forms of socialisation. Such variety, within one society, often results in a balancing act between accepting diversity and variety, and ensuring that individual rights are not infringed upon. But this is easier said than done, and societies that embrace diversity have struggled in attempting to regulate previously foreign practices (that are the norm in what were, initially, far-flung cultures) that potentially fall within the parochial concepts of abuse. The government of the UK, for example, has struggled to regulate what it has defined as "Female Genital Mutilation" and "Forced Marriages", practices that under different names and by different degrees are considered traditional and normal within some of its resident immigrant cultures – the former being a form of circumcision (or excision) for girls seen by some as an integral part of their religious culture, the latter arranged marriages where the parents or religious elders match partners.[1]

Currently, State bodies and NGOs within the UK are struggling to create a national understanding of good practice regarding the disciplining of children, especially after several cases of child abuse resulting from beliefs in spirit possession of the children and attempts at exorcism.[2] But these are sensitive debates where religion and culture, and interpretations tendered of them, are accused of cutting across individuals' rights and what is assumed to be to the benefit of the community as a whole. Both the

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[1] Of course the re-defined concepts, including the terms 'mutilation', and 'forced', point to varieties of practice and different interpretations of what happens (Stobart 2005).
[2] See, for example, the report commissioned by the DfES on the topic (Stobart 2006).

former Prime Minister Tony Blair and Minister Jack Straw have argued that the practice of some Muslim women of wearing the *Niqab* is segregating them from the wider community.[3] Blair and Straw pinpointed this style of dress as hampering social integration. Interestingly, this implies that social integration is desirable. But what if integration is not deemed to be desirable by some communities? Or what if different parts of the wider community disagree on acceptable and desirable levels of integration? Integration may be perceived as problematic or unacceptable by those who object to the norms and values accepted within the hegemonic majority often referred to as the 'mainstream', be these disrespectful styles of dress, 'too much freedom', loose morals, or a lack of education. Communities in disagreement with the hegemonic majority are likely to disengage and remove themselves in some way from aspects of the surrounding society that are deemed unacceptable, problematic and/or non-conducive to their aims and objectives. Such disengagement has been an integral part of the history of the West; social, ideological and geographical disengagement has increased with diversity. This thesis explores several groups that have significantly disengaged from certain aspects of mainstream society, and have adopted a sectarian stance.

Bryan Wilson, a leading authority on the topic of sectarianism, defines a sect as:

> ... a self-consciously and deliberately separated religious minority which espouses a faith divergent from that of other religious bodies. ...[The term]... is employed to encompass also those minority movements sometimes referred to as 'cults' or as 'new religious movements'. Each sect is, in greater or lesser degree, unique... (1990: 47).

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[3] This was, at the time, widely reported by the media. *The Times* wrote 'The Muslim veil is a sign of separation, says Blair' on October 18, 2006; the AFP reported 'Straw sparks row over Muslim veil comments' on October 5, 2006.

I shall be using the term sect(s) to mean something different from 'new religious movements' (NRMs) and 'cults' – 'sect' has, historically, a different meaning. The term 'NRM' includes many groups that are not in tension with society. The term 'cult', initially pointing to a particular style of worship within a Church, has with popular usage developed negative connotations which are not necessarily useful, or confirmed by social scientific research (Barker 1986; 1989). Similarly, the term 'sect' has also developed a derogatory connotation over time, and in some languages the word 'secte' is used as the word 'cult' is in English. Still, I shall persist in using the term, as Wilson did, to denote specific group dynamics. Sects arise out of opposition, and are in tension with their surroundings. This is not necessarily, or definitionally, an aspect of all NRMs.[4] Wilson describes how the sect has moved from being in opposition to 'church' to being in opposition to 'society'- hence less a combatant in religious issues than a deviant and abnormal religious threat to conventional, generally a-religious social practice. "Sects thus become an issue of social rather than of explicitly religious concern" (Wilson 1990: 47). Sects challenge the ethos and practice of other religious bodies, and of society. They tend to claim that they provide the 'Truth', and access to salvation. Similar to Mary Douglas' enclaves, sects are characterised by their boundaries - their separatism (Douglas 1970).[5] Douglas states that it is not the fact of being physically an enclave within a larger society that brings on the symptoms of sectarianism; the true enclave is in tension with the outside world (*ibid.*: xx). It challenges the generally accepted norms and values of the society around it, and frequently also challenges the accepted regulations and rules.

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[4] I shall, however, use the term cult or NRM when involving someone else's research or argument and language and when its meaning is similar to the way I use the term sect or sectarian movement or community. This will be clear in the context of the discussion.

[5] Douglas used the term 'sect' in previous editions but eventually replaced it with the more neutral 'enclave' to avoid the negative connotations surrounding the word 'sect. I will continue to use the term 'sect' in line with a history of sociological research exploring the social phenomenon.

This thesis is an exploration and analysis of the variables involved in the socialisation of children in sectarian communities, and the interplay between the changing constituents involved: that is, between children, sects, and society. The dynamic that comes out of this interplay is a complicated dialectic changing according to the dynamics between the variables. As much as sects, fringe movements and subcultures appear to reside 'outside' society, one must keep in mind that they are very much a product of society, and exist as a part of society. They arise from society, often in reaction to perceived negative or detrimental aspects of society, yet they position themselves 'apart' from society. They often create their own societies, institutions and cultures within the greater social structure. They raise their children apart from society. Their social boundaries, which distinguish the sect from the 'non-sect', will form an important aspect of the childhoods of children born into the sect. Individual sects are likely to create different structures and socialising forces for their children, providing them with atypical childhoods. In turn, the children affect the sects, which have to adapt to the new responsibilities that children create. Furthermore, the sects affect the wider society, of which they form a part. States, for example, have a responsibility towards their citizens, especially minors, and are likely to want to keep an eye on their welfare—as determined by their standards, and intervene when deemed necessary. Some sects consider this an intrusion, and respond accordingly. Degrees of organisational and ideological persistence affect the degree to which sects change in response to pressures from outside and inside. The resulting dynamics between society and sect and within sects are likely to affect the children yet again. As the children mature, this interplay is likely to affect their allegiances—do they stay or do they leave? The extent to which these children join the mainstream or another

subculture, and the extent to which they are equipped for social interactions, affects them as well as social institutions around them.

The stronger the sect's social (and ideological) boundaries (and, consequently, the greater the tension with society), the more segregated the socialisation of the children as they grow up in relative isolation. Consequently, the children who leave as adults will have more difficulty adjusting to the greater society. In this scenario, the process of leaving and adjusting to society is likely to be challenging, and result in an antagonistic relationship between the children, the sect and the parents. The groups that retained their sectarian stance throughout the maturation of the second generation transferred social segregation to their children. Conversely, the more negotiable a sect's boundaries (and thus the more a sect negotiates its position within society), the greater the adaptability in the socialisation process of the children. The children who leave as adults are likely to have less difficulty adjusting to society. In this scenario, the process of leaving and adjusting to society is more likely to include communication and negotiation between the children, the sect and the parents. Adaptation, however, has not always been a speedy process, and consequently there have been different experiences between cohorts of a generation - the younger members having benefited from the outcome of the struggles of their elder 'community siblings'. Throughout the maturation of the second generation, the group will have 'denominationalised', and those whose childhoods coincided with the tail end of this process have, generally, had the option of easier integration into society. Niebuhr's term 'denominationalism' is useful here to describe the process of reduction of tensions between a sect and its environment (Niebuhr 1957[1929]). However, as Bryan Wilson demonstrated, denominationalisation is not inevitable, and

some sects manage to revitalise their sectarian stance (1990). This process, too, affects the members of the second and following generations.

The discourse surrounding sectarian groups (frequently non-discriminately labelled as 'cults' and/or 'extremists') so far has included a significant 'voice' focused on alleged immoral, unsavoury and unhealthy aspects, accusations of deviance, criminal behaviour and the forceful submission of individuals, including minors, without their consent.[6] This thesis explores some of these issues from a social scientific perspective; in particular, the focus is on the effect sectarian groups may have on their children as they mature, and *vice versa*. In doing so, I address a topic not discussed in such detail as of yet, and highlight issues of socialisation, social integration, and identity.[7] Hence the focus of this research is those who were raised in sectarian groups and communities *per se*, although I occasionally note other religious collectivities for comparative purposes. I focus on the points of tension – situations where the wellbeing or rights of minors have been questioned, as these are the situations where the rights of parents have been questioned and where the presence of sectarian groups have challenged peaceful coexistence within diversity. This is neither a study of one religious community, nor a systematic comparison between communities. This is an exploration and mapping out of points of tension between some sects and their surroundings throughout the maturation of the second (and subsequent) generations, the ways in which such tension has been resolved (or not),

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[6] This 'voice' is usually represented by the popular media, who tend to define 'cults' (and sects) along very unspecific popular definitions that generally represent them as unsavoury and undesirable organisations.

[7] Interestingly, in this research the topics of gender and ethnicity, usually significant aspects of identity, have not arisen in great detail. I have not specifically focused on them, despite having interviewed people of both genders and a variety of ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, preferring to leave those interviewed to set the agenda within the parameters of my research. But they have not come up either, unless within a general context of role division within religious communities or society and as a lesser concern than religious or spiritual issues, and identity struggles to do with where one belongs as a person.

and how this has effected the perceived and remembered childhoods of second-generation members. This is, of course, an extremely ambitious range of topics to cover in one thesis. But I consciously chose to explore and conceptualise the main issues in order to chart territory for future research. There has been no such research to date, and I considered it imperative to link together theories and concepts and offer parallels to ground this subject.[8]

Throughout the following chapters, I mention a variety of religious and sectarian groups, and focus more in depth on five sectarian groups; the Bruderhof, The Family International (The Family), the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (the Unification Church), the Church of Scientology (Scientology), and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). For comparative purposes, I have included discussion of topics relating to children within the New Age. The latter is more easily defined as a social network, or grid, rather than a bounded group and is conceptually and structurally significantly different from sectarian groups.[9] Yet, New Age groups and ideas are relatively recent religious developments and, consequently, have only recently had to think about ways to integrate children into the belief system (or, in some cases, whether to do this at all). The five sectarian groups have all been controversial and, consequently, have been in tension with their surrounding community. Hence, this is neither a random sample of groups, nor a balanced and representative choice of groups that is representative of

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[8] The research so far consisted of an edited book, unpublished theses and papers about childhoods in particular communities and memoirs (See, for example, Bettelheim 1969; Masson 1993; Palmer and Hardman 1999; Guest 2004).

[9] Here I am loosely selecting from Mary Douglas' complicated distinction between group and grid, the former being defined mostly by distinction between insiders and outsiders, the latter by rules that relate individuals to one another. The distinctions are both on an interlinked continuum; strong group is likely to have a dualistic world-view whereas strong grid is more likely to be relativistic – where an individual must find him/herself. Douglas uses these as a framework applicable to all societies (Douglas 1970). For the purposes of this research I shall use these two concepts summarised here as ideal types.

sects in general. I have chosen these groups specifically to highlight certain points of tension with society and how this has affected the groups and the childhoods of those raised in them. The objective of this thesis is to move beyond case studies and personal accounts - to explore social dynamics. Hence the focus of this research is on the social environment of children in sectarian communities, the ways in which this environment changes over time, the reasons for these changes, and the consequences to the groups, the children, and the wider community. As a result of this wide scope, the study relies on a variety of resources, ranging from face-to-face interviews with former as well as current second-generation members, (foster) parents, and teachers, in some cases written communication when distance precluded a meeting, participant observation, analysis of online discussion forums for former members of certain sectarian groups, and attendance at relevant conferences.

I have interviewed thirty second-generation former members and current members, teachers and (foster) parents, as well as nine children and teenagers (between the ages of 7 and 16) between 1997 and 2006.[10] Furthermore, I have also used case-notes of seventeen enquiries to Inform from former members of religious groups (all but one fit my definition of sectarian). Inform is an independent charity that was founded in 1988 with the support of the British Home Office and the mainstream Churches with the aim of obtaining and making available objective and up-to-date information about new religious movements, also known as sects or cults.[11] Inform has an enquiry line; enquirers are often people who have been in contact with a religious movement, and who provide inside information as well as requesting information. Inform receives an

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[10] Throughout the thesis I have changed their names to respect their anonymity. In the case of Joyce, a (foster) carer, I have not mentioned the name of the group she and some of those in her care came from following her request.

[11] Inform is based at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE, www.inform.ac.

average of 850 enquiries *per annum* from a variety of individuals and public and

private institutions. Since 1996, 305 of these enquiries came from former members of

religious movements; and 730 were from enquirers who did not identify themselves.[12]

Of the 305, there were nineteen cases where it was very clear that the enquirers had

been raised within sectarian groups, and one case where the enquirer had been raised

within a minority religious group. As for the anonymous enquiries, there is no way to

know how many were from second-generation members of sectarian groups.

However, I expect there may be a significant amount, as there is a risk for them in

contacting an outside agency – I will elaborate on this in chapter five. I have included

these cases because they have been a part of my general process of thought and the

formation of this thesis – I have been working for Inform since 1998 and was the staff

member who dealt with most of these cases.

Further sources of information for this thesis have been visits to schools, homes,

communities and/or other facilities of most of the communities I describe in depth,

except for the Bruderhof. They declined my request to visit and speak to a teacher

about the Bruderhof education (although did kindly send me a catalogue of their

'Community Playthings'). I have not persisted as my focus is on the experiences of

some former members I have interviewed, and I decided that I had enough reliable

secondary sources, including one approved by the Bruderhof themselves (Oved 1996).

I have attended conferences and meetings about the experiences and support for

second-generation former members (and have spoken at a number of seminars and

conferences where I have received feedback from members as well as former

members of religious communities.) Another invaluable source of information has

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[12] Data compiled in first week of June 2007.

been the monitoring of Internet forums for second-generation former members.
Because literature on this exact topic is scarce, I have read widely on related topics
and what I consider to be topics with social parallels.

This thesis consists of two parts, the first exploring the possible tensions within sects
as a second generation is born, and the resulting possible tensions between sects and
the State, both having a responsibility towards these minors. The second part explores
the choices made by the second-generation members as they reach adulthood, and the
consequences of these choices. This part also describes the variety of support that is
available for those who leave, and ways in which this journey has affected them. The
final chapter ties the themes of the second part of the thesis into a wider theoretical
framework.

CHAPTER 1

PART I: SECTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

SECTS AND SOCIETY

The ways in which a sect fits within the surrounding society often depends on its priorities, how members feel these can be attained, and how they relate to the rest of society. Concurrently, society's perception of the sect will relegate it to a position within society that reflects the extent to which the group is accepted by its surroundings. James Beckford, when analysing the controversies surrounding New Religious Movements (NRMs), asked: "How are NRMs inserted into their societies?" (1985: 85). An NRM's 'mode of insertion' into society highlights ways in which members of NRMs are individually and collectively related to other people, groups, institutions, and social processes (*ibid.*). Beckford here distinguishes between an internal and an external axis – the former refers to relations within an NRM and the latter refers to relations between the NRM members and 'outside' people, institutions and social processes. Using this distinction as a framework, Beckford argues, enables us to consider particular NRMs as distinctive sets of social relationships and create a profile of an NRM's 'mode of insertion within society' (*ibid.*). It is meant as a framework, and generalises and summarises complex relationships that are otherwise not easily reduced and described.[13] Although Beckford concentrates on the social

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[13] Beckford elaborates on this framework to include varieties of internal levels of membership and external modes of insertion into society. Beckford's modes of insertion distinguish between 'refuge' (NRMs which seek to avoid what they consider the world's evil and who, as a result, have weak and severely limited ties with non-members), 'revitalisation' (those which seek to revitalise and transform the secular world according to their vision and teachings, hence need some forms of interaction with society in order to transform certain social processes), and 'release' (those which offer to release people from the conditions which allegedly obstruct the full realisation of their potential, and

aspect, the relationships, the ideological aspect also comes into play. This was most famously analysed by Bryan Wilson, who emphasised that sects tend to have strong beliefs regarding salvation (1982; 1990). Certain salvation beliefs can set a group of people apart from the rest - the elect, such as the 144,000 (Revelation 7:3-8, 14:1, 14:3), those who are enlightened versus those who are not; those who are free from *Maya* (illusion that stands in the way of one perceiving 'reality') as opposed to those who live in illusion and indulge in 'sense-gratification'. Salvation beliefs can range from physical or mental healing to elaborate prospects of the transmigration of the soul, or reincarnation. The common denominator is always the promise of present reassurance in the face of malevolent or troublesome phenomena or events (Wilson 1990). Salvation beliefs can be strong motivators for behaviour and practice. Conditions for the attainment of salvation imply a range of 'restrictions' in the form of taboos and injunctions for everyday life, as well as a range of 'additions' in the form of tasks and responsibilities. For example, the Amish and the Exclusive Brethren avoid using certain modern technological services and appliances and adhere to a strict dress code in reverence for the age of their forefathers, the nineteenth century. For them, salvation hinges on this 'simple' Christian life that allows them to concentrate on what they consider to be more important spiritual matters. Their lifestyle is quite different from that of the wider community in which they live, and as a result they live in relative segregation (and have relatively few interactions with the surrounding society). Similarly, observing Jews tend to adhere to dietary codes, dress codes and a range of behavioural restrictions. For them, salvation hinges on an

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consequently need to interact with their target population) (1985: 85-9). This framework of modes of insertion has certain parallels to Wallis' distinctions between world rejecting, world accommodating, and world affirming movements: distinctions based on ideological positions (Wallis 1996). I prefer Beckford's framework for my purposes because it focuses on social relationships and allows for a variety of modes of interaction with outsiders and society. This will be particularly useful later in this thesis when I discuss the relations with young members of the groups' new generation who have left, affecting the external axis.

intricate combination of taboos and prescribed rituals, although this differs within

Judaism. Reform Jews have significantly different proscriptions and rituals from

Orthodox Jews who, as a result of their strict adherence to dress and behavioural

codes, tend to be easily distinguishable. Even in Israel they are a minority among

Jews, and tend to live in 'enclaves' such as *Mea Shearim* in Jerusalem.

Of course everybody, to some extent, lives his or her life by rejecting some ideas and

practices while choosing others. Western society consists of a religious and cultural

diversity that makes concepts such as 'mainstream', 'normative' and 'marginal'

somewhat problematic. Furthermore, in a globalized world the possibilities are ever

growing, and the concepts of mainstream and marginal, or 'normal' and abnormal',

keep expanding. However, in Western society, one can distinguish between a

generalised, or imagined, concept of mainstream ('the norm'), and religious groups

that are in tension with this mainstream ('abnormal'), as well as communities of like-

minded people who pick and choose ideas from the cultic milieu while discounting

the ideas prevalent in the mainstream (and who are often labelled as living 'alternative

lifestyles'). One can identify groups of people who turn their backs on the lifestyle

enjoyed by their parents in order to embrace another—be it an invented, re-invented,

imported lifestyle, or a syncretistic amalgamation. Whereas vegetarianism, robes

(*Dhotis* for men, *saris* for women; saffron for monks and white for married men;

colourful *saris* for women), *sikha* (ponytail or topknot) and *tilak* (yellow paste mark

of khrisnas over bridge of nose) are quite a normal occurrence in certain parts of the

world, they are not a traditional part of Western society. Choosing the path of

Vaishnaism (followers of Vishnu, one of the most important Hindu gods) for

salvation is a relatively unusual step for people who are not of Asian descent, living in

the West. Joining an intentional Christian community such as the Exclusive Brethren

certainly is more in keeping with the Western Judeo-Christian religious tradition.[14]

Yet some of their salvation beliefs and the resultant practices have resulted in them

having little interaction with the rest of society – the group has a marginal position

within society in that they are considered to be, and consider themselves to be,

different from the 'norm'. This marginal position comes with distinctions between

'them' and 'us', and social boundaries protecting 'us' from the likes of 'them' and their

ideas and practices – considered to be depraved or otherwise immoral. Protecting the

'flock' from negative influences, and creating an environment conducive to the beliefs

and practices necessary for salvation, tends to become an important priority for

sectarian groups. Consequently, the modes of insertion in society are purposefully

limited. They are an enclave structurally like Douglas' concept of group. Or, as Kai

Erikson argued in *Wayward Puritans*, such communities are 'boundary maintaining'

in the sense that they place 'symbolic parentheses' around their members:

> When one describes any system as boundary maintaining, one is saying that it
> controls the fluctuation of its constituent parts so that the whole retains a
> limited range of activity, a given pattern of constancy and stability, within the
> larger environment (1966: 10).

A short synopsis of five of the main sectarian groups cited in this research follows,

and it will serve as an introduction to illustrations and examples throughout the

following chapters. Another religious collectivity, the New Age, will be discussed in

places within the discussion for comparative purposes (as New Age collectivities

generally lack such sectarian boundaries that typify the groups discussed).[15]

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[14] See Appendix for more information on the Exclusive Brethren.
[15] The New Age is more easily typified as frameworks of beliefs within which a variety of different collectivities operate, not necessarily all sharing the same beliefs and practices, rather sharing aspects of similar beliefs like Wittgenstein's family resemblances. Hence they are more akin to Douglas' grid as opposed to group, although, of course, within the New Age one can find groups that operate as such.

The Bruderhof

The Bruderhof is a collection of pacifist communities following Anabaptist precepts that have at several points in their early history sought to be associated with the Hutterites. In 1990 some Hutterite congregations excommunicated the Bruderhof for what they perceived as doctrinal deviations, and eventually the Bruderhof broke the remaining ties with the Hutterite tradition. The Bruderhof, which means 'community of brothers', had more than 2000 members by 2000. [16] Eberhard Arnold founded the Bruderhof in the 1920s in Germany, and they now have 'hofs' (communities) in the USA, the UK and Australia. Upon joining, members hand over their belongings to the community, after which they are meant to reject what community members consider the divisiveness of private property and power. One of the main rules in place to help maintain the brotherly communal atmosphere is the 'law of Sannerz', named after the first community. The spirit of the 'law' is that disputes or disagreements are settled between individuals, face-to-face, without the mediation of third parties. This discourages talking about third parties behind their backs, gossip, and other behaviour seen to be out of step with the 'spirit of love'.

> There is no law but that of love. Love means having joy in others. Then what does being annoyed with them mean? Words of love convey the joy we have in the presence of brothers and sisters. By the same token it is out of the question to speak about a Bruderhof member in a spirit of irritation or vexation. There must never be talk, either in open remarks or by insinuation, against a brother or sister, against their individual characteristics—under no circumstances behind the person's back. Talking in one's own family is no exception (Oved 1996: 25).

The Sermon on the Mount serves as the biblical foundation for the Bruderhof communities. The members become radical disciples of Jesus after adult baptism, and

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In general, however, they tend to be relativistic world-views within which many different types of groupings operate – many of them operating as and/or tapping into virtual networks as well.

[16] Or 'place where brothers dwell' according to Rubin (2001).

lead a life of pacifism. Conduct is strictly regulated; transgressions are handled with

public confession and repentance of sin, and sometimes exclusion of the sinner from

the day-to-day life in the community, until s/he has found 'the path' again.

Being a pacifist community, the Bruderhof left pre-war Germany for England, which

they later left for Paraguay, where they created three separate communities at a

settlement they called 'Primavera'. There the members formed a self-sufficient

commune, isolated from the Spanish-speaking Paraguayan population. After the war,

members established communities outside Paraguay. But even in English-speaking

countries, the communities were relatively isolated from the rest of society. The hofs

were intentional communities, created out of a desire to live according to Christian

and humanistic ideals. However, the 1960s saw a crisis (referred to as the 'Great

Crisis') within the Bruderhof.[17] The crisis was due mainly to a schism in the

leadership between Hans Zumpe (Eberhard Arnold's son-in-law) and the European

leaders, and the Arnolds (Eberhard Arnold's sons) in the USA. The American leaders

accused the communities in Paraguay of being 'cold-hearted' and of having moved

away from the Hutterite ideals they held at the time. The 'cold-hearted' were the

people who had joined because of a shared humanist ideology, and who sought social

and economic relations with the wider community. The 'warm-hearted', on the other

hand, had joined as a result of their belief in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, and

favoured a closed community in order to focus on this devotion.[18] Hence they

favoured self-sustaining communities. There was a feeling, amongst the Arnold

followers, that the movement had moved away from what were perceived as the

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[17] I will elaborate on this event from a different perspective in the following chapter, and it will be described from some former members' perspectives throughout the following chapters.
[18] Although these terms and distinctions were initially applied by one particular side in this debate, the terms were eventually used by both sides, including individual members. The former members I have spoken with used these terms to describe the schism at the time.

'warm-hearted' days in Sannerz (the first community, and the original leadership

under Arnold) towards a more liberal and ideological stance (which was perceived as

legalistic rather than spiritual) under the Zumpe leadership. Under these

circumstances the communities in Paraguay were dissolved, as were several other

hofs (in England and North America), and over 600 people left or were expelled. The

'warm-hearted' devotion won over the more liberal ideals, and the Bruderhof became

a closed Christian community with like-minded 'brethren'.

In the West, the Bruderhof have never been considered as unfamiliar and exotic as

some of the foreign sects that arrived in the West around the same time. The

members and their traditional ways - sober and traditional dress, manual agricultural

and artisan labour, and communal sharing of goods - were generally seen as quaint

and romantic.[19] Their sectarian stance towards society was intensified and

highlighted only once exiles from the Great Crisis started voicing their discontent.[20]

The Church of Scientology

In 1950, the publication of *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health,* written

by Lafayette Ron Hubbard, introduced new ideas regarding the human mind and the

goal of 'Man'; the book gained a certain level of popularity (Hubbard 1950). Four

years later, a religious organisation was established around the themes of Dianetics,

called Scientology. The aims of Scientology are to solve the problems perceived to

be affecting society, such as crime, drugs, and illiteracy. The essential tenets of

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[19] See, for example, Zablocki who described the Bruderhof as 'The Joyful Community' (1971).
Perhaps partly as a result of this image, the communities have never garnered much prominence
beyond their geographic localities, and certainly are not as recognised as some of the other religious
groups mentioned in this research.
[20] This topic will be covered in depth in part two.

Scientology are that people are immortal spiritual beings, whose experience extends well beyond a single lifetime, and whose capabilities are unlimited—even if not presently realised.[21] The spiritual being is called a 'Thetan' which is believed to be basically good, and seeking to survive. But the Thetan is impeded. People, according to Scientology, lack self-awareness, and have come to believe that they are their bodies, rather than their Thetans. This is a result of the mind, which, according to Scientology, is an accumulation of 'mental image pictures' (what we often think of as memory) from current and previous lives. But the mind can have a confining effect. The mind consists of the 'analytical mind' and the 'reactive mind'. The former is the rational, conscious and aware mind which thinks, observes data, remembers these data, and resolves problems (Jentzsch 1994: 60). The latter is the accumulation of negative images and experiences, which have a harmful effect. Some of these negative experiences are recorded unconsciously; they are stored not as memories, but as 'engrams'. Engrams are thought to have mass, and act as blockages in the mind. The reactive mind is unconscious, and not normally under our volitional control. But Scientologists believe that Hubbard has found the key to unlock this reactive mind, and a method to learn to control its allegedly debilitating effects. Members and clients are meant to become aware of their reactive mind through auditing, a form of 'co-counselling' (Scientologists stress that it is a system through which someone is allowed to find their own answers, without outside suggestions or solutions), aided by an 'electropsychometer' (e-meter). This meter measures changes in energy-flow. The goal of auditing is to erase the engrams from the reactive mind and re-store them as standard memories in the analytical mind. Once this goal has been realised an individual is 'clear', and may proceed training to become an 'Operating Thetan' (OT),

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[21] See, for example, *A Description of the Scientology Religion* (Jentzsch 1994).

not burdened by the alleged restrictive forces of the reactive mind. The doctrine focuses on the human mind, what impedes it, and what would 'set it free'. This route to 'freedom', to the state of clear and through the OT levels, is called the Bridge.[22]

Aside from helping people cross the Bridge to 'total freedom', Scientology aims to heal what it perceives as the ills of society. Hence the organisation consists of many affiliated organisations that target society's 'problem areas', such as Narconon (drug rehabilitation), Criminon (crime rehabilitation), and Applied Scholastics International (improving education through the application of Hubbard's Study Technology) all governed by the Association for Better Living and Education International (ABLE). These organisations rely heavily on the book *The Way to Happiness* by L. Ron Hubbard. Other social reform programs include the Citizen's Commission on Human Rights, which aims to expose what they consider psychiatric abuse, and the National Commission on Law Enforcement and Social Justice, which aims to clean government files of false reports. Since 1981 all of the churches and organisations of Scientology have been brought together under the Church of Scientology International (CSI).[23]

The size of membership of the Church of Scientology is difficult to establish. There are clients who take courses now and then, more dedicated adherents, staff, and full-time members who have devoted their lives to Scientology and signed a contract extending well beyond their biological life span – a billion-year contract.[24] The latter

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[22] Allegedly Hubbard has written OT levels up to OT 15 – the remaining seven levels not having been released by Scientology as of 2007.
[23] This includes the churches, the International Hubbard Ecclesiastical League of Pastors, and Scientology Missions International.
[24] This is in accordance with Scientology beliefs; members can then continue their mission when they are reborn (Atack 1990). Others interpretations are that this is a symbolic contract.

are members of the Sea Org, an elite group of people who live communally and

regard Scientology as the main priority in their lives. Sea Org members have to step

down once they have children, but can re-join when their children are 10 and have

agreed to join as well, as 'little Cadets'.[25] These Cadets are then schooled at the Little

Cadet School, at the Saint Hill community where they also live. There is also a Cadet

school at Scientology's USA headquarters in Florida. David Barrett estimates there

are 5000 Sea Org members world-wide, of which there are 400 in the UK (2001:

465). Around the same time membership claimed by Scientology was 8 million, with

100.000 members in the UK.[26] Scientology has centres throughout the world.

Scientology teachings include aspects typically associated with religion, psychology,

philosophy and science, yet is not fully recognised and accepted by any of these

disciplines. This is partly because Scientology defies easy categorisation - it charges

money for services other religions might offer free of charge, and because it is

structured (and operates) bureaucratically.[27] It has been accused of swindling and

brainwashing followers, and the movement in return has harassed its critics.[28]

Scientology strongly adheres to a set of values which has been formalised into an

'ethics policy' to which followers adhere.[29] The purpose of adhering to 'ethics' is to

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[25] They have taken a vow to give undivided attention to their mission, a focus that, according to the
organisation, cannot be shared with the responsibilities of parenthood. According to some sources,
children are asked to make the decision to join the Sea Org from the age of 6, or even younger (see, for
example, http://www.whyaretheydead.net/childabuse/woodcraft/ and
http://www.raids.org/gen00049.htm?FACTNet) accessed 16/6/2007. When I visited the Little Cadet
school at Saint Hill in 2000 the youngest Cadet was 9 years of age.
[26] Inform. These numbers may include anyone who has taken courses or auditing with Scientology,
which raises the question whether 'clients' may be counted as members alongside Sea Org members.
[27] Although many old religions are highly institutionalised and bureaucratised, new religious
movements are generally stereotyped as having charismatic leaders and looser structures. This is, of
course, not necessarily the case, as explained by Barker – one cannot generalise about the new religions
(Barker 1995).
[28] see, for example, US v. Fishman and US District court for the district of Mass., Flynn v. L. Ron
Hubbard 1983.
[29] There has been discussion about the way Hubbard defined 'ethics' and the way the Scientology
organisation has possibly modified the meaning of the term over time. See, for example, Kent (2003).

ensure continued survival across the dimensions of self, ranging from the self to the family unit and groups, mankind to all living things, the universe and infinity.[30] The follower is encouraged to maximise chances of survival by bettering one's understanding of and accomplishments within these areas of the self – which will consequently enable better understanding of the 'tech' (the learning tools). If a follower fails to achieve this s/he is 'out ethics', and should be declared to a senior member for further training to again achieve the position of being 'in ethics'. The areas of 'self' recognised by Scientologists include 'dynamics' which are generally considered to be 'outside' the self, such as social groups, all living things, and the physical universe. Consequently, followers' path to 'betterment' extends beyond the organisation, where 'ethics' and Scientology standards are applied as well. Consequently outsiders can create a situation of 'out ethics', such as people who give the movement a bad name in public by testifying against it in court, by publicising negative information, and so forth. People who are seen as actively trying to suppress or damage Scientology are referred to as 'suppressive persons', and those who are in contact with suppressive persons are seen as 'potential trouble sources' (Bednarowski 1995: 388). Scientology's relations with government officials are not necessarily much better than their relations with individual critics. In 1977, eleven senior members of the Guardian's Office (set up to deal with 'threats to Scientology'), including Hubbard's wife, were convicted of stealing government documents from the USA Inland Revenue Service (IRS) after finding out about plans of a raid on the movement by the IRS.[31] The organisation waged a twenty-year battle with the IRS in the United States before it was awarded tax-exempt status. Similarly, it has been trying to get charitable status in the UK, which was denied in 1999. There have been

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[30] See, for example, *What is Scientology* (Hubbard 1992, 1993, 1998 1998 #1093).
[31] See, for example, http://www.lermanet.com/reference/77Granjurypart1.htm where a copy of the case has been posted (accessed 15/6/2007) or *A Piece of Blue Sky* (Atack 1990: 218-41) for more details.

many court-cases, including several U.S. grand jury investigations. The French government have expressed their desire to ban the movement after a conviction of the Paris church for violating the privacy of former members. The German Bavarian State Government stated in 1995 that it refused to employ any member of Scientology, and suggested in 1996 the church should be put under surveillance.

The Family International

The Family International, formerly known as the Children of God and later as the Family of Love, emerged during the counter-cultural Jesus Revolution of the 1960s. In 1967 David Berg (a.k.a. Father David, Moses David 1919-1994) preached a message of salvation to hippies in Huntington Beach, California—he and his predominantly young followers were known as the Teens for Christ. David Berg came from a Southern American Protestant background infused with fundamentalist and millennial beliefs. His idea was to set up a 'Heavenly community' where members would practise a 'Godly socialism'. As Berg's following grew, communities were set up in Texas and Los Angeles. There, members developed the skills of provisioning (soliciting funds and goods from institutions and the public), still an important aspect of the group's life. As with other communities, most belongings are shared, and the full-time members are expected to offer their commitment, adopt biblically inspired names, live in a 'Family Home' (community), and work for the movement. An important aspect of their work is 'witnessing', telling the world about the Lord. Throughout the years the movement has gone through many changes, including different styles of leadership. The majority of the full-time Family members still live communally, although the communities are smaller, have spread all over the world, and individual families often move around from country to

country as missionaries. Thus in any given home there may be a constant flux of families moving in and out.

Members of The Family have a definite belief in the 'End Time'. Berg took the millennial beliefs popular in American Fundamentalist Christianity literally - he believed that the Bible could be read as a virtual textbook of the events leading up to the end of the world (Millikan 1994: 203). He believed he was the last of God's great prophets. The Family expect that a dictator will rise in the East and try to rule the world. At first he will appear to be bringing peace. The world will continue to modernise, and people will be able to buy goods and services without monetary interaction. The majority will have accepted a microchip implanted under the skin. After three and a half years of success the dictator will declare himself as 'God', although others will recognise him as the Antichrist. Then will follow three and a half years of trial and tribulation, as the Antichrist persecutes all who refuse to worship him, and who refuse the microchip (which will have the number of the Beast, 666). After these seven years Jesus will come down from heaven, in a white light, exactly as he ascended according to Scripture. His believers will be resurrected and fly up to his Heavenly City with new bodies and supernatural powers. As the Antichrist starts the battle of Armageddon, Jesus and all his Saints (members of The Family and other Christians who have received the Lord) will destroy the worshippers of the Beast, and capture the Beast. Then the period of one thousand years of peace on earth, known as the Millennium, will begin. Jesus' supernatural helpers will clean up all the debris of the battle and rule over the people who remain - those who refused the mark of the Beast, but who had not received Jesus into their hearts. The earth will be restored to its original beauty of the Garden of Eden.

Members believe the world is currently evil, which confirms the Bible's prophecy that we are in the End Time. David Berg, as God's prophet for the End Time, declared a war on the wicked ways of the world. Berg received much of his authority through his alleged contact with certain 'spirit helpers' such as David (King of the Jews in the Old Testament) and Moses. Moses David, as Berg was often called, used to speak in tongues and relate/translate their messages. His messages were written and distributed as Family literature (known as MO letters). Although independent of the Bible, they were considered to be messages from God by the members. In 1994 Berg passed away. But he is still considered to be present in spirit, channelled through Maria, his common-law wife, who has, together with Peter Amsterdam (her husband), taken over the leadership position.

The West was not unfamiliar with Christian groups witnessing and reaching out to the down and out. David Millikan, a theologian, describes the Family's theology as a mix of apocalypticism, evangelical southern American Protestantism, and universalism (1994: 191). Despite their relatively familiar doctrine, the group was controversial, and allegations of brainwashing and cultism were spread, mainly by critics and concerned parents, through the media. The first anti-cult group, The Parents' Committee to Free our Children from the Children of God (later shortened to FreeCOG) was created in reaction to David Berg and his followers. The situation worsened when Berg started writing about new witnessing experiments that he and Maria had been exploring: the Flirty Fishing ministry.

In 1974 Berg sent out a MO letter describing how Maria had witnessed successfully in a revolutionary way; she had had a sexual relationship with a man to show him God's love, and he had joined the group. Berg urged his female readers to approach lonely men and show them God's love, using sexual contact if necessary. Over the next few years, Flirty Fishing (FF-ing) became an important evangelistic tool. At roughly the same time, Berg was elaborating his teachings on sexuality in general, referring to the biblical Law of Love. Berg emphasised a doctrine of positive sexuality - he considered the credo that 'sex is sin' a false doctrine. He argued that the Law of Love supersedes all other laws. Using the parable of the Good Samaritan, he taught that love and compassion must be put into action. And the greatest manifestation of love is the sharing of the self (Melton 1994: 77). Over time the Family's Law of Love came to teach that love could cross such boundaries as marriage; spouses, if willing, should share one another with others 'in need'. Aside from FF-ing, there was also sexual sharing within many Family homes and communities.[32]

The perception of The Family in middle-class Anglo-Saxon North America was not favourable, and this eventually informed the perception in other countries where The Family had a presence. The fervently millennial and evangelical attitude of the followers, and their negative attitude to society, did not leave them with many friends in the wider community. The FF-ing ministry made matters worse. Female members were often described as 'hookers for Jesus', 'prostitutes for Christ', and other such terms. The group was generally and simplistically described as a 'sex cult'.[33]

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[32] Although the level of sharing, as well as the interpretation of Berg's MO letters, varied for each home and community throughout times of re-organisation of the authority structures, when many of the members were relatively disconnected from each other. I shall elaborate such changes in chapter 2.
[33] See, for example, the memoir of a former member *Heaven's Harlots: my Fifteen Years as a Sacred Prostitute.* (Williams 1998).

The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification

The Family Federation For World Peace and Unification was formerly known as the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, and members were often referred to as 'Moonies', after the name of the Korean founder and leader, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. I shall use the more familiar terms Unificationists and Unification Church (UC). The movement was founded in 1954 in South Korea, and in the early 1970s Moon and his wife moved to the United States, where the UC became one of the new religions with the highest profile throughout the West (Barker in Miller 1995: 223). Over time the UC has developed into an organization with many subsidiaries and projects, including UPI (United Press International) and the *Washington Times*, fishing companies, a theological seminary, colleges, schools, a Korean dance company, and much more, as well as valuable property. These businesses are propelled by the internationalism of the UC, which stresses 'unification' of the world. In 1982 Moon was convicted of conspiracy to evade taxes and sent to prison. Since his release, he has spent most of his time in the East and the United States of America, because he was banned from entering the UK and all the Schengen agreement nations. In 2005, however, Moon was allowed to visit the UK for 24 hours, and in 2006 he was allowed to visit Germany. Membership estimates range between 250.000 and over 4 million followers world-wide (of which 10.000 are said to be in Western nations).[34]

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[34] Inform estimates there are 25,000 members and approximately 5-600 in the UK. According to David V. Barrett, the UC now has 4.5 million followers worldwide, and 10,000 of them are in the West (2001). This discrepancy is not unusual as membership estimates are inherently difficult; one cannot always rely on the movement's own statistics and definitions of membership are not always clear. For example, Moon is politically quite powerful and has prominent guests who appear at ceremonies, who in turn draw attendees, and it is not clear whether they are counted as 'honorary members' or not.

To his followers, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon is the Messiah. Moon's teachings have been written down by followers in the *Divine Principle*, which argues that Adam and Eve were meant to establish a God-centred family. Yet Lucifer seduced Eve, who in turn physically seduced Adam; they 'fell from grace'. From then on, according to the UC, all children have been born with what Moon refers to as 'Fallen Nature', which is a state of being resulting from a 'Lucifer centred' union as opposed to a 'God-centred' union. For Unificationists, purity before marriage is very important, and adultery is the most horrendous sin among human beings - it is at the root of all sinfulness (Fichter 1985: 30). Eve's transgression with Lucifer has enabled him to hold sovereignty over this world, rather than God. Jesus was meant to restore the world according to God's plan, but he was killed before he was able to marry, hence he could not restore the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Unificationists believe that Moon is the Messiah who has managed to lay the foundation for the restoration of the 'Kingdom of Heaven' on earth through his marriage in 1960 (Barker in Miller 1995: 224). Marriage and family are seen as the keys to salvation. For the first generation of converts, the most important ritual was to be 'matched' to a partner by Moon, after which a 'Blessing' would take place. This was seen as the only way in which eventually 'Fallen Nature' could be eradicated (in mass wedding ceremonies that could involve thousands of couples). Preceding the blessing there is a Holy Wine ceremony, during which, it is believed, the matched couples' bloodline is purified, enabling them to bear children untainted by 'Fallen Nature' (*ibid*.: 225). After the blessing ceremony the couples often separate in order to continue their church activities; this used to be for several years, although over time this separation period has shortened. Once the couple is reunited, more rituals follow in order to ensure that the wife will give birth to 'blessed' children. This includes a three-day ceremony

starting on the night the marriage is consummated, which includes prescribed sexual positions that are meant to symbolically expunge the Devil and recreate a God-centred family.

The importance of the blessing carries through to the next generation of 'blessed children', who have the task to continue building on the foundation to the Kingdom of God laid down by their parents. This means that a Unificationist 'sister' can only marry a Unificationist 'brother'.[35] The movement is considered to be one big unified family, and blessed children must marry within the movement so as not to break down this foundation to God's Kingdom created by Moon's blessings. Moon's plan is salvation through the creation of 'God-centred' families, where a perfect relationship with God helps to establish a perfect relationship between husband and wife, and then between parents and children (Fichter 1985).[36] There were certain requirements before a couple could be blessed in marriage. The first generation converts were generally required to have been members for at least three years, and to have each recruited three new members ('spiritual children') to the church.[37] Also, a required financial contribution to the 'indemnity fund' was necessary. Indemnity is a very important concept within Unification theology. The belief behind it is that all of humanity shares in the debt owed for the fall of mankind and the betrayal of Jesus, and all must pay, spiritually, for this collective sin. But a good deed can cancel the debt; hence this 'payment' can be done through good, sacrificial deeds. But different 'value' is bestowed upon deeds depending on the actor. Indemnity, according to

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[35] Before marriage both men and women, referred to as 'brothers' and 'sisters' within the Unificationist family, are expected to be chaste.

[36] This is called the Four Position Foundation in Unification theology. Neither men nor women are complete without each other, blessed in a God-centred marriage, with children to complete the four points of love that travel vertically from God through the couple to their children, and horizontally between the married couple. See Barker for more on the ideal family in UC theology (1983).

[37] Radical changes to these requirements will be discussed below.

Moon, is the result of an event that happened between three individuals - but not all

bear equal responsibility. Lucifer seduced Eve, but Eve in turn seduced Adam. As a

result of this causal dynamic, Eve bears more responsibility than Adam. This

resulting asymmetrical responsibility continues throughout history. Cain and Abel,

for example, were in mirror positions of good and evil. Cain should, according to

Moon, have fulfilled the indemnity condition and removed the 'Fallen Nature'; he

should have humbled himself to Abel. Instead, he killed Abel, and thus allowed the

condition to continue.[38] This lop-sided relationship is represented between

individuals, groups, nations, states, political positions and between the physical and

the spiritual. Women have to pay more indemnity than men, (former) communist

states more than non-communist states (the former are seen as Satan-led and

antonyms to Moon's ideal of Heaven on Earth), and humanity has to pay indemnity

towards the spiritual realm ('mankind' has failed to achieve spiritual salvation).[39] For

Moon's followers, paying indemnity, one's own as well as the indemnity for other's

misdeeds, is a contribution to the restoration of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Largely because of the variety of businesses, Moon's alleged wealth, and other

accusations by the media and anti-cult groups regarding the church's recruitment

methods and the supposed 'brainwashing' of members, the UC has been very

controversial. Individual rank and file members were often seen as victims, recruited

into a corrupt organisation involved in illegal behaviour such as, for example,

weapons manufacturing.[40] Not only did many Christians have difficulty accepting

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[38] See the Divine Principle, or Barker's *The Making of a Moonie: Brainwashing or Choice?* (Barker 1984), chapter 3.
[39] For a more detailed discussion of 'indemnity', see Barker (Barker 1984) and the *Divine Principle* (Moon 1973).
[40] See, for example, the UC libel case against the Daily Mail in the UK, in 1981 – The UC lost the defamation case against the Daily Mail.

Moon's interpretation of biblical history, many Western Christians had difficulty

imagining 'the Messiah' as a Korean man. Friends and relatives of members and

former members have also found it difficult to accept Moon's large and wealthy

empire (much emphasised by the media) compared to the relative poverty of rank and

file members. Most governments are still wary of receiving him, and closely monitor

the expansion of his domain.[41]

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada brought the International Society for Krishna

Consciousness (ISKCON) to the United States from India in 1965 and to London in

1969. Srila Prabhupada, as his followers called him, had founded a worldwide

movement within a decade of starting the first temple in New York City. In 2002

they claimed to have approximately 10,000 temple devotees and 250,000

congregational devotees, 350 centres and 60 rural communities worldwide.[42] The

movement has its roots in the 15th Century Krishna Bhakti (devotional) movement

founded by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534), who had revived a devotional

form of Hinduism, emphasising that love and service to God were the means through

which one could gain spiritual realisation (Goswami in Gelberg 1983; Rochford 1995:

216). Caitanya, and later his followers, considered Krishna the supreme manifestation

of God, instead of seeing him as one of many gods. Caitanya preached that all

people, regardless of their caste or station in life, could be self-realised through their

activities performed in the service of Krishna. This was a major split from other

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[41] Brazilian authorities investigated the property Moon purchased in their country after allegations of money laundering – as of 2007 no legal action had been taken. In Paraguay congress approved the expropriation of parts of land owned by a company connected to Rev Moon in 2005. See, for example, 'A town owned by a cult seeks liberation' in The Economist (11 August 2005).
[42] Inform

forms of Hinduism (Rochford 1995: 216). Caitanya also introduced another practice, *Sankirtan*, for which ISKCON has become notorious:[43]

> Growing out of his intense religious passion, Caitanya initiated *sankirtana*, a practice requiring his followers to venture out into the streets to dance and sing their praises of Lord Krishna. When Prabhupada began his movement in America, *sankirtana* (preaching, book distribution, and chanting in public) became the principal means of spreading Krishna Consciousness (*ibid.*: 216).

According to Prabhupada, devotion to Krishna and *sankirtan* were imperative for devotees to reach their goal: to escape the cycle of rebirth and return to Godhead.[44] In order to avoid the material world and return to Godhead devotees must escape the laws of karma, by controlling their senses and perfecting their spiritual lives. Devotees commit themselves to chanting the *Hare Krishna* mantra daily (*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*) with a string of 108 prayer beads, called *japa* beads, (one mantra per bead, 16 rounds per day) and to live a life of devotion. This devotion includes a specific dress code, following a special diet (no meat or foods that are considered to tantalise the senses, or that grow in shadow or darkness, such as mushrooms), as well as abstaining from alcohol, drugs, caffeine, and gambling. Devotees should also abstain from sex, except for procreation within marriage.

The life of ritual and devotion is crucial to achieving Krishna Consciousness. The chanting and worship of the deities can actively raise one towards Godhead, and keep the devotee from *Maya*, illusion, the soul being misled by matter and, consequently,

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[43] See, for example, Nori Muster (1997) on the controversy *sankirtan* caused at the Los Angeles airport.
[44] Godhead refers to the original spiritual home of Krishna.

entrapped.[45] Such devotion might take someone from the world of the 'conditioned souls' to the world of the liberated entities. Followers believe that the soul transmigrates through millions of bodily forms on its way towards perfection. It is only those who have attained 'Krishna Consciousness' who are truly liberated. Those who are not are subject to continual reincarnation (in human or animal forms). Likewise, the universe passes through different stages, *yugas*. The universe in its various stages will last for four billion, three hundred million years. When it comes to an end all creation (including hundreds of thousands of universes) is inhaled back into the body of Vishnu (an expansion of Krishna), and reborn with Vishnu's next breath. At the present time, according to ISKCON, we are in the *Kali yuga*, the *yuga* of death and destruction. Followers are taught that Krishna has shown a special mercy by entering this world in the shape of Caitanya Mahabrabhu - and human beings have received the rare opportunity to attain spiritual fulfilment despite being in such a destructive age.

For most Western countries during the 1960s, this was a new message, hence ISKCON stood out. Likewise, devotees stood out because of their dress and style of worship, and the practice of *sankirtan* brought them into the public eye. At the time the general public was wary of new religions, which they considered to be cultic. Cults were perceived to be a challenge to churches, the state, family life, and the general well-being of individuals.[46] ISKCON, especially, being an exotic import and espousing an unusual lifestyle, was treated with apprehension. Guru-disciple relations were regarded with suspicion, especially when some gurus within ISKCON started

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[45] Krishna is believed to reside in his name, and in his image. ISKCON Temples are likely to have images of other deities as well, such as Radha-Krishna, Gaura-Nitai, Visnu, Laksmi Narayana and Sita Rama. They are generally thought to, at times of ritual, contain the spirits of the deities they represent.
[46] See, for example, Bromley et. al. (1981) and Beckford (1985).

abusing their positions of power and involved themselves with sexual misconduct, drug dealing, and in one case, murder (Muster 1997). Yet ISKCON was attractive to many people, who were generally young, dissatisfied with society, and ready to turn their backs on it and embrace something new. They were ready to devote their lives to Krishna, and did so with fervour.[47]

SECTS AND CHILDREN

The first generation born within the sectarian community is often considered a special milestone by parents and religious leaders, and a reason for structural changes aimed at increasing protection of this new generation by keeping out negative influences while holding in positive ones. Of course this sentiment is shared by most parents, whether they are part of a sectarian community or not. Yet for a sectarian group the birth of a new generation can greatly affect the sect's previous priorities and lifestyle as parents have to divide their time, energy and resources.[48] The lifestyle of young revolutionaries with relatively few responsibilities is different from that of parents who need to provide for children. It is likely that they will need to alter the previously manufactured environment to make it appropriate for children. Groups might even find they need to re-evaluate certain beliefs and practices. The ways in which sectarian groups adapt to this change, and the degree to which they do so, depends on how they choose to combine their new responsibilities with their previous priorities. How these priorities are juggled depends on the way in which the new generation is

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[47] To such an extent that some airports sought a ban on solicitation from ISKCON See ISKCON v. Lee, 505 U.S. 672 (1992).

[48] The leadership of the sects and parents of the children do not always agree, and the birth of children may be an incentive for parents to leave the confines of the group. However, in general the plans for the children fall within the general worldview and doctrinal framework the members already adhere to, and consequently parents frequently follow the teachings relating to the following generations. My research focuses on those who have remained with the groups after the birth of their children, although in one case a mother left with her children when the daughter I interviewed was a young teenager.

regarded. Children might be perceived to have a special and doctrinal importance, or an intrinsic importance. In most cases they are thought to be different from 'other' children - this difference may result from prophecy, by association, by birth, or even by biology. Hence one can distinguish between doctrinal importance bestowed on children (i.e. they are deemed special as a result of a prophecy, perceived biblical parallels, assigned spiritual roles, and so forth), and intrinsic importance (i.e. they are deemed essentially special - biologically rather than spiritually). As I shall illustrate below, such distinctions are found within sects as well as within other religious collectivities - the examples I use for illustration are New Age concepts. However, for sectarian communities such beliefs are likely to affect the entire structure rather than individual nuclear families.

Children of the Millennium

For Christian-inspired millennial groups the doctrinal importance bestowed on children is likely to centre around the return of Jesus. The first-generation parents in The Family, for example, believed their children were special because they were the last generation to be born before the return of Christ, a chosen generation - God's anointed children. They believed Jesus' return was imminent, and saw their children as harbingers of events to come. This was intensified when Maria, Berg's wife, had children - Davidito and Techi were depicted in The Family's literature as having a millenarian role in the group's apocalyptic expectations (Palmer 1994: 16). Berg and Maria believed that Davidito and Techi would lead the group's other children as rulers during the Millennium. Children in The Family are raised in preparation for the spiritual battle they believe will take place when Jesus returns. No matter where they are in the world, the children are taught that they will be his helpers, fighting

alongside Him with newly developed supernatural powers. Interestingly, during the Millennium their doctrinal importance will develop into an intrinsic one as well, according to the teachings, as their biological bodies change for the occasion. Many believe they will learn how to fly and walk through walls - they will consist of pure energy. Their task will be to rebuild the world after the great battle. The Family's children will be the judges and kings over the people who were saved.[49] They have been raised as the 'End-Time Teens', revolutionaries for Jesus, and generally believe they have a very important role to play in the future of the world. They believe they are spiritually advanced.[50]

The Children in the Bruderhof are considered to be special for doctrinal reasons as well – in this case connected to the place and circumstance in which they were born. Born within community, in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, they are referred to as the 'Sabra Youth', like the children born in the State of Israel. The term Sabra is derived from the Hebrew word for the prickly pear (a cactus fruit) and was used by the Zionist movement to describe the 'new Jews' born in Israel – the native-born rather than the immigrants. Similarly, Bruderhof members believe that their children form a new and special generation, as they were born in the right circumstances, within a peaceful community. They might still stray, but their brethren will be there to put them 'back on track'. Hence during the Great Crisis, the Sabras were allowed to stay, whereas many of their parents were expelled. The Sabras are 'special', and

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[49] From interviews with nine young teenage members in 1997.
[50] This idea is not unusual among Evangelical Christians. Simon Coleman has written about Livets Ord, an evangelical Christian group in Sweden, where the children born to church members are considered to be spiritually more advanced and mature than new converts. Therefore they have higher standing in the church. A ten-year-old may preach to the congregation and heal the sick (Coleman 1999).

they need to be spared from 'outside' influences considered to be detrimental to their character by the Bruderhof.

This is similar for the children in ISKCON and Scientology's Sea Org. In the case of the former, children can be guarded from *Maya*. Prabhupada taught his devotees that all people are born in Krishna Consciousness; it is external interference from our lives, which are filled with material concerns, which muddy the clear waters of the soul (Prabhupada 1978: 10). If you filter all the mud out of the water, it again becomes clear and transparent. And if you separate the mud from the clear water to begin with, filtering it will not be necessary. Hence the children would retain their Krishna Consciousness as long as they were raised in an environment conducive to the required lifestyle and practice. The children born to Sea Org members in Scientology do not have a comparative spiritual staring point to those born in ISKCON; they aren't born 'clear'. However, children raised in Scientology are believed (by followers) to be at a significant advantage, being raised with Hubbard's 'study tech' (a methodology of learning developed by Hubbard) and kept from 'Wog material' - Wog is a term used to describe non-Scientologists and is generally used in a derogatory way for those who 'reject' the scientology methods.[51] Little Cadets have their own school, and their curriculum consists mainly of Hubbard's study tech. In other cases Scientology children also have the opportunity to go to schools that have leased Scientology's Applied Scholastics for use in the classroom. Atack, a former member who wrote a book criticising the organisation, argues that Scientologists consider it good practice for these children to learn to interact with

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[51] Although some would disagree on whether the term is generally used in a derogatory way (and within Scientology it is not used in its originally racist context), 'wogs' are at least disparaged for not using Scientology to better themselves and their surroundings. See, for example, Atack (1990).

non-Scientology children; they are trained to become world leaders, and at the same time they gain experience in dealing with 'Wogs' (Atack 1990: 392).

The New Children

For some religious groups the exceptional nature of their children surpasses doctrine and circumstance; they see their children as inherently special. The Holy Wine ceremony in the Unification Church allegedly clears the bloodline of the parents, so that the children are born 'blessed' - without 'Fallen Nature'. Not only have they been born without 'Fallen Nature', they also appear to have, or at least are meant to have, other special abilities. According to Moon, his children Hyo Jin, Ye Jin and Eun Jin have spiritual abilities and strong premonitions that are innate. Moon claims that if children are born with such gifts on a 'good foundation', and use them limitlessly, these gifts will develop infinitely (Moon 1998: 25). In Moon's own terms:

> Knowing that you were born on such a foundation of the Unification Church, you should, before your father and mother have thought of it, decide the way you want to go by the age of ten or twenty. If you have such a resolve, even though you may go in a different direction, your body will turn towards the proper way. Everything will be guided. For example, although you are sleeping facing the east and thinking to go east the next morning, if it is wrong to go east your body will turn toward the south. Your body itself knows that. It is very sensitive. Do you understand what I mean? If you do not reach such a level, you cannot be a great leader in the future. Accordingly, you would not be able to stand in front of me and fulfil the mission as responsible persons of the second generation. The time will come when your spiritual level will be evaluated automatically. It is gradually coming closer. Among ten people in a village, three people will have spiritual power. They will all know what the others are thinking. You should know that this time will come. Therefore, now you must have the right attitude and devote yourselves (1998: 22).

Children within the UC who are not from Blessed parents, hence are not Blessed themselves, allegedly do not have these qualities – this is a significant distinction.

Moon is not alone in his belief in the spiritual abilities of his children. As mentioned previously, the children in The Family will allegedly have similar spiritual abilities, if not further developed ones, after the return of Jesus. In the New Age milieu there are people who believe their children are what is referred to as 'Indigo Children'.[52]

'Indigo Children' are children who "...display a new and unusual set of psychological attributes and who show a pattern of behaviour generally undocumented before" (Carroll and Tober 1999: 1). They were apparently first observed by Nancy Ann Tappe, a parapsychologist and counsellor who claims to see auras as a result of synesthesia.[53] Tappe noticed that some newborns had an 'auric colour' she had never seen before. Since the 1980s Tappe allegedly noticed that many more children were born with this colour, and has claimed that since the late 1990s ninety percent of the children under 10 are 'Indigos' (in Carrol *et al.* 1999: 10). The concept of Indigo Children appeared in New Age circles in the late 1990s. Believers see them as the new stage of humanity who will bring a new era to this world - the reign of the 'Divine Feminine' (Carroll and Tober 2001).[54]

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[52] Other terms used include 'Crystal Children' and 'Star Children', although I shall refer to 'Indigo Children'. Although I have not interviewed any 'Indigos' I shall nonetheless elaborate on this concept for comparison within the overall concept of children who are considered intrinsically different. For example, the Indigo Children have many abilities in common with Sri Mataji's New Age children in Sahaja Yoga (see http://www.adishakti.org/new_age_children.htm) accessed 22/4/2006). Sahaja Yoga is a new Hindu movement. For more information on Sahaja Yoga, see the appendix. The New Age is a varied and open network of beliefs, concepts and practices rather than a community of like believers, see the appendix for more information. Hence groups and movements more easily categorised elsewhere (i.e. Sahaja Yoga as a new Hindu group) can still appropriate ideas from New Age circles – which borrows from Hinduism as well as many other religious traditions and cultures. See, for example, literature on the 'Cultic Milieu', 'Easternisation' of the West, and on the 'Holistic Revolution' (Campbell 1972; 1999; Bloom 2004).

[53] A reported neurological condition in which some of her senses are coupled. In colour synesthesia, for example, letters of the alphabet and numbers are associated with certain colours to the person who has this particular neurological condition. By some this ability is coupled with the notion of auras (alleged energy fields around our bodies) - also called 'life colours' by Nancy Tappe, who claims to learn about people's 'mission on earth' by looking at their auric field. This idea, although accepted by some in New Age circles, is not widely accepted – certainly not in scientific circles.

[54] Carroll and Tober were the first New Age authors to publish on the topic of Indigo Children. They allegedly channel an entity they refer to as Kryon, whose teachings, they claim, help people empower themselves, and run courses and seminars on this topic. They have written eleven 'Kryon books' with channellings from 1989 to 2006 (see www.kryon.com accessed 12/4/2006).

These children are believed to be reincarnations of old souls, with a special mission.

The Indigos allegedly are 'right/left brain integrated souls', with a developed

intuition, who will help the world move into 'brain-hemisphere balance'. Apparently

an unusually large proportion of these children are diagnosed with Attention Deficit

(Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD or ADHD). But, according to Carrol, Tober, and

other believers, these are false diagnoses - they consider these children to be part of a

new paradigm. They are misunderstood because science cannot accept as

'therapeutically significant' the child's role and duty in the spiritual and etheric

realms (Carroll *et al.* 1999: 40). They are, supposedly, 'system busters' who bring a

message of love. They break through authority and refuse to cooperate with the 'old

system' (*ibid.*). Others believe that Indigo Children are intrinsically different; that

Indigos are biologically distinct and living demonstrations of the dormant abilities

that are now beginning to unfold among all humans. These abilities include purging

HIV, advanced genius, and psychic/telekinetic abilities.[55] But one special attribute of

the Indigos advancement is 'perceptual expansion', an alleged accelerated psycho-

spiritual and biological orientation, as well as natural usage of sensory abilities, that

are beyond the range of the commonly known five senses (*ibid.*).[56] This makes the

Indigos very similar to the 'Children of the New Dream' described by Drunvalo

Melchizedek, a New Age 'spiritual teacher'. In an interview he talks about three

different kinds of children emerging in the world; the 'super psychic children of

China', the Indigo Children, and the 'children of AIDS'. The first group are children

who can allegedly read minds perfectly, and the last are children who are born HIV

positive but who allegedly cure themselves. Melchizedek explains that these children

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[55] See http://www.greatdreams.com/indigo.htm accessed 12/4/2006.
[56] This particular assertion is put forward by A'shayana Deane (formerly Anna Hayes) who claims to
be an Indigo herself. She writes and runs workshops where she teaches, among other things, 'New
Science' and spiritual development (see www.bibliotecapleyades.net accessed 12/4/2006).

have 4 extra functioning codons on their DNA; which according to him means that

they cannot get ill. He, along with other believers, concludes that a new human race

is born on earth.[57]

Of course parents tend to think their child is special, but in some sects and parts of the

cultic milieu such beliefs are viewed through a framework of doctrines and world-

views that is atypical. Children in The Family are taught that they will develop

supernatural powers and abilities that will help them once they become soldiers for

Christ. Blessed Children are taught they are free from 'Fallen nature', and Indigo

Children are likely to learn that they are more evolved than the rest of the population

– some allegedly can purge themselves from debilitating diseases. They are children

born within the paradigm of their parents – in the case of the New Age this can

include beliefs in ancient teachings, universalism, the eternal and universal Truth, the

importance of planetary alignment and chakras and holism. Such beliefs are likely to

affect the childhoods and socialisation of the new generations of these sects and

spiritual communities. The beliefs that these children are special, and different from

'other children', may have significant consequences in sectarian communities that are

unlikely to arise in non-sectarian collectivities. In sectarian communities parents

and/or religious leaders are more likely to manufacture an environment where they

can control the socialising forces and set their children apart from potentially negative

peer influences and 'harmful' teachings. This is reminiscent of Douglas' symbolic

interpretation of dirt and rules surrounding hygiene described in *Purity and Danger*

where she concluded that all societies classify the world around them and assign as

social taboos those things and concepts considered to be challenging established

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[57] http://www.greatdreams.com.indigo.htm Interview with Drunvalo Melchizedek by Diane Cooper
(date unknown, accessed 12/4/2006). This concept is also mentioned by A'shayana on
www.bibliotecapleyades.net accessed 12/4/2006.

boundaries (1966). Similarly, some sects organise themselves in ways to keep 'clean'

and away from polluting influences those things most important to them. Some sects

aim for a relatively high level of protection for their children, consequently limiting

their 'insertion' into society. Their sectarianism is purposeful.[58] Sects aim to

establish their own cultural identity, cultural codes and identity spaces independent of,

and often resistant to, dominant cultural codes and structures.[59] I aim to identify sects

that manufacture an environment conducive to the socialisation of their 'special

children' and, in a sense, construct childhoods and socialisations for their purposes.

The opportunity exists for religious experimentation partly because the religious

organisations that used to control most public religious activities, often in alliance

with the State, have now lost much of their power (Beckford 2003: 172-3). For this

reason, among others, post-industrial society has 'free space' for religious

entrepreneurs – those who intend to keep to themselves, as well as those who intend

to interact with civil society in order to improve it.[60] However, Beckford argues that

such religious entrepreneurs do not seek to replace old religion or restructure old ways

(*ibid.*: 173). These movements' influence on civil society is limited in scope. Their

influence on their followers, however, can be profound (*ibid.*: 174).

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

Of course beliefs that children are doctrinally or intrinsically special to the extent

described above are not necessarily the norm for all religious collectivities. In some

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[58] In the case of Indigo children the special nature is allegedly inherent, hence the child is less at risk of being 'altered' by socialising influences, although these may still be dangerous to them as the structure is not fine-tuned enough for them and they may get 'frustrated', and, some argue, turn into something akin to the destructive 'End Time children' identified by Petrisko.

[59] See, for example, Beckford's discussion of NRMs and their 'identity spaces' in *Social Theory and Religion*, where he also acknowledges work by Kevin Hetherington (Beckford 2003).

[60] Beckford's analysis includes other reasons and theoretical ideas to explain the availability of free space.

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cases children are neither a priority nor desirable within the overall aims of the religious group. Children might be seen to distract parents from their spiritual path or other duties. Among sectarian groups there is a wide range of attitudes to children; some groups are celibate and urge members to renounce family ties and any form of dependency. Yet, this does not mean that groups that practice celibacy will not have a next generation; children can be adopted, or the importance of celibacy can be questioned in light of continuation of the group. For example, the Oneida Perfectionists and Ananda Marga changed to incorporate a second generation.[61] The leader of the Oneida Perfectionists changed his mind on celibacy and the group moved to a system of sexual sharing; enabling some couples to have children. Celibacy proved to be a temporary practice as other issues, such as sexual sharing and a second generation, became more important. Some *Ananda Margis* remain celibate, and in some countries the group runs orphanages and raises the children as members. In Tottenham, London, *Margis* run a nursery where they teach young children meditation and a curriculum in light of the teachings of the founder. Krishna devotees can be celibate, married, and/or return to celibacy after having children. Devotees generally aim to progress through four life stages, or *ashramas*, according to Hindu tradition. They begin their devotional paths as *Brahmacharyas*, students in an apprenticeship focused on celibacy and character building within the context of their spiritual path. In the second stage the devotee marries and becomes a 'householder', *Grihasta*. The third stage, *Vanaprastha*, involves gradual withdrawal from family life (once the children have reached the appropriate age) and retirement into solitary life – it is seen as a gradual withdrawal from the 'egotistic' life of the student and the householder, both seen to involve levels of indulgence. The fourth stage, when

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[61] See glossary in appendix for information about the Sullivan Institute, the Oneida Perfectionists and Ananda Marga.

achieved, takes the devotee to a life of renunciation, *Sannyas*. This renunciate is a

monk who has taken vows to denounce material goods in favour of spiritual gain.

Men and women can also choose to proceed from the first stage directly to the fourth

stage. During the early years, in ISKCON, devotees were by and large

Brahmacharyas, devoted to a life of celibacy.[62] Prabhupada, at the time, clearly

thought this was preferable to marriage, which he described as the appropriate option

for those who could not ignore their desires (Rochford 1997).

Scientology also has a clear standard of priorities for its Sea Org members, who must

leave the organisation when they have children, but can re-join once the child decides

to join as well - or once the child has reached adulthood. These premises are in stark

contrast to groups that see children as gifts from God, such as, for example, The

Family and the Bruderhof. However, the desirability of children, or their perceived

doctrinal importance, does not necessarily mean that these children will become the

group's priority. Even when children are considered to be an important aspect of the

groups physical and/or spiritual future, they can be seen to stand in the way of other

priorities - such as self-realisation, devotion, political agendas, social work, and so on.

But priorities can be juggled and responsibility shared; in a community of like-minded

people, resources can be stretched to cover childcare as well as other necessary jobs.

And this might be seen as beneficial to both parents and children; separation of parent

and child might be deemed necessary for a variety of reasons - for a greater good,

justifiable in relation to a bigger picture, or perceived as better for the parent, the

child, or both. Both parents and children might be perceived to have special needs

which should be prioritised, and this perceived need might entail separation from each

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[62] This changed once devotees started to become householders. For more information on this, see Rochford (1997) and chapter two of this thesis.

other. Some groups believe that the parents are a negative influence on their children, and that the children are better off socialising with their peer group, under the supervision of specially trained carers. And, parents might have tasks, responsibilities, and/or predispositions which need to be prioritised over child care.

In the Sullivan Institute the question of whether or not to have children, and how to raise them, hinged on psychological issues.[63] Not all members were deemed 'ready' to have children. Parents were seen as having a negative influence on their children - they had to reach a level of maturity before they could procreate, and had to consult with their psychotherapists before doing so (Siskind 1999: 56). True to a Freudian legacy, members believed that mothers usually behave in an 'envious and hateful manner towards their children', and, in this more emancipated era, that no parent should be under an obligation to look after a child full-time (*ibid.*). Hence, for the few who were allowed to have children, there were full-time babysitters. These were sometimes hired from outside, although some members volunteered their time— limited time spent with children, they believed, could help the individual gain insights into their personality and encourage personal growth (*ibid.*). And for the children, it was thought that the less exposure they had to their parents, the better a child's mental health would be (*ibid.*).

Whereas in the Sullivan Institute separation of parents and children was encouraged for psychological reasons, in other cases this is encouraged for spiritual reasons. Sri Mataji recommends that children be sent to one of the Sahaja Yoga schools as early as

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[63] See the glossary in the appendix for more information on the Sullivan Institute.

possible so they can avoid their parents' 'vibrational problems'.[64] Similarly, Osho

taught that the nuclear family was the main corrupting influence in life, followed by

schools and churches.[65] Puttick has selected from several of Osho's writings:

> With all good intentions, all parents are murderers of their own children. You
> see all over the world only dead people walking, who have lost their souls
> even before they had any notion of what it is. ...The most outdated thing is the
> family. It has done its work, it is no more needed. In fact, now it is the most
> hindering phenomenon for human progress... The family is the root cause of
> all our neurosis (1999: 90).

Such attitudes are in stark contrast to the perceived importance of family values as put

forward by many mainstream religious groups and, indeed, other sects, such as the

Bruderhof. Yet, despite their marginal and alternative position *vis-à-vis* the Western

cultural acceptance of the nuclear family, alternative child-rearing philosophies can be

very important to the functioning of a sectarian community. Aside from the

psychological and spiritual reasons mentioned above, there can be strong ideological

and/or economic reasons. For example, in the early *Kibbutzim* the children spent a

significant amount of time apart from the parents, and this was perceived to be

beneficial for both parties. The parents could do their work, and the children could

grow up without what was perceived as 'interference' from their parents. The

commitment to the ideal of communal work and ownership in the early *Kibbutzim*

extended to communal upbringing of the children. It was strongly believed that the

bourgeois family was at the root of individualistic impulses and that communal child

rearing would inculcate cooperative and communal values. There was, however, a

strong economic basis as well: with communal childcare most parents would be freed

to work. Furthermore, the children would not be economically attached to the

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[64] This is based on the Tantric idea that the body is the primary vehicle of the divine, and that each
individual is composed of four bodies; the physical body, the subtle body (made up of vibrations and
energy), the causal body (which makes up the abstract mind) and the supercausal (in which lies the
divine and universal self). See Coney (1999) chapter 2.

[65] For more information on Osho see the glossary in the appendix.

parents, freeing them emotionally as well as structurally. There were also egalitarian reasons, the sharing of child care is crucial to the involvement of women as participants in the 'building of the dream'. Indeed, the *Kibbutzniks* believed that equally sharing all work engenders equality.[66]

Any beliefs regarding what is best either for the child or the parent's spiritual path (or both), however, must tie in with a more material reality of what is actually possible and realistic - the structural resources have to underpin the psychological and spiritual demands. Separating children from the parents requires alternative childcare, as does involving mothers in day-to-day work. Offering day-long parental guidance, in turn, requires alternative resources, as the care-takers will not be partaking full-time in other tasks necessary for the community. These are similar issues to the ones faced by all families where both parents work, throughout society. Yet in this case the issues must be solved within communities that are often trying to 'reinvent the wheel' and improve on the existing social systems. In communities efforts can be pooled, making more resources available to the members - although this usually involves the shifting of priorities and existing resources.

Juggling Resources

The atypical beliefs and aims of sectarian groups frequently sets them apart from their surroundings; depending on the extent to which they want to integrate their children within the surrounding culture, this sectarian stance will fluctuate over time. Hence

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[66] Over time the structure within the Kibbutzim changed towards privatisation within community, as did the approach to child care. See, for example, the differences between the accounts of Bettelheim (1969) and Spiro (1975) on the one hand, and Palgi (1997) and the description of child care at http://www.ketura.org.il/child.html accessed 12/7/2004, where children live with their parents, on the other hand.

parents and sects have to weigh up their priorities regarding their child-rearing philosophies (and how these match with those available in the mainstream), as well as the available resources necessary for child rearing, the group's needs, and their spiritual paths. Sectarian groups generally aim to have control over the socialising influences their children encounter - after all, the sectarian stance results from dissatisfaction with society and its hegemonic cultures, and sects are concerned with the production, maintenance and transmission of distinctive beliefs. They adapt their social boundaries to strike a balance between keeping in the 'good' while blocking out the 'bad'. Hence groups might need to focus on teaching children special practice, training in certain skills, and/or the passing on of specific norms and values that are not generally part of the 'outside' socialisation process. At the same time, groups might aim to keep their children safe from perceived danger associated with outside institutions and/or influences. For example, Prabhupada considered 'outside' schools to be 'slaughterhouses for children', teaching them sense-gratification rather than the necessary practices to reach *Krishna* Consciousness (Goswami 1984). Prabhupada was troubled by the sense-gratification pervasive in society, hence he created the *gurukulas*, where the children could grow up untainted by *maya* and taught a '*Krishna-ised*' curriculum.[67] There are many other groups (as well as individuals) who refuse to send their children to schools, because they are troubled by the information floating freely within society, the techniques and/or the technology used in schools, the other socialising forces, and many other reasons. In 1999 there were between 700,000 and 1,200,000 pupils enrolled in home-schools in the United States (between 0.1% and 1% of the total school population), and between 3-4000

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[67] Term used by a teacher at the Bhaktivedanta Manor school in the UK, interview 2001.

children in the UK (0.02% of the total school population (Rudner 1999).[68] Parents in the USA and the UK choose to home-school for several reasons: dissatisfaction with existing schools, the parents' claim that they can provide a better education then the schools, and strong religious convictions—the latter accounting for 40% of the home-schooling parents in the UK during the mid-nineties (Petrie 1995). Depending on the beliefs and preferences of the parents, there are usually a variety of other options available aside from home schools. Famous examples are Montessori education and Waldorf Steiner schools, which both offer a more child-centred approach as an alternative to 'mainstream' education. Parents of Indigo children tend to opt for Steiner or Montessori education, or home schooling (Carroll and Tober 1999; 2001). They might not necessarily be part of a geographic community, but they ensure their children travel within a 'spiritual framework' they deem appropriate to their needs. Children of Scientology parents might attend a school that uses Applied Scholastics, and Cadets, children of Sea Org members, have their own schools. There, they can be taught using Hubbard's tech, while 'wog material' can be censored. The Bruderhof offers primary education within their community, but for secondary education the children are generally bussed to state schools. After school these children are picked up again and driven back to the community. The Amish send their children to school until the age of 12, either state schools or their own, depending on the resources available, after which the young members are taught the skills they need for life in the community. Similarly, The Family chooses to home-school and bring its children along to the mission field, where they will simultaneously be trained in the skills

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[68] Experts disagree, however, especially on numbers in the UK. Registering with a local authority as a home educator is voluntary unless a child has been withdrawn from school, and home-schoolers are under no obligation to reveal themselves. Rothermel suggested that up to 66% of her sample might not have been known to their Local Authoritiess (2002). A feasibility study in 1999, commissioned by the DfES indicated that, at that time, a survey into the prevalence of home education was not possible (Petrie, Windras et al. 1999).

necessary for missionary- and community life. Sectarian groups do form a physical community, and tend to create special structures in order to direct, as much as possible, the socialisation of their children. However, the integration of children into the existing social structure of the group has to be balanced with other priorities. The children might be desirable and welcome, but not necessarily easily integrated; and the parents might have to make important decisions as to how the priorities will be balanced. The ease of the integration of children into the group's lifestyle depends on the structure of the group as well as its resources.

THE ADVANTAGES OF COMMUNALISM

Communal life can have many advantages; the pooling of efforts and energy maximises resources. If a few people look after all the children, the others can work and raise funds - this division of labour makes sense economically. Many are the ways, however, in which labour can be divided. These ways are generally determined by the group's beliefs and subsequent attitudes to gender, sexuality, marriage, ethnicity, as well as the authority structure in which such beliefs are translated into practice. A strong authoritarian and top-down decision-making process leaves little room for individual variation of doctrinal interpretation and practice. This is especially the case with small sects.

The extent to which sexuality is regulated in sects has a strong influence on the ways in which men and women co-exist within the community, and where the children will fit in. However, attitude to gender and sexuality, usually deeply embedded in the group's world-view and philosophy, is often part of the group's attraction. Someone who is attracted to the idea of renouncing material desires in exchange for salvation,

for instance, is not likely to be surprised by the concept of overcoming physical desire along the way. A person who joins a group where racial identity is entrenched in the doctrine and teachings will probably expect certain social attitudes. And a person who joins a revolutionary group with the aim of helping to break down the established social order might also embrace opportunities to break down other social norms and personal boundaries. Professor Kanter, whose current work focuses on the transformation of major institutions, began her career analysing communes and how they create and manage their collective life (1972; 1973). In *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* she described communes as social laboratories; experimental places where the rules of engagement could be changed (1972). There is ample evidence that members of sectarian communities are prepared to lead personal lives in line with what they perceive to be a greater good. For example, Stuart Wright has documented cases where followers married, separated or divorced following the desires of the leader (1986). Inhabitants of the Oneida community switched from celibacy to a system of organised sexual sharing once Noyes explained that this was for the general well-being of the community (Kephart 1982). Family members have seen the rules of the 'Law of Love' change quite dramatically over the last three decades. 'Rules' regarding sexuality are not set in stone, although they do tend to remain within certain parameters; the perceived similarities and differences between men and women.

The regulation of couplings and sexuality is based on attitudes to gender and theories of the nature of interaction between men and women. Palmer has distinguished three ideal typical modes of interaction between men and women, or 'sex identity', in religious communities: sex complementarity, polarity, and unity (1994). The

relationship hinges on whether men and women are individuals who: complement each other, are only 'complete as one androgynous being' once they are united (and are spiritually distinct and inessential or irrelevant to each other's salvation), or are essentially sexless spirits shrouded in a superficial (gendered) layer that obscures the immortal (*ibid.*). Such attitudes to gender and sexuality are important to understand a group's division of labour. The early Kibbutzim, egalitarian and often socialist communes, were adamant that women should share equally in the labour. In the UC and The Family, women partake in missionary work and provisioning (Family) or fundraising (UC) as much as the men do, although with their own specialties—under the assumption that men and women are 'different but equal'.[69] In the Bruderhof, labour is divided according to traditional lines with women as home-makers and men in charge of the manual labour – their work considered different but equally important.

These relationship dynamics between the members, and between the members and the leadership, as well as the resulting division of labour, are necessary background information for understanding how community dynamics influence the choice of primary care taker: mother, father, both, or neither. Top-down, a system of relationships and a hierarchy of priorities are decided, and the children are integrated into the resulting social structure accordingly. This structure, in a sense, channels the socialising forces. The leadership prescribes the structure of relationships and the division of labour. The next important question then is: from where do the resources come?

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[69] Although in both groups women have argued, after leaving, that gender bias and sexism were prevalent. See, for example, Williams (1998) regarding The Family and Hong (Hong 1998) regarding the Unification Church.

The critical stance sects tend to have towards society often involves a resistance to participation, hence a resistance to mix in it and contribute to it through 'secular work', at least for the core members.[70] Most religious traditions have a core of renunciates, or religious 'professionals', for whom adherence and religious practice is a full-time occupation. This adherence and practice can involve full-time work within the movement, through, for example, fund-raising or administration. With Scientology one can distinguish (at a basic level) between clients who pay for courses and buy some of the materials and merchandise, and Sea Org members, who have chosen to devote their lives to the organisation and have signed a contract extending well beyond their biological life-span. The latter work for Scientology full-time, live in community with other Sea Org members, and have their general primary needs (housing, food, etc.) met by Scientology. For many sectarian groups, however, especially new groups consisting mostly of first-generation converts, renouncing secular jobs can be a requisite to joining - a sign of belief and devotion as well as a political message to the wider society. ISKCON's monks and nuns have to be in the temple and practice *Bhakti* devotion several times throughout the day, as well as practicing *sankirtan*. The latter is part of their devotion, and it also forms a substantial part of the temple's income. Similarly, fundraising is an important part of the lifestyle of members of the Unification Church; and it has its spiritual uses as well - through fundraising a member can 'pay off' some of the indemnity he or she might carry. For members of The Family 'dropping out of the system' includes not being tied to that 'system' through material means. They can accept gifts and donations, but generally do not have salaried jobs. Hence provisioning has practically become a full-time occupation, with each home having a few people who specialise in providing the

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[70] Of course, 'society' is often constructed as an antithesis of the sect itself.

household with donated goods, and, ideally, also sending some to other homes in the mission field. These donated goods range from food to clothes, furniture, and machinery to money. The Family has been known to arrange, through provisioning, hospital equipment or other necessities for third-world countries. Despite the financial uncertainty for the group that comes with having to rely on fundraising and provisioning, there is some security for the individual in knowing that the community will provide. This is especially the case for members of the Bruderhof. They have handed over all possessions to the community upon joining, and it becomes the responsibility of the community as a whole to provide for its brethren. Community life does not only provide a sense of security on a material level, as mentioned above, but also on a social level. For example, in Family homes there is always someone in charge of the children while other adults go out witnessing, 'litnessing' (witnessing through the use of literature) and provisioning. Especially when The Family had large communities, sometimes consisting of over two hundred members, there was organised childcare. Both ISKCON and Scientology have organised childcare and schooling while the parents take care of their responsibilities.[71]

CONCLUSION

As I have argued throughout this chapter, the integration of children into a sectarian community demands a variety of changes as sectarian groups, collectively, have to establish priorities, relocate resources, and often create new resources and structures for childcare. These changes happen within an existing structure, established on the basis of the group's belief and practices. Theoretical frameworks mentioned at the start of this chapter that outline distinctions between, to use Mary Douglas' language,

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[71] In the case of ISKCON this has changed drastically in the late 'nineties; I shall elaborate on this later.

group and grid structures, are useful for identifying significant structural differences between sects and other collectivities where religious beliefs provide a prism through which to interpret events and organise one's life (1970). As a result of their group structure the sectarian groups had to adjust on a variety of levels to integrate the children within the ideological and spiritual framework. The New Age, in contrast, operates as a grid where individuals tap into a vast and varied network of beliefs and practices. Hence the Indigo children, deemed special both doctrinally and in some cases intrinsically as well, are not likely to have as structurally and systematically segregated childhoods as the children raised in the sects I have described throughout this chapter. In the case of the latter, pedagogical decisions are made largely by individuals (the parents or guardians) rather than by groups of individuals and/or structures appointed to make these decisions. Furthermore, it is less likely that special structures will be created and institutionalised for them, as opposed to children born into sects.

The perceived importance of the children directs where the children will be located within the structure of the group. The Bruderhof integrate the children into community life and the ethic of the Sermon on the Mount, which is facilitated by their communal structure in which resources and responsibilities are shared. The first generation of children was easily integrated, both into the parents' homes and into the *hofs*, without undue disruption to previous institutional habits.[72] The Family integrate their children into the missionary lifestyle from a young age, making them part of witnessing, which often happens through song and dance. When the first generation of children was born, childcare and other necessities were incorporated with relative

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[72] The structure, lifestyle, and division of labour were conducive to traditional nuclear families and child rearing.

ease as the lifestyle of the members had been flexible.[73] For The Family and the Bruderhof, children are considered 'gifts from God'. For the Unification Church, they are believed to be a special and atypical generation. In all three cases, they are doctrinally important. For the Unification Church, however, there was another dimension as salvation hinges on these children - they had a special role. However, in practice the first generation of children born into the movement was not always an immediate priority in the sense that other priorities continued to be of immediate importance and parents had to juggle them. Moon appeared to put equal importance on fundraising and missions to reduce indemnity and to build the Kingdom of God, and parents were often called to leave their children in the hands of other community members for such missions. Consequently the children were not completely integrated into the movement's everyday life; rather there was a division of labour where some members concentrated on long-term missions while their spouses or other families concentrated on childcare. For Scientology's Sea Org and ISKCON, the children are neither doctrinally important (for the salvation of the parents or the continuation of the community – it still relied heavily on converts), nor were they a priority. In fact, in both cases the sects' leadership seemed reluctant about the presence of children. As a result, the children never completely integrated within the day-to-day life of the community. Special structures were created for them, quite separate from the life of the adult practitioners. This was possible with the group's resources, and was not very challenging to the overall group structure.

The birth of a second generation is a crucial moment where a community has to think about their social boundaries and renegotiate them according to their requirements

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[73] It was not until later in the movement's history that special communes and projects were developed for the children that took them out of the day-to-day Family activities. I shall elaborate on this in chapters 2, 4 and 5.

and desires. On a different level, the decisions sectarian groups make in relation to their new generation will also affect their modes of insertion into society. In some cases this is the moment religious groups denominationalise, as a result of the birth of a new generation, because this is a significant change for parents that comes with responsibilities. They may choose the more conventional lifestyle of mortgages and school runs rather than witnessing in the streets and fundraising. But this thesis will focus on the groups that have chosen to reinvent the wheel, as it were, and create new childhoods for their special children. These groups, as a result of their decisions, have increased their sectarianism in order to accommodate their new generation in new and special ways.[74] Yet attitudes to the second generation, and the resultant integration of the children, are not static. The interplay between society, sects, and their children creates an environment of pushes and pulls which are potent sources of change. These changes will be analysed in chapters two and three.

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[74] Although in some cases in fairly conventional ways, yet within their own structures. This has been different in each group, which is analysed in detail in chapter two.

CHAPTER 2

CHANGES OVER TIME

ADAPTATION FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

Over time, groups often find they have to make choices; adapt to the new generation and its associated responsibilities at the cost of some aspects of their current lifestyle (such as religious practices, rituals and missions considered essential to achieving spiritual goals), or hold on to their traditional ways and aim to minimise the impact of the new generation. These choices are crucial to first-generation movements, whose initial structure generally does not involve children. When adapting the structure and culture of the community to children, groups risk alienating some of the founding members, who might feel the group is losing some of its initial vision and revolutionary ethos. The group's choice - change or stasis - is likely to depend on a number of factors, such as the group's social organization, resources, tradition, beliefs, and worldview. Whichever path the group follows, the result will alter the dynamics, changing the group's modes of insertion (to use Beckford's phrasing) within society as well as the internal relations between the founding members and the second generation.

In this chapter the discussion of change will be illustrated with reference to the leadership of several sects and the decisions made regarding the group's priorities, its mission and the raising of children. A sect's leadership structure is likely to predispose the group's attitude towards change or stasis. Authority structures have

their social and organisational consequences; as Weber argued, charismatic authority is inherently unstable compared to other authority structures, due to its lack of tradition and reliance on a single authority figure. Traditional authority, on the other hand, relies on pre-existing structures and a history of rules, hence it is likely to be more rigid (Gerth and Mills 1946). New religions and sectarian groups are more likely to have charismatic leaders, and as a result they tend to be more inclined to change (Barker 1995). Consequently changes within new religions and sectarian groups can occur within a relatively short period of time compared to more institutionalised and established religions. Possibly the largest catalyst to change is the birth of the second generation (*ibid.*). Sectarian communities, or 'laboratories for social experiments', as Kanter saw them, often aspire to a lifestyle which is new, different, or 'pure'; an alternative to the *status quo* of the mainstream (Kanter 1972). An environment of social experimentation among consenting adults is a different matter, however, to one that includes minors. In the latter scenario a process of 'trial and error', social experimentation and attempts to 'reinvent the wheel' pedagogically, may have a developmental impact with altogether more significant consequences.[75] Consenting adults require relatively little guidance; minors require someone to take responsibility for their social, pedagogical, emotional, and medical care, among other things. Hence social experiments are often re-considered in the light of different responsibilities; rituals are adapted and practices altered. But this process of change is vulnerable to a number of dynamics, such as competing priorities and possibly resistance from the initial religious '*avant-garde*' (who will eventually become the '*arriere-garde*' to the maturing second generation).

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[75] The term 'trial and error' arose in an interview with a second-generation Family member who discussed changes over time.

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE

Weber deemed charismatic leadership to be inherently unstable because, among other things, the charismatic leader has not been 'elected' as a result of proven expertise through training or examination, nor is s/he a successor in a traditional line of rulers— the charismatic leader can stand independent of tradition and 'official recognition'. This leader is accepted by followers because of a perceived special nature, talents or skills, and/or a so-called 'gift of Grace' (Gerth and Mills 1946: 245-50). As a result, this leader's legitimacy is unbounded by tradition and norms. This is in contrast to traditional leadership where there is more likely to be a long legacy of rules and precedent that direct 'the way things are done'. In the realm of social experimentation and a group's attitude to change, whether there is a charismatic leadership or reverence to a particular tradition is a significant variable. The Family's sex ministry, for example, was a significant deviation from that preached and practised in the vast majority of other Christian churches and denominations—it came from Berg's interpretations and writings (and perceived connection with God) rather than from tradition. As a result, it was relatively easy to incorporate several significant changes to the group's sexual practices throughout the years, coupled with changes in leadership, structure, lifestyle, and so forth.[76]

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[76] This is a stark contrast to older and established religions, frequently large institutions dogged by rules and regulations that direct the structure, leadership as well as conduct. But of course this stark contrast is unrepresentative, as some groups mix and match charismatic leadership and a reverence for traditions.

The Unification Church

Followers of Sun Myung Moon regard him as the Messiah. Although he places himself in the Christian tradition, following in the footsteps of Jesus, his message and doctrine are strongly based on personal interpretation rather than generally and historically accepted Christian tradition. Discredited by the majority of Christian Churches, Moon can be considered a charismatic leader. And as the spiritual father to his followers, he decides upon the movement's general course of action.[77]

This, however, has not always been a straight course, rather one where the Reverend Moon appears to be changing the focus frequently and rapidly—termed by one former member as 'short-termism'.[78] The 1970s and 1980s were a time of large-scale 'outreach' on a global level, with groups of members moving to different countries and spreading the message in a very open and public manner. The movement was largely communal, most members lived together in the centres where they enjoyed mutual support, as well as the sharing of resources and childcare responsibilities for the first cohort of children. But in the early 1990s Moon decided to change the focus from the 'global level' to the 'family level', and started the 'Hometown Providence'. Members were urged to go back to their hometowns and convert their own family and childhood community. As a result, members moved away from the centres where they had emotional and structural support from fellow members, to live closer to their biological families - with whom they often had strenuous relations after joining what was largely perceived as a 'cult'. What was supposed to be an exercise in 'Tribal Messiahship', a change from a life of service to the world to service with the

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[77] After the movement started spreading from Korea, however, it diversified under the leadership of different missionaries. The first centres, in the USA, UK, and Japan, were quite different from each other. It was not until 1971, when Moon conducted a large tour of the centres, that these disparate groups became an international movement.
[78] Interview Eric, 2000

followers' own family and relatives in order to save their own 'tribes' first, often turned out to be a lonely and strenuous task. In many cases, old bridges had been badly burnt, and members found themselves isolated and without a support network. Approximately five years later, followers were introduced to the 'National Messiahs Providence'. Groups consisting of three couples from different nations were sent to countries throughout the world, according to rules of indemnity; one couple from an 'Eve nation', one from an 'Adam nation', and one from an 'Archangel nation'.[79] Usually this coupled a Korean and a Japanese couple (who have relatively less indemnity to pay) with one from a Western country (who have relatively more indemnity to pay), who were meant to establish themselves in this new country and remain there for three generations. Many couples who were assigned to be National Messiahs did not go, or did not stay, partly because a new plan, revolving around work towards the reunification of Korea, required a number of women to go to Korea for a period of up to three years. As a result the husbands would often remain wherever they could rely on childcare. Alongside the major mission-changes from global to family level to national messiahs, there were smaller ones that could periodically uproot the members from the conventional kinship structures. Spouses were often sent on separate witnessing missions to different countries, or urged to attend training sessions (lasting for weeks) in Korea for important 'providential' missions. At times when both spouses had to go abroad, children were sent to other families or, in the UK, to a boarding school, Cleve House, which organised special summer programmes for the children.

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[79] Several academics and theologians have written thorough analyses of Unification theology (e.g. Bryant and Richardson 1978; Beverley 1994).

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the majority of followers were working for the church full-time. The Church, however, did not provide financially for all the members. National leaders, business leaders and departmental leaders could expect a stipend, but rank and file members, including missionaries, were expected to raise funds for the movement as well as for their own day-to-day living costs. As one former member explains: "The ethos was: we are volunteers for building the Kingdom of God, and you don't place a burden on the church".[80] In the early days, when members lived together and shared childcare, resources were shared in order that as much time as possible could be given to the mission. But with the 'Hometown Providence' members did not have this extended UC family around them for support. Simultaneously, there was no extended UC network exercising social control. Hence, more followers started looking for work in order to support themselves—especially individuals who did not like the strain and insecurity of fundraising. As such, 'short-termism' may have undermined the stability of the Unificationists by perpetual change, a constantly diffusing focus and the breaking apart of support structures. Moon's status as a Messiah, however, legitimated the constant changes as divinely inspired.

THE POWER OF TRADITIONAL TIES

Charismatic groups are not necessarily completely devoid of traditional ties. But groups with strong traditional ties do tend to be more resistant to change, due to, as Weber wrote, a 'piety for what actually, allegedly, or presumably has always existed' (Gerth and Mills 1946: 296). Both the Bruderhof and ISKCON, for example, have based their authority structures and beliefs firmly on an existing tradition, and both

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[80] Interview Eric, 2000

groups have shown resistance to deviate from their respective traditions.[81] Yet, they are not easily 'pigeon-holed', as their development has been paired with a constant tension between charismatic innovation and tradition. ISKCON was brought to the West by Prabhupada, who aimed to transport the old Bhakti tradition of Caitanya. Before he died, Prabhupada established a system of eleven regional gurus who would, together with the organisational management of a Governing Body Commission (GBC), continue the spiritual leadership of the movement. Each Guru was to be treated with the same respect formerly paid to Prabhupada, and each Guru had complete authority over his regional zone—together they were to be the 'collective body' of Prabhupada (Muster 1997: 30-1). The guru-system had its problems, but could not easily be changed because followers were reluctant to change Prabhupada's (charismatic) legacy and the gurus, personally selected by Prabhupada, held a lot of power.

The Bruderhof

The Bruderhof started as a charismatic community under Arnold, but this charisma was routinised through his adoption and incorporation of the Hutterite tradition—he received ordination as a Hutterite minister and aligned his community's practices to theirs (Rubin 1993; Oved 1996). In the Bruderhof's authoritarian hierarchy of leadership, following Hutterite tradition, God and the Holy Spirit stand at the top, and they inspire the 'Vorsteher', or Bishop, who is the spiritual and administrative leader of all the communities. The Vorsteher, as a servant of the Lord, interprets divine mandate and decides on the direction of the global community, as well as internal

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[81] The Bruderhof attempted, for a period of time, to adhere to the Hutterite tradition, and ISKCON followed in the footsteps of the Caitanya tradition. In comparison, Moon, although he placed himself in the Christian tradition, reinterpreted many tenets in such a novel way that he was perceived, by the majority of other Christians, as not compatible with 'their tradition'.

hierarchy. Each individual community has its own 'Servant of the Word', who acts

like the chief executive officer as well as a preacher; he is elected by a consensus of

all baptised men. The Servant of the Word is assisted by five to seven Witness

Brothers, who act as an administrative council. These include community stewards

and controllers as well as foremen of the different work departments and elderly

spiritual leaders. In addition to the Hutterite hierarchy, the Bruderhof distinguishes

between fully baptised members who enjoy participation in the prayer circles and are

allowed to vote, single members who are excluded from certain decisions, and non-

decision making Brotherhood members. The latter are believed to be suffering

limitations as a result of old age, physical or emotional impairments (Zablocki 1971:

204). As a result, members in good standing are part of the decision-making process,

and members who are not, such as critics and questioning members in the *kleiner* or

grosser ausschluss, are excluded from the decision-making process. In a letter quoted

in *Torches Rekindled*, Heini Arnold, the son of the founder, stated: "We are definitely

not democratic, since we believe in a King, and our surrender must be without

limitation."[82] The Bruderhof leaders believe that all attempts to live in community by

human efforts alone will fail; only through the rule of the Holy Spirit can it be

achieved.

In the Bruderhof there is a hereditary succession of office; the *Vorstehers* are

generally the sons of the leader. After Eberhard Arnold's death in 1935, however,

this was not immediately the case; his sons were not in Germany at the time and could

not travel for fear of being conscripted into the army. Upon Eberhard's death, his

son-in-law Hans Zumpe was installed as Servant of the Word, and from this position

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[82] See *Torches Rekindled* (Mow 1991) and http://www.perefound.org/abt_rsb.html accessed
13/2/2005.

of leadership Zumpe made changes to the Bruderhof's hierarchy of leadership and relationship with the Hutterites (Oved 1996: 20). The Arnolds protested against this change, but Zumpe's followers accused them of being over emotional and rigid in their insistence on following in Eberhard's footsteps (*ibid.*). A few years later, however, Zumpe was deposed by the Hutterite leaders (with whom they were affiliated at the time) and excluded from his community, and other Servants of the Lord were installed, including Heini Arnold, by Hutterite leaders in line with their usual authority structure.

The years that followed were marked by disruption and moves (because of the changing regimes in and around Germany the communities were scattered). But the communities were governed under a collective leadership in line with Hutterite methods. The Paraguayan hof, however, was isolated, and the primitive lifestyle significantly different from other hofs; over time, the new generation of members there grew up lacking in the observation of the Hutterite way of life and the general Bruderhof standard of living.[83] Both Heini Arnold and Hans Zumpe were in Paraguay. Heini fell ill and Hans Zumpe was instated as Servant of the Word. The balance of authority had changed again. A leadership crisis as well as a spiritual crisis ensued, as leading brotherhood members were divided in their allegiances to Arnold and Zumpe – the former feeling that the community was moving away from the Hutterite ideals and the latter meting out harsh punishments of exclusion to the dissenters. This was the beginning of the 'cold hearted' versus 'warm hearted' division which eventually led to the Great Crisis where Heini (reportedly feeling bitter as a result of his exclusion) accused Zumpe of having moved away from Hutterite

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[83] From Interviews and see Oved (1996).

principles and the God-led lifestyle and of being, instead, 'cold hearted' – led by day-to-day responsibilities (and rationalism) rather than spiritual ideals.[84] The rift deepened in the following years as Heini moved to North American communities and Zumpe to Europe where they both sought to expand the Bruderhof. Since the Great Crisis, the Bruderhof's authority structure changed, with Heini Arnold elected to the office of Elder of the entire Bruderhof flock (in line with Hutterite tradition) while Hans Zumpe was in exclusion. Heini Arnold was eventually succeeded by his son Christoph.

Although the Bruderhof leadership has a strong sense of tradition, there are also charismatic elements to the leadership and its decision-making process. One aspect of the rift during the Great Crisis was the perception that parts of the community rejected the (warm-hearted) spiritual legacy created by Eberhard Arnold. The rift between the 'warm-hearted' and the 'cold-hearted' was a top-down initiated purification; an identification and elimination of those considered to be spiritually weak and unfit for Heini Arnold's view of the Christ-centred community—what Julius Rubin, a Professor of Sociology who has written a number of books and articles on the Bruderhof, refers to as 'Heini-ism' (1993):[85]

> The members of the Bruderhof institutionalized, by their own account, 'a dictatorship of the Holy Spirit', and a system of religious totalism that requires the undivided loyalty of their members. The concentration of spiritual and political power into an elite leadership group of servants, ever-obsessed with unity, has resulted in the continued and systematic abuse of Church discipline as a political device to expel members, who because of individual conscience,

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[84] See, for example, Oved (1996) and Bohlken-Zumpe (1993).
[85] The Great Crisis is a difficult chapter of Bruderhof history where the community was divided between those who supported the Arnolds and those who supported the Zumpes and the two parties' associated ideals. Hence Rubin's 'Heini-ism' has a parallel with Heini supporters describing Hans Zumpe as creating an authoritarian and dictatorial regime. See, for example, Mow (1991). The exclusion by Heini of Eberhard's other son-in-law, Balz Trumpi added to the feeling that Heini appeared to be carving out a hegemonic status for himself and the style of the North American communities.

question or oppose community policy. Such persons stand charged with sins of pride, selfishness and egoism, and are said to be motivated by 'the wrong spirit', or to have luke-warm zeal. The abuse of Church discipline as a political tool to stifle dissent or to redirect the movement, as in the periodic crises and purges, most notably the Great Crisis, has marked Bruderhof history (Rubin 1997: 88-9) .

Heini's son, Christoph, who followed in his father's footsteps as *Vorsteher*, also worked towards cooperation and association with the Hutterites, but this failed as the Bruderhof were eventually rejected by the more orthodox branch of the Hutterites in 1990 (who claimed that the Bruderhof communities were modernising), and as Christoph (in line with charismatic authority) eventually broke with the less orthodox branch of the Hutterites for what he saw as their 'internal deterioration'.[86] The Bruderhof communities still aim to live in Christ-centred community, following the Sermon on the Mount, and they continue to shun those who are not considered to be 'living in the spirit'. Other traditions that were initially deeply ingrained, however, have been dropped. The Bruderhof's commitment to pacifism has been de-prioritised since the leadership has chosen to fight its critics through the courts.[87] In several cases this has deepened rifts; and the Bruderhof has acquired a vocal community of detractors since the Great Crisis.[88] Consequently, the communities have built strong social boundaries to protect the children from their detractors, and increased their isolation from the wider community. The communities' modes of insertion into society have changed over time, as they have businesses, charitable organisations and outreach efforts, and use 'outside' courts for legal disputes (decreasing their level of

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[86] See his open letter in the Bruderhof publication The Plough, no.41 (January 1995).
[87] See http://www.perefound.org/jr_cn.html accessed 13/2/2005 for Rubin's description of this development. Some Hutterite congregations disassociated themselves from the Bruderhof partly for this reason. See, for example, http://www.perefound.org/xcsob_90.html. Accessed 13/2/2005.
[88] I shall elaborate on this issue in chapter 6.

sectarianism) while strictly monitoring social interactions with members and children

(increasing their level of sectarianism).[89]

MODIFICATIONS IN LEADERSHIP

Change is inevitable, but in charismatic groups it is likely to arise with greater

frequency. David Berg and Sun Myung Moon initiated many changes within their

movements. And in a different way, the leadership in the Bruderhof and ISKCON

initiated changes in order to hold on to certain parts of a respected tradition – they

changed in order to 'not change'. For the Bruderhof this was the Great Crisis in

favour of the Arnold legacy and 'warm-heartedness', for ISKCON they were

adjustments (changes nonetheless) in favour of Prabhupada's legacy and the Guru

tradition. Modifications in leadership are influential to the structure of the group and

the decision-making process, practices, and decisions regarding what aspects of

doctrine are emphasised or de-emphasised. The battle within the Bruderhof to

prioritise the 'warm-hearted' Arnold leadership over the 'cold-hearted' Zumpe

leadership was achieved at the cost of approximately 600 members, who were deemed

to be in the 'wrong spirit' and exiled. This affected the children and young adults

greatly, who generally were kept on, as Sabras, to form the base of new communities

while their parents were in exclusion. In ISKCON, the Guru system was maintained

despite the problematic (and in some cases even criminal) behaviour of some of the

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[89] Their position has also changed throughout the movement's history. In the late 1960s the American hofs began more involvement with their surrounding community and social/political issues such as the civil rights movement and the anti war movement. More recently, for example, members were active in protesting against the death sentence of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Such outreach efforts, however, can be seen as part of Beckford's 'trying to change their community' efforts (1985). Social contact with outsiders, however, is strictly regulated – visitors may visit communities but family who have left often cannot visit as freely.

gurus.[90] In helping Prabhupada establish the Gurus system, the GBC limited its own executive power. The Family also aimed to continue Berg's legacy after his death with minimal changes. When David Berg died, Maria took over as leader of The Family, together with Peter Amsterdam. Maria and Peter claim to be in spiritual contact with Berg, and thus continued his legacy by channelling his messages. Hence, the group's tradition did not change significantly as a result of Berg's death.[91] Consequently, The Family was resistant to changing aspects of the doctrine that Berg had supported and preached while alive, unless change was supported by post-mortem messages from the spirit world.

REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICES

The decision-making process involved in negotiating change is important to understand, as experimental communities are likely to go through a process of 'trial and error' in their efforts to manufacture what they consider to be an ideal environment for their purposes. There may be unusual tension between rigidity regarding 'the word' or 'the book' and flexibility as new prophecies and/or revelations put this 'word' in a different light. Yet, how is a group likely to react when a social experiment has not worked out as planned and expected? With first-generation groups in particular, the enthusiasm of the converts and their desire to change the world can make for communities with unusual and revolutionary practices. These are not always appropriate for children. Hence, the birth of children can trigger tension between founding members (in some cases especially between parents and non-parents) and intense discussions over doctrine and practice. For example, The

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[90] For more information on this topic, see Muster (1997) and Rochford (1995; Rochford and Bailey 2006).

[91] There were significant changes later after his death (not as a direct result of his death), and I shall elaborate on these changes later in this chapter and in the following chapter.

Family taught that sex is God-given and natural, and children were supposed to be

raised within a permissive and affirming environment in order to avoid the feelings of

shame many people are taught to feel towards sexuality and their own bodies. There

were occasions when children were encouraged to experiment (Millikan 1994: 241).[92]

It has been reported that there was sexual 'experimentation' among children and

between children and adults in Berg's presence.[93] The Family teachings around sex

and minors changed eventually, although this was a long process. Maria had received

letters of complaint from minors who felt under pressure to become sexually active,

and began initiating changes, but the most influential changes were not made until

authorities began stepping in. In the UK , for example, a custody case where a

grandmother sought to safeguard her grandchild moved the Judge, Lord Justice Ward,

to demand certain changes in The Family before allowing the mother to keep her son

(Ward 1995).[94] The Law of Love has been adapted over time, and the leadership

created a charter of elaborate rules around social and sexual behaviour in Family

homes and communities which was and is constantly being fine-tuned (Family 1998).

I shall elaborate on this topic in the next chapter.

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[92] The extent of this experimentation differed per home and community, especially during periods when members were spread globally without a strong central organisation (Bromley and Newton 1994; Melton 1994).

[93] See, for example, the judgement of Lord Justice Ward (1995) and a number of accounts from former members (e.g. Davis 1985; Ajemiam 2005) as well as accounts on http://www.movingon.org/, especially *Life with Grandpa: The Mene Story* (Rodriguez 2002). It has been reported in several of my interviews as well.

[94] This court case was significant in the history of The Family because the Judge, Lord Justice Ward, demanded that the group denounce some of Berg's teachings and implement some changes before letting the mother, who was a member, keep the child (Ward 1995). The judgement can also be found online on http://www.xfamily.org/index.php/Complete_Judgment_of_Lord_Justice_Ward and http://www.movingon.org/ accessed 12/9/2007.

Disciplining

The disciplining of children is a contentious topic; there are many theories regarding the methods and values of punishment, but there is no consensus.[95] Despite the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a range of arguments exist between cultures, groups and even individuals: on the one hand some argue that children 'need' to be disciplined within the context of love ('spare the rod and spoil the child') and corporal punishment is biblically condoned, whilst on the other hand some argue that children cannot defend themselves within such an unequal power relation and all violence towards children should be avoided. Just over half the American States have banned the use of corporal punishment in schools, and the use of corporal punishment has been banned in both public and private schools in the UK since 1999.[96] Britain was the last country in Europe to ban corporal punishment in schools. Yet, many parents and religious groups still argue for the right to spank their children as a method for disciplining. Disciplining can be an important aspect of the socialisation of children, in order to prepare them for the lifestyle and conduct they are expected to internalise. But disciplining can be part of the process of 'trial and error' when a community, in the desire to create an environment conducive to the religious ideals, prioritises certain objectives over the well-being of all the members in the spirit of 'the end justifies the means'. Furthermore, a community of enthusiastic converts may have rigid expectations regarding the spirituality and/or 'purity' of children, and discipline them for behaviour that would otherwise be accepted as within the general range of children's development.

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[95] One former president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) argued, during his presidential address, that aspects of religious belief, doctrine and practice may be inherently abusive to children (Capps 1992).

[96] http://www.corpun.com/index.htm and http://www.religioustolerance.org/spankin6.htm accessed 4/8/2005.

The Family's Victor Program

By the late 1980s there were concerns in various Family field homes with regard to JETTs (Junior End Time Teens—aged 11-13). They did not seem to have the enthusiasm and commitment their parents had had when they joined. The Victor Program was established for these teens who, leadership believed, were in need of monitoring, discipline, and intense retraining in the Word of Berg and the Bible (Kent 1997). The idea was that they needed to find their path again and become 'victors' over their 'bad habits'. The leaders tried to provide the teenagers with a sense of enthusiasm, a sense of excitement and adventure, and to enlarge their goals and the vision of what it means to be in The Family (Ward 1995: 163). The Victor Program was envisaged as enabling the necessary close shepherding; the spiritual equivalent to rehabilitation programmes. In reality, adolescents were separated from everyday Family activities and, instead, submitted to a strict discipline of manual work and 'word' study.[97] Disciplining involved extended periods of silence restriction and/or isolation, as well as corporal punishment. The Family's organised disciplining efforts started in 1986 with the creation of a Mexican Teen Training Camp, which was followed by the Teens Detention Camp in Macau; 1989 saw the establishment of the first Victor Program for teens (*ibid.*: 139). Victor Programs operated in Macao, Thailand, Mexico, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, Scotland, and England. Macao also had a 'Detention Teen Program', which was referred to as a camp for 'determined teens' (*ibid.*: 152). There were also Victor-type disciplining programs in the Philippines and Japan - the latter was referred to as the 'rotten apple' camp (*ibid.*). The largest disciplining program was the Jumbo in the Philippines, a walled complex which housed between 200 and 350 people from early 1988 until 1989 (Kent 1997).

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[97] Interview Stephen 2001.

Life in a Victor Program was regimented. The teens' time, according to one former

'Victor', was filled with a workload of manual labour that involved building and

renovating (in some cases digging trenches for the sake of physical activity), other

physical exercise, such as callisthenics, studying MO letters, and the writing of Open

Heart Reports (OHRs).[98] The latter are reports of thoughts and confessions of doubts

and criticisms that are submitted to the shepherds and leaders.[99] In Lord Justice

Ward's words:

> OHRs - open heart reports - were widely used as a means of forcing
> confession with the result that children were made to feel guilty if they did not
> confess. If they had no NOW (Needs Work On) they were said to be self-
> righteous and proud: if they expressed their doubts and antipathies, then they
> were murmuring. Either way they could not win (1995: 97).

Aside from the regular regiment, disciplining methods were used when teens were

thought to digress from the leadership's expectations. Digressions were measured by

assigning 'demerits'. Demerits could be picked up from talking during 'quiet time'

(time to think about spiritual matters), murmuring, complaining or criticising.[100] In

most cases, seven demerits resulted in disciplinary action - spanking or being

deprived of parent time (*ibid*: 89). In the Victor Programs, however, there were few

parents present, hence the latter was usually not applicable. Consequently,

disciplinary action consisted largely of increased physical labour and/or exercise,

silence restrictions, isolation, and/or corporal punishment - depending on the amount

of demerits accumulated. Teenagers under silence restriction were to wear signs

around their necks stating they were on silence restriction, so that peers knew that

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[98] Interview Stephen 2002.
[99] Not unlike reports a former Scientology member had to write while she was still part of the
movement; her story will be discussed in chapter six.
[100] Murmuring, in a biblical context, refers to voicing discontent and doubts, and is often seen as a lack
of faith. See, for example, Ex. 15:24; 16:2-12; 17:3-7.

these teenagers were not supposed to speak or be spoken to unless by an adult in charge. In some cases teens were on silence restrictions for weeks. Isolation involved physical separation from the other teenagers; in some cases the teenager was locked in a room in order to fast, with a bucket as a toilet.[101] If these methods failed, a teenager was put on 'Intensive Care Status', which amounted to separation from other 'Victors' and round the clock supervision from an adult for personal counselling and Word study.[102] Corporal punishment involved beatings with a fly swatter, switch, or a wooden paddle with holes in it - in the Philippines a bamboo cane was used. The beatings were witnessed by the other teenagers. Lord Justice Ward was in no doubt that corporal punishment was widespread and endemic, especially in Victor Camps in Macau where children were bruised and injured (Ward 1995: 105-6); Kent describes the corporal punishment as 'physical maltreatment' (1997).

David Berg's granddaughter Merry Berg, known as Mene within The Family, developed doubts in her teenage years about the group and some members whose behaviour she considered to be contradictory to the Bible.[103] She was, as a result, disciplined, and eventually sent to the Victor Camp in Macau. Before and while at the Macau camp, Mene was subject to exorcisms.[104] In the case of Mene, some of these exorcisms have been recorded and described at length in internal Family publications, namely *The Last State?–The Dangers of Demonism!* (Berg 1987) and *It's Up to You!–Mene's Farewell from the King's House!* (Berg).[105] *The Last State*

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[101] See, for example, accounts on www.movingon.org, Kent (1997) and Ward (1995: 94).
[102] *Ibid.*
[103] From an article by Merry Berg in No Longer Children Newsletter (Berg 1999).
[104] The Family teach that individuals can be demonically possessed, and that this can be reversed through exorcism.
[105] These publications are very difficult to find as a result of literature purges (the destruction of some publications) when The Family was investigated and, in some cases, raided. However, in many cases old copies have been scanned and published on the Internet. See, for example, http://www.xfamily.org for a list of scanned and posted Family publications. *The Last State* is available on this site.

describes one of Mene's exorcisms by Berg; Berg violently shakes her, shouts at the

Devil to leave, and rebukes Mene for 'letting the Devil in'.

> God is angry! He is angry with you! I mean he is really angry! The power of
> God's spirit curse that devil and curse you for allowing him in... I've never put
> up with anything like this ever from the very first beginning of this Family,
> from my own first children, I have beaten them with the rod, I have beaten
> them until they cry for mercy... From now on I'm going to knock the devil out
> of you if I have to... How can you my own granddaughter supposed to be one
> of my saved children, how could you invite Satan in and put curses on others,
> send little devils to other people? I don't ever want to hear about that again!
> (*ibid.*)

As part of her exorcism Mene was subject to corporal punishment, food and silence

restrictions and solitary confinement. The exorcisms and disciplining led to Mene

suffering a breakdown, after which she was sent to an institution and subsequently

sent to stay with her grandmother. Mene eventually left the movement, after which

she spoke out against the harsh disciplining in Macau. In her words:

> When I was finally allowed out of confinement, they began to bring other
> teenagers to the same house with me that were also "having problems". Most
> of these teenagers had questioned or criticized the leadership so they were
> considered "rebellious, proud, self-righteous, having a critical spirit and in
> need of major deliverance". Many of the same tactics began to be used on
> them as they used on me: Fear, restrictions (i.e. absolute silence), severe
> paddlings, and solitary confinement for "serious cases". They added hard labor
> to the list. There were also long, exhausting exorcisms over many of these
> kids.[106]

The early 1990s was a turbulent time for The Family, as allegations of child abuse and

child sexual abuse motivated authorities to interfere. In 1990 a home in Barcelona

was raided by regional authorities and the children taken away, and in 1991 and 1992

homes in the UK were investigated by social services. In 1991 Maria instituted the

Discipleship Training Revolution, designed to re-evaluate and revamp the way the

movement was treating and handling its teenagers. This included integrating the

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[106] From a published account from Merry Berg (1999).

methods of the Victor Program in every home, appointing a childcare team-worker in every community, weekly childcare parenting meetings and family time (one hour a day for parents and their children), as well as a family day - one day a week for parents and children to spend together. Maria also set disciplining standards for children and adults within The Family, and mandatory guidelines for home schooling (Ward 1995: 139-40). Nonetheless, in 1992 Family homes in Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, were raided by police and officials from the Department of Community Services (DOCS), and the Ward custody case began in the UK. The Family was changing as a result of these events; especially in response to the British custody case. In 1993 Maria encouraged world-wide open-forum discussions between leadership and teenagers to hear about their desires, needs, and complaints. She also requested that teenagers write to her personally (Ward 1995: 141). In 1994 The Family published The Family Discipline Guidelines. Disciplining of children since the publication of these guidelines included 'conversation restriction', but could not involve physical restraint such as placing tape over a child's mouth, and ought not to last longer than 3 hours at any time or in a day - a few minutes to half an hour being preferable. 'Time out', or isolation, was to last from 5 minutes to 3 days depending on age and behaviour. There were age-specific guidelines for corporal punishment (*ibid.*: 142).

Maria described the teenagers as undertaking a 'revolutionary boot camp training programme' (*ibid.*: 90). They were supposed to become 'teen soldiers'. In its millennial fervour The Family aimed to create an army of 'Christian soldiers', but the draconian regime and penalties, in turn, left The Family with 'rebellious' teenagers who carried a grudge and eventually left the movement behind. The Family's idea of

how their children 'ought to be' did not conform with how the children frequently

turned out to be; which started a battle of wills between leadership and rebellious

teenagers. Justice Ward concluded that the children had been subjected to a

"...regime of physical and psychological brutality" (Ward 1995: 92). But Lord

Justice Ward was also convinced that the Family could change, and had changed.

And he pressed them for further changes. Thus where The Family was first

determined to 'change their teenagers'; eventually the movement had to adapt to

internal and external pressure, and was forced to change because of and by its

teenagers.

ISKCON's Gurukulas

The *gurukulas*, in their task to raise the children into the bhakti practice necessary for

a life lived in Krishna Consciousness, developed a disciplinary atmosphere similar to

some of the Family's Victor Programs.[107] *Gurukulas* were specifically meant to train

pupils in the spiritual life through a 'Krishna-ised' curriculum and focus on practice.

Children needed to be trained in 'sense control', hence they were removed from

parents from the age of 4 or 5, to avoid the 'ropes of affection' between parents and

child.[108] Children attended the *gurukula* on a year-round basis, residing in ashrams

with other children of similar age and sex. Visits to their parents tended to be

sporadic.

There is evidence, however, that the *gurukulas* functioned as general residential

centres for children rather than schools - the latter arguably not always being the

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[107] For further reading about disciplining in the *Gurukulas*, see Raghunatha Dasa's Children of the Ashram on http://www.surrealist.org accessed 26/8/2007.
[108] This is similar to teachings in Osho and Sahaja Yoga.

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leadership's priority. ISKCON started as a communal organisation of monks and nuns, but was eventually transformed into a loosely organised congregation of financially independent householders and their children. Despite this expansion of family life, the organisation's attitude remained, at first, biased towards celibate monastic life. As the numbers of marriages and births began to grow in the mid-70s, householder life was redefined by ISKCON's renunciate elite as a symbol of spiritual weakness. The height of this organisational discrepancy was reached in 1976, with a 'fratricidal war', a clash between householder temple presidents in North America and *sannyasis* and *brahmacaries* - the latter had a preaching campaign against householders and women, who were seen as a threat to a man's spiritual advancement (Rochford and Heinlein 1998: 49-50). E. Burke Rochford Jr, a Professor of sociology of religion who has studied ISKCON for the past 25 years, argues that, as a result, householders were a stigmatised and politically marginal group within ISKCON, and powerless to assert their parental authority over the lives of their children. Hence there was an atmosphere where children were not valued by leaders, nor by their own parents, who accepted theological and practical justifications offered by the leadership for remaining uninvolved in the lives of their children (Rochford and Heinlein 1998: 43-4).

The first *gurukula* was established in Dallas in 1971, one year after Prabhupada had established the Governing Body Commission (GBC). By 1972 Prabhupada was, allegedly, aware that child abuse (including sexual abuse) was occurring in the *gurukula*.[109] By 1978, when ISKCON airport and street soliciting were at their peak, there were a total of eleven *gurukulas* in North America and one each in Vrindavana

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[109] See Rochford (1998: 49) and Muster on http://surrealist.org/*gurukula*/ accessed 26/8/2007. This has, however, been debated, which I will discuss in chapter 6.

and Mayapur in India. Three years later there were 24 *gurukulas* running in 18

countries, with approximately 700 students, and only one year after that ISKCON

publications listed thirty *gurukulas* worldwide.[110] By this time there were about as

many married devotees as celibates; airport and street soliciting were at half the peak

of 1978, and parents were pushed outside the communities to find employment to

support themselves and their families (Rochford and Heinlein 1998: 55). The

movement was changing rapidly, but the changes came too late for some. During the

early 1980s a two year-old boy died from battering in New Vrindaban. One year

later, in 1984, child abuse was exposed at the Los Angeles temple nursery school, two

more boys died in an abandoned refrigerator in New Vrindaban, and a devotee was

prosecuted and imprisoned for abusing children in Dallas.[111] The child abuse

appeared to be widespread and endemic. In 1985 the GBC received an anonymous

letter describing the child sexual abuse at the hands of Bhavananda, one of the Gurus.

Meanwhile, another Guru, Kirtananda, was also known to be sexually molesting

children. Evidence of child abuse continued to surface, and in 1986 the majority of

gurukulas closed, except for the India ashram *gurukulas* and a few day-schools (*ibid.*:

46-7). Yet, the ISKCON press was still in denial (Muster 1997), and ISKCON

leaders were complaining that their children were turning out to be '*karmies*'

(outsiders, people living within 'maya'), and wondering why that should be so

(Rochford and Heinlein 1998: 50). ISKCON authorities had been slow in addressing

this problem. For the *gurukulis* (*gurukula* pupils) the turning point did not come until

1990, when Raghunatha, a former *gurukuli* himself, organised a *gurukula* Alumni

reunion and the ISKCON Youth Veterans Newsletter, in which he published an

autobiographical story about physical and sexual abuse during his childhood in the

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[110] see Muster on http://surrealist.org/*gurukula*/timeline/ accessed 26/8/2007.
[111] see Muster on http://surrealist.org/*gurukula*/timeline/ accessed 26/8/2007.

gurukula, titled *'Children of the Ashram'*.[112] That same year the GBC passed a series

of resolutions dealing with child abuse, but for many young members harm had

already been done.

In June 2000, 44 young adults filed a $400 million damage suit against ISKCON for

sexual, physical and emotional abuse inflicted upon them as children in *gurukulas*.

By May 2003 the suit had expanded to 91 complainants.[113] Estimates of abuse range

from twenty percent of all students who attended an ashram *gurukula* suffering from

'some form of abuse', to as many as seventy-five percent of the boys enrolled at the

Vrindavan, India *gurukula* having been sexually molested during the late 1970s and

early 1980s (Rochford and Heinlein 1998: 47). The bias against married life and the

priorities of the leadership led to a general environment of neglect for the children.

The latter felt unwanted and abandoned by their parents. The majority felt they were

in *gurukula* so that their parents could continue *sankirtan* - 'dump the load and hit the

road' (*ibid*.: 52-3). The function of the *gurukulas*, in reality, had been childminding

rather than education. Consequently, there was insufficient staffing, funding, and

general oversight. Rochford argues that it became an institution defined by neglect,

isolation, and marginalisation (*ibid*.: 53). There was a shortage of trained and

qualified staff, and the majority of staff were ill-prepared for working with children.

The *gurukula* became, indeed, the 'dumping ground' for staff who were not reaching

the preferred sankirtan quotas (*ibid*.: 53). Sankirtan brought recognition within the

devotee community, working in the *gurukulas* brought invisibility and a loss of status.

Hence there was a high turn-over rate of untrained, unqualified and unmotivated

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[112] Also available on http://www.surrealist.org/*gurukula*/children.html accessed 26/8/2007.
[113] The case attempted to use the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) to
corral allegations of abuse at several schools into one Federal case, but was dismissed by a Dallas,
USA district court in 2001 (see legal documents posted on www.wturley.com).

teachers. The second generation had been marginalised within ISKCON, and this was now reaping consequences.

Throughout the 1990s, after Raghunatha had published his memoir and organised reunions for the disenfranchised second generation, the ISKCON leadership initiated changes to support the *gurukulis*.[114] Simultaneously, the *gurukulis* continued to meet at the Alumni reunions and continued to voice their complaints. The opposing voices did not agree on the speed and usefulness of the changes implemented. 'Letter from Me' by Anuttama Dasa, the international communications director for ISKCON, outlined the way the society had responded to the abuse at the *gurukula*.[115] Anuttama introduced himself as also having served as a board member of the Children of Krishna organisation, as well as having been on the task force that established the Office of Child Protection (OCP) within ISKCON.[116] In this role he lamented that ISKCON's response had sometimes been represented incorrectly or not clearly, and thus demanded that information be as accurate as possible. Anuttama acknowledged the abuse but added that these were acts by individuals in gross violation with the religious teachings, the instructions as well as the personal example of Prabhupada, and the general policies and principles of ISKCON.[117] According to him, the society had reacted by taking steps to assure the children were now safe, to help the young who had suffered, and to investigate fully all allegations of past abuse. In 1990 the

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[114] Although this was not a smooth process - by 1998 more letters about child abuse had been sent to the GBC, and a new Guru was admitted to the GBC who advocated *gurukula* reform and the interviewing of former *gurukula* students as well as teachers—but he also favoured keeping the matter a GBC secret. The minister of education, Jagadish, resigned, and the GBC reformed the existing Ministry of Education into a Board of Education. Jagadish became a member of the Board of Education.

[115] http://www.chakra.org/articles/2000/06/20/anuttama/index.htm (accessed in June 2003).

[116] Children of Krishna is an organisation that provides financial assistance for Krishna youth for educational needs and counselling.

[117] (*Ibid.*). In the following chapter I shall elaborate on such acknowledgements and explanations using The Family as an example, and in the second part of this thesis further comparisons and analysis will put such responses in a larger context.

GBC had established a series of policies to protect children, requiring abuse-prevention education for all students as well as the immediate reporting of all suspicions of abuse to local government authorities. Six years later the Children of Krishna organisation had been established to assist young devotees who had been in *gurukulas* with support and financial assistance, for counselling, education and vocational training. In 1998 the Office of Child Protection (OCP) had been established by ISKCON to investigate and adjudicate the allegations of past abuse. When Anuttama wrote the article in 2000, 50 cases had been decided and more were in process. The OCP also provided financial assistance for the abused devotees, with $200,000 having been granted by 2000, and worked with ISKCON to enhance child protection programs. The GBC has helped the OCP by providing $750,000 in 1999, with a commitment to raise a further $225,000 for the OCP for 2000.[118]

These arguments were countered by former *gurukuli* Raghunatha Anudasa, who argued that most of these gestures towards the *gurukulis* were merely superficial operations meant to look good rather than 'do good' for the second generation. He claimed his generation had been neglected and ignored at best. Raghunatha pointed out that the bulk of the second-generation youth were alienated, made to feel that the problem was with them rather than with the schools. According to him they were branded as disloyal to Prabhupada, spiritually corrupt, and unappreciative of Krishna Consciousness. As a result the majority of the second generation had either left or been thrown out.[119] The second generation felt neither part of ISKCON nor '*karmi*', those not of ISKCON. Raghunatha wrote: "ISKCON had eliminated or at least

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[118] http://www.chakra.org/articles/2000/06/20/anuttama/index.htm accessed June 2003.
[119] p.1 Raghunatha Anudasa
http://www.chakra.org/miscellaneous/vnews/Prabhupada'sMagicCure1.htm (accessed in June 2003)

silenced an entire generation of the movements (*sic.*) children".[120] Raghunatha

summarised sarcastically that *gurukula* was a 'grand success': the foremost motive

was to have a place to keep the kids out of the way so that the parents could be put to

work on *sankirtan* collections without distraction. Its second objective was to have

another showpiece, an ashram school for their public display; again, the *gurukulas*

delivered. He concluded that these priorities were not part of the public mission-

statement, but that they nonetheless represented the leaders' real motives for a

gurukula.[121] In a similar vein Raghunatha accused the leadership of not listening to

the *gurukulis* a second time, arguing that the reforms made now were more about the

institution's needs than those of the second generation. He alleged that at least in one

case too much of the money collected through Children of Krishna went to one of

their self-appointed directors or other office expenses. Furthermore, he argued that

the GBC's Youth Minister was 'useless' as he was not a representative of the youth;

"Never has the [second] generation been asked who they would like to represent them

and it is clear that they never will be asked".[122]

There is evidence that the ISKCON leadership structure is, indeed, resistant to change

in reverence for their tradition. For example, in 1996, former students from the

Vrindavana, India *gurukula* confronted Dhanurdar, the former school principal, about

the abuse that occurred under his leadership. The meeting was arranged and

facilitated by GBC member Badrinarayan. After the confrontation, however,

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[120] p.2 Raghunatha Anudasa
http://www.chakra.org/miscellaneous/vnews/Prabhupada'sMagicCure1.htm (accessed in June 2003)
[121] p.5 Raghunatha Anudasa
http://www.chakra.org/miscellaneous/vnews/Prabhupada'sMagicCure1.htm (accessed in June 2003)
[122] p.7 Raghunatha Anudasa
http://www.chakra.org/miscellaneous/vnews/Prabhupada'sMagicCure1.htm (accessed in June 2003) or
http://www.vnn.org/news/abuse.html (accessed in June 2003)

Dhanurdara continued his position as a guru and *sannyasi*.[123] An appointed guru is

not easily deposed. But, at the same time, there are many avenues for discussion

within and around ISKCON that challenge the leadership, such as chakra.org, a forum

for discussing controversial issues within and surrounding ISKCON[124], vnn.org

(Vaisnava News Network), an independent discussion network for Vaisnavas world-

wide[125], and the forums and newsletters for former *gurukulis* (the Gurukuli Youth

Veteran Newsletter, and former member Nori Muster's website surrealist.org, among

others). In 1998, the ISKCON Communications Journal published a study of the

abuse in the *gurukulas* written by E. B. Rochford and J. Heinlein, independent

scholars. ISKCON communications issued a press release and outside media covered

the story. For the first time, *gurukula* abuse was widely publicised. Two years later,

chakra.org published the results of a *gurukula* alumni survey sent out by the ISKCON

Youth Ministry to 800 people who grew up in ISKCON - 115 were returned. The

questions focused on sexual, physical and emotional abuse experienced and

witnessed. In summary, 37.4% saw, or knew of friends being repeatedly hit to the

point of having marks on their bodies. Over a third of respondents admitted to a lack

of feeling safe and protected from the teachers, and roughly a quarter admitted to

being touched with sexual intent by an older person before the age of 18, at an

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[123] see Muster http//www.surrealist.org/*gurukula*/timeline.html accessed in June 2003.

[124] The editorial policy states: "While Chakra has sometimes appeared to be an official website of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness or ISKCON's Governing Body Commission, our editorial policy remains independent. We, the editors, consider ourselves ISKCON-friendly, but Chakra, as an open forum for variegated ideas and opinions, is not formally or directly affiliated with either ISKCON or the GBC."

[125] The editorial policy states: "The Vaishnava News Network (VNN) is an independent network of collaborating Vaishnavas worldwide providing the world Vaishnava community with news and forums of communication. The VNN was founded in 1997 by an international group of Vaishnavas in response to a growing need for reliable and unbiased information concerning the Vaishnava community. It strives to be an independent, comprehensive and universal information source and communication center to the Vaishnava world community. Anyone can participate in the VNN. The VNN does not censor any news as long as it conforms with the VNN Standards of Publication."

ISKCON community.[126] The ISKCON *gurukulas* were meant to be a place where the children of the devotees could be raised in Krishna consciousness, but in reality the juggling of priorities and lack of management and training of *gurukula* staff meant that the ashram schools were far from the ideal envisaged by devotees.

The Bruderhof's Ausschluss

The Bruderhof's main disciplining method is shunning, which is also used by the Exclusive Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses (disfellowshipping), Amish (*Meidung*), Hutterites and Mennonite communities, among others. In the Bruderhof, deviations from doctrine, practice and the communal norm are believed to threaten the social and spiritual base of the community. Those whose ideas or behaviour are believed to threaten unity, and who will not reform from and repent alleged or reported sinful thoughts and conduct, are disciplined. Members who commit minor infractions are prohibited from attending the *Gemeindestunde* (prayer circle). Larger infractions result in the *Kleiner Ausschluss* (small exclusion); the member remains within the community, working and eating with fellow members, but is shunned and excluded from the *Gemeindestunde*. At this stage, a member is deemed unfit to work with children, and is likely to be put to work in the laundry room, kitchen, or field.[127] The *Grosser Ausschluss* (great exclusion) involves exclusion from all community activity and complete shunning—in some cases this entails expulsion from the community for an indefinite length of time, although a member might still physically be in or near the community.[128] These punishments transcend blood ties and marriage vows; children, spouse and other relatives have to shun the offending member, and accept the

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[126] http://www.chakra.org/articles/2000/04/14/survey.results/index.htm accessed June 2003.
[127] Interview Janet 2001.
[128] Interview Anna 2001.

expulsion if the leadership decides the great exclusion is appropriate (see Rubin 1997: 88).[129]

When parents are put in *Grosser Ausschluss*, children are affected - they are sent to live with another couple or family for the duration of the exclusion. They are usually not told where their parents are, nor how long the exclusion will last. Siblings are often separated. One former member aged nine, Janet, came home from school one day to an empty house. A group of parents had disagreed with a minister, and were put in exclusion; the fathers on one farm and the mothers on another. (This was on an English hof which consisted of three farms.) Her eldest brother, who was twelve at the time, was also in exclusion - he ended up being in exclusion for six months. With her parents gone, she and her other siblings were separated and taken to other families for the duration of the parents' exclusion. At the time she did not know where her parents were, and to this day she does not know where her siblings stayed.[130] For another former member, Frank, a similar scenario lasted almost a year.[131]

When children are in the Great Exclusion, they are separated from family and friends. According to Nadine Pleil, a former member who has published a memoir, young children could be excluded for years; the elders believed that children needed a longer interval to repent and experience a freeing of their sins than adults (Pleil 1994: 86). Children are seen as points of entry for demonic attack, and they can be tools of Satan. Parents are told that their children are inherently inclined to sin, and the

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[129] This shunning can be compared to silence restriction and isolation used on children and teenagers in The Family. Justice Ward describes a case in The Family where a young woman was put into isolation. Every morning she had to go to a caravan on the grounds of the Home, isolated from fellow members. Some adults would visit her on occasion, and meals were brought to her. This isolation lasted seven weeks (Ward 1995: 111).

[130] Interview Janet 2001.

[131] Interview Frank 2001.

parents must guard against this (Arnold 1996: 77). Hence the children's environment

must be filled with purity and love. Children follow the examples of others, and if

people around them sin, they will do so as well. "As parents we must always be ready

to fight evil in our children, whether it takes the form of lying, stealing, disrespect, or

sexual impurity" (*ibid.*: 79). The issue of sexual impurity in children needs 'special

sensitivity and discernment' according to Johann Christoph Arnold (*ibid.*: 80). In the

Bruderhof's battle to put Agape over Eros, erotic thought, action, and sexuality are

highly regulated. In Christoph Arnold's words:

> Yet just as the area of sensuous experience can bring us close to God, it can
> mislead us and even bring us into satanic darkness. All too often we tend
> towards the superficial and miss the might and power of what God could
> otherwise give us. Too often, in grasping at what we experience with our
> senses, we forget about God and miss the possibility of experiencing the full
> depth of his will (*ibid.*: 33).

Hence, children and young teenagers who showed an interest in general issues of

reproduction could be branded as sinful and be subject to 'clearances', interrogations

to garner confessions of sexual sin and impurity, and exclusion. After clearances,

children were separated from their parents in order to repent for their sins. Oved

argued that one of the dynamics that led to the Great Crisis was a perception of the

moral decline of the younger generation. Schoolchildren had been involved in petty

theft and bartered these stolen goods with the hired workers. The leadership's

greatest worry was not the stealing, but the relations with the Paraguayan workers,

which put the children's puritanical sex education in jeopardy. The boys involved

were brought before the entire community and those found guilty were punished by

exclusion (Oved 1996: chapter 8).

Clearances appear to have been a part of life in the Bruderhof for a number of people. Former member Elizabeth Bohlken-Zumpe describes in her memoir how she went through a clearing without knowing what she had done wrong. She had to spend the night outside, away from her family. When her friend told her to tell the elders that they had been 'looking at each other's bottoms' (although they were not) in order to force the ordeal to an end, Elizabeth was relieved to be able to tell the elders something they might accept as a 'truthful answer'—and then the questioning would be over. She and her friend were excluded from the other children for ten days and were put to work in the laundry (Bohlken-Zumpe 1993: 58). Rubin describes the 'struggle for the soul of Faith', who was suspected of harbouring impure thoughts after reading sections of *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. Intense interrogations followed, as well as *Grosser Ausschluss*, leaving her, according to Rubin, clinically depressed. She was eventually expelled after attempting suicide (1997). Another young woman, reportedly thought by Heini to be possessed by evil demons, was never fully cleared, and eventually institutionalised (*ibid.*). The three former members I have interviewed had their own accounts of clearings as well as accounts of the clearings of siblings and friends, and the corporal punishment that occasionally followed.[132] Between clearings of children and perceived wrong-doings by adults, many childhoods in the Bruderhof have been marked by disruptions when one or both parents, or siblings, were excluded.

The height of clearings came with the leadership schism, when the American brothers and Heini visited hofs in Paraguay, England, and Germany, demanding self-examination and repentance for alleged 'cold-heartedness'. Those deemed 'spiritually

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[132] More discussion on this topic can be found on http://www.perefound.org/knsltrs.html accessed 17/8/2007, where former members have addressed this topic on a number of occasions.

weak' were shunned and disfellowshipped. One former member in Paraguay, Anna, was fourteen at the time of the Great Crisis, and her parents were sent away. She was asked whether she wanted to stay, but she chose to go to a hof in England with her parents who were in disgrace. Several years later, the English hof closed down, and with her parents she moved to a hof in the USA. But, being still in disgrace, they had to live on the outskirts of the hof. In her own words:

> To live near a community has huge stuff around it. It's a position of disgrace, of punishment, of being totally beholden. Writing endless letters and definitely not putting a foot wrong, hanging on every invitation to come to some special meal.

She wrote letters for years asking to be allowed in, harbouring feelings of shame, as well as anger towards her parents for being in exclusion—and, she argued, never able to respect her father because of the shame as a teenager. For five years she lived on the outskirts of the hof. "[I] felt depressed all that time, a failure before God and the community—just for not being allowed in." She did, however, go to college with 'the girls from the inner circle', but at the end of the day was dropped off at the bottom of the hill, outside the hof.

> And you can't be quite out because you're not feeling out inside. You're still a Bruderhof person. And you dress like a Bruderhof person and you want to go back to the Bruderhof so you don't do anything to damage that.

Eventually she began a cycle of confessing to sexual thoughts and masturbation, thinking that would enable her to join the brotherhood.[133]

Another former member, Janet, was twenty years old and living in Paraguay when her parents were sent to England, but she was asked to stay. A year later she was in exclusion without knowing why. Frank, who did not know exactly why he was in

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[133] Interview Anna 2001.

exclusion, spent sixteen years in *Kleiner Ausschluss*, after which he was sent to another hof to make a new beginning.[134] Most of these people were *sabra* youth, thought to have the advantage of being raised in community. They generally 'survived' the Great Crisis and were moved to the new communities. The leadership schism and enforcement of 'warm-hearted' spirituality resulted in the expulsion of hundreds of members who had considered the Bruderhof their family and their home. In the words of Rubin:

> Those shunned in 'disfellowship' experienced traumatic loss and
> disorientation, at first blaming their fate on their own spiritual inadequacies.
> Later, when confirmed as apostates with no way back, they came to view
> exclusion as a callous act of unloving, unbrotherly cruelty (Rubin 2000: 106).

The Bruderhof leadership remained rigid in their preservation of a certain tradition, and dissenters had a choice; they could conform or they would be shunned and possibly excluded.

LEADERSHIP, STASIS AND CHANGE

The Family, through Victor Programs, attempted to make the children conform to the vision they had for them in the spirit of 'the end justifies the means'. Kent argues that the Family's Victor Program was an exercise in 'brainwashing' and an attempt to mould the children to the image held by Family leadership and parents (1997). According to Justice Ward, the means employed had significant costs: "The cost to the children was to rob them of their personal identity. It was an invasion of personal freedom" (1995: 157). Similarly, *gurukulas* could be seen as a way to raise the children to conform to the practice and lifestyle of Krishna devotees, in the same spirit of 'the end justifies the means'. It is equally important, however, to look at the

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[134] Interview Frank 2001.

overall structure of the movement and the changes made over time. In both cases, the communal structure, allocation of resources and division of labour made it sensible to have organised education and camps for children; the parents could continue their tasks while the children were cared for and educated. This is not an unusual lifestyle, and can be found in many other situations where neglect and abuse have been far from the reality. Historically, it has been the upper classes who sent their children to boarding school, a practice still prevalent in Britain.

Similarly, disciplining is part of socialisation, and not necessarily problematic or harmful. Yet, in certain settings abuse is more likely to occur, and in certain structures abuse can be institutionalised.[135] The Family and ISKCON separated children from their parents, and appointed teachers who were not necessarily appropriately trained. And in both cases the aims were not realistic and flexible. In the Bruderhof and The Family disciplining was also used in the context of beliefs in evil spirits and possession, a condition that can be, in certain mindsets, easy to 'prove' and impossible to refute. Neither corporal punishment nor exorcisms are unusual among religious populations (although of course both include a wide possible range of ways to practice them). Yet some social structures and hierarchies can create an environment where harmful practices can occur and possibly continue unchecked and unchallenged. Challenging authority in the Bruderhof is likely to lead to exclusion, after which a member can no longer communicate their complaints. In The Family and ISKCON, extreme disciplining of the children could go unchecked; the Victor Programs and *gurukulas* were not easily accessed by outsiders, and were practically unscrutinised for several years. The disciplining practices were not visible to the

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[135] Comparisons can be made to other religious movements, including the Roman Catholic Church, where over time a structure developed in which priests who transgressed were protected within the institution over and above the welfare of children (Shupe 1998; Jacobs 2007).

relevant authorities. These were decisions related to the chosen modes of insertion into the wider society.

What I have described as attempts to reinvent the wheel, ignoring existing customs in favour of new ways and methods, occasionally through a process that may seem like 'trial and error', appears to be more characteristic of charismatic communities. Yet more traditional communities can equally have a doctrine and practices that are experimental (such as instituting a new governing board of gurus), and because of the reverence for traditional ties, these are more difficult to overturn. Thus The Family, a charismatic community, eventually managed to put safeguards around their Law of Love which, to some extent, protects their children. At the time of the raids, changes had already begun, and no evidence of abuse was found. ISKCON's *gurukulas*, however, continued despite complaints from children and some parents—the authority structure was steeped in Vaisnava tradition. Furthermore, devotees were reluctant to change a structure created by their founding Guru. Changes were eventually initiated when the former *gurukulis* organised and put pressure on the leadership. The practice of shunning in the Bruderhof has not been overturned. Although there has never again been the number of exclusions there were following the Great Crisis, there have been smaller crises since. The Arnold leadership held on to certain traditions, and in the process shut its ears to the former members, most of them *Sabras* who have organised themselves against the sect and lobbied for change.

CONCLUSION

The authority structure, flexibility, modes of insertion and recovery from 'trial and error' are important factors in establishing the level of a community's accommodation over time. The moment a new generation is born into the community, new pressures crop up. Tensions arise between the demands of the second generation and the demands of the founding members. The journey towards accommodation can be fraught with battles and back-and-forth manoeuvring as the leadership tries to please several parties at once. The leadership can steer a straight and narrow path, pushing away those who demand accommodation, or adjust and accommodate at the risk of alienating some of the founding members. How exactly are the tensions resolved that arise from the differing demands of the first generation and the second generation? Initial questions that arose with the birth of the second generation were: To what extent can the religious groups shift the priorities? Is it acceptable to send the children to a regular school? Can members afford to spend less time witnessing? Under what circumstances can members take on an outside job? Over time, other questions arise: Is it appropriate to change the rituals for the children? To what extent do we change the rules of engagement within the community? Can children be members according to different standards? Can we 'sell out' for our children by adjusting the modes of insertion into society? These questions can lead to long and heated discussions regarding the founding principles and the direction the group should take.

The Family adapted as a result of outside scrutiny by opening itself up to investigation and changing its behaviour. In a controversial and unusual move, the Family leadership allowed academics to approach certain communities and interview certain

members.[136] Consequently, there was some degree of dialogue between Family

leadership and 'outsiders'. The leadership reinterpreted rules within the Law of Love

to increase safeguards for the children, and although several of their practices are still

highly controversial, there is, within the movement, more reflection regarding how

society will perceive certain teachings.[137] ISKCON adapted by opening up to inside

scrutiny and discussion as well as outside scrutiny. The leadership set up structures

within the movement to look after children, giving them a forum for discussion and

complaints. They also made room for the initiatives of the second generation, who in

turn put pressure on the leadership to implement many of these changes. The

Bruderhof, rather than adapting, increased its separation from 'outside' relatives and

former members. Although visitors are generally welcomed to the communities, this

invitation does not stand for those who have a social or biological connection and who

are critical of the community.

The conclusion of whether a sect's attitude towards change is 'rigid' (because the

leadership aims to adhere to a particular tradition) or 'relatively flexible' (because the

charismatic leader may decide upon particular changes and implement them) should

involve analysis of a multitude of factors.[138] Important factors include leadership,

social structure, changes, and level of accommodation over time. Change is

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[136] Some critics and former members, however, argue that academics and researchers only receive access to special 'pr homes' or 'media homes' and only speak with members who have been trained to deal with difficult questions (this was argued in interviews a number of times). They tend to see this, cynically, as a 'pr whitewash' exercise. This may be the case, yet the end result is, nonetheless, that the group has opened up to some extent to outside scrutiny and, consequently, is not as isolated as it has been in the past.

[137] For example, the Loving Jesus revelation, where members are encouraged to see themselves as the bride of Jesus, and called to love and serve him with the fervour of a wife, and to include this 'heavenly' relationship in their 'earthly' relationships, was a controversial teaching. A radical form of 'bridal theology', The Family explain this as a logical part of the Law of Love, critics describe it along the lines of 'masturbating while praying'.

[138] The terms 'flexible' and 'rigid' do not make for sophisticated typologies; rather they are generalisations describing the group and its process of change and adaptation over time. The terms are meant to be descriptive within a context of charismatic and sectarian communities.

inevitable, but the attitude to change and the measures taken to either facilitate or fight certain processes, are important to the social dynamics both within the sect, and between the sect and society; changes tend to affect a group's modes of insertion into society. Hence, before embarking on the next chapter, it may be useful to generalise and create a working framework of a sect's general predisposition towards change. The sects with traditional leadership and/or a strongly established bureaucratic structure were generally more resistant to change. As a result of the tradition and/or hierarchical structure, matters of doctrine and practice were not up for 'bottom-up' debate. There was little flexibility regarding experimentation and 'trial and error', as practices tended to be entrenched and non-negotiable. There was relatively more flexibility towards change in groups with charismatic leaders, who could change their mind and quickly implement the changes, or with groups where leadership is according to democratic decision and doctrine/practice is up for discussion.[139] There is room for 'trial and error', as experiments that do not work out as planned can be changed relatively quickly (for better or worse).

However, resistance or surrender to change strongly depends on whose idea it is. Parts of the leadership or membership suggesting changes is significantly different from outside agents or authorities suggesting, or even enforcing, changes. Throughout their history, as described in this chapter, groups engage in boundary maintenance and tend to increase and decrease their modes of insertion into society as a result of internal and external events, pressures and changes. Hence it is important to analyse changing dynamics within and surrounding sectarian communities. And in

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[139] I speak of relative flexibility, in comparison with sects with strong traditional ties. Charismatic leaders can still create an environment where practice and doctrine are not negotiable, and they can have a strong 'top-down' leadership. Yet, as a result of their style of leadership, such leaders can implement dramatic changes overnight.

analysing changing dynamics, it is important to identify which changes are in

response to external demands. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

POINTS OF CONFLICT

The relationships between sects and the surrounding society intensify or relax as a result of the quality and level of interaction and exchange between them. Sects work on boundary maintenance while being embedded in the society they are opposed to, if not wholeheartedly then at least in part.[140] I shall refer to this process of boundary maintenance in light of interaction and exchange with members of the surrounding society as 'boundary dynamics'. No sect operates in a vacuum; no matter how much a group tries to remove itself from the surrounding society, it remains a part of society – although some are deeply inserted while others are only loosely coupled. The relationship between sects and society correlate strongly with a society's history of diversity and attitude to minority religions.[141] Depending on the extent of existing diversity and laws regarding religious freedom, a group might be illegal and 'underground' rather than an accepted minority religion. Yet, a 'legal' minority religion, if it perceives the wider society as being against its objectives, may portray itself as a world-rejecting and revolutionary entity that *ought to* operate 'underground' for the safety of its members. This is in contrast to more world-accommodating and world-affirming groups that are overtly part of the religious landscape and consider themselves, by and large, to be beneficial to society as a whole.[142] Consequently different religious groups negotiate different modes of insertion into society depending on their aims objectives and world-views. Yet, this dynamic works both

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[140] Here I am relying on Kai Erikson's use of the term boundary maintenance (1966: 10-2).
[141] Sects are by definition also minority religions (although some may disagree on definitions of religion employed), but minority religions are not necessarily sectarian.
[142] Wallis introduced a classification system based on movements' views on and relationships with the world at large: world rejecting (who see the world as 'evil'), world accommodating (who neither reject nor affirm it), or world affirming (who work with the system of the world) (1979).

ways as society, in turn, can alienate minority groups as well. Social boundaries are

frequently constructed from two sides, internally as well as externally, and the

strength or weakness of negotiations between the two sides varies according to action

and reaction on both sides to the issues that are deemed important. This can lead to a

deviance amplification spiral, as described by, for example, Cohen in his research,

and by Wessinger in her book titled *How The Millennium comes Violently* (Cohen

1972; Wessinger 2000). These publications deal with the escalating relationship

between small social enclaves on the one hand, and 'authorities' on the other.[143]

There are, of course, other variables involved, and there can be different types of

'authorities'.[144] The social dynamics surrounding sects depend on the relationship

between sects and 'authorities' (the State, government bodies, civil society, the media,

and so forth), but also on the relationship between sects and their surrounding society,

which consists of the general public as well as relatives of members of the sects and

former members of the sects. The latter groups can have a great impact on the

perceptions of the general public and the state towards the sect, and on the sects'

perceived need for boundary maintenance. For example, relatives and former

members can have a significant impact through the provision of information if a

group is isolated, or 'underground' (as it is then often difficult to gather information).

But former members and relatives of members can tell others about their experiences,

which, although subjective, may be the only information available.

The nature of disputes surrounding a sect can sometimes be identified by reviewing

the literature that is available about the sect. For example, one can get a very clear

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[143] Except for one chapter in Wessinger's book, which deals with increased accommodation between an enclave, Chen Tao, and authorities after both sides worked to bridge the divide between them (*ibid.*).
[144] In the case of Cohen's work, the important dynamic was between the social groups (Mods and Rockers) and the media. I argue here that the media had the role of 'authorities' in the sense that the general public relied on them for information regarding perceived (and reported) 'moral panics'.

picture of the relations between Falun Gong and the Chinese government when comparing literature published by Falun Gong with literature published by the Chinese government about Falun Gong. (Especially in the late 1990s, these were almost the only sources of information regarding Falun Gong.) The polarised descriptions of the group's practices strongly mirrored the spiral of deviance amplification between the two camps.[145] Similarly, in the West, it is often challenging to find balanced information about religious communities, as this material is not always available in bookshops and libraries, and the media (especially the Internet) are overloaded with polarised and partisan accounts describing, selectively, either the best or the worst aspects of particular religious communities. Of course the consequences are not necessarily the same – they depend on types of governance, the variety of information available and which 'information providers' the relevant authorities rely on. France, for example, has a significantly different policy towards 'cults', or 'sectes', than the UK as a result of different types of governance (i.e. France's republic based on *Laicite* versus the UK's constitutional monarchy with the Church of England as the established Church). Whilst reliable information is of vital importance, it is neither always available, nor always desired or sought.[146] Academic research is often criticised by non-academics for being out of touch, removed from 'reality', and, occasionally, for not understanding the religious dimension, while information from former members and critics often has a bias which makes it unrepresentative as a reflection of the religious community in question (Beckford 1985; Barker 1995). Furthermore, the latter do not always report the changes that

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[145] See, for example, the website of Barend ter Haar, an expert on Falun Gong
http://website.leidenuniv.nl/~aarbjter/falun.htm accessed 3/9/2004.
[146] There are disagreements regarding what reliable information consists of, and who reliable disseminators are. For example, the French and Belgian reports on sects have been criticised for their lack of methodology (Introvigne 1997; Palmer 2002; 2002).

invariably occur over time within sectarian movements (which is often inevitable, as they have lost their access when they left).

As I have described in the previous chapter, the history of a sect can take the form of periods of revolutionary social experiments, or 'trial and error', according to the whims of a charismatic leader. Hence, former member accounts of a tumultuous and problematic period are not necessarily representative of how the sect is a decade after they have left. However, there may not be balanced and up-to-date information available, and as a result, much decision-making (be it private or public, for policy-making) is based on the old information – which is usually freely available in the media. The latter tend to prefer the type of information that is more likely to sell, i.e. 'atrocity tales' rather than balanced accounts (Beckford 1985). Such discrepancies are likely to create a larger chasm between a sect and the surrounding society. Social isolation is acceptable when the sect consists of consenting adults who abide by the law of the land. But when minors are involved, the state, as well as local authorities such as social services, has a responsibility over the well-being of the child. This may be somewhat complicated, as, due to the often international efforts of the sects, some or many minors may not be citizens of the State, at which point involvement of the State authorities must be affected accordingly. But when minors are citizens, such institutions may seek to impose limits on a sect's social isolation. This, in return, will elicit a response from the sect, which might either choose to accommodate, or attempt to remove itself further from social scrutiny and possible external interference. However, as Beckford has argued, religious groups are not always given the 'free

space' they want within society.[147] Famously, the Branch Davidians did not accept external interference from the American FBI and the BATF, who sought to impose limits on the group. The leader had no faith in these earthly authorities, and the clashes resulted in many deaths.[148]

UN member states and their relevant institutions have a responsibility towards their minors according to the United Nations convention; but so do parents. This is an ambiguous balance, and there are ongoing discussions about whether children are, or ought to be, under the jurisdiction of the state over and above the rights of the parents, or *vice versa*.[149] The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child calls for the responsibilities, rights, and duties of parents to raise their children, which they can exercise according to their religion, within the constraints of the law of the land (Art. 5). This is especially important in the context of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which is subject only to limitations prescribed by law – in the interest of public safety and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others (Art. 9). The last point creates another ambiguity as it can put the parents' right to freedom against the protection of the rights and freedoms of a child, another variable in what is now a precarious balance between state, parent, and child. One example of such a precarious balance, and where the rights of the parents clash with local authority, or in this case the family court, is the request by the Exclusive Brethren to have full custody of the children in cases of divorce where one parent has left or is leaving the

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[147] In *Social Theory and Religion* (2003) Beckford describes 'free space' as being contested space for religious experimentation – created by the loss of power of the old religions but now being competed over by other religious entrepreneurs, old and new (172-4).

[148] For more information on the Branch Davidians, see the appendix and, for example, Wright (1995) and Wessinger (2000).

[149] See, for example, *It Takes a Village* by Hillary Clinton (1996), in which she argued that communities have a responsibility in the welfare of children, which immediately aroused opposition in the USA – namely, 1996 presidential nominee Bob Dole replied that it does not take a village, it takes a family to raise a child.

religious community. The Exclusive Brethren have put pressure on family courts in New Zealand to allow them full custody of their children, and deny custody and visitation rights to the 'outside' parent, in order to safeguard the children from non-Brethren influences. In one case a Judge ordered shared custody, and when the mother (and community members) ignored the court order and refused to comply, the Judge warned he or she would impose hefty fines and/or imprisonment if the mother contravened court orders.[150] The law of the land is not always free from ambiguity and leaves ample room for gaps and/or clashes between adult and child human rights and parent and state responsibilities, and consequently cases regarding children's rights frequently have to be dealt with in family courts. In other cases, however, family courts are bypassed and the State becomes directly involved. For example, medical issues (i.e. Jehovah's Witnesses whose parents of minors or minors refuse vital blood transfusions, versus the state's responsibility for the well-being of children) and education issues (i.e. a sectarian group's refusal to follow the state's educational curriculum) occasionally warrant higher-level legal intervention. These issues have repeatedly uncovered the grey area where the different parties' rights, freedoms and responsibilities overlap. These grey areas are also frequently topics which are closely tied in with religious doctrine and/or ideals, and which elicit strong opinions. Consequently, they can be strong catalysts to disputes and conflict between the sect and the state.

As mentioned in the first two chapters, the creation of a 'perfect environment' conducive to the priorities of the religious community becomes more challenging once children have been born into a group. The birth of a second generation initiates

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[150] "Brethren mother ignores court order" by Michael Bachelard ("The Age," January 27, 2007).

a process of precariously re-negotiating and balancing priorities as well as re-negotiating the social boundaries that separate the group from the outside world. These adjustments can dramatically change the internal dynamics of a group, and even cause tension between members on a horizontal level and/or across the hierarchy between members and leadership. There may be an ongoing struggle throughout the maturation of the second generation. This struggle, as I have pointed out, can happen in conjunction with, and be influenced by, outside scrutiny and interference. The mere presence of children can lead to state interference with sects—certainly more so than if the group consists of consenting adults only. Suddenly an external dynamic has been added to the mixture as several communities, the family, the sect, and the state, claim an interest, or even a right, in the child's (religious) upbringing. This is especially the case when parents and state disagree strongly on issues such as education or medicine, which often leads to cases where there is contested jurisdiction over who ought to decide for the child. Another situation where a sect's right to seclusion and self-governance is severely tested, and when the state has to intervene, is when there are suspicions of child abuse and/or child sexual abuse. In such cases there tends to be little ambiguity, as child abuse is an infringement in most countries (although there are different opinions as to what constitutes 'abuse'). In the following section I shall provide an extended example of The Family, who have endured extensive outside scrutiny over the wellbeing of their children as a result of the leader's publications on the topic of sexuality. The Family is a good example for this chapter as there have been a number of points of conflict, and the follower's attitudes to society, as well as society's attitude towards them, have changed significantly over time. The clashes have been very intense as authorities have interfered and taken some of their children into custody on several occasions (although not found evidence

of abuse), and somewhat relaxed as the group has adapted and changed in order to align itself more with society's standards. Yet, the sectarian group has re-negotiated its modes of insertion into society as the leadership struggles to retain the group's revolutionary stance while also offering a wider range of options for members.

THE FAMILY AND THE STATE

> *To the pure all things are pure (Tit.1:15)*
>
> *All things are lawful unto me (1Cor.10:23)* But… *All things are not expedient (Berg 1992)*

History

The Family is a sectarian community, historically frequently unpopular with the state and the general public, who tend to classify it as a 'cult' (Bromley and Shupe 1981; Beckford 1985). Academics have identified several stages in the history of the group in which they either shunned society or more or less interacted with it (van Zandt 1991; Introvigne 1994). The group was founded in the late 1960s in Huntington Beach, California where David Berg, the founder and leader, and a handful of followers were witnessing to 'drop-outs and hippies'. This was the time of the Jesus Revolution, and although this was before the development of the sexually free, experimental and explicit behaviour the group is known for, the USA media were already writing about them, and gave them the name 'Children of God', a name they later adopted. They were social and religious revolutionaries and they stood out. In 1969 members started travelling around the USA in several mission teams before regrouping in Canada. There, Berg met Karen Zerby. At this time Berg wrote that the old church was corrupt and needed replacing with the new church (Berg 1969).

Berg left his first wife in favour of Karen, now known within the movement as (Mother) Maria, and together they formed the 'new church'.

In 1970 and 1971 the group lived a disciplinary life in Texas at the Soul Clinic Ranch, where they continued building the 'new church'. Here the Children of God grew from less than 100 to 1500 members (Bromley and Newton 1994). This is where the movement developed a strong separation from the outside world. Joining the group meant forsaking all and severing world ties. In reaction to this stance, the group Free Our Children From The Children Of God (FreeCOG) was formed. This was one of the first of the so-called 'anti-cult' groups in the USA. In 1971 Berg and Maria moved to Europe, and members soon followed. A hierarchy developed as the group spread out. Overall control was in the hands of the 'royal family' (Berg's family), and local control with 'shepherds' (senior members elected for local leadership position).

Within several years this structure was changed by Berg; in 1978 he initiated the Reorganization and Nationalization Revolution (RNR). The RNR entailed the elimination of all the intermediate leadership between Berg and the membership, and the downsizing of communities. The smaller communities were now largely independent, yet also isolated from each other. Witnessing and outreach increased during this time, and as a result the strong boundaries between members and the outside world diminished as they inserted themselves more into the surrounding community. Also, many children were born into the movement during this time, adding responsibilities and changing the dynamic drastically. Some members moved

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back to the more familiar territory of the USA, but kept a low profile.[151] Some even took 'regular' employment and sent their children to mainstream schools. The Children of God had developed into a different group, and it was operating under a new name: The Family of Love.

In 1981 there was an attempt to reverse the chaos and diffusion of the RNR and encourage members to establish new fellowship links with one another – this was called the Local Area Fellowship mission, or the Fellowship Revolution. Communities, called Homes, were encouraged to meet up with other Family of Love Homes in the area. A new hierarchy developed, although this time more democratically; leaders were appointed by members in the individual areas. This new leadership brought a newfound organisation, and soon they recognised a problem arising from the many fellowship meetings between Homes coupled with the teachings regarding free love which had been widely instituted by then. In 1983 a publication called 'Ban The Bomb' drew attention to the spread of venereal diseases within the group, and brought about a new rule: 'sexual sharing' was to be limited to the Home fellowship only. This new rule was followed by the initiation of a six-month period during which new members were not to participate in 'sharing', and marked the beginning of a policy on sex. The renewed fellowship between members and the system of leadership led to the solidifying of social boundaries and relative isolation from society again as the group focused inward. Around 1987 the group changed its name from The Family of Love to The Family.

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[151] Also, by the end of the 1980s more members began returning to the USA after having been forced out of a few countries (Bromley *et al.* 1994: 43).

Throughout the 1990s, Family communities were subject to investigations by authorities. These events led to a significant turn-around as the group decided to emerge from seclusion and interact with authorities and academics in an attempt to control the damage to their image and, crucially, keep their children. This accommodation did involve some sacrifices, mainly to the doctrine and legacy of their late leader (who had died in 1994).[152] In this case study I will elaborate on Berg's interpretation of the 'Law of Love' and how this has affected the Family doctrine and practices. This was important because of the impact that some of the teachings, especially the more controversial ones, had on the relationship between the group and its detractors, and how this dynamic affected the minors within the community. I will chart the extent to which some teachings changed over time with the maturation of the children, and as a result of interference from outside authorities.

The Law of Love

For Berg and devoted members of The Family, the Law of Love is the most important commandment. The Law of Love can be traced to Matthew 22:36, which describes when Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment in the Law. He gave two: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind', and 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. Jesus continued to say that 'all the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments'. The Family regarded the teachings of Jesus to be crucial in establishing the supremacy of Love – selfless and unconditional Love should guide all behaviour (Millikan 1994: 232). Berg considered Jesus' commandments ('God's only law is Love') more important than the Ten

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[152] Since these investigations, however, The Family has undergone further changes, which signal a return to their revolutionary days and seclusion from 'the System'. I shall elaborate on these changes later in this chapter.

Commandments, - the latter considered 'old law', and Jesus' and Paul's teachings (the

New Testament Gospel of Grace) more important than 'old law' (Asterdam 1993).

Hence, for The Family, Love is the primary moral arbiter; Love guides their decisions

rather than law, regulation, or tradition. This extended to The Family's everyday

behaviour, as well as their ministry. In the mid-1970s Berg and Maria experimented

with a new ministry, which was communicated to the followers in the late 1970s: the

Flirty Fishing ministry (described in their publications as 'FFing'). This was to be the

most controversial time in the history of The Family.

Flirty Fishing

Berg, Maria and their immediate circle had been experimenting with new ways of

witnessing since the early to mid-1970s, processes they described in the publication

entitled 'The One That Got Away', published in two parts (Berg and Maria 1974).[153]

This letter described how Maria aimed to witness to a man through a sexual

relationship, but this man rejected going 'all the way' with Maria. His rejection of

Maria's sexual advances was equivalent to a person rejecting Jesus, and in part two

the man was portrayed as the 'stubborn wilful sinner', in tune with the Devil. In

contrast, another man, named Arthur, was very willing to receive this 'gift' from

Maria, and he was described as being in tune with the Lord.

> 53. <u>We are actually going through an experiment,</u> an amazing and most
> remarkable experiment – almost like a <u>clinical</u> experiment in this thing! Here
> is the actual illustration of the love of God! It's just like a clinical experiment
> in illustrating the love of God in terms the world should understand, right?
> (p.7).

The two-part letter ended with: 'Hook'em for Jesus!' (p.8).

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[153] DFO stands for Disciples and Friends Only, and DO for Disciples Only; such literature was kept
from the general public due to its sensitive nature.

In 1976 a series of widely distributed MO letters, entitled 'King Arthur's Nights', began to describe in more detail this new form of witnessing in which Berg, Maria and other members of the leadership had been involved – mostly in London dance clubs and in Tenerife. The experiment had moved on from Maria to other senior members, and now it was to become a ministry available to all members of the Family community. Over the next series of letters discussions developed about the sacrificial nature of Flirty Fishing and the importance of using sexuality as a tool in witnessing to establish contact with 'outsiders'. Sexual intercourse was an acceptable outcome, and was even encouraged. There were theological justifications. Because of the belief in the imminence of The End (the return of Jesus and the start of the events leading to the Millennium), there was a real sense of urgency and insistence on witnessing. Family teachings paved the way for this new development. Sexual intercourse outside marriage was not considered adultery, but an outpouring of sacrificial love. Flirty Fishing, it was argued, was not driven by lustful motives – it was a ministry of Love. And, crucially, it was a ministry of sacrifice. Women were giving themselves to the sexual 'needs' of their 'fish' (a person who is witnessed to) for the sake of the latter's salvation. The atmosphere was one of personal sacrifice for the salvation of others, a ministry of selflessness. The following quotes are from the start of the Flirty Fishing era, and give a good picture of the excitement and fervour of the time. They describe "The real meaning of 'The Lord's Supper:' – Do You have Come-union?" (Berg 1978):

> DO WE HAVE COMPLETE FULL COMMUNION? – Come-union?
> Common-union? 'All things common'? (Ac.2:44.) Communion in the flesh
> as well as the spirit? How long has it been since you've given your body to
> someone, a brother or sister or even a fish? JESUS GAVE HIS BODY EVEN
> FOR THE UNSAVED! Have you? Surely you should be willing to give
> yourself at least to each other! Have you been withholding yourself, your

flesh, from a brother or sister or a fish? – Or even from your own <u>mate</u>? –
Such selfishness is absolutely unscriptural! (See Acts 2:44, 4:32, 1Cor.7:5,
Jas.2:15,16 etc) <u>Love</u> sacrifices the <u>flesh</u> for <u>others</u>! (emphasis in the original)

Berg argues that the Holy Spirit is the female aspect of God – in many of the

drawings that accompany the literature she is portrayed as the Third Person in the

Trinity, a young, beautiful and sexual woman.[154]

> We talk about the Holy Spirit wooing us, so that means the Holy Spirit makes
> love to us. Let's face it!- she stoops to make love to all of us just like Jesus
> did and like God does! (Berg 1982).

Throughout the time of the Flirty Fishing ministry, the literature was full of

statements regarding this ministry as a test of loyalty.[155] Although some men were

involved in the Flirty Fishing ministry, they were not as popular as the women.

Hence, Flirty Fishing was essentially a women's issue: the 'burden' was on women,

yet, at the same time, the women were the real heroines. Flirty Fishing was

considered the ultimate gift, and women were the front-line troops in the battle against

Satan. The women were in charge of the most important mission; they were the

ultimate witnesses. The Rev Dr. David Millikan, a theologian and expert on The

Family, argues that during that time, women moved from a subservient role to an

equal role, as did Maria, who had more power after the Flirty Fishing era than she did

before (1994: 216). [156]

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[154] There is a parallel to parts of the Pentecostal Charismatic movement, as argued by Martyn Percy
(1997) in "Sweet Rapture: Subliminal Eroticism in Contemporary Charismatic Worship".
[155] See also Millikan (1994: 186).
[156] In this chapter I will rely largely on the analysis of David Millikan, a theologian who has
extensively analysed The Family's theology. He was one of the first to gain access to Family material
as well as key individuals.

Sharing

Flirty Fishing was mostly practised during the RNR, when The Family communities were independent and diffused. The Fellowship Revolution brought many changes, including renewed contact among members and regional leadership. The Flirty Fishing ministry involved meeting the sexual needs of outsiders, but the philosophy also included the needs of Family members. Hence within the Homes there was a permissive sexual atmosphere that involved the sharing of partners and spouses according to 'need' (which was self-defined). The Law of Love was applied to Family members as much as it was to outsiders. When in 1987 the Flirty Fishing ministry was discontinued, mainly as a result of AIDS, the focus of the Law of Love was turned inwards to focus on 'sexual sharing' among members rather than Flirty Fishing with outsiders.

According to Millikan, 'sharing' is based on three principles (1994: 233). It proceeds from the ethical standpoint that there is no evil in any sexual act (except sodomy) provided that it is done as an expression of love (and that the expressions of love are confined within the behavioural code developed by the group). The primary responsibility of all members is to the larger community of The Family. The needs of a brother or sister cannot be neglected or ignored because of a prior relationship to a spouse or partner, and the relationship between a husband and wife is secondary to the love that all members should have for one another within The Family. Finally, the needs created by sexuality are given a certain moral weight. The sexual need in one person creates an obligation in others (*ibid.*). Hence, sharing should always be in the spirit of the Law of Love, and a decision to share should be preceded by several questions. Is it something that is motivated by Love? Do all parties involved approve

and recognise the love in this act? Is anyone being hurt? Has it been talked through and submitted to counselling? Does this have the Lord's blessing (*ibid.*: 235)?

Yet, there was no regulation or notion of limitation outside of these principles. And although the Law of Love stipulated that all acts should be motivated by Love and that nobody should get hurt, this was not necessarily how it always manifested. Between the RNR and the beginning of the Fellowship Revolution, Family Homes were often unregulated, and there were times during the Family of Love era when there were more experimental and unfettered forms of free love. Millikan argues that at certain times during the history of the Law of Love, the motivation shifted towards the fulfilment of unmet needs rather than extending the sexual possibilities of all individuals – married and single (*ibid.*: 235). Flirty Fishing had been the ultimate sacrifice, and hence the ultimate moral good. This attitude extended to sharing – denying the sexual needs of another meant selfishness, a grave sin within the context of the Law of Love. "By elevating sex to make it a moral good, they have created the obverse, namely that the denial of sex to another in need is a moral evil" (*ibid.*: 234).

An example of this is described in 'The Girl Who Wouldn't' (Berg 1978). As explained by former members, a leader working in the field, Lori, a gay woman, requested a mate and helper to join her on her mission.[157] Berg sent out a female member called Toni to help Lori, and, also, to be her mate. Toni helped with the missionary work, but would not 'share' with Lori, despite Lori's requests. Both sent

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[157] In The Family male homosexuality, referred to as 'sodomy' by Berg, was expressly forbidden; it was considered un-biblical. Female homosexuality, on the other hand, was not forbidden. As Berg wrote in 'Women in Love': "But I don't see and I've never been able to find any place in the Bible where it is forbidden to women" (1973). However, he did, in the same publication, mention a woman who had never been with a man, and described this as 'a form of perversion' (*ibid.*). Berg concluded that bi-sexual women were acceptable within The Family doctrine, as long as they were willing to 'share' within the context of The Family's Law of Love.

letters to Berg explaining their feelings, and Berg published these as part of a MO

letter, a response to Lori and Toni, in which he was quite critical of Toni and her

refusal to be intimate with Lori. I quote at length from this publication:

> ...we're greatly disappointed in Toni, sorry to say, that she could have
> withheld herself from you when you had need, and she was your travelling
> mate. She withheld herself from her sister in need... She should have
> supplied the love and affection and the sex you needed, but she denied it
> selfishly, independently, wilfully, in spite of all our Letters on love and
> sharing and mutual supplying of each other's needs. As far as we are
> concerned, she is without excuse, and we're both highly disappointed in her
> that she denied herself to you, even if she didn't like it, even if she didn't
> particularly care for it herself... (*ibid.*)

Berg used this as an excuse to criticise attitudes that he considered to be out of line

with the Law of Love. He emphasised that Toni should at least have tried to be

intimate with Lori, and criticised her for using the same excuse he claims others gave

in the past for not engaging in Flirty Fishing. Berg used himself as an example of

how the Law of Love should be practiced. Sharing, according to him, should be

practiced with the aim of pleasing others; it is about sacrifice, and should be done

sacrificially (*ibid.*: par. 14). Pleasing another should make one happy, he argued. But

'compromisers' and 'half-hearted' people, whom he considers selfish, are, according

to Berg, worse than 'honest sinners' (*ibid.*: par. 17).

> Even if it rubbed her the wrong way and she didn't like it at all, she should
> have gritted her teeth and borne it, just like any husband or any wife or any
> mate or any FFer has to do sometimes, even if she hated it! She should have
> done it for your sake and out of love, compassion, sacrifice, unselfishness and
> sharing! ... (*ibid.*)

Berg then advised Lori that she could either 'keep her or send her away', but that he,

himself, wouldn't want her to work in his area. "As far as I'm concerned, she doesn't

believe what I write because she doesn't obey what I write" (*ibid.*: par. 22). Hence,

Berg argued, she failed God by failing Lori, and she was a disappointment to God.

And after failing this 'test' of God, after failing The Family and Lori, what task could she be trusted to do? Berg wrote that he did not want her on his team, and after such a statement, one wonders who in The Family would have wanted her on their team? Toni was likely to have felt strongly reprimanded and rejected. And, for others within The Family, this publication stressed the importance of sharing, whether one wanted to or not, and might have put pressure onto some members to take part in this ministry. Sharing is an integral aspect of the Law of Love. Although the Law should encourage respect and equality, it was also open to abuse (especially at times when there was no official charter). Many in The Family argue that there are ways in which they were protected from sharing against their will.[158] But at times Homes were spread out and there was no central leadership, and consequently many members had to rely on MO letters and personal interpretation – and Law of Love concepts such as 'respect' and 'equality' were competing with 'sacrifice' and the 'sin' of selfishness. Over time official safety measures had to be put in place in order to protect members, including the younger members in The Family.

Children

When sharing results in pregnancy, the spouse or partner is expected to welcome the child within the union – and raise it as his own. The biological father is not excluded, but the spouse/partner virtually adopts the child.[159] The years following the start of the Flirty Fishing ministry were ones of considerable sexual freedom within the group, and this was manifested in the numbers of children born within The Family. This decade of The Family's history, however, is also the one that has raised most

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[158] This was explained to me in interviews with members, and is discussed in the Law of Love, which can be accessed online (http://www.thefamily.org/dossier/statements/lol.htm accessed 12/8/2007).
[159] See, also, Millikan (1994: 236).

concerns among child welfare authorities. At a time when all forms of sexual interchange outside male homosexuality were allowed, and when individuals were experimenting with the boundaries of the Law of Love, the presence of children raised further questions about what was possible within the Law of Love.

Millikan wrote:

> ...it is clear from the literature and the history of The Family that there were occasions when the sexual division between adults and children were blurred. I am aware of a number of instances where the literature led some Family members to explore the fullest dimensions of sexual freedom, even with children (1994: 241).

According to Berg, children should be given the greatest freedom possible. He taught that our bodies are natural, and that sex is a natural need and God-given expression. Hence, he also taught that children should be raised without inhibitions to their own God-given bodies and urges. Berg argued that if children can already enjoy sexual feelings at such a young age, then what is wrong with sexual experimentation happening in a loving way (Berg 1977; Berg 1980; 1987)?

It was around this time in their doctrinal history that the 'Davidito Letters' were written (these letters circulated from about 1975 until 1981) in which instances of sexual contact, including oral sex between Maria's three-year old son and his young nanny Sara, were related. *The Story of Davidito* is a 750-page book that was published in 1982 and consists of a compilation of these letters; it covers the birth and rearing of Davidito, and includes twenty pages that deal with The Family's attitudes to Davidito's sexual development.[160] It is the most contentious of The Family's

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[160] This book was quickly discontinued and is now very difficult to find access to. Millikan, however, has a copy, and discusses it in his 1994 paper (240-1). Parts of it have been scanned and posted on http://www.xfamily.com/

publications. According to Millikan, the book includes descriptions of Davidito being involved in a wide range of sexual behaviours with adults, watching couples having sexual intercourse on various occasions, and being allowed sexual contact with the women around him.[161] The book was removed from circulation in 1987, and, according to Millikan, prior to this it was not read by the majority of the group (1994: 245).[162] The book was written by Sara, who had primary responsibility for Davidito's care. It allegedly never carried the same authority as MO letters (letters written by David Berg who was also referred to as Mo, short for Moses) and other direct communications from Berg.

Millikan met Davidito and quotes him as saying he was a test tube, an experiment, but that it didn't harm him in any way, and that it was not like 'he was having sex all the time'. "I really don't think it hurt me in any way. I never felt uncomfortable with it" (*ibid.*: 247). This is in contrast, however, with comments Davidito wrote in 2002 to a website of former second-generation members, using the name Ricky, after leaving The Family. [163] There he wrote about Mene (Berg's granddaughter, see chapter two) and what life was like for the children who lived with Berg when he, Ricky, was growing up.

> Maria and Sara were obsessed with their image and the reflection we cast on it. We not only had to be "good kids", but we had to be the best! After all, we were "Grandpa and Maria's kids". We were supposed to be super-kids, commissioned with taking over the Family when Berg died, and leading God's Endtime Army through the Great Tribulation! (Rodriguez 2002).

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[161] Millikan (1994), and aspects of this are also discussed on http://www.movingon.org
[162] It was first published as a series of individual chapters in 1977 and 1978, and these chapters were re-compiled and republished as a book in 1982.
[163] See http://www.movingon.org/article.asp?sID=3&Cat=25&ID=445#comments accessed 12/8/2007. This first posting on movingon.org was written using his name, Ricky, but later postings mentioned the name Davidito as well. See, for example, http://www.movingon.org/article.asp?sID=1&Cat=31&ID=1781 accessed 12/8/2007.

This story includes strong criticism of the overly sexualised atmosphere, and how this

negatively affected some of the young girls. Ricky elaborates on the sexual abuse of

Deborah (Berg's daughter who eventually left the movement and wrote a book

detailing her experiences) and Mene, among others. He described the atmosphere at

their community in the Phillipines as sexualised; as a child he frequently observed

adults engaging in sexual intercourse, and stated he was supposed to engage in similar

behaviour himself (*ibid.*). Posting on a website for former members, he describes the

experiences in a different light:[164]

> Berg also came up with the bright idea that the teen girls and I should have
> regular sex together on a rotating schedule... Of course, I didn't have to have
> my arm twisted for that, but I must say, it was a little awkward—especially
> since I was much younger than most of them were, and I could tell that a
> couple of them were uncomfortable with it.   I hoped that after some of the
> teen girls left, and we moved to a new compound christened the "Hilltop", that
> Teen Training would end, and things would be a little easier. How wrong I
> was! Round one of Teen Training looked like a Sunday School Picnic
> compared to round two, and we were miserable! (*ibid.*)

Several academics have argued that this kind of sexual experimentation happened at a

time when the organisation of The Family was looser and more diverse than before, or

than it has been since (Melton 1994; Palmer 1994). There was a fluid membership

and less cohesion between the households. Hence some households embraced this

greater freedom, whereas others did not do so to the same extent.[165]

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[164] Ricky uses more disapproving and condemning language regarding Berg's behaviour, among others, throughout his account, see http://www.movingon.org/article.asp?sID=3&Cat=25&ID=445 accessed 12/8/2007.
[165] See, for example, Millikan, Melton, and Bromley in Lewis *et al* (ed.). (1994).

History of Investigations

Despite the changes that were beginning to happen within The Family, authorities were worried. They had been made aware of the concerns raised by former members, relatives of members, and anti-cult organisations. The first wave of people leaving The Family had brought internal literature into the wider society, as well as stories of their experiences. This provided ammunition for detractors of The Family. Between 1989 and 1994, Family communities were investigated in Venezuela, Italy, Argentina, Spain, the UK, Norway, Peru, Australia, France, the USA, Belgium and Sweden by the relevant child-welfare authorities - although in most cases the communities were entered by local police after which the children were handed over to social services and the courts. In some cases the parents were held in prison while their children were taken into state custody. In 1989 two Family communities in Argentina were raided by police.[166] Adults were arrested and held for 2 weeks, 18 children were placed in state custody, and returned a little over 6 weeks later. In 1993 police raided five Family residences in Buenos Aires, arresting and imprisoning 21 adults and holding 137 children in state custody, both groups remaining in custody for three-and-a-half months. By 1993, Argentine authorities had examined over 230 children of Family members; they found no evidence of physical, sexual or psychological abuse. In Spain 21 children were taken into state custody for nearly 12 months in 1990. In 1992, 65 children were taken into state custody after pre-dawn raids on a community in Sydney, Australia. There was a simultaneous raid in Melbourne where 56 children were taken into custody. In both cases the children were returned a week later. In 1993 in France 22 adults were arrested and 80 children taken into state custody. The

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[166] In Argentina, The Family has been involved in eleven investigations since 1987; eight of these were court proceedings against Family members.

adults were released after 48 hours for lack of evidence, and 33 children were released

after one week, the others released after 51 days.[167]

In all cases where whole communities were investigated the charges included sexual,

physical and/or psychological abuse of children. In the UK, this included the charge

of ownership of pornographic material. In France the charges also included child

prostitution and lack of medical and physical care for the children. In Argentina the

charges also included kidnapping, child trafficking, prostitution, and slavery (The

Family Vindicated 1997). The Family estimate that court-appointed and independent

authorities around the world have examined approximately 600 children from Family

communities (*ibid.*). In no instances were cases of abuse found. The Family have

argued that there were very few cases anyway, and that changes had already been

instituted by the time authorities intervened; critics argue that children had been

taught to lie to authorities.[168]

There has been a debate since about who was actually committing child abuse, The

Family or the authorities who raided the communities and took the children away

from the parents, in some cases for extended periods of time?[169] The authorities

generally relied on information offered to them that portrayed a singularly negative

picture of a 'sex-cult' run by a paedophile. The information was one-sided and

portrayed a stereotypically negative view of this reclusive movement that was

certainly morally revolutionary, did not respect normative boundaries regarding

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[167] For more information on these raids, see Lewis *et al.* (Lewis and Melton 1994) and *The Family Vindicated* (1997).

[168] I will elaborate on this topic in chapter 6.

[169] See, for example, Lewis *et al.* (1994), where one paper refers to 'the Inquisition Revisited' (Oliver 1994).

sexuality, and had many children. Similarly, any scrutiny by authorities was likely to

have been met with reluctance and cynicism by members, and with fear by the

children. The latter had been socialised in a culture of millennialism where the world

is seen as corrupt and ruled by evil, and in the belief that the Law of Love superseded

all else. An important part of the worldview was that the children were part of a

revolutionary group that was working against the 'System', and were to prepare

themselves for the return of Jesus. The System as a concept described society outside

of The Family and was associated with ungodliness, worldliness, capitalism, and other

'evils'.[170] The children in The Family considered themselves part of the End-Time

army, but were temporarily held captive by the System.

A persistent theme throughout the history of The Family is the adherence to Berg's

call of total commitment and renunciation of the world – the 'System'. Millikan

compares this to monastic life:

> It is a long-standing aspect of Christian monastic life that a person turn from
> all worldly ties, take no secular job, and recognise no allegiance either to
> family, friends, lovers or financial security which will threaten the primacy of
> one's total commitment to Christ (1994: 231).

Although the level of world-renunciation has been flexible and adaptable over time,

with some members working outside when necessary and/or appropriate, it is an

aspect of the doctrine that has been strongly present throughout the history of The

Family. And this rejection is mutual, as the majority of society regarded them (and in

many cases still regards them) as an aberrant cult. Family members understood this

as part of the process, since they took it as their task to unveil what they perceived as

the evils of society and to uncover what they recognise as the work of Satan. Hence

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[170] This vilifying of the 'outside' while teaching that Family members were true followers of God and
were to be Jesus' army upon his return created a 'them' versus 'us' attitude among members, which
was inculcated into the children.

The Family rejected society, but they also felt persecuted by society, both in a 'good' way (as if they were revolutionaries who were being rebuked by those on the side of Satan) and in a bad way (discrimination and persecution). This feeling of persecution led to the leadership and, at times, the movement, going underground. The Family have had a history of responding to situations of difficulty with local authorities by fleeing, citing Jesus' advise that 'when they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another' (Millikan 1994: 224). Many of the first members of the second generation were raised with 'flee bags' under their beds, so that they were ready to flee when necessary. This background provides some context to the polarised and hard-handed approach chosen by authorities, whether one deems it appropriate or not.

Accommodation

No evidence of sexual abuse was found during the 'raids'; The Family had already undergone some changes by the time authorities stepped in. During the late 1980s several significant changes were initiated in The Family. Flirty Fishing, or 'FFing' became 'DFing' (the "Daily Food" ministry, developed through the publication and distribution of a series of booklets entitled "Daily Food"), sex between adults and minors was prohibited, and sex among teenagers was restricted.[171] But was this because of internal decisions, or a result of external pressures and events? Although The Family argue that they had initiated many changes before the peak of outside scrutiny ('the raids'), many of the leadership's writings from that time appear to be in response to outside criticism. From the late 1980s there appears to be an important and ongoing interplay between the group and society, which is illustrated in the publications of that time.

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[171] See, for example, the Love Charter. This Charter is still periodically updated (Family 1998).

In these publications, the leaders strongly insisted that these changes did not mean

that the previous practices had been wrong. Members were encouraged to be proud of

their Flirty Fishing history. But AIDS had forced a different approach, and,

reportedly, the Lord had intimated to Berg and Maria that it was time to switch to

DFing – the Daily Food ministry. Similarly, sex among teenagers had been restricted,

not, reportedly, because it was deemed to be wrong, but because sexual and romantic

involvement often wound up complicating the lives of the young members and

distracting them from the service for the Lord. The leadership explained that

teenagers lack the spiritual maturity and foundation in the Word. And, it was also

mentioned that in many countries such behaviour is either prohibited or frowned upon

by the authorities (Amsterdam and Apollos 1993).

The push and pull which resulted from outside scrutiny and criticism and the doctrinal

priorities of the group is clearly illustrated in two publications written after the height

of the investigations; 'Why do ye Stone us?' (Berg 1992) and the following General

Newsletter (referred to as GN, 'Our beliefs concerning the Lord's Law of Love')

written by Peter Amsterdam and Apollos, members of the leadership. The

publications are ambiguous - they show an awareness of mainstream concepts of harm

and abuse and a willingness to conform, while also rebuking these mainstream

concepts and insisting that these do not parallel the Law of Love. 'Why do ye Stone

us?' states (here, as below, emphases in original):

> Of course, we have never allowed actual child abuse of any kind, as we would
> never think of harming our children! We are completely against any kind of
> child abuse, not only because of the System, but because we love our children
> & to harm them in any way would be completely against our principles of
> love. We cannot even allow any kind of sexual affection between minors &
> adults whatsoever, even though the Bible says that 'to the pure, all things are

pure.' – Tit.1:15. We have found that even though 'all things are <u>lawful</u> unto us, all things are not <u>expedient</u>' (1 Cor.10:23), which means that even though some things may be perfectly <u>lawful</u> & all right in the eyes of <u>God</u>, they may not be helpful or profitable for us.

<u>We certainly do not condone nor approve of child sexual molestation, exploitation or abuse</u>. In fact, we have very stringently condemned it & have made it very clear that not only is any kind of actual child abuse absolutely <u>illegal</u> in our Homes & that anyone guilty of any such practices must be excommunicated & ostracised & cast out of our Homes & our fellowship, but we've also had to go as far as to ban any <u>non</u>-abusive contact with minors which could be construed as 'abuse' by the System! ... (Berg 1992)

In this publication, Berg continues to argue that the System is full of sins and 'false rules', and were the Bible used as a standard, then society would not be able to argue that The Family had sinned. The Family and the System, including established religion, are worlds apart regarding their policies on sexuality, and Berg describes this as the same difference between God's opinion and the Devil's opinion – a divide so great that it cannot be bridged. It is the difference between the doctrine that 'sex is a sin' and the doctrine that 'sex as a manifestation of Love is pure'. Berg argues that now, in some cases, the laws of society are completely contrary to the laws of God: "<u>So you who rebuke me, I in turn rebuke you as the sinners</u>" (*ibid*.: par.68).

The Family's doctrine maintained this distinction, and continued to give priority to the Law of Love. This is clear from the publication following 'Why do ye Stone us?': 'Our beliefs concerning the Lord's Law of Love', which acted as a reminder of what exactly the Law of Love is, in light of the changes to sexual freedoms within The Family. This publication, written by Peter Amsterdam and Apollos, explains the current restrictions placed upon sexual policies, why they have been instituted, and that they do not alter the Law of Love:

The main reason we don't have as many freedoms along those lines today as we once had is because many of us <u>misused</u> them. The Lord gave us those freedoms so we could <u>sacrificially</u> & <u>unselfishly</u> help <u>others</u>. But many of us simply weren't <u>mature</u> enough to handle them wisely & responsibly, thus we wound up using - or <u>misusing</u> – them <u>selfishly</u> & getting way off the track. So for our <u>own</u> well-being & for His <u>Work's</u> sake, the Lord had to restrict or severely limit many of those freedoms (1993: 2).

So the Law of Love was to curtail a few proverbial 'bad apples'. But Peter and

Apollos also admitted that there have been some wider 'misinterpretations':

> <u>Unfortunately, the teachings of the Letters & the principles of the Law of Love were not always carried out perfectly</u> by every Family Member. Many of us were young & immature when we were first learning to apply the Law of Love, so there were cases where the Word was misinterpreted or misunderstood, & these freedoms were used 'as an occasion to the flesh' (Gal.5:13) & not applied lovingly & unselfishly as the Lord and Dad [Berg] had intended. When Dad wrote those letters, he expected us to be <u>Loving, unselfish, considerate & mature</u> enough in spirit that we wouldn't do anything that would hurt anyone else... (*ibid.*: 3)

> <u>Overall, our past practice of the Law of Love bore good fruit & had wonderful results</u>. But because some of us were not as mature & loving & yielded to the Lord as we should have been, there were some problems & some mistakes were made. But the Lord even used our mistakes to teach us some valuable lessons, & we have since learned that it's [*sic*] better to wisely curb some of our sexual freedoms because they're not all necessary or helpful. We've also learned that by putting less emphasis on sexual freedoms & relationships, we can thereby devote ourselves more fully to the Lord's Work (*ibid.*).

Peter Amsterdam and Apollos continuously reinforced the argument that the different

rules and restrictions regarding sexual activities that were incorporated did not signify

a departure from the principles of the Law of Love, but an affirmation. Essentially,

they argued that the Law of Love worked, and problems were blamed on the

proverbial 'bad apples' and misinterpretations. The new rules and restrictions, they

argued, act as a safeguard to help ensure that everyone is indeed acting in accordance

with the Law of Love – by removing some potential problems these new rules ensure

that no one is 'hurt' or 'harmed' (*ibid*). Hence there is an affirmation that these

freedoms are biblical and according to principles. But, according to the authors, 'the

System' does not understand, and hence they have decided to curb some of these

freedoms.

> We've also learned that some of our past freedoms were difficult for a lot of weak & unenlightened outsiders to comprehend. ... We have chosen to discontinue some of the freedoms we practiced [*sic*] in the past, even though 'all things indeed are pure.' ...But according to God's Word there is absolutely nothing wrong with the freedom of Love & the principles of the Law of Love... (*ibid.*).

> Yet another area in which we've changed over the years is regarding any kind of intimate relationships between adults (those over 21 years of age) & minors (those under 21 years of age). ...As you are probably aware, in recent years, the System has been on an absolute rampage against child abuse, & we totally agree with them that there is a lot of genuine abuse out there ... However, if someone were to specifically ask us if any intimate contact between an adult and a minor is inherently wrong, abusive & bound to cause psychological harm, we would have to honestly answer 'no.' (*ibid.*: 4-5)

The authors also claim that these freedoms were not curbed because of the System's

demands, but rather, and more importantly, as a result of a TTC (Teen Training

Camp) meeting in Mexico, the first large gathering of teenagers. Berg and Maria

became aware that there had been sexual interaction between adults and minors, and

that this was not in the best interest of the teenagers – it hindered their interaction with

the Lord. Reportedly, Berg and Maria were worried about the emotional and spiritual

wellbeing of the teenagers, and also curbed the relationships between the teenagers

with new rules in 1986. Hence they argued that the changes were made as a result of

internal demands rather than external pressures.

The publications at this time, however, presented quite an ambiguous message; some

arguably problematic practices were described as 'fine' and 'Godly', but not

'expedient' (Berg 1992). There was neither outright condemnation of sexual relations

with minors, nor approval. Changes at this time appeared to be part of a transitional era in The Family; the leaders were beginning to listen and react to outside scrutiny. But there were not, at this point, many sacrifices regarding Family doctrine and tradition. Justice Ward argued that the argument in publication GN555 (Amsterdam *et al*. 1993) was that neither Berg, nor Maria, nor the Law of Love were to blame for any of the 'excesses of the flesh'. Instead, these were blamed on the 'weak members' (1995). James Penn, a former member who published a memoir, refers to these alleged 'weak members' as the 'usual suspects' – the ones consistently blamed by the leadership for any wrongdoings (Penn 2000: 8). Ward also described the publication as ambiguous and confusing in the sense that it states that adult/child sex is not wrong, it is right for members of The Family, but they should not do it because 'the System does not understand', and as a result they could get into trouble (1995). A later publication, GN 653, includes Peter Amsterdam's letter to Justice Ward, in which he did accept and acknowledge that Berg bears responsibility for what arose as a result of some of his teachings, namely the overly sexualised atmosphere in a number of Family communities which, in some cases, led to a number of children being subjected to sexually inappropriate behaviour (Maria 1995). Maria, too, stated that in hindsight, some of that material should not have been published (*ibid*.). (This was a big move away from GN 555, and I shall elaborate on these developments later in this chapter.) Penn argues that it took Maria and Peter seven years to admit that sexual abuse of minors had occurred in The Family, and that Berg, through his writings, had to bear a responsibility for this (2000: 10). According to him, "They published GN 555 because they *wanted* to; they published GN 653 because they were *forced* to" (*ibid.*: 11). Thus, Penn suggests, The Family changed as a result from outside pressure.

The Reliability of Literature

Millikan, however, suggests a more dialectical development. He argues that it was

not uncommon for literature, which was considered normative, to be discarded on the

basis of a further revelation from Berg (1994: 183). This is, of course, also intrinsic

to charismatic leadership, which is generally not governed by rules or traditions and is

consequently susceptible to changes following new revelations or realisations. This

flexibility, for example, affected the status assigned to The Story of Davidito, which

followers were urged to destroy once the leadership realised the contents could cause

problems.[172]

> As you know, some years ago we instructed all of our Homes worldwide to
> dispose of any copies they may still have had of the "Dito" book, as well as
> the "Adults Only" TK volume. We explained then that because of society's
> increasing hyper-sensitivity to any publications for or about children that
> could even be remotely construed as having any sexual overtones to them, the
> modern-day inquisitors and witch-hunters who are bent on destroying our
> Family and our work for the Lord are declaring that many of our Family pubs
> appear "evil" to them. (1Thes.5:22)

> To our ungodly enemies and vengeful false accusers, some of our perfectly
> pure doctrines and views regarding God's Own natural and beautiful sinless
> creation are very "defiled" and "impure" in their soiled minds! (See Titus
> 1:15) In fact, they're so offended by some of our views (or their interpretations
> and misinterpretations of what they think are our views) and publications and
> pictures, that they seem bent on using (misusing) them to try to substantiate
> their very false and malicious accusations against us that we abuse our own
> dear children! So for this reason, we are now initiating an extensive "purge" of
> our publications. Thank the Lord, most of our publications will come through
> this purge with only a few pages missing ('Pubs Purge Advisory' 1991).

Although here the concerns appear to be more about destroying past literature than

explaining that the past teachings are no longer appropriate, the result is nonetheless

that contentious literature was then no longer widely accessible. At the same time,

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[172] The Family have urged followers to destroy literature on a few occasions. Former members have
reported drawing bikinis and clothes over pictures of naked followers in publications, and receiving
'BAR pubs', 'Burn After Reading publications' – to be burnt because of incriminating content. See
discussions on www.movingon.com and in Penn (2000: 4). Some BAR literature has been scanned
onto http://www.xfamily.com, including 'Pubs Purge Advisory' (1991).

other measures were taken to ensure 'the System' would not be able to 'destroy' The Family, for instance the creation of The Charter ensured the organisation could show they had formalised and institutionalised rules, and the result was a more responsible group. Hence, Millikan suggests questions must be asked before deciding on the validity of literature, for example, the date (the most recent publications must take precedence, especially when it covers contentious topics), and the author (1994: 183-4).

Throughout the history of The Family, the literature relating to issues of doctrine has come from a number of sources: Berg himself, Maria, Peter Amsterdam, Apollos and others in the leadership, and many other voices have been added through prophecy, including those of Berg after his death, and Jesus. The Family's revelations have changed with time as well – they are dynamic, following the idea of 'progressive revelation', i.e. the belief that God did not reveal his mind once and for all, but in parts according to the demands of the situation (*ibid.*: 184). Hence some things in the past can be superseded or 'explained' by new insights. This means that MO letters are subject to the limitations of history. And members are, apparently, expected to judge the 'truth' of the literature sent to them on the basis of their own understanding and their own contact with the Bible (*ibid.*: 185-6). More recently, members are also encouraged to rely on their own prophecies when making judgements (Bainbridge 2002).

A Family publication written in response to the allegations of child abuse states that the fact that certain ideas are openly discussed in literature does not mean that it becomes, or is even supposed to become standard practice – 'Our replies to

allegations of child abuse' (1992). But this practice of discussing ideas in disseminated literature, regardless of whether it becomes accepted practice, they claim, has been counterproductive when disaffected former members and anti-cult organisations have used, for their own purposes, extreme and outdated examples of literature which does not necessarily reflect the present lifestyle and practices of the membership (*ibid.*). Millikan argues that, within The Family, there is room for questioning, and that there have been occasions where authority in The Family was challenged successfully. He interviewed a member who explained that Berg was a man who was iconoclastic by inclination and that his letters should not be read as literal statements of what must be (1994: 187). This is, however, a much-challenged position. There are also accounts of members being ridiculed and publicly ostracised for challenging, or even questioning, authority or the status quo. Former member Miriam Williams, in her account of her life The Family, describes being publicly ostracised and ridiculed after writing a children's story, the 'Uneager Beaver', about a beaver looking for his name (Williams 1998). Toni in 'The Girl Who Wouldn't', also was publicly criticised, in this case for not sexually sharing with another woman – as described above (Berg 1978). More recently, in April 2002, a disillusioned SGA (second-generation adult) sent a letter to friends to be forwarded as a chain among other young adults. The young man was upset over the fact that many of his friends within his cohort were leaving. He commented that the group had a majority of young people, yet was still run by the first generation, whom he regarded as stiff and inflexible, and who came down very hard on the small mistakes of SGAs. When Peter and Maria were sent a copy by another member, they published the letter, with their public response, in a general publication. On the one hand this can be seen as management of a potentially damaging situation, as the letter was in parts critical of

aspects of life in The Family, and was being distributed informally. On the other

hand, Peter, in his answer, mentioned on several occasions that the author of the letter

had an 'attitude issue', was immature, and suffered from negativity (Amsterdam

2002).[173] The author had been labelled in such a way that Family members could

ignore his views as coming from a young man who had 'personal problems'. Peter's

publication, entitled 'The Professionals', was followed by 'Speak for Yourself!',

devoted to thoughts, reactions, and replies to the young member's critical letter, and

consisted almost entirely of praise for The Family and scathing criticism of the young

member's letter, including comments about him being a 'loser', a 'coward' and more

(2002). These two publications read like a warning to all SGAs, this was not an

appropriate criticism, and the bearer of this criticism was widely ridiculed. It appears

that there is room for questioning and interpretation, but within boundaries.

In every religious tradition there is a gap between what the leadership and the

literature call for, and the way in which the followers respond. Maria has written at

the end of the publication by Amsterdam and Apollos (emphasis in original):

> 67. We also need to understand that The Family's teachings & principles are
> not necessarily always carried out perfectly by all of our members. In other
> words, the actions of one person or Home do not always accurately reflect the
> policies & principles of The Family. Unfortunately, some of our Homes or
> followers have fallen far short of that standard (Amsterdam and Apollos
> 1993).

With regards to The Family it is important to establish to what extent literature was

considered normative, and to what extent there was freedom to not accept it.

Millikan, for example, argues that Flirty Fishing was never universally accepted, and

that there were acceptable reasons within communities not to practice Flirty Fishing

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[173] In 'The professionals' Amsterdam argues that discipleship is like playing sport professionally, and
"[t]o be a pro you have to give your sport everything" (*ibid.*).

(1994: 186). Yet, this also depended on the communities - some were reported to be more bohemian and experimental than others.[174] This lack of uniformity is a theme throughout the history of The Family; teachings have always been fluid. Before 1978, sexual activities outside marriage needed approval from the Home leadership. In 1978, the RNR brought chaos as the communities became independent, spread globally and were out of touch with the leadership. Poor communication between communities intensified the isolation, and homes were free to interpret literature as they thought appropriate - they no longer needed leadership permission. After 1978 all members were free to exercise their faith in regards to sexual sharing (Maria 1995). The publication of 'The Devil Hates Sex' in 1980 opened the door to the possibilities of sexual relations with minors, and the Fellowship Revolution initiated a rise in sexual contacts between adults within the communities.[175] Melton wrote:

> Without a doubt 1981 and 1982 were the years in which most of the events for which The Family has been criticised occurred. It was the era of the first dance videos, it was a time in which adult-teenage sex was allowed (though it was never the norm), and it was the period in which the widest range and the most sensitive issues of sexual conduct was discussed by Father David in the literature (1994).[176]

Yet, through a process one could call 'trial and error', The Family have, over time, moved away from some of their teachings and accommodated, to a considerable extent, some of their practices.

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[174] See, for example, Williams' account (1998).
[175] Berg argues in *The Devil Hates Sex* that, in contrast to what churches teach, the Devil actually hates and fights against sex because it is the most beautiful creation of God (1980).
[176] The dance videos featured female members, including underage members, performing erotic dances for Berg. See, for example, Williams (1998) and Jones, Jones *et al.* (2007).

Bending versus Breaking

In the UK, what The Family has referred to as 'persecution' came in the form of a custody dispute, generally referred to as the Ward case (in reference to the judge overseeing the case, Lord Justice Ward), in which a grandmother sought custody of her grandson who was born within The Family.[177] This court case initiated some of the most significant changes within The Family, which included a letter to Justice Ward in which one of the leaders, Peter Amsterdam, distanced himself and The Family from some of Berg's writings, as demanded by Justice Ward.[178] In a Family publication distributed after the court case, which also included the text of the letter to Ward, Peter Amsterdam admitted that some of the resentful former members have legitimate grievances (Maria 1995: 1). He also, however, again put the blame on the proverbial 'bad apples' who did not adhere to the 'Golden Rule' of the Law of Love, despite Berg's writings not being very clear on the limitations of this 'law' (*ibid.*: 1, 6 and 8). But there was, nonetheless, an admission of past mistakes. This change in tone had, apparently, been approved 'from above'. Through prophecy, Maria and Peter had received messages from Berg allegedly telling them that it was acceptable to blame Berg, since he was the leader and 'the buck stops with the leader'.[179] Berg's message, through prophecy, explained that he had not meant to hurt anyone, but in hindsight he realised that some people had been hurt. He urged Peter and Maria to go ahead and say that he, Berg, should have been wiser (*ibid.*: 2-3). There were other messages. The Lord allegedly, through prophecy, urged them to 'bend, but not break' (*ibid.*). This was reinforced by another prophecy from Berg who specified that

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[177] This court case has been mentioned in the previous chapter.

[178] The demands posed by Ward also included limits regarding corporal punishment, silence restriction, isolation and the use of Open Heart Reports. His demands are listed in the concluding part of the statement (Ward 1995).

[179] Through prophecy leaders as well as members receive messages from the spirit world (from Berg, Jesus, and other 'spirit helpers') that guide them in their day-to-day lives. Such prophecy has assumed greater significance since Berg's death. See Bainbridge (2002).

'bending' means 'putting the blame on him' while breaking would be to 'deny the Law of Love' (*ibid.*: 4).

> Don't deny the Truth, don't deny the Truth-Giver, and don't deny the messenger. But if you have to poke a little at the messenger, some of the faults and failings, and point some blame here and there, don't worry about it! There are lots of things I could've done better, and boy, if I had known then what I know now, there are things I would've done differently... (*ibid.*: 4-5).

Peter and Maria, with alleged permission from Berg, described how the Law of Love was 'handled and mishandled'; through lack of leadership during the RNR combined with Berg exploring the boundaries and possibilities of the Law of Love in reality and in the disseminated literature.

In the writing of the letter to Justice Ward the authors, Amsterdam and Apollos, claim they were given 'skill and power from on High' as well (*ibid.*: 11). The letter details the changes they have undertaken regarding child discipline rules, education (the establishment of an educational steering committee), and reconciliation with former members (attached was a report with the progress of the Ministry of Reconciliation). But the most significant change was an acknowledgement of David Berg's responsibility regarding inappropriate sexual activity with children in The Family. They acknowledged that The Family had, in certain places and at certain times, not been as safe an environment for children as it should have been. In the letter to Justice Ward they respond to his crucial demand:

> Your Lordship has asked us to acknowledge that Father David, through his writings, was personally responsible for children in The Family being sexually abused. Father David wrote a series of Letters concerning sexual behaviour. The Judgement refers in particular to 'The Law of Love' and 'The Devil Hates Sex', and we accept that as the author of ideas upon which some members acted to the harm of minors in The Family, he must bear responsibility for that harm... (*ibid.*:14; Ward 1995).

Amsterdam and Apollos added that Maria and World Services leadership also felt the burden of responsibility. This statement was followed by the explanation that the global spread of independent communities during this time of their history left them out of touch with World Services, the central administrative wing of the organisation. Hence there was no direct guidance accompanying the literature, and World Services did not have the connection necessary to function as effective 'leaders' (*ibid.*: 15). Wherever the bulk of responsibility lies - Berg's writings, a time of lawlessness, a few 'bad apples', or a combination of these, The Family distanced itself from some of the key doctrinal aspects of their past.[180] They accommodated to Justice Ward's demands and, consequently, the mother retained custody of the child.

The Changes after the Ward Case

The recantations in response to the Ward case, however, do not necessarily mean that The Family denominationalised in a process to blend with the mainstream.[181] The years following the Ward case saw several missions aimed at reinforcing the importance of the Law of Love, recapturing The Family's tenuous level of insertion into society - reclaiming their space as revolutionaries. In 1997 a mission to bridge the generation gap was initiated, where members were encouraged to bridge the generation gap and bring the entire Family community, young and old, closer together in the spirit of 'loving Jesus' (which included inter-generational sexual sharing, according to age guidelines stipulated in the Charter) (Maria 1997). This mission had followed closely on a previous one, in 1996, which was an effort to bring the entire

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[180] In chapter 5 I elaborate on some types and techniques of denial still involved, and the consequences this has had on some former members.

[181] 'Denominationalisation' was initially described by Niebuhr who used the term to describe sects who accommodated over time (and with the maturation of the second generation) to the surrounding society (1957[1929]).

Family community closer to Jesus, through the 'Loving Jesus Revelation'. This was a revelation that encouraged members to think of Jesus and communicate with him not only when praying, but also when being intimate with a partner and when masturbating. Followers were encouraged to imagine themselves having an intimate relationship with Jesus. This was a controversial practice, and several members, especially young members, left the movement as a result (Apollos 1996; Maria 1996). Men, especially, found it difficult to imagine themselves in an intimate relationship with someone they considered to be another man, Jesus. But it was explained that, in the spirit, you can be anything you want, hence a man could have characteristics traditionally regarded as 'female', and men were to think of themselves as 'spiritually receptive' in their relationship with Jesus (*ibid.*). This particular practice was claimed to be optional, but Penn, a former member, argues that this statement was later followed by warnings that God would withhold his blessing from anyone who did not love Jesus in this intimate new way (2000: 26). Members could be reclassified to the marginal status of 'Turf Supporter' status (members who no longer live in a Family home but still tithe) if they did not join in the Loving Jesus Revelation (*ibid.*). The 'Junior End Time Teens' (14 to 15 year olds) received an edited version of the Loving Jesus Revelation, as did Turf Supporters (TS). The unedited version only went to the committed members – the Disciples. Through reported prophecy, Jesus had allegedly warned it was preferable to give teens and TS members the revelation without the intimate sexual revelation. Berg had added, through prophecy, that this revelation is 'not for the weak' (Maria 1996).

One young mother was worried about the effects the Loving Jesus Revelation might have, and asked, in a letter to Maria, why it was not published as a BAR publication

(Burn After Reading). She was worried that if these publications fell in the wrong hands, her children might be at risk of being taken away by authorities (Maria 1996). Maria responded that describing a publication as BAR does not guarantee that it will not fall into the hands of their detractors, and that, through prophecy, Berg had explained that this was a call from Jesus for Family members to 'lift up the standard' and conquer, knowing they have the truth with them. Through alleged prophecy, Jesus told The Family that this teaching would be misunderstood, but that he would protect them (*ibid.*). However, former members and critics of the group interpreted this new development as evidence that The Family had never actually changed:

> It is now very easy to see that there has not been a dime's worth of real and fundamental change in the COG [Children of God]. Their recent trying to be perceived as more mainstream may have made some of us wonder if in fact there is some sincerity and honesty in all this. Then the Loving Jesus sacrilege came and shattered all hopes.[182]

Shake-Up 2000

The upcoming new millennium saw a purge to strengthen and cleanse The Family from the alleged external influences of the 'System'. According to Maria, many people in the then CM (Charter Member) Family had 'settled down' to the point where they were ineffective and without the vision needed to be a revolutionary.[183] She wrote that quite a few of the YAs (young adults) and SGAs (second-generation adults) did not seem to want to be in The Family, yet did not take steps to leave. She accused these members of 'putting up with The Family' and living in the security of

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[182] See page 1 of the publication *More Madness from Mama Maria # 11* (1997).
[183] There have been several different levels of leadership throughout the history of The Family. As of 2007 there were 5 levels of commitment: Family disciples lived communally and were governed by the rules of the Charter, Missionary Members were bound by the rules of the Missionary Member Statutes (which has fewer requirements than the Love Charter), Fellow Members do not live communally and generally work outside, but tithe ten percent and live by the Statement on Fellow Members, and Active Members and General Members receive the movement's literature and may volunteer to help on specific projects.

community living, which, for Family members, is safer than the System. But, in her

opinion, these members did not deserve that privilege (Maria 1999). Maria put

forward an ultimatum: if members do not want to live the CM standard, then they

should not be in the CM Family (*ibid.*). The Family had to go back to its roots and

purge itself from System influences. And, as has become common practice in The

Family, these new teachings were reportedly received through prophecy, mainly from

Jesus and Berg. According to Maria, Jesus said:

> Now as you and your children near the End, you must go back to the
> beginning, back to the freshness, the freedom of spirit, the total break with the
> world as there was in the beginning. There must be a purging, because the
> children of David must be kept free from the System and the influences of the
> world, which, if left unchecked, if allowed to continue as they now are, would
> destroy The Family (quoted in Maria 1999: 7).

'Back to the beginning' refers to a move back to the spirit of dedication and

commitment that the first disciples in The Family had (Maria 1999). There was

strong criticism of the young members who were thought to be 'too infatuated' with

the System and its music, films, Internet, clothes, people, and so on. These members

were accused of being 'bad apples' that ruined the batch by allowing poison to seep

into The Family communities.[184]

> As Dad [Berg] explains, some of you are also weakening because of the
> ungodly and unedifying influence of your System jobs or your contact with
> System relatives or from having your kids in System school. These too can
> become inroads for the poison of the System in the form of compromise and
> wrong attitudes, and getting away from not having time for the Lord and His
> Word (*ibid.*: 7).

> ...What each of you Charter Members need to realise is that the level of
> ungodly and unedifying influence in your life and Home that was tolerated
> <u>before</u> the publishing of 'The Shakeup 2000!' will no longer be tolerated. It

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[184] The metaphor 'bad apples' here is used differently than previous usage in this chapter. Here 'bad apples' refers to members with a lack of dedication who are weakening the community. Earlier the term has been used to describe those members who misinterpreted Berg's teachings and were abusive and/or neglectful towards children and/or other members, and tarnished The Family's reputation.

cannot be allowed if we are to strengthen The Family, and to do so, things must change in this area, and change drastically (*ibid.*)!

...When you have total incorrigibles who are causing no end of trouble and really poisoning the flock, you want to get them out as quickly as you can, before they contaminate others further, but you can still be loving (*ibid.*: 17).

This poisoning of the communities, according to Jesus (through prophecy) would weaken the communities and, eventually, lead to persecution (Maria 1999). Hence, Maria argued, The Family needed to go back to the basics: total commitment and rejection of the System. Shake-up 2000 was a criticism of anyone who was not a full-time, devoted and committed revolutionary for The Family – those not showing the dedication expected of a devoted member were urged either to change their attitude or to leave the CM membership. CM members were given a six-month probation period to give Jesus and The Family their full devotion, after which they had to decide whether or not they wanted to continue as CM members. Senior Teens (age 16 and up), as voting members of The Family, were given the same ultimatum, but the commitment required of them was different: they were to sign a provisional charter member contract.[185]

Homes, in order to resist ungodly and unedifying influences, were required to vote on whether individuals could watch certain movies, read certain novels, play certain computer games, take a 'System job', send kids to a 'System school', and more. And these decisions were to be made using a new standard: the 'Shakeup 2000' standard, which was stricter than The Family had been in recent history. Members were urged to consult God in these matters and wait for a prophecy before deciding. They were

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[185] Within the Charter, they have a range of available options for membership, on which I will elaborate in a later chapter.

called upon to strictly follow the Charter. CM members could be disciplined for

spiritual infractions of the Charter (when people sow division, mock or talk against

the word, are a destructive influence and/or lead others astray, do not minimise

ungodly or unedifying influences, and so forth). Such infractions are not easily

proven, but the CROs and VSs (Continental Reporting Offices and Visiting

Shepherds) had the freedom to judge situations for themselves and discipline

accordingly (*ibid.*: 8-9).[186] Teenagers were allowed their 'teenage moods' and

'attitude', as long as this did not point to 'wrong attitude', 'bad spirit' and/or an

infatuation with aspects of the System – for which they could be dis-fellowshipped

(*ibid.*: 14-5).[187] As Jesus allegedly said, through prophecy:

> … So I don't want to hear of troublemakers and dividers and poison-injectors
> and System-lovers being tolerated in this Family anymore. We're a
> revolutionary Gideon's band, and I don't care if we lose one-third of our CM
> membership, if that's what it takes to keep us pure and separate from the
> world! (*ibid.*: 23).[188]

In contrast to the days of the Victor Program, there was an emphasis on being gentle

and loving throughout the process of disciplining. There was also an emphasis on

disengaged members being allowed to continue membership as Fellow Members

rather than Charter Members, as opposed to earlier times when former members were

alienated.

Yet Berg, through prophecy, had advised that even though not all Fellow Members

and former members were a bad influence, some were. And, although they had

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[186] According to some, this is not a watertight system. For example, in The Professionals, the author of the letter tells the story of a young member who was reprimanded and disciplined despite evidence of wrong-doing. A shepherd had asked God and reportedly received, through prophecy, information that this young member was guilty. The author of the letter, however, claims that he was there and knows first-hand that the young member was not involved in any wrong-doing (Amsterdam 2002).
[187] Although there were no clear guidelines to distinguish between typical teenage attitudes and moods and 'wrong attitude' or 'bad spirit'.
[188] A reference to the biblical Gideon who whittled down his army from over 30.000 to 300 dedicated soldiers. See 'Trimming down to a Gideon's Band!' (1989) DO 2527.

developed a policy of greater unity with former members, to stem some of the

division and bitterness between the two camps, they also had to protect their children

from the possible bad influence of Fellow Member children and teenagers - as well as

those who were no longer associated with The Family. This was a change from what

Peter wrote in response to the Ward case, which was that Family children would have

regular contact with relatives who were not in The Family, and that young members

who left would still have 'loving contact' with their parents who remained members,

despite having left (Maria 1995).[189] The Family wanted a clean break with the

System on the one hand, yet they did not want to appear callous and cold to non-CM

members. This is a contradiction, and they appeared to be acutely aware of this.

> It was Dad's prerogative as God's End-time prophet to deliver some fiery
> messages and really sock it to some people. He was led of the Lord to do this,
> but I don't think the Lord is going to lead any of you to do the same thing.
> Dad had to be very strong for the sake of the Revolution, to get people moving
> and doing what they were supposed to do.
> But now, for us, this is not permissible, and we should not blast people. It's
> just not done! ...
> So many of our past leaders got so harsh because they misinterpreted how they
> were supposed to handle people because of Dad's blasts. They did the same
> thing as Dad, but without the love and mercy that Dad showed, and without
> the justification that Dad had for doing it, because he was led of the Lord to do
> it and to be that way (*ibid.*: 19-20).

These statements are followed by an alleged prophecy from Jesus, who explained that

Berg's leadership is akin to a double-act, as part of Berg's ministry was to be a fiery

prophet while also being a gentle leader; when Berg gave a 'hot' talk, it was claimed,

this was Jesus' spirit coming through, not Berg's. But, Jesus explained, this attitude

was only permissible to Berg, not to any other leaders currently within The Family

(*ibid.*: 20). Hence the times of fiery and iconoclastic talk were to be a thing of the

past, not permissible to current leadership. And although The Family had gone 'back

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[189] I shall elaborate on this subject in the next chapter.

to the beginning', a time marked by full commitment and rejection of society, they were more sophisticated about their level of insertion into society. The Family have embraced their roots again, which includes a move towards larger communities, but at the same time they realised the importance of having good relations with outsiders, and since the UK court case The Family have worked hard on maintaining good public relations. Family representatives can be relatively easily contacted by the media, academics, cult watching groups, and government institutions in the UK as well as in many other countries. They also have sought contact with other religions in inter-faith efforts as well as with NGOs and charities working towards similar goals. The Family has, over time, developed more complex and ambiguous modes of insertion where parts of the organisation reach out and engage in significant interactions with outside institutions, while many followers still aim to be revolutionary missionaries who reject the 'System' and what it stands for.

CONCLUSION

The children in the examples throughout this chapter have been raised according to the beliefs, norms and values of their parents, yet they also have another 'parent' – the state. When there is a disparity between what these two caregivers want for their children, it creates a problem, which often entails both sets of caregivers struggling for the right of authority and sometimes of custody. In the case of sects, boundary maintenance may change with the birth of children, as may the modes of insertion into society. Groups who feel they need to safeguard their new generation are likely to restrict interaction between their children and 'the outside'. This happened in the case of The Family, although these boundaries between the second-generation members and outsiders dissipated slightly as a result of changes instituted after the

Ward case in the UK, when the leadership distanced themselves from some of the past behaviour while looking for a level of accommodation with marginal members. Later, however, the boundaries intensified again, as the revolutionary group sought to return to what they consider to be the fundamentals of their faith.

This is not unusual; The Family has had a history of constant change – one could interpret this as 'trial and error' on the path to maturation into a community with a second and third generation membership.[190] Berg was an iconoclastic and experimental leader, and tried out a large range of ministries. In fact, it is part of The Family theology to expect constant change (Bromley and Newton 1994; Melton 1994; Millikan 1994). As a result, one cannot ascertain the present behaviour of The Family on the basis of old literature; one can only use old literature to illustrate The Family's history and to chart the extent to which the sect has changed over time. The underlying principles have not changed, but the elaboration of them and the way the group is called to act upon them have changed drastically. The changing circumstances have affected the way principles are lived out in the day-to-day life of the group. One can see this as accommodation to internal and external circumstances. The underlying principles remain relatively static, but practices have been adapted and levels of insertion to society have fluctuated significantly. Yet this dual approach, accommodating on one level while holding on to underlying principles, or 'bending versus breaking', has not been satisfactory to all – critics and former members have accused the Family of covering up its past mistakes and 'cleaning up' superficially only for public relations purposes. The process of changes, as well as the discourse surrounding them, are of sociological interest.

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[190] This was, after all, the term used by a second-generation member of The Family, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

Stan Cohen's work on denial, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering*, provides a useful framework for analysing and understanding such discrepancies in discourses (2001). Cohen distinguishes between different aspects of denial which include cognition (not acknowledging the facts), emotion (not feeling, not being disturbed), morality (not recognising wrongness or responsibility), and action (not taking active steps in response to knowledge (*ibid.*: 9). Cohen's is a study of reactions to abuse and suffering, the discrepancy between perceptions of what happened, and both the personal and political ways in which uncomfortable realities are avoided and evaded. He distinguishes between literal denial ('this did not happen'), interpretive denial (the facts are given a different meaning from what seems apparent to others), and implicatory denial (psychological, political or moral implications that follow are being denied or minimised) (*ibid.*). From an outsider's perspective, The Family is in interpretive denial. What outsiders would generally see as promiscuity, immoral behaviour, or in some cases child sexual abuse, was explained in The Family along the lines of the Law of Love and Berg's teachings - such as described in 'The Devil Hates Sex' (Berg 1980). According to this doctrine, sex is a natural thing, and children are prone naturally to explore. As such, the children were encouraged to explore their sexuality with one another and, in some situations, with adult members. The young former members feel that the psychological implications and consequences, for them, have been largely denied.[191] According to Cohen's framework this amounts to implicatory denial. The young former members focus on the issue that has had the single most impact in their lives, while members still in The Family, when admitting that there has been abuse (in the

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[191] I shall elaborate on this topic in chapter 6.

sense that the Law of Love has been ignored or misinterpreted), will argue that this

happened for a short while only in a few homes – and usually the 'bad apples' are

blamed.[192]

Denial is not necessarily a personal and individual reaction, it can be a shared and

collective response – consequently it can be organised and institutionalised (Cohen

2001: 9). And denial does not have to be complete; it can be partial, not

acknowledging the extent of the problem or mostly blaming the proverbial bad apples.

Not having taken immediate active steps in response to knowledge of a problem can

be interpreted as a form of denial. ISKCON, as I have discussed in chapter two, was

also resistant to change. The leadership was slow in acting (reacting) in response to

initial signs of problems within the community, and former members were critical of

the speed and the ways in which the organisation has attempted to rectify the

problems. Such events, and the following types of denial, have consequences for the

second generation and the way the latter view the communities of their childhood.

This will be discussed in the second part of this thesis.

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[192] Comparing the discourses between Family-run websites such as http://www.myconclusion.com and http://www.myreaction.net (created to provide commentary, mostly by former members, on articles posted on the former site) and http://www.movingon.org, highlights this dynamic.

CHAPTER 4

PART II: WHAT HAPPENED?

THE AFTERMATH OF GROWING UP IN A SECTARIAN GROUP

Previous chapters have addressed what is likely to happen when children are born into

sects, the State's responsibilities towards its minors, and how this shared

responsibility for the children affects the sectarian communities. The question of

'what happened to the children', however, goes beyond the dialectic between the sects

and society covered in the first three chapters. This chapter discusses the ways in

which the people in this research have been affected by their sectarian childhoods,

what decisions they have made as young adults, and how these decisions have

affected their relationship with their parents and the sectarian communities. Were

these decisions in line with the expectations the parents had for their children? Have

these second-generation members been 'successfully socialised' into the beliefs and

culture of the sectarian communities in which they were raised? The latter question,

of course, raises more questions, such as: what entails successful socialisation? I shall

focus on the broad issue of socialisation in so far as it relates to the topic of this

chapter, the integration of the children into their sectarian cultures, and how this has

affected them.

What is Perceived as Successful Socialisation?

The term 'socialisation' refers to an imprecise concept that has been much debated and 'fine-tuned'. Consequently, there are many related concepts with degrees of affect or even power allocated to either 'structure' or 'agency' or both. Especially when the topic of religious sectarianism is part of the discussion, the process of acculturation may be described rather more extremely as 'inculcation', 'indoctrination', or even 'brainwashing' depending on the literature.[193] Such literature, however, tends not to be from a sociological (or academic) perspective, and in my opinion is rather too simplistic and binary in its analysis. I define socialisation broadly as a process by which people learn to become members of the society or community in which they live, both by internalising norms and values of that group, and by learning to perform the appropriate social roles. Furthermore, socialisation also involves learning layers of interpretive rules for reading, ascertaining and deconstructing norms, roles and rules, knowing how to recapitulate them, and knowing when they are appropriate and inappropriate (and what to do in cases of breach). Members of a society internalise their complicated surroundings and its layers of meanings and adapt to them – and they internalise values and religious beliefs as well, as much as they are an integral part of their surrounding culture (although this does not mean that people always conform to the explicit and implicit rules, norms and values). [194]

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[193] See, for example, *Snapping: America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Change* (Conway and Siegleman 1978), *Combatting Cult Mind Control* (Hassan 1988) and *Thought Reform Programs and the Production of Psychiatric Casualties* (Singer and Ofshe 1990).

[194] There has been a significant evolution in socialisation theory, which I shall elaborate upon in a later chapter. For the moment, however, I will focus on social-psychological and sociological approaches that focus on the ongoing interaction between the individual and society, which inherently engenders change. This interaction must be understood as a two-way interaction. In Wrong's words, people are

In the case of this research the children are socialised into an alternative culture. This is not socialisation into the mainstream – this is socialisation into sectarian cultures and their norms and values.[195] Conventional socialisation theories tend to focus on the process through which children become members of their particular society. A socialisation 'success story', then, would be a child learning and internalising the appropriate explicit and implicit norms, values, codes of behaviour and social roles, and knowing where generally the 'line' is drawn between acceptable and deviant behaviour and understanding how to manage these 'lines'.[196] However, deviancy is an arbitrary concept, subject to change and interpretation within and across cultures. And religion can complicate issues further when, as a system of meaning, its 'rights' and 'wrongs' do not coincide with the laws and conventions laid down by the wider community and/or the state. Hence socialisation in sectarian movements may have different aims and results from surrounding socialisations. The Amish, for example, have gone to court in the USA several times to keep their children out of school from the age of 12, in order to teach them at home (for the girls) or on the land (for the boys), and in the belief that education instils pride (Kraybill 1989; Hostetler 1993). The socialisation aims of the Amish in the USA have been significantly divergent from those of the surrounding society, where, by law, minors have to attend school until the age of 16.

'social, though never fully socialised'; they may internalise social norms but they may also choose to not live up to these social norms (Wrong 1961).

[195] And, in the case of many missionary groups, children may be socialised into an alternative culture within one or several foreign countries. Many of the people I have interviewed did not visit their 'native country' until they were adults.

[196] Although Kai Erikson argues that deviancy is actually a necessary and important part of the ongoing process of the formation of communities, and of socialisation, as individuals and communities then learn where the boundaries are drawn (1966).

The question then becomes: what is considered 'successful socialisation' in sectarian movements? Of course this depends on the movement, its priorities, who is making the judgement, when, where, and many other variables. Furthermore, groups who are, for the first time, faced with a second generation, approach this topic for the first time as well – without previous experience. Consequently, expectations are likely to hinge on ideals rather than experience. Measures of successful socialisation might include whether the children remain members of the movement as adults, whether they continue to adhere to the beliefs and practices, whether they maintain the norm and values, and so on. Yet different groups have different expectations. Whereas some might expect the second-generation members, as adults, to reach salvation more or less by the same means as their parents (by following the 'one True path'), other movements may teach, akin to New Age traditions, that 'many are the ways' (or at least 'several are the ways') and individuals have to find their own paths. Such divergent groups are likely to have different measures of successful socialisation. For example, Indigo Children have many options ahead of them that fit in with 'their purpose in life' or their 'temperament' as perceived by their parents – they can, within the parents' and New Age expectations, join the establishment (to overturn it) or they can join the fringe of society (to join the grassroots movement). In contrast, Little Cadets who leave Scientology behind, will most likely be perceived by other Scientologists as having joined the 'Wogs', and as a result will never be 'clear', let alone be Operating Thetans. One crucial factor in concepts of 'successful' socialisation is the degree of role flexibility available to the children. Can they stay in the sect if they choose not to completely adhere to the beliefs and practices? Is there room for change within? Can they still be saved by adhering to the beliefs and practices outside of the geographical or social boundaries of the community? Can the

group's norms and values be separated from the beliefs and practices? Can the second-generation members believe without belonging (Davie 1994)? The main question here, of course, is where the parents and members of the established generation in charge of the group draw the line. And, following that, do the young members accept the lines drawn by the first generation? Where do the second-generation members draw the line?

In sectarian movements, part of the dialectic of socialisation is the negation of the boundaries of the community. Socialisation is a multi-faceted process by which, to put it over-simply, children internalise their surrounding culture, but in turn also have an impact on it, by their mere presence and as active agents (as mentioned in chapter two). Social boundaries are a very important aspect of sectarianism, but they are often challenged with the maturation of the second generation. Whereas established religions have a sense of security through their institutionalisation, and are not as threatened by nominal membership, sectarian movements rely on total membership. Davie's concept of 'believing without belonging' would destroy the sectarian community, taking away its *'raison d'être'*, as it were (Davie 1994). In sects, socialisation has a dual purpose - the continuation of norms and values as well as the perpetuation of a 'way of life', the social isolation that largely creates the community's sense of identity. On a social level, the second generation's socialisation has an immediate bearing on the continuation of the group's way of life - sectarianism.

Groups change over time, even if they wish to remain the same - they have to change in order to achieve a level of stasis. As I have addressed in chapters two and three,

the presence of children brings changes to a group, but the surrounding community and/or the state also have their influences. Sectarian groups are often caught between their children's demands and external demands and pressures. How do they balance these pressures? Furthermore, there are also pressures from members of the first generation or the current leaders, who may resent recent or planned changes and wish for the group to continue as it was – prioritise the founding ethic, the mission, or whatever they consider the 'raison d'être' of the movement. An important question underlying this balancing exercise is: Is the sect ready to denominationalise, or does the group want to remain revolutionary and sectarian?[197] The ways in which these tensions are balanced and navigated is crucial for future relations with the second-generation members. If the group prioritises sectarianism over the demands of the children, then the young members have to adapt. If the group denominationalises, then the children will have more flexible boundaries within which to accommodate their plans. For these groups, the plans for the children can change over time. For example, whereas the *gurukuli*s were initially trained to become monks, now it is acceptable if these young members remain vegetarian and visit the temple once in a while. The plans for the children have changed in adaptation to an undisputable fact – the *gurukulas* proved disastrous for many of the children there because of institutionalised neglect and abuse. My research has shown that as the groups changed over time and the priorities were reassessed, the boundaries also changed. The second-generation members, as a result, were often re-assessed according to the new boundaries. Whereas the children at first had a special significance, such as End-Time Teens or Blessed Children, their roles came to be redefined and renegotiated. This adaptation throughout the process of changes also made for different childhoods

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[197] And are the opinions shared or divided? Such pressures can cause much tension within the group, and if opinions are divided sectarian divisions may occur, causing much upheaval.

for the different cohorts of children, and consequently different experiences for the

elder members of the second generation than for their younger counterparts.

The Good, the Bad and the Troubled...

In many cases the second-generation members turned out not to be as 'perfect' as

their parents and other established members had expected. For example, the

Reverend Moon's children were 'Blessed', but not necessarily free of 'misdeeds',

their collective transgressions involving spousal abuse, drugs, excessive drinking,

extra-marital affairs, and so on.[198] There were many among the first wave of Blessed

Children who left, most of them unhappy with their childhoods.[199] As mentioned

earlier, the *gurukuli*s frequently were not and did not become the disciplined monks

their parents and other first generation devotees had envisaged. The children in The

Family were thought to be in need of Victor Programs for disciplining and/or to 'get

the Victory'. The Bruderhof children might have been raised in propitious

circumstances, within a community of brethren, but were still suspected of having

'impure thoughts' – and in need of help, through 'clearings', to overcome these

alleged thoughts.[200] Over time the ideas surrounding the children and what they

needed to grow up as responsible assets to the sects changed or at least had to be

pragmatically adapted.[201] As a result, programmes were developed in order to deal

with this discrepancy, i.e. the Victor Program, disciplining measures in *gurukulas*, and

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[198] See, for example, Hong (1998).

[199] One of the members I interviewed suggested that the first wave of children were somewhat neglected, and as a result they did not build the type of bond the younger children developed as a result of the camps, retreats and workshops. (Interview Justin 1999.)

[200] See, for example, "The Society Syndrome, Depressive Illness and Conversion Crises in a Christian Fundamentalist Sect" by Julius H. Rubin (date unknown) and his book on the Bruderhof (2000).

[201] There are several levels of adaptation here; parents, teachers and/or other community members disciplining individual children for transgressions, and leadership defining certain transgressions as deviant and institutionalising disciplining measures to manage this deviancy. I concentrate on the social process of the institutionalisation and management of deviance within these sects.

so on. The Unification Church began to organise workshops to bring about the bonding and sense of community that the first cohort of children had reportedly not developed, in order to reduce the rate of desertion amongst the children of the second cohort.[202]

The desertion of the children is a difficult issue for sectarian groups, but one they need to face eventually. Accommodation to demanding and/or difficult children can be too much a cost to bear (sacrificing religious tradition), and keeping the rebellious children around the fringes can also be costly, as they may influence the others. The more rigidly sectarian the group, the stricter are the boundaries, which means that children have to be either in or out. By 'sitting on the fence', as it were, the proverbial bad apples may pollute the bunch (Douglas 1966). Of course, if such boundaries were to be stretched or slackened, then 'slight deviants' could remain, but this would be a level of accommodation that is not always acceptable in light of doctrine and/or tradition.[203] Hence the rebellious young members are sometimes offered two choices, stay and adapt or leave. Depending on their choices, the special children of earlier chapters, such as the Blessed Children and Millennium children, have over time become renamed, or the meaning of the names have changed . The children who have left or been cast out have been given (and have frequently also assumed) a new status and, accordingly, a new designation.

Sociologists are well aware of the politics of naming - the act of labelling and its consequences (e.g. Erikson 1966; Becker 1973 [1963]). A 'deviant' receives a 'deviant label' considered fitting by those in her/his surroundings – who have defined

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[202] Interview (Interview Justin 1999).
[203] Or, of course, the acts previously considered deviant could become part of the norm and no longer be considered transgressions.

the action as deviant (and hence have defined the act as well as the person). Deviance

is not about the quality of the act committed, but a consequence of the application, by

others, of rules and sanctions. The sanctions can be seen as rites of transition with the

purpose of transferring the deviant to a special deviant position (Erikson 1966: 15).

This can be a symbolic marginal position (such as the *kleiner ausschluss*) or a more

concrete removal from the community (such as excommunication, the *grosser*

ausschluss). The deviant label, in a way, says at least as much about the surroundings

as about the deviant. And the label may become an entrenched part of the person as

s/he is redefined as a 'transgressor' or an 'outsider', an outcast from the community.

Although it is important to keep in mind that labelling is more reflective than

deterministic (a perspective rather than a theory), it can help create stigma, which in

turn may affect behaviour (Plummer 1979). The 'outsiders' are treated as such by the

'insiders', and as a result they are more likely to associate with other 'outsiders',

hence continuing to engage in behaviour that the 'insiders' now expect of them

(Becker 1973). Or, as Erikson and Merton argue, the deviant label may become a

self-fulfilling prophecy – a way for both the community and the deviant to agree on

what kind of person s/he is. If one is already considered to be a deviant, then any

behaviour is more likely to be considered deviant, and one may as well engage in

deviant behaviour.[204]

The types of labels that arose in my research can be categorised into a few stereotypes

of labels assigned, both by parents and sects, to their children. The young members

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[204] In the next few chapters I will describe how such labelling largely directs the interaction between the parents and the sects and the children and young members. The latter, as a result of their experiences and the associated labelling, also often group together to create a community of outcasts, either within or outside of the religious groups.

are described as 'Goodies', 'Rebels', or 'Baddies'.[205] These generalised stereotypes largely represent the different categories of how the children were defined as they made their own decisions regarding their future.[206] I shall first briefly introduce the generalised stereotypes that I have created to represent the clusters of labels I discovered in my research, then proceed to more in-depth descriptions using the terminology and language I have encountered in interviews, participant observation, content analysis of literature and online discussion groups and on which I have based the generalised stereotypes.

The children and young members who adapt to their surrounding culture and learn to operate within it are quite simply 'the Goodies'. They have internalised the culture, roles, explicit and implicit meanings, successfully conform to the expectations of others, and report to be happy within this context. Then there are those who love and appreciate their childhood culture, but have some questions about the way things are done and extend some challenges to the existing 'rules'. They want improvements. They are the 'Rebels' (although in some contexts they are described more positively as 'innovators'). Some young members decide very clearly during their teenage years or as young adults that they do not want to live within this culture. In some cases there has been an unhappy childhood (sometimes involving abuse or neglect), in other cases it is a matter of values ('I want to earn my own money and keep it', or 'I want to go to university'), or disagreement over future plans ('I do not want to go to that

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[205] The stereotypes as I have named them are admittedly simplistic (i.e. 'Baddie' and 'Goodie'), but they are the most representative of the explicit and implicit meanings of the polarised labels used by the parents and others within the religious groups.

[206] Those who put forward indoctrination or brainwashing theses might disagree with the statement that the adult children make 'their own' decisions. However, for second-generation members, such theories create an impossible and tautological argument, as their actions and decisions are frequently dismissed as the result of 'indoctrination'. I shall align myself with the more Interactionist theories that involve the child and young person as an active agent in the socialisation process (Jenks 1996; Jenks, James *et al.* 1997).

school' or 'I do not want to marry that person'). These kinds of matters are not easily resolved, and the (usually adult) young member leaves or is cast out. These young members usually have a past of rebellion and transgression within the group, and their exit marks their new status: a seed gone bad, a lost soul, or other equivalent – 'the Baddies'. The Baddies are the 'bad apples' who either left or were cast out – they are to be kept away from the other children so they do not 'spoil the bunch'. The 'badness' reflects on the fact that these were usually rebellious children who transgressed the boundaries of acceptable rebellion. However, the existence of Baddies is not always explained in terms of their transgressions by the parents, leaders, or other elders of the religious groups, frequently it is explained as a more intrinsic affliction to do with their emotional stability or spirituality (or lack of) rather than with their behaviour. In interviews these young former members were frequently described (by parents, some in leadership or public relations positions) as 'troubled'.[207] The 'Troubled' former members are the ones whose absence from the sect, and attitude towards the sect, is explained by spiritual problems (they have lost their way or are being plagued by problems associated with a lack of spirituality - vanity, doubt, pride, material desire, or other such 'problems' depending on the religious beliefs) or by emotional issues (they are depressed, 'down', have lost their way – possibly under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs).

Goodies display different characteristics depending on the religious group. In the Unification Church it is not enough to just be a Blessed Child (BC) – there is a further informal distinction between those who are 'hard-core BCs' and those who are not.

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[207] I noticed on occasion that when sitting in on gossip between young members I would hear stories about those who were Baddies and had left, yet when talking with parents of leaders they would tell me about the same person but explain their actions differently and describe the individual as Troubled. I suspect that both labels may be used depending on the audience.

The hard-core BCs are 'activists' for the movement; they strive for purity according to UC standards, apply peer pressure to their contemporaries to conform, and are the leaders within the UC youth movement.[208] These Goodies are also active in the fundraising endeavours, despite the original teaching that they have relatively little indemnity to pay.[209] They are spiritual 'activists' who value and enforce the group's morals and values while denouncing the immoral and corrupt standards 'outside'. There are strong parallels to Goodies within The Family, who are described as revolutionaries and 'professionals' – more than mere missionaries and disciples, they are 'go-getters'. They are akin to the original Gideon's band.[210] In the Bruderhof the Goodies were described as pure (and women as modest), and humble. This language is significantly different from Scientology, where Goodies were described as being 'clear in the head', 'in reality', and generally 'able people' who were 'in control', productive, and 'up-stat'. A follower's work ethic is important, and Goodies are valued for their productivity, values and ethics.

Keeping in mind these values and priorities, it is interesting to note the language used to describe those who transgress, whom I have termed the Rebels, and what values they are perceived to be transgressing. One Rebel in the Unification Church repeatedly used the term 'negative' when reporting how his attitude and behaviour were perceived by his peers and the leaders in the group. He was told he was 'sarcastic', 'pessimistic', 'cynical' (these are 'negative' attributes within the group), was suffering from a lack of faith, and at risk of losing his faith. Hence leaders

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[208] HARP, CARP, and related organisations.
[209] Although this changed over time.
[210] Interestingly, this was the terminology used by parents, leaders, and those inside the group. A former member described the Goodies as 'robotic' – especially those who had 'gotten the victory' in Victor Camps. He accused these members of having given up thinking for themselves (Interview Stephen 2001).

suggested 'spiritual cleansing' to counter his 'wild' and negative attitude and lack of

discipline. His peers also considered him to be negative, and 'on the edge' (as well as

'on the line' and 'on the borderline' – a spatially marginal position). This Rebel was

under pressure to conform. In The Family, Rebels were described as 'suffering' or

giving in to 'pride' and/or being 'lazy – and consequently of 'not pulling their

weight'. Such behaviour or attitudes were described as being symptomatic of

spiritual trouble; having bad spirits or possibly being demon possessed.[211] In

Scientology, those who are 'down stat' are considered a liability and 'need

correcting'.

The existence, or rather creation, of these Rebels points to an existence of

transgressable boundaries that do not necessarily exist in non-sectarian groups. For

example, the term 'rebel' came up in New Age literature and in an interview with a

step-parent of an Indigo child, but in this context the term had a significantly different

meaning. Indigo Children were generally described, by this parent and literature

about Indigo Children, as rebellious ('completely rebellious' and 'naturally

rebellious') in the sense that they were 'different'. Indigo Rebels 'question

everything' and this is perceived, within their circles, as a commendable quality –

they challenge the 'old structures' of authority and consequently are the ones who will

create the new pathways towards a 'new consciousness'.[212] In this context Rebels are

described as being advanced souls; 'light workers' who are 'switched on' and have a

different mindset from their non-Indigo contemporaries. They are generally described

as being highly sensitive persons who are extremely bright (and frequently have

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[211] Here they are mostly behavioural aspects attributed to spiritual issues, as is the norm in The Family. But were these Rebels to leave after failure to conform, I would expect the labelling to switch to them being Troubled.
[212] See, for example, Carroll and Tober (1999; 2001).

healing skills). They are naturally rebellious because they do not fit into the existing structures of this society. They are innovators and transgressors in a positive and supposedly constructive way rather than transgressors with a supposedly negative agenda seen as potentially destructive to community cohesion. The labelling and coding of attitude and behaviour is significant and reflects the moral codes and boundaries of the groups and communities that use such labels (and, in some cases, enforce sanctions). In this context rebellion is praised, whereas in the others it is frowned upon and/or denounced and sanctioned. Indeed, in some contexts, rules and moral codes are virtually non-negotiable, and room for rebellion is limited – Rebels have to either adapt and integrate or leave. The Rebels who did not conform after sanctions, and left, are the Baddies.

The Bruderhof (and other Anabaptist or Hutterite groups, as well as Jehovah's Witnessses) discipline their Rebels ('impure' members in need of 'clearing' or those who suffer from pride, selfishness, or display other behaviours which point to them having lost their faith or being spiritually confused) by symbolically and temporarily removing them from the inner circle of their community – the brotherhood. Those who do not repent in order to be allowed back in (and those who try but do not succeed) are eventually excommunicated or leave.[213] There is relatively little room for rebellion in the Bruderhof; pride, self-esteem, ambition and questioning will get one into trouble with the brotherhood and are likely to lead to some form of exclusion. The Baddies are excluded because they are deemed to be polluting influences. They are no longer members, or no longer part of the inner circle, because the presence of

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[213] Although they will be allowed back once they show they have changed their ways, regained their faith and/or found the way again, some eventually stop trying.

these 'rotten apples' may 'spoil the bunch'.[214] Impurity can be behavioural, physical, and spiritual. Those who have lost their faith are spiritually impure. In The Family it is believed that a lack of faith may lead to someone being possessed by bad spirits or demons (as was the case with Mene, described in chapter two). This may be a 'dangerous' status: former members can be 'Vandaris' – demons who have the power to affect the purity and spiritual status of members.[215] In ISKCON lack of faith and straying from the principles may lead to 'Karmi' behaviour and status. Karmi is a term reserved for 'outsiders', those who do not adhere to the principles. In Scientology, those who criticise the teachings, the founder, or integral aspects of the organisation, are labelled 'suppressives' and followers are recommended to steer clear of them, to avoid their progress being hampered by the 'wrong information'. In the Unification Church, pollution is seen to be inherent. Whereas Blessed Children have a 'purified' bloodline, those born of UC members who have an unblessed union do not have a purified bloodline (Jacob's Children). There are also 'fallen children' – Blessed Children who have not retained their purity (who have had sexual relations before marriage). The latter are no longer considered pure and have to undergo cleaning rituals and will have to be matched and 'Blessed' before they can have Blessed offspring.[216]

It is important to keep in mind however, that these labels are generalised stereotypes which are here used as a framework – they will never be a perfect fit. Rebels and Baddies, for example, frequently display very similar attitudes, behaviours and spiritual struggles. The main difference is that in some groups there is room for their

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[214] An interesting comparison here is the literature written about apostasy and apostates (Shupe and Bromley 1981; Shupe 1998).
[215] I will elaborate on Vandaris in the following chapter.
[216] I will elaborate on this later in this chapter.

questioning and rebellions (indeed, rebelliousness is seen as commendable in some circles), while in other groups this type of behaviour is not acceptable. Similarly, Baddies are sometimes described as Troubled, depending on the speaker and the audience – rather than being 'demonised', they are then pitied. The Troubled are usually the Baddies by another name, and sometimes they are both simultaneously. These former members are described as 'having problems'; they are 'having doubts', are struggling spiritually, or are a 'troubled person'. Anna had been described as a 'troubled person' within the Bruderhof, and at the time she felt a failure before God and her community – yet she was treated like a Baddie and shunned. She was not 'good enough' to be united with the brotherhood.[217] A youth worker in the Unification Church described how many children from the first cohort left. He blamed the movement for not having created enough of a community spirit among these teenagers, but also the young members for being 'confused', 'muddled up', and 'a bit lost'. Teachers within ISKCON described how some *gurukuli*s were 'having a hard time' or 'going through a phase', momentarily following desire rather than the principles. Interestingly, this was always described as temporary, and could be reversed.

These generalised labels exist in reference to the sects' social boundaries and as part of their boundary maintenance. The Goodies fall neatly within the existing framework. The Rebels (as well as the New Age Rebels) brush up against the fringes, yet do so in an acceptable or at least manageable way. The Baddies do not; they fall outside the framework. As do the Troubled, they are not in the 'right' spiritual framework. Non-sectarian religious groups do not have such a rigid authoritarian

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[217] Interview Anna 2001.

framework and social boundaries, hence their labelling tends not to fall within the same ideal types as mentioned above. This explains why rebellion within the New Age, and for Indigo Children, carries a significantly different meaning from rebellion within more sectarian groups. Labels applied to the Indigo Children, in what is a looser and more fluid collective, are more positive and constructive, i.e. describing the boundary breakers as light workers and 'innovators'.[218]

Another important aspect of labelling is that the children themselves internalise these labels and incorporate them into their self-definition, appropriating the labels for themselves. I shall elaborate on the labels throughout this chapter and the next, where I quote at length the Goodies, the Rebels, the Baddies and the Troubled, as well as their parents, teachers, and other caretakers. In quoting at length I aim to give the reader a flavour of the language and the words used to pinpoint someone's position relative to the sectarian group (in, out, or, when possible, on the margins).[219] But first I shall elaborate on the young members' accounts of their childhoods and why they chose the paths they have chosen – to stay, become revolutionaries, to question the status quo, or to leave. And in light of this discussion their proscribed (and occasionally internalised) status and roles will be part of the narrative throughout the remaining chapters.

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[218] I am focusing on social dynamics rather than interpersonal and family dynamics, within which other labels might of course be used.
[219] Although it is important to note here that even the Baddies have always the option to return, as long as they can change and adapt their attitude, behaviour and spiritual state.

CHAPTER 5

THE YOUNG MEMBERS WHO STAY

THE GOODIES, THE REBELS AND THE INNOVATORS

There are rational and emotional reasons for young members to stay within the

community in which they were raised. Depending on the sect and the level to which

it has adapted to these members, the decision can be a one-way street (rigid groups

demand that the children adapt) or a two-way street where the groups and the children

compromise and meet half-way. The latter is more typical of fluid groups that have

adapted to the demands of having children, and/or the demands imposed by society by

sacrificing some aspects of their lifestyle for the benefit of the children.

WHY DO THEY STAY?

The 'Strangeness' Outside and the 'Goodness' Within

Choosing to remain a part of a religious group usually involves both positive factors

associated with membership, and negative factors associated with non-membership –

or the outside world. The two factors act together, as the stronger the pull on the one

hand, the stronger the push becomes on the other hand.[220] Sects have created their

own communities of meaning, and leaving this community of meaning is undesirable

as there is no 'match' elsewhere. One may speak here of a sense of *gemeinschaft* and

its characteristically close social relations between individuals based on close personal

and family ties, rather than *gesellschaft* where social relations are based on

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[220] There are strong parallels here with push and pull theories of migration.

impersonal ties (Tönnies 1965 2nd ed. (1st published 1887)). The stronger the

positive associations with the sectarian culture (the 'pull'), the stronger the negative

associations with the external culture (the 'push') because sectarian groups are formed

in opposition to the 'outside'.[221] Hence, for the young people making decisions about

their futures, familiarity of the sect is a very important theme that comes up

repeatedly.[222] This is in contrast to descriptions of 'outside' as a place where there is

not only unfamiliarity, but also different priorities, values and attitudes that are

perceived as less beneficial, and sometimes even destructive, compared to the ones

inside the community.

The Bruderhof, for example, has been described as an idyllic community in which to

grow up, including by former members who have later either left or been

excommunicated. Even those who have serious questions about some of the child

rearing practices (as mentioned in chapter two), also admit that there were wonderful

aspects to the communal lifestyle. Elizabeth Bohlken Zumpe, in a critical book

describing the hardship she has endured with the Bruderhof, and the harm she feels

has been done to many members and former members, nonetheless also describes

how she enjoyed life as a nine-year old in the Primavera community in Paraguay

(1993: 69). This was reflected in interviews with former members, where, for

example, Frank described his childhood in Paraguay as 'idyllic'. He felt it was a

beautiful place, wonderful for children, and has fond memories of a large and well-

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[221] This relationship of pushes and pulls can also work exactly the other way for members who have had less beneficial or occasionally traumatic experiences and who wish to leave.

[222] The topic of familiarity is important; it is something 'the renegades' seek outside when leaving and often find with other former members. This theme has again parallels to migrants – where familiarity is linked to settlement in an area where others from the same place have already established themselves and hence have prepared a haven of familiarity. Former members frequently make similar choices. I will elaborate on this in the following chapter.

stocked library.[223] In most of the accounts I have come across there were positive accounts of childhoods in the Bruderhof. One of the former members I interviewed, Anna, described her childhood love for the Bruderhof and her desire to be a part of its inner circle.[224] Her story also unearths her fear, as a child and young woman, of 'being out' and believing that all the good things in the world were within the Bruderhof. Hence, not being a part of the Bruderhof, to her, felt like being cast to the lions.

Anna describes herself as having been a very happy child. She felt she was called to the Bruderhof and did everything within her powers to stay in the fold. "The thought of not joining the Bruderhof was frightening to me." As a child she had been very moved by the Christian teachings of the Bruderhof, and she had also had a religious experience, which made her very sympathetic to the values and practices of the movement. "I was actually ideal material for the Bruderhof. I felt called to the Bruderhof – always did." As the Paraguayan community was facing difficulties, at the time of the Great Crisis, Anna and her family went to England, their original homeland, where they did not live with a community – they were in exclusion. But soon her parents started writing to a local community asking to be allowed back in. Anna was 'desperately keen' to return to the community. When asked what she had missed about living in the community, she said:

> It was fellowship, the children, [a] sense of justice. What comes to mind
> [about not living in the community] is an incredible emptiness and nothing
> would fill it. It was like a hole inside me. I was always hungry because we
> didn't have a lot, and always trying to fill [the hole] with eating. Incredible
> emptiness.

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[223] Nadine Pleil, another former member, provides a description of this library in her book, explaining that the library had been shipped from England during the war, and post-war received sizeable donations from people in England, Germany and America (1994: 64).

[224] Interview with Anna 2001.

Anna describes a terrible homesickness for the Bruderhof. The yearning for the

Bruderhof grew as she was feeling more and more out of place in school. After Anna

finished her GCSEs, her family were allowed back into the community, but soon her

parents were 'out' again, in exclusion.

> By parents having been in trouble with the Brotherhood, that affected the
> children, in a most damaging, corrosive way. No self esteem, huge anxieties
> about making decisions... They got back into the Brotherhood, and as soon as
> there was another crisis, mom and dad were out again.

Anna's parents were in and out a few more times, and eventually moved to a

community in the United States of America. Anna was then twenty-one. In America,

the family was still in disgrace. They lived on the outskirts of the community for five

years, lobbying to be allowed in. This was, to her, like a manifestation of her

disgraced status – being relegated to the physical margins of the community. As a

result Anna had issues with low self-esteem, and felt like a failure in several ways.

She now believes, in hindsight, that she might have been clinically depressed at the

time. Then, she was certainly considered to be problematic – a Baddie needing to be

kept away from the flock.

> To live near a community has huge stuff around it. It's a position of disgrace,
> of punishment, of being totally beholden. Writing endless letters and
> definitely not putting a foot wrong – hanging on every invitation to come to
> some special meal... Me, yearning to be part of the community, yearning to be
> free. Depressed and more and more self conscious and unfree and tied up in
> knots about everything...

Despite the disgrace of exclusion, the family, and especially Anna, longed to be a part

of the community and its ideals of a perfect life. The teachings of the Bruderhof were

a big pull; but there were also pushes. Anna certainly had fears about leaving:

"Because it's so scary to come out, because you can't actually stand on your own

feet."

> You've got the loyalty issue, the whole thing with God and Christ. You're brought up not to trust anyone but the people in the community...

And Anna believed that those who were not part of the Bruderhof would go to hell. Although it was, according to her, never quite spelt out like that, it was nonetheless very clear to her.[225] As a result Anna continued to petition the community to allow her back in. This process lasted until she was in her thirties. She eventually stopped trying to get back into the community, assuming she would be in exclusion when returning.

> Being outside meant the fear of losing that connection with God and everything that made life worth living. Being in the Bruderhof was what made life worth living.

In the case of Anna the pushes and pulls appear to have initially been on the side of the Bruderhof. Despite the difficulties involved in being part of the community, she fought hard to be a part of it. On a less extreme level, this idea of the 'goodness within' versus the 'badness outside' is mirrored in the attitude of a young man who is a Blessed Child in the Unification Church, and who I will refer to as Sam.[226] For Sam, the most important aspect of being a Unificationist was the values, compared to the lack of values and integrity 'outside'.[227] Sam was in his early twenties, and both his parents were missionaries for the Church. As a result, they were not well off, and he had worked 'outside' for a few years in order to save money for college, where he was enrolled when I interviewed him. His childhood was spent mostly in the USA, where he was part of a sizeable network of Blessed Children. They had their own

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[225] This is an aspect of the implicit learning (of concepts, meanings, conduct, etc.) mentioned earlier in this chapter.

[226] Of course the strength and content of these idealisations of 'goodness within' versus 'badness outside' are likely to eventually change if/when the member leaves and depending on their experiences and fortunes 'outside'. Then, in hindsight, and within a different system of meanings, their autobiography may undergo significant changes.

[227] Interview Sam 2001.

meetings and workshops, and had developed strong *gemeinschaft* bonds. This unity,

or cohesion, was due to the time spent together, but also due to the shared values,

which he considered intrinsic to the movement.

> … [O]n the whole I think people who have grown up in the movement, they're
> more sincere, they're more honest, I think they're just more well-rounded
> individuals in terms of just being able to understand people, being more
> compassionate, kind of. They're not as sarcastic, or pessimistic, or put people
> down. I think they're just nicer, easier to get along with, in general.

According to him these values were passed down to him by his parents and other first-

generation Church members, not necessarily through (overt) teachings, but (more

implicitly) by giving the right example. He felt he has been better off than many of

his peers.

> I just think that, [with] families within the Church, there is certainly less
> divorce. On average there are higher standards of morals. I think I grew up
> with [a] bigger sense of awareness of good moral values or something… In the
> US half [of] my friends are living just with their mom or their dad. They're
> totally rebellious. They didn't like the fact that they just lived with their dad
> or their mom, and they had a step-mom they hated or a step-dad they thought
> was a jerk. I think there's just less of that [in the Church]. You just grow up
> in a healthier environment.

And he wants to pass this on to his children.

> …I'd like my kids to get some of the values I've learned. I think it's really
> important to grow up with some moral standards… Respecting your parents.
> Just respecting people in general. Moon has definitely talked about [it], he
> doesn't judge anybody so I try to do the same. I try to be really open. And the
> more open you are to people, the more opportunities come your way, I think.
> And the more you can rub off on people that you are genuine. I think a lot of
> times that's difficult to find in today's world. A lot of people are too fake,
> they put up a front to try and get what they want. But I think if someone really
> comes across someone genuine, I think it's really to your advantage. I think
> that's helped me in my career as well.

Sam argues that by setting the right example, 'doing right', others will do the same in

return. He feels that this is how he has been raised, and he wants to do the same for

his children – as well as the people around him. He admires and respects the people

within the Church, and wants to be a part of it - maybe not as a missionary like his parents (he wants to earn enough money to be able to send his children to university), but certainly in a way that the values and teachings continue to impact on his life. One of the teachings of the Church of which Sam thinks very highly centres on sexual purity.[228] For Blessed Children, the most important thing, according to Moon, is that they remain pure and continue to build upon this foundation, so that eventually there is a foundation upon which Heaven on Earth can be created. Hence, the Blessed Children, both male and female, have a quest for purity. In the Rev Moon's own words:

> You should not ruin your purity during your adolescence, which is the precious time when you cleanse and indemnify the purity lost by Adam and Eve during their youth. You should preserve your purity, precious and clean, and you should have the mind and the determination that "even if I have to live a thousand or ten thousand years alone, my love will absolutely never be misused."[229]

Sam has strongly internalised this teaching; he practises it and plans to pass it on:

> Honestly, try and keep yourself pure. That's one of the big things we stress in our movement. No sex before marriage type thing. I think that's really important. So if I can pass these kinds of things down, that would be great.

> If I had kids I wouldn't really want my daughter to go around sleeping around with, you know, ten or fifteen guys and then try and find someone to settle down with. I'd rather her just be clean and whatever. I don't know if I can pass down those values to my kids, that's probably one of the most challenging things. For me, that's one of the best things I've gotten out of it, that's one of the things I wanna do to my children.

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[228] Purity is a very important doctrine in the Church as a whole. Moon teaches that purity was lost in the Garden of Eden, as a result of the actions of Eve. As Eve tempted Adam, he lost his purity as well. But it was Eve who made Adam fall, and consequently she bears most of the responsibility – as do women, according to Moon. But his aim is to even out this equality for the coming generations, and to restore purity in both men and women. The parents, through the blessing, have created a foundation on which the children could be born without 'fallen nature'.

[229] Blessing and Ideal Family by Reverend Sun Myung Moon, Chapter 1, Part 2, THE LOVE OF TRUE MAN AND WOMAN. (http://www.ettl.co.at/unification/bif/bif-1-2.html#6) accessed 26/3/2005.

It is for this reason that he wants to marry another Blessed Child.[230] For Sam, part of the reason for wanting to marry someone 'within' is that he can then be confident that she would have had a similar upbringing and would share the same values and beliefs regarding purity.[231] Then, he argued, "...it would be easier to teach our children the same thing, if both parents are on the same page."

But more importantly, there is such a strong feeling of community among some of the Blessed Children, that an 'outsider' simply does not seem equally approachable or even desirable.[232] In the words of another Blessed Child, whom I will refer to as Kevin:

> What's really positive is that we always feel comfortable and there's a connection there, and I can probably feel closer to some kids who I don't really know so well, but I've seen them around, I know their brothers and sisters. But I can feel more comfortable with them then some people at college, because I just have an understanding that they're of the same faith.

This sense of community and connection is an important aspect of what I refer to as the 'goodness within', and it is something that came up repeatedly in interviews with young members – both the 'Goodies' and the 'Rebels'.[233] It was strongly emphasized by a young member of The Family, whom I will refer to as Sally. Sally's parents separated when she was young, and as a result she was 'out' for three to four years, as she lived with her father who had left the movement.[234] Sally was not impressed with 'the System' as she experienced it while she was away from The Family as a young

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[230] This is, in Unificationist theology, the way to maintain one's purity. Marrying anyone other than a BC would be 'impure', as it would break the lineage created by the Blessing of the parents.
[231] Although another reason he gives for wanting to marry within is: "And then, you don't have to explain your life as much."
[232] This strong sense of community has not always been there for Blessed Children. I will discuss this in a later chapter.
[233] Part of the reason why the Rebels challenge aspects of the groups is because they recognise the positive aspects as well and are not ready to leave the whole package behind.
[234] Interview 2000.

teenager.[235] As a child she had loved life in The Family. Her parents and siblings had lived as a nuclear family until she was six, after which they had moved to India as missionaries, where they lived in a large Family community. There were many other children. She had previously been educated at home, but in India she was schooled with the other young children within the community. She was aware that she was a missionary child and that her parents were missionaries, and she had liked it: "I was aware that I was a missionary; my parents were always sure to make sure it didn't get to my pride". She describes Family missionaries and members as having something special about them, and is convinced that she can point out a Family member in a crowd, not because of their dress or style necessarily, but because of something more ethereal. And, she argues, there immediately would be a feeling of familiarity.

> I guess there is something different about us – can't necessarily put your finger on it. There's something different, and I think its cool. Someone can actually spot you. ...I guess there is a little bit more.

> I don't say you can tell a person's religion, but you can definitely tell their spirit, whether it's the Christian spirit or not. People's spirit, their outlook, is reflected on their face, [in] their eyes.

When she went to live with her father after her parents' separation, she had in effect left The Family. She had difficulty adjusting to life outside, and did not enjoy it. "I didn't really enjoy myself. ... We've grown up trying to save the world – or change the world, or something like that." And instead she found herself amongst her cousins, who were into make-up, clothes, and Tom Cruise. Sally says: "[Inside The Family there are] a lot of people like me, [with the] same vision. ...[There is] a feeling of being at home. Outside, I was not the oddball, I felt they were the weirdos."

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[235] Family members refer to society as 'the System' to denote the world outside of The Family – mostly the 'capitalist establishement', but generally anything not of The Family.

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Sally wanted to rejoin The Family as soon as possible, and asked special permission

to stay with 'foster parents' within The Family while she was still a minor, at the age

of sixteen, and whilst her mother was in the mission field. She received the necessary

written permission from her mother and eventually moved to the USA and took a

secretarial job within the movement. She felt at home, and she felt a sense of purpose

in her life.

> ...Knowing they were there, that there was actually a goal... You're part of
> the world. If you can make a little difference, a change, you can do
> something. It might not be big, but it's something. It's an accomplishment
> which goes further than yourself. It's not just for yourself. It's not just
> material.

Sally also described a feeling of appreciation that others have towards the Family.

According to her, other missionaries appreciate Family missionaries and look up to

them.[236] Her work is important, and it provides meaning to her life. And this

meaning, as well as the sense of community, is something she would not jeopardise.

They are things she respects and values, and they are benefits to her life.

Nadine (not her real name) has similar feelings towards the religious group she chose

to formally join as a teenager.[237] Her parents were both involved with Scientology

throughout her childhood, and although they lived as a nuclear family and she went to

mainstream schools, Scientology methods were an essential part of her life. She

received assists (a Scientology process to help a person confront and eventually

resolve physical difficulties) from her parents when necessary and used L. Ron

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[236] This is in stark contrast with the majority of the literature originating from other missionary groups
and churches that describe The Family as heretical and cultic. See, for example, entries on apologetics
websites such as www.apologeticsindex.org and www.watchman.org
[237] Interview 1998.

Hubbard's study technology as part of her learning at home. She argued that this was essential to her performance at school.

> Well, I was much more clear in the head than anyone else in the class. And very, very many times the teachers were just confusing to listen to, and in high school I very many times actually took over maths class because I was much more in reality with what the kids thought than the teacher was. So, I mean, a few times I was actually thrown out because I was – they thought I was trying to show off or something, and the kids would actually come with me outside so I could tell: 'look -', 'this is -', you know, and just help them with their misunderstood words, which is just a basic L Ron Hubbard technology."

> "I didn't have misunderstoods, I didn't have these things I didn't understand, I always clarified everything. Sometimes this got really annoying, teachers [saying]: 'why are you asking all these things', you know. But I wouldn't go past these misunderstood words whereas the other kids would. And therefore I was the brightest out of every class... Its very logical, actually."[238]

As a teenager, Nadine sustained a sports-related injury, and the doctors could not help her. But, she claimed, her mother, through 'auditing' (Scientology counselling methods), found 'the command' her coach/teacher had given her and which had somehow been 'imbedded in her brain', causing her body to respond accordingly at inappropriate moments – allegedly interfering with her own neurological commands. The injury was treated through assists by her mother, and disappeared. When Nadine was fifteen years old her parents went to East Grinstead, the Scientology headquarters in England, for two months of courses. Nadine accompanied them. This trip coincided with her teacher telling her that she was not talented enough to do her sport at a professional level, and criticising her body shape and weight.

> And that's the moment where I decided: I found here what I really like, I am being granted the beingness of what I am, I am actually granted important as opposed to being put down all the time. And I called – 'I am not coming back'.

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[238] 'Misunderstoods' are, according to Scientology teaching, the most important barrier to study, and "the only reason a person would stop studying or get confused or not be able to learn" (*Basic Study Manual*, preface).

I was fed up with being thought of as a piece of meat, you know...

Nadine was in her early teens, just as Sally was, when she chose to become more involved in the movement. She had had positive experiences as a child, and preferred the values above those she encountered in the secular world. This perceived discrepancy of values proved a push, and the beckoning possibilities inside a pull. This process was also reflected in the story of Kevin.[239] Kevin was born and raised within the Unification Church; he is a Blessed Child. When he was fourteen years old his parents left the movement, but he and his younger sister chose to stay. At the age of seventeen he moved away from home and came to London in order to attend college. He moved into the house of the Collegiate Association for the Research of the Principle (CARP; principle refers to the Divine Principle). He chose to live in this house because it was familiar; he knew the people who lived there well, and some of them were his friends. Even though Kevin had gone to mainstream schools, his closest friends had always been Church members. This was partly because he had moved schools a few times, but also because the workshops for Blessed Children had managed to create a strong sense of community and fellowship amongst them, as well as a community of experience and meaning.

> ...and being together, relating, that just kind of kept, or strengthened, the friendships and all. Because we all had a common base; the same kind of upbringing, same ideas, all this kind of stuff. So, yeah, I do have my closest friends in the Church.

And these friendships among Blessed Children (BCs) created during the workshops were also maintained outside of the workshops as the young members sought each

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[239] Interview 2002.

other out.[240] The shared values, experiences and ideals made fellow members more familiar and, consequently, more reliable and desirable friends.

> [Being a Blessed Child] … that kind of set up a common base between us. We all thought BCs – create a community, BC community, able to relate to each other, share what's going on in our lives, like, issues to do with school, college, faith, whatever, just that kind of relating, you know, via letters, via emails, talking together on the 'phone, whatever. So that kind of BC set-up just, I suppose, helped and created that kind of safe community, that we could support each other, that, you know, if you did feel slightly different to outside people, friends at school, because you felt uncomfortable to share or talk to them about certain aspects of our lives or faith, whatever, that we could be relaxed and be ourselves with each other. And that's how it has been for me, I suppose.

Kevin did feel confused when his parents left the movement, and during his late teens he felt that he had to figure out for himself 'where the truth lies'. Hence another reason to move into the CARP house was to find out for himself where he stood *vis-à-vis* the Church, the lifestyle, and the leadership (aspects of the movement that had been criticised by his father in the last few years).

> So I was just trying to figure stuff out for myself. But still inclined towards the Church, because that was my only understanding. And my understanding or feeling that it was true, coz that was what I was brought up with.

But he moved out a year later. Kevin respected, and valued, many aspects of the Unification Church, but there were also aspects he had problems with. It was a result of the latter that he moved out of the communal house, and that he openly questioned some aspects of 'the way things are done'. Kevin was a rebellious Blessed Child, unlike Nadine, for example, who adapted to 'the way things are done' in her community. The extent to which a young member accepts and internalises the norms and values and conforms to them distinguishes the ones who stay from the ones who leave – and amongst the ones who stay, it is especially acceptance that distinguishes

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[240] The workshops were retreats, or camps, for young members to spend time together, bond, and learn about the Divine Principle.

the Goodies from the Rebels. There is an interesting similarity here to the literature about institutionalisation (such as Goffman's *Asylum* and Clemmer's concept of *prisonisation*) that alludes to the way segregation in a closed environment can progressively incapacitate one for life outside the institution in question (Clemmer 1958; Goffman 1968). Another striking parallel can be made with Maurice Punch's conclusions to his research into Dartington Hall School, a progressive boarding school, during the 1960s (Punch 1977). Punch argued that the head of the school had created an 'anti-institution' in his desire to innovate education and liberate pupils and enable them to become a new type of man or woman – a culture-free individual. Yet, in the end, adjustments to the 'realities' of the wider society proved 'abrasive' to some respondents, and the head of Dartington had to admit that his modern school might be accused of having produced 'neurotic misfits' (*ibid.*). All the people I have mentioned in this section referred to 'the outside' as a place they had difficulty adjusting to – be it the values or the people. Both Sally, and Nadine referred to people outside in a critical manner, as 'weirdos', not as intelligent, certainly preoccupied with different issues (Tom Cruise and make-up rather than making the world a 'better place'). Sam and Kevin both referred to different value systems, and not appreciating the outsiders' ones as much. There was a general inability or unwillingness to relativise the moral and social dimensions between the two spheres – rather a tendency to polarise the two. There were references throughout their accounts of them not feeling adjusted to the outside, but feeling quite adjusted inside – feeling 'at home'.

HOW DO THEY FIT IN?

Adapt to Fit: the Goodies and the Activists

Adapting and fitting in require not only successful internalisation and externalisation of the norms, values, codes and expectations, but also an acceptance of them – an acceptance of 'the way things are done'. Of course this adaptation and acceptance is a complicated (and for a large part unconscious) process of trial and error in exploration around acceptable and unacceptable conduct. Sectarian communities are idealised constructions and through interaction over time this construct is fine-tuned and members united. This process is especially important in groups where tradition has a high priority, such as the Amish. In the Amish, members have to adhere relatively strictly to the rules of the community, or they will be shunned. Since this community practices adult baptism, children have more leeway, and receive a substantial amount of freedom during their period of *Rumspringa* (a Pennsylvania-Dutch term which, when roughly translated, means 'running around'). It is a traditional rite of passage in the Amish religion, and signifies a period of months or years, beginning at the age of sixteen, when adolescents are released from the rules of the Church. During this period, these young adolescents are allowed to live among 'the English' (non-Amish North Americans) and experience the outsiders' way of life, and they are afforded a large measure of flexibility by the Amish. After this period, if they choose to join and be baptised, they have to accept the lifestyle and the rules, and adapt to them.[241]

Although the Bruderhof is also an Anabaptist community (practicing adult baptism), they have a slightly different authority structure, inherited from the Hutterite tradition. In the Bruderhof, it is only baptised members who are part of the prayer circle who

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[241] See, for example, Hostetler (1993) and Kraybill (1989).

may vote and have a voice in community matters – and there are further distinctions

for single members (who may not vote on issues that touch upon sexual issues) and

non-decision making Brotherhood members (those who are seen as suffering from an

emotional disposition, or old age).[242] Transgressions are punished by shunning and,

in cases of serious transgression, exclusion. Those who are being shunned (small

exclusion), are not allowed into the prayer circle, and hence cannot vote. And for

those who want to be part of the community, this kind of exclusion is a grave

punishment. For Anna, the idea of not being in the Bruderhof was frightening, and

exclusion was a difficult place to be for her.

> And you can't be quite out because you're not feeling 'out' inside. You're
> still a Bruderhof person. And you dress like a Bruderhof, and you want to go
> back to the Bruderhof, so you don't do anything to damage that.

Hence Anna did everything she could to be accepted as part of the Bruderhof, and

tried as best she could to adapt to the lifestyle. She copied the behaviour of successful

members who were already a part of the novitiate and the prayer circle, and, as a

result, accepted as part of the brotherhood.

> [I had] actually earlier confessed about masturbating to [the housemother]
> because whenever in the Brotherhood, young men would get up and confess
> about impure thoughts. So I thought that in order to get into the Brotherhood
> and the novitiate I had to confess all. So I went to [housemother] and
> confessed.

But for Anna it did not turn out as she had hoped, and according to her she did not

receive the same positive attention as the young men in the Brotherhood did. "When

you go in and confess you get lots of love and attention. Not at all when you're

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[242] For more information on the authority structure of the Bruderhof, see Rubin (1993), Hostetler
(1993), and Zablocki (1971).

rebellious. And I was deprived." By trial and error Anna adapted to the behaviour she thought would get her ahead in the Bruderhof.[243]

Similarly, Sally capitalised on the talents and attributes that she knows would get her into the jobs and missions she liked in The Family. She has honed the skills she knows are desirable, such as secretarial skills and the outgoing personality useful for leadership and provisioning. Sally adapts to the necessary give-and-take of communal life and occasionally joins missions she finds less desirable but where her skills are needed, as such sacrifices, according to her, are compensated by the occasions where she can go to her preferred missions. Sally likes being on the frontline; not only is she a Goodie, she is an 'activist' for her movement. This term came up while I was interviewing Kevin, who described the Goodies within the Unification Church. He referred to them as the 'hardcore BCs' – the ones who do all their public missions and who are on the frontline of the movement. They are activists for the UC.[244] Nadine could be described as an activist for her organisation as well. A majority of the interview was devoted to her explaining the logic behind Scientology and how it could save the world. She also explained her plans for the future, which involved working her way up to one of the largest Scientology centres.

Change from Within: the Rebels and Innovators

The rebels are those questioning and challenging the status quo, and are frequently also the innovators – it is because of their rebellion, depending on the strength of the

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[243] She never did achieve the 'success' she was aiming for acceptance into the brotherhood, which reinforces the view of adaptation as a process of trial and error into a possibly crudely constructed idealisation – her view of the Bruderhof. I say here 'crudely constructed' because clearly her idea of 'success' and how to achieve this was different from that held by her elders.

[244] I shall elaborate on these 'activists' later in this chapter.

group's boundaries, that they can make changes and stretch the boundaries of the group. As they gain influence among their generation, they gain a certain kind of power that solidifies their position and influence. In this way the young generation can create its own career opportunities within the movement and gain voting power. Both The Family and the Unification Church over time developed new and exciting missions for the young generations. These young members could now gain access to leadership positions. Also, with these positions came voting power, giving them the power to change ideas or practices with which they disagreed, or at least discuss them with the first generation members.

Kevin went to live in the CARP house in order to deepen his faith after a time of confusion. This confusion was a result of his parents leaving the organisation when he was a young teenager. He, however, had remained connected through his network of friends.

> I suppose, like I said, I just still felt connected because of my upbringing and the friends that I had. And that... is practically all I knew so I just felt – to go with that. It was difficult, because it was like: 'oh, my faith is being ripped away from me' and I was left on my own and not knowing where to go, so the easiest and safest option was for me to go back into it, to feel safe and secure, have some kind of platform underneath me.

But living in the CARP house, Kevin also came across aspects of membership in which he did not believe, and with which he did not want to continue - he did not feel a personal benefit. He also felt awkward about how much of his life he had to report to the 'central figure', a person within the house who was in charge of the household and issues of faith.

> And after a while I felt, you know, why do I need to be telling everything that I am doing, you know, that kind of restriction. So I probably felt a bit of restriction there, living at the CARP house. Twice, during that year, I went through two severe moments of losing my faith, or really going against it and

not wanting to do anything with it. And they caught on to that because I was being, for their eyes, negative, because I was questioning a lot of stuff, trying to get answers to certain things that didn't make sense, so I just did my personal research on certain things, talking to my Dad, reading different books, and just doing my own kinda thing.

The central figure felt that Kevin had a problem that needed addressing, and Kevin was advised to do a 'condition' – which is the process of deepening one's practice in offer to God while helping one's own spirituality in the process. The activities have to follow a certain pattern based on providential numbers, as specified in the Divine Principle. Kevin agreed, even though he was sceptical of this helping him spiritually.

> They're offering me to find my faith, but its kind of hypocritical, because I'm not finding it my way. I'm finding the faith that they want me to find, you know.

So Kevin continued to 'lose his faith' in the eyes of those around him (but, interestingly, not according to him). And the demands for 'conditions' and further measures continued. Kevin was told that he had to 'sort out his faith', and that if he continued the way he was going, he would end up leaving the Church and losing his friends. Kevin was upset over this statement, as he himself had not thought of leaving the Church, and the prospect of losing his friends was distressing to him. He has decided with hindsight that the leadership was not prepared for Blessed Children questioning the Church or the faith.

> Coz I suppose their idea is that second generation, coz we're born, coz we're there – we go to workshops, we're just being fed, and its easier for us to get trained, I suppose, and take on our parents' mission, what have you. But, they didn't know how to handle me kind of questioning stuff.

Hence he left the CARP house, which 'kind of created an upset'.

> It somehow created a negative nametag for me, to be like: 'oh yeah, [Kevin] is on the edge, he's leaving the Church. He's got negative ideas'.

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Kevin did not like this label, and as a result he has been out of touch with the other

CARP members since he left the house. He does, however, keep in touch with his

friends and other members not necessarily associated with the CARP house. He does

not attend the activities that he does not believe in, and goes along only to the ones in

which he does believe.

> ...I'm not sure whether I feel inside, outside, or just connected, or associated, or whatever. But what I do feel, I still feel a BC, because that's been [spoon-fed] into me and I have this BC community that I'm really part of, and I have my best friends in this BC community you know, throughout the UK and throughout Europe. Some of my other friends are kind of on the verge, like me, and are leaving or distancing themselves from Church activities.

Kevin was always very involved in a variety of leadership positions in the youth

missions and workshops. But, he said, he was taken out of that role of responsibility

because of what was perceived as his loss of faith, which the leadership feared he

could transfer to the other Blessed Children. Yet, he argued, as a result of his energy

and motivation, he always ended up in a leadership position somewhere, despite some

people trying to prevent this. And he wanted to continue to be a part of the Church,

and have a role in leadership positions for his generation.

> ...I still feel connected, and still feel involved with things, but, like I say, in my choice and what I wanna do, and if I do want to go to a service, or a workshop, I'll go along. But also because I feel I want to help and support the younger BCs, to kind of help to give them a choice or to kind of open their minds up to create their own faith instead of always just taking in and taking in, but, to be able to handle stuff, I suppose.

Kevin stressed that he did not want to do this in a 'negative way' – he did not aim to

undermine the leadership, he wanted to be involved, but on his own terms, not under

the control of the central leader or the UK leadership. Senior members had been

flexible enough at least to allow him to be on the fringes and still be involved with the

movement on some level. Hence he still was an active and prominent figure within

the BC community when I spoke with him:

> Which I still kind of am, but, like I said, with this kind of nametag on me.
> Which I don't mind, coz I still enjoy bringing up discussion, or to show them
> the fact that I still am on the borderline, kind of involved, and showing that I
> do have a choice, which is what I want to allow other BCs to have. Rather
> than my feeling of them being controlled or dominated because of this
> upbringing and being fed this information that they have to do certain things
> because that is their responsibility as a second generation, you know, to take
> over the first generation's responsibility of whatever. I just think they're kind
> of weak people, personally.

Senior members set an ultimatum for Kevin, but he refused to meet it. Yet at the

same time, they did not ex-communicate Kevin. They have allowed him leeway to

rebel.

> But I suppose, if they had been stricter, or really forced me, I would have
> become more negative. Because I felt as if I was being pushed a bit too much
> already, and if they had pushed me a little bit more I would have become
> really angry and gone all out against them. And I probably could have done,
> but I myself as an individual feel that wouldn't do any good for any of us[.]

> It wouldn't benefit me, or them, or any of my friends. It would just create
> more problems and difficulties, and break friendships, I suppose. I mean, coz
> I'm still friends with them. And I myself, as an individual, feel ok and
> comfortable with people of different faiths.

NAMETAGS AND THEIR WORK

Despite Kevin being very active in the BC community and in the Church, he still had

a 'nametag', or a label – he still was considered a problem. He placed this within a

larger framework of labels, and distinguished between different 'types' of members.

The committed members who want to be on the front line of their missions he referred

to as the 'hard-core BCs'. Then there were the BCs who were 'on the edge', who

were 'really negative'. Kevin was one of the latter (both by proscribed label and,

eventually, by self-definition). This categorisation becomes an important part of

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sectarian life, as boundaries are drawn between those who fit in, and those who do not, and distinctions made to single them out. Sally, who is in The Family, makes a similar distinction between members, although along different lines. Whereas Kevin explained his problems in terms of the rigidness of the leadership and their lack of understanding of young members and their spirituality, Sally explains the problems of some other members and former members, as she perceives them, in terms of their personalities. Sally explains the difference between 'the ones who make it' and 'the ones who don't', and in her explanations the 'ones who don't' are labelled as lazy or shy, or simply the ones who are not the 'go-getters'.[245]

There are different types of personalities. The way Sally explains it, some people may be more interested in reaching out, others may be shy. And in a movement of missionaries who rely on provisioning, being a 'go-getter' is an important and desirable quality.[246] The shy ones, upon leaving, would, according to Sally, never suddenly become outgoing 'go-getters'. The 'go-getters', upon leaving, would be more likely to get a job and be successful outside The Family.

> Okay, we both know that there's the ones who are successful when they leave The Family, and the ones who aren't... the ones who left The Family and didn't really get anywhere were the ones – they were always like that.

> Many times a lot of people, when they leave The Family, they kind of think that maybe it should all be easy for them, like, the work, and - you know, its not all handed to you on a silver platter. Coz you have to plan on being a go-getter to get yourself going, you know, your parents can only do so much to help you get set up.

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[245] It is interesting here that Sally, a Goodie, places the problem with particular members, while Kevin, a Rebel, places the problem with the structure and leadership of the movement. I will discuss this in the following chapter.

[246] Although I have met Family members who appeared more withdrawn and introverted, and it appears there is certainly room for a variety of personalities, as there are a variety of tasks and responsibilities within the movement. There is, however, also evidence of some personality types being deemed undesirable, as Maria has published letters denouncing 'lazy' and 'complacent' members (e.g. Maria 1999).

The responsibility is placed with the ones who leave; if they fail, that means they were not 'go-getters'. The movement and leadership bear no responsibility in Sally's account; individual (former) members are to blame for their own predicament.

> A lot of times, I am sad to say, I know quite a few young people left The Family that wanted to make money quickly – they just didn't want to have the financial stress that many times we have in The Family. So they just wanted to make money quick. But you can't be lazy and make money quick. Everyone wants to make money quick, but you have to work for it.[247]

Sally was always a 'go-getter'; her brother was the 'bad boy'. And although she admits that some people 'maybe got frustrated' with the Victor Camps, it was never an issue for her. She was occasionally disciplined, but feels it happened in a loving manner. She admits, however, that some had more negative experiences, and that they left The Family as a result of what happened at Victor Camps. But these people, as she explains it, were 'bad' before they left. That is why they needed disciplining, and that is why they did not fit in The Family.

> One girl, a tomboy, she was always being bad – she left… She left because she didn't like it. She left before the charter came out, before her rights came up. She was always the bad girl, and I guess she kind of got tired of getting all the correction, people telling her how to do things, so she just realised maybe this wasn't the life for her.

Sally's stories give an impression of The Family as a lifestyle not appropriate for all. Hence a second-generation adult (referred to as SGAs within The Family) has to decide whether s/he is 'cut from the right material', hence, a 'go-getter' or of similar persuasion. And although The Family can accommodate different styles and personalities, recent literature has made it clear that the young members have to be

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[247] For CM and those in the mission field, life is communal and most goods are shared aside from pocket money allocated.

'revolutionaries' who are ready to 'fight' for the mission.[248] Sally's theory of

personality also gives an impression that some former members, who have not made it

in 'the System', are considered to have personality issues that would have impeded

them regardless of being 'in or out' – and such personality issues may even be seen as

a reason why they left.[249] They may have been under pressure to 'shape up' or leave

– The Family leadership have initiated purges to filter out those who were not 'pulling

their weight' and accused of 'sponging off' the others in the community, allegedly

expecting The Family to 'carry them'.[250]

A MEETING HALF-WAY

Staying by Different Rules

As previously mentioned, when the children of the founding members gain voting

power and the ability to negotiate rules with their parents' generation, they can

become members by different rules. This is by and large the result of adaptation to

the demands of the children, or adaptation after a failed process of trial and error. For

example, in the Unification Church, the second generation members were supposed to

be Blessed at birth, hence there was no need for them to undertake the same missions

required of their parents. Furthermore, as the group was still run by the charismatic

leader, he could make decisions and make changes on the spur of the moment -

particularly when changes or adaptations fit within the framework of the Divine

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[248] See, for example, Maria's letter *The Shakeup 2000* (1999) and the following one *Jesus is calling you back to the Beginning* (1999).

[249] There are differences between cohorts of leavers; the older children had to, as it were, 'break in' the parents and challenge the rules, which often slackened for the younger cohorts of children. Hence the elder siblings tend to have more negative labels, and negative attitudes towards the parents and the group, than the younger children – the later cohorts of leavers. I will elaborate on this in the final chapter.

[250] *Shake-up 2000* is one such example.

Principle or other Unificationist theology.[251] Doctrines often prove remarkably elastic following new revelations and/or interpretations.[252]

The first generation converts were required to have three 'spiritual children' (converts to the UC) before they could be Blessed by Reverend Moon with a spouse of his choosing. Eventually young adults in the Unification Church were allowed to choose their own spouse, although in some cases the parents chose. The BCs had to fill in lists with specifics such as demographics, educational achievements, spiritual questions, and so forth. Each geographical region (i.e. America, Europe, Korea, Japan) had its own lists. Parents were allowed to match from the lists, and some parents allowed their children a role in the choosing process. With the involvement of the parents, the system had opened up, as many included their children's wishes. The BCs could be Blessed by their parents or their local leader, and they were allowed to be Blessed from the age of nineteen. They did not have to accumulate a certain amount of 'spiritual children', nor did they have to separate after their Blessing. Because they are 'Blessed', they owe less indemnity than their parents do. They still were 'strongly encouraged' to do certain missions, but theoretically did not receive the same level of pressure their parents had to endure. However, more recently pressure has increased on second-generation members to do their missions. But this time peer group pressure conduced towards urging people to be seen to be a Goodie, a 'hard-core BC', rather than someone with a 'negative' attitude.

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[251] For example, Moon's extra-marital affairs would seem unacceptable according to the Divine Principle (where adultery is described as a grave sin). However, Moon's behaviour has been justified by way of an old teaching that had not been officially disseminated before, P'ikareun. For more on this, see Nansook Hong (1998) chapter 1.

[252] See, for example, Festinger et al. (1956).

From 2000 the Blessed Children have been advised to complete a public mission, fundraising and witnessing, for the duration of one or even two years in order to prepare for their Blessing. In Europe the missions for the BCs were called the European Task Force (ETF). In the USA they were referred to as the Special Task Force (STF). As Kevin explained: "It's mainly doing front-line mission for the second generation to experience Rev Moon's heart, what he went through, and so you can understand what the church is all about". Since these Task Forces started, there has been 'quite a push' for BCs to take out a year and join the forces.

> I don't know, because it feels like the leaders say that the first generation failed in their responsibility, the second generation now have to do it. I was thinking and understanding that we should have been able to just continue, just be successful in study and do well in that kind of circumstances and not have to go through those difficulties which our parents did, and most of them are now in difficult financial situations.

> Now it's like, of course, advising, but it's quite a push to go, because you're thought of as not good or not conforming or not showing that you're really into the Church if you don't want to do ETF.

The ETF typically lasts a year, which includes 4 months of fundraising, for 6 days a week, and witnessing in East European countries, such as Slovakia and Hungary.[253] Thus, although the Blessed Children had, theoretically, less indemnity to pay, they were asked to involve themselves in fundraising and witnessing missions. This has not always been the case, but the UC has, over time, involved the BCs in the day-to-day life of the Church and its activities. Hence, despite the different rules regarding the Blessing, the lives of the second-generation members were now coming closer to the lives of the parents in the fields of fundraising and witnessing. The latter were missions with a dual purpose, as they also functioned to create a sense of community

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[253] There were also fundraising and witnessing projects in London.

and meaning for the BCs. The label applied by Kevin to his peers involved in these missions, 'activists', summons up an image of dedicated involvement and belief in a cause. The Church may have found a way in which to involve the BCs, by giving them leadership opportunities and career options within their own cohort, and letting them organise their own missions. Otherwise indifferent and disempowered young members are now motivated 'activists', excited about their lives and their work.

The Family has also managed to motivate its young members, and in similar ways. Certainly, the SGAs had a different lifestyle from their parents. The sizes of communities have changed throughout the history of The Family, as have theories over the perfect size of a 'home'. Berg, although deceased, is reportedly still sending messages through prophecy, as are Jesus and other major biblical figures.[254] A further dramatic change in lifestyle came with the Charter. Whereas the early history of The Family was typified by trial and error, the publication of the Charter solidified certain responsibilities. As Sally explains: "You might enjoy sexual liberty, but then something else comes with it". After the advent of the Charter, a couple who conceived were strongly encouraged to get married, in accordance with the Law of Love.[255] Sally used the word 'suggests', and followed this by saying that if they do not want to get married, then at least the father has full responsibility for the next twenty months – throughout the pregnancy and until the child is one year of age he has to look after the mother and child. After this one year, if they still do not want to marry, then their decision will be respected. Although birth control is not endorsed, young members are encouraged to act responsibly and think of the consequences of

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[254] See Bainbridge (2002). This is a significant and interesting example of Weber's charismatic succession - ideas can still change as the result of one person's prophecy from Berg or other influential figures.
[255] If SGAs reside in the same home as their parents, they can marry at the age of seventeen, otherwise the age of consent is eighteen.

their actions. Consequently, young members now tend to have fewer children than the first generation, and several do use birth control.

Staying on a Different Level

Aside from membership by different standards, different levels of membership are also an important marker of the degree of adaptation of a community to its children. The more sectarian the community, the fewer membership options there are: one is either in or out. But as groups adapt to their children over time, flexibility increases, and the second-generation members can go beyond setting new rules. They can sometimes create their own levels of membership, and set new social boundaries in the process, changing the level of insertion of the group into society. SGAs in The Family, for example, can be Fellow Members.[256] It enables members to be a part of the movement, stay in touch and receive literature, without being a full-time member and living in community. Alternatively, they can be even further on the fringe by becoming Active Members or General Members; staying in touch or having a general and distant interest.

In the UC, the birth of the BCs automatically brought with it new hierarchies within the movement, as a distinction was made between the Blessed Children, and those not born to Blessed couples – the Jacob's Children. The former are the second generation, the latter are often referred to as the '1.5 generation'. The Jacob's Children were born before their parents received the Blessing, and as a result they are first generation members according to lineage (they were not born Blessed), while

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[256] This is a new membership level, which has evolved over time (from 'tithing member' and 'turf supporter' to 'fellow member').

being second-generation members within the community by virtue of their parents being members. This distinction creates a UC equivalent to a class system, as Jacob's Children may only be matched to other Jacob's Children or converts. (Jacob's Children will have to go through the Holy Wine ceremony in order to purify their bloodline.) Whereas Blessed Children should only get matched to other Blessed Children in order to keep their lineage pure. This distinction between different 'types' of children is considered necessary to keep the 'lineages pure'. Another level in the class system is made up of the Blessed Children who have 'fallen' – they have lost their 'purity' in similar fashion to how Adam and Eve 'fell'. Moon cannot restore fallen Blessed Children. Through their fall they have created a new lineage; as BCs they are still in the True Parents lineage, but by having had a sexual relationship outside of the Blessing, they have lost God's lineage. They cannot receive the Blessing like pure BCs. BCs never lose their Blessed position, but their course has changed, hence they have a different fate to follow in order to restore their lineage. Fallen BCs have to marry other fallen BCs, so that they can work on restoring their lineage together, without defiling another's lineage. These new levels of membership involve members who otherwise would have been excluded by virtue of having transgressed the most important 'rule' in the UC – the maintenance of purity. Now, however, they can remain within the movement (albeit as 'fallen' children), under the understanding that they have to restore their lineage.[257]

Kevin, a BC, was trying to create a new niche for himself within the BC community. He did not want to be an 'activist' and do the ETF, yet he still wanted to be a part of the movement. He wanted to create more connections with the European BC

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[257] See "The new matching procedure, the joint responsibility of us Blessed Families" by Geros Kunkel, European Second Generation Blessing Director - November 3th, 2002 in Chamarande, France (http://www.2ndgenblessing.com/guidance/008.php3 accessed 12/6/2004.)

community because they were, according to him, 'more relaxed' and 'open'. He considered the UK community to be very insular, including the Blessed Children. I asked whether he would have liked there to be more flexibility within the UC.

> I am feeling that, yeah. Yeah. Everything that I know of my life is UC movement. The teachings and the ideas of the Church and the beliefs and faith, a certain percentage I do believe in, and I do go with. I have difficulties with organisational – the structure of the movement and the leaders.

And as a result of his difficulties with the existing structure he felt his future in the movement to be uncertain. It depended on the extent to which he could carve out a niche, combining the aspects that he liked and avoiding the aspects he did not like.

> But I still feel that throughout my life I'll be probably on the line, in and out, maybe an associate, I don't know, that's just how I feel.

> I don't feel extremely negative, you know, to totally leave or bash, because I feel and know a lot of positives out of what I've learned and the relationships that I have with people. And I'm still good friends with BCs who are on the verge, who are really in, who have left, or – I can handle that, you know, I'm cool with that.

In a sense this is when 'outside' influences affect the sectarian communities, and the children demand to be allowed to 'pick and choose' their allegiances to the community. And some demand to, as it were, sit on the fence and speak to both sides. This would not be acceptable behaviour in strict sectarian communities such as the Bruderhof, but has become acceptable, to degrees, in more adaptable communities.

One example of an adaptable community is ISKCON. This community has had a problematic history with its children, after which it has changed and somewhat adapted to the changing attitudes of the children.[258] Whereas initially the assumption

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[258] Many *gurukula* veterans, however, would argue that ISKCON has not adapted enough – or even that the organisation has made the changes only to protect itself, as mentioned in chapter two.

was that the children would be raised to become monks and work in the temples, the reality proved to be very different. Some children in India and the USA were abused and/or neglected, consequently, some of them wanted as little as possible to do with the temples. But according to members and teachers I have spoken to in the UK, the children who have not become devotees are still welcomed at the temples, and some do occasionally visit.[259] This change required a process of adaptation. A major turning point for ISKCON was when married couples were asked to live outside the temples, as 'householders'. To one member, who had been a devotee since her teens, this felt like she had been 'kicked out'. Suddenly she had to be self-supporting and ascertain how to run a household, ascertain, in her words, 'how the world works'. But she, her contentment, and her comfort, had had to be sacrificed to other processes – the ashrams needed to change. And as a result, for the children born since then, it meant that the ashram was a place for worship and the place for their education – but not their be all and end all, as it had been for the previous cohorts of *gurukulis*.

The shift from a movement of monks to one of monks and householders has been significant to ISKCON's social boundaries. As a consequence of the ashrams opening up and the householders spreading the membership to a more widely defined community, the concept of 'in' and 'out' has changed. Consequently, the definition of what it means to be a part of ISKCON has changed as well. One does not have to be a monk, one does not have to live on the ashram, and now, for the children, the flexibility has continued.

> They're still very much part of the community, they're still following – you know, they're vegetarian and they still come in, you know, when there are

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[259] This is based on interviews with teachers and members of the UK community in 2001, where the ashrams and schools have not had as problematic a history as some of those in the United States and India. As a result, the relations between the first and second generation in the UK are less polarised. Later chapters will incorporate more data on some USA members.

festivals they will still come in. They're still part of the community. It's only that they're attending outside school, or they're working outside.

Hence the concept of the ISKCON community has become much more fluid than it was when the movement had just started. Children can attend outside schools, after which they can take an outside job, marry an outside person, and so forth.

> There's nothing really they could do for us to stop them. *We* have four principles that we try to adhere by, but *they* do or they don't. It's their choice. At what point do they decide they don't want to be part of the community? As far as we are concerned, they'll always be part of this community, or part of the greater ISKCON community.

> They're referred to as *gurukul*, or *gurukuli*... Wherever they go in the world, he's a *gurukul*, or she's a *gurukuli*, and they're part of the community in that respect. So there's no cut-off point.

*Gurukuli*s can stop practicing, they can stay away from the temple, they can smoke, drink, and live a secular life – but they are still considered part of the larger ISKCON community. The idea is that they may at some point come back. The young members may be going through a rough time, they may have lost the faith, lost the way a bit, but some day they may return. One teacher argued that the *gurukuli*s are not judgemental amongst themselves, and they forgive each other's trespasses.[260] In general, she found that the older *gurukuli*s in the UK still have faith in Krishna and Prabhupada. They may not have faith in certain individuals, and the way they have managed things, but these members still have faith in the spiritual side of the movement.[261] Hence, they may go through 'hard times' and not do their practice, but, she predicted, years down the line they suddenly appear at the temple.[262]

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[260] In contrast, she argued, the first generation members are more judgemental towards each other.
[261] This is reflected in discussions held at the time of the Turley case where elder *gurukuli*s were suggesting younger *gurukuli*s were throwing the baby out with the bathwater (Dasa 1999). See also Parker (2001) and Anudasa (2000).
[262] Similarly, Rochford found that second-generation members who went to normal schools found ways of 'passing' (fitting in with non-devotee children) and blending into the secular world, yet did not lose

It's like a phase... It's also part of the philosophy – the desires. A person has the freedom to choose. Again, we don't see this as a cut-off point, there is no cut-off point... A person smoking and drinking may have desires, [it] may be a hard phase. There's nothing stopping that person from moving on... That's their choice.

Hence they don't have to be active devotees, they may break some of the lifestyle and dietary restrictions - but they still are *gurukulis*. They may consider themselves as having left, but to the first generation they will always be a part of ISKCON. Furthermore, some values and beliefs may be sufficiently ingrained to have become lifestyle choices; for example, very few *gurukulis* eat meat. Hence, they belong by default. They belong because they have been raised as *gurukulis* – whether they believe or not.[263] Interestingly, in my interviews with teachers I did not come across special terminology for young members who were considered either 'good', 'bad' or 'rebellious', rather all young members were described as *gurukulis*, followed by a distinction describing whether they visited the Temple, or whether they were 'going through a rough time'. It appears the one main distinction is between those who may have lost the way temporarily and are perhaps having a hard time: 'Troubled'. This points to a significant change in attitude between ISKCON now and at the time of the first *gurukulas* in the USA and India.

CONCLUSION

Sects construct communities of meaning that are special and opposed to 'outside'. Hence the group, to its second-generation members, can be seen as a safe haven compared to the world outside. Yet, sometimes staying is an effort as the young

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their religious identity in the process, even if they became less involved in the practice and lifestyle of Krishna Consciousness (1999: 44).

[263] Some are steadfast unbelievers, as I will describe in the next chapter.

members grapple with institutional or organisational issues. Then, the discontent with the sect has to be weighed out against the undesirability of 'outside'. It is at this point that the relative flexibility or rigidity of the groups' boundaries becomes important to the second generation. In some communities the beliefs and values are more important than membership and, in some cases, practice. It is more important that the children have been socialised into the beliefs, norms and values, than for them to stay with the group. One is more likely to find this, for example, in groups with a New Age orientation, where teachings emphasize the importance of finding one's own spiritual path.[264] Such religious groups put more emphasis on norms and values, as opposed to 'truths'. Charlotte Hardman, in a study comparing the moral rules and sense of self of children in The Family, Transcendental Meditation and Findhorn (a New Age community in Scotland), found that relativism and absolutism were very important and deeply ingrained underlying values that distinguished these children from each other (1999).[265] The Family children were more likely to be absolutist in their outlooks, whereas the other children in Hardman's study were more likely to be relativistic. Children in TM and Findhorn had learned the concept of 'inner knowledge', whereas the children in The Family had learned to rely on the teachings of Berg and Jesus. Hence, the children in The Family knew they should abide by moral rules, laid out by God, Jesus, Berg, or leaders within the movement, and they felt these to be objective rules. The children from TM and Findhorn felt that there were no objective moral rules, all rules were perceived to be subjective, and a few

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[264] This is significantly different from groups with a Judeo-Christian tradition where paths to salvation are not as negotiable and passed down to the next generation as 'the way'. Social and group dynamics, however, can change even the most relativistic of teachings and New Age groups can develop 'absolutist' approaches to 'the way things are done' and how to achieve one's spiritual goal.

[265] Hardman also argued that the second generation are more likely to remain with the group as adults if they have been raised with this sense of absolutism - if their sense of self is constructed within a framework of a belief in one absolute Truth, an external source of authority, and a notion of the child as essentially fallible and thereby requiring external correction and guidance (1999: 227-8).

argued there should not be any rules - that nothing should be imposed. People's inherent goodness, they argued, would ensure harmony. Hence for the New Age children, moral discourse came from within, whereas the Family children looked towards an external authority for guidance. Consequently, Family children interpreted 'right' and 'wrong' in light of the Bible, whereas the New Age children had more relativistic concepts ('right' and 'wrong' were seen as subjective concepts) and had an empowered sense of self as opposed to an empowered external authority. Hardman concluded that the Family children were 'successfully socialised' into their parents' worldview, and those who deviated had either to conform or to leave, as there were absolutist moral views. On the other hand, the New Age children had been empowered to trust their inner selves, hence they had created their own moral views and may well find their own paths and reject those taken by their parents (1999: 240). Despite not following the parents on their path, however, the children had internalised the parents' general New Age worldviews and beliefs of self-realisation. This adds an interesting angle, as it underlines how the 'absolutist' groups are also more likely to have less negotiable norms and rules, and more regulatory and disciplining methods and agencies. The presence of an external agency (be it God or Berg or Moon) who provides guidance, as opposed to the potential for an 'inner monitor' or 'inner knowledge', does tend to make rules more non-negotiable, and consequently infraction of such rules comes at a higher cost. Following this logic, the more absolutist the groups, the more intense the control of infractions and deviancy. Hence it makes sense that Baddies come from groups where breaking rules amounts to impurity and danger, where those who leave are considered 'backsliders' or 'in disgrace' – their action frequently seen as a betrayal. Whereas groups who have the flexibility of a more relativistic world-view, have room for rebels who are considered

'ground breakers', rule-breakers', 'light workers', and so on. There are no such hard and fast rules to break, and consequently no such deviants.

Staying on a different level and 'believing without belonging' can only happen when a group has flexible social boundaries and is willing to re-negotiate their opposition to society – or at least the priority of this stance.[266] If the group is willing to shift the boundaries to adapt to the children and include a different generation, with different needs and desires, then this is a move towards denominalisation, because the moment boundaries are negotiable - they are less rigid. Hence the young members can stay by different rules, and the group has lessened its stance of opposition. This process of adaptation is then likely to continue with the third generation, further diminishing the opposition to the surrounding society. Such a process often enables the young members to 'sit on the fence', to explore the margins and experiment with the elasticity of the boundaries – in the way that Kevin does. Although in the case of the UC there is clearly still a significant amount of resistance to Kevin's rebellion; he has reported himself that he feels like he walks around with a label tagged on him announcing his 'negativity'.[267]

The more flexible the group, the more opportunity the young members have to negotiate their own roles within the movement. In this case the labelling is more likely to be along the language of rebels, explorers, ground-breakers, and so forth. The young members can explore and carve out their own niches and expand the 'territory' of the movement without being banished from the tribe. Young members

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[266] I have borrowed this term from Davie, who uses it to describe religious behaviour in 'secular' Western Europe, where church attendance is low while people still score high on measures of belief (1994).
[267] Interview Kevin 2002.

in groups with rigid boundaries do not have this opportunity; they will have to adapt

or be cast out. In this case, one is more likely to see polarised labelling; children are

either Goodies or Baddies (and potentially also Troubled). Of course these

distinctions are ideal-typical – but there is a 'boundary dynamic' that is interesting

and which, I argue, taints the picture of what happens after the young members

leave.[268] The maintenance of boundaries is what defines a sect, and what maintains

the sectarian stance with society – opposition and isolation. Hence, if the young

members leave, they join the opposition, as it were.

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[268] The Rebels and Troubled can be redeemed, for example by doing conditions (UC), by undergoing clearing and going through exclusion which gives them time to redeem (Bruderhof), by word time, writing Open Heart Reports, and going through the Victor Program (The Family), and by undergoing auditing, ethics programme or other appropriate courses (Scientology). But if they don't redeem themselves and are excommunicated or leave then they become Baddies, which frequently requires physical and emotional distance; disconnect, exclusion, shunning, or other way of not being in contact. But the terms of course are generalised stereotypes created by me to represent a number of labels, used differently, by each organisation. For example, within The Family there are Rebels who can still be redeemed, but once they have left they may become Baddies if they have become 'apostates' (this was especially the case with the first cohort, now some former members remain on friendly terms with the organisation). But in conversation they may be labelled as Troubled instead as an explanation for their 'bad attitude'. Stephen, for example, is reportedly a 'backslider' and a Baddie – but this is explained by his 'troubled nature'. In a different example, ISKCON teachers argued that 'once a *gurukuli* always a *gurukuli*' – they may not follow the principles but can always return. But when I asked a former *gurukuli* whether she and other former *gurukuls* she knows still consider themselves devotees, she wrote: "Heck no". Of course being a devotee is different from being a *gurukuli* by birth, but it gives one an impression of where they stand vis-à-vis ISKCON.

CHAPTER 6

THE YOUNG MEMBERS WHO LEAVE

There are different scenarios for leaving, and a range of experiences among young

members who find themselves outside the familiarity of the group. Interconnected

with the way young members leave is the type of support they are likely to encounter,

and how this support affects them - in shaping their future attitude to the group in

which they were raised and their parents, as well as their sense of identity. However,

not all former members who leave seek or receive support, either from the group they

came from or from outside agencies. There are many who have left sectarian

religious groups who have found and made their own ways. There is no systematic

research or literature on this group of people, nor statistics, hence it is very difficult to

ascertain what the numbers may be (especially since it also depends on which

religious groups we use in the analysis).[269] In short, more systematic research needs

to be done on this topic, but for the moment this research maps out a number of

trends.

Some of the people I have spoken to have literally run away – and never returned.

They have sacrificed their relationship with family and friends in order to break free

from the community in which they were unhappy. (Often they were unhappy with

their family and some friends by association.) They left following abuse, neglect,

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[269] For example, over twenty people have contacted Inform between 1996 and April 2007 who have been members of a sectarian community in the past but have since left. This number is problematic for several reasons: many enquiries to Inform are anonymous, and in the past enquiries were not coded according to the current system. Also, Inform is known first and foremost as an information centre, not a support agency, hence people looking for support may not think of contacting Inform (and, after all, they have intimate information about the groups they came from). However, those who did contact Inform were seeking advise and support. Similarly, ICSA organise workshops for former members, and as of 2007 also workshops for second-generation former members.

disagreements, and/or dissatisfaction, and often look back in anger. But of course this is not always the case. Some had mixed experiences, and after leaving frequently doubted their decision. Others move away with a feeling of 'this is fine for some, but not for me' or 'I want more' and move on. In some cases young members can sit on the margins and float in and out, although they can only do this if the community allows them to do so. For others membership is part of their ascribed identity, whether they practice and/or associate with the community or not. For example, *gurukulis* in the UK are generally still regarded as part of the community by their parents and other members of ISKCON, no matter the lifestyle and beliefs of the young adults.[270] Some people move away only to later move back. The Family have, since 2002, 'rejoinees' - second-generation members who have returned to the movement after having left.

WHY DO THEY LEAVE?

Look Back in Anger

Those who look back in anger are generally those who have experienced their childhood as unhappy, or even abusive. They tend to be the ones who were previously labelled the 'Baddies' within the group, or those who were quiet and 'biding their time' while planning to leave. These are the young members who were generally labelled deviants, who were more frequently disciplined for transgressions, or who were scolded for not 'being in the right spirit' or 'lazy'. Frequently they were disillusioned - feeling that the parents and the group as a whole did not live as they

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[270] *Gurukuli* means 'those who attended *Gurukula*' – and more recently those born within ISKCON are referred to as '*Kulis*' - whether they have attended a *Gurukula* or not.

preached. This was frequently coupled with doubts about religious doctrines. Consequently, upon leaving they often had no or very few connections with the group and their family and friends. Furthermore, their difficulties adjusting to the outside world often left them frustrated, and very angry with the community from which they came.[271]

Nora, for instance, was raised in the Unification Church, but she was not born into the movement; she was born to an unwed mother before the mother joined the Church.[272] She was known as an 'Unblessed Child'. As an Unblessed Child, she was excluded in a variety of ways. During the Sunday morning prayers, she was not allowed to partake in the Pledge of the Families, not belonging to a Blessed Family herself. During big celebrations (such as God's Day) seats were reserved for Blessed Children, and Nora mentions that she was allowed to sit there, but not without being told that this was an exception, as these seats were really only for Blessed Children.[273] Although Blessed Children would often go to Korea (this was considered an honour and akin to a rite of passage) she was never asked to go. And, Blessed Children were, at first, exempt from fund-raising and witnessing, but she was not. Nora had to pay indemnity; she was not a Blessed Child. For Blessed Children, according to Nora, jobs and higher education were often mediated and sponsored by the Church, whereas she had to depend on student loans and welfare. This discrepancy left her feeling inferior and inadequate, but rather than focusing on her own perceived inadequacy, she projected an image on those around her as being 'gibbering morons'. She returned the 'otherness' imposed on her onto 'them', and, over time, somewhat

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[271] This discrepancy and the necessary adjustment work is also likely to encourage the former member to reinterpret past events, norms and beliefs – often in an unfavourable light. I shall elaborate on this later in the chapter.

[272] Personal communication and unpublished paper sent to me (2001).

[273] God's day is one of the main holidays in the UC, celebrated on the day of the Western new year.

emotionally removed herself from the community as she learned to shut out the group's discourse. Hence, for Nora, leaving was not as great a jump as it was for others who had felt more integrated into their communities.

Marianne was born and raised in The Family, but left with her mother and several of her siblings at the age of twelve.[274] As a child she and her family had spent a lot of time in 'the mission field', which is, in her words: "...any third world country... who were ripe and ready for the message". In Marianne's case it was India, where she lived with her mother and stepfather. When Marianne was seven, her mother, pregnant with her seventh child and, according to Marianne, still suffering from postpartum depression from her previous child, returned to her native country and moved in with her parents. Marianne remained in India.

While back 'home', Marianne's mother began to doubt her membership in the movement, and when the family was reunited for a holiday, she took the children and left for a women's refuge. Following this, Marianne's grandparents bought a house for them, and, away from The Family, the children went to school for the first time. This is how at the age of twelve, Marianne found herself out in the world.

> I was suddenly thrown into this different world, you know. Not just culturally, because obviously I was thrown from India to [a Western country]. Not just that. But, you know, I was suddenly out of everything I knew, community-wise, and suddenly I was the Dad in the house, looking after all my brothers and sisters, you know, my mum fell to pieces. We didn't have any help.

As a result of her family responsibilities, Marianne had little time for homework, and did not perform well at school. She reported having been bullied, because she 'did

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[274] Interview 1998.

not fit in'. And although she had been reading from a very early age, she found that The Family's education had not prepared her adequately for school.

> ...I never got education. I learned to read and write but by the time I was six I was looking after children. When I was nine I had, after my chores in the kitchen, to cook breakfast for like forty people, and then clean up afterwards. And then make the bread for dinner, for forty people. I mean, we're talking flour here, and water, we're not talking about going out and buying bread. You know, after all my chores in the morning I had to take school, when I was nine I had ten toddlers to look after... I was a teacher at nine years old. I wasn't taught, you know, my education stopped when I was – as soon as I could read, you know, that was my education stopped.

Marianne's teachers were not aware that she had never been to a conventional school, and she received no special support. At the age of sixteen she was pregnant, and moved out of her mother's house into her own accommodation. In her own words: "It was a lot easier to move out and look after one child than stay at home and look after five." This was also prompted by what Marianne considers to be a lack of respect for her mother – a lack of respect developed within The Family. She feels she was never taught to respect her mother.

> I am talking about unconscious respect, I'm talking about: here's this woman who has totally fallen apart, she's basically my mother, you know, she should be cooking and cleaning and stuff, not me. Is that a mother? That sort of lack of respect.

Marianne argues that her mother, who joined as a young teenager, must have 'stopped developing' when she joined, after which her communal tasks were mostly to do with looking after her children and those of others. In contrast, Marianne argues that children who were raised in The Family are very mature, because they take on responsible tasks from a young age. Consequently, she found it difficult to relate to other teenagers, and she did not manage to make friends easily.

I can't think of myself as twenty-one. I'm not twenty-one. I don't feel like twenty-one. There's no way. Mentally, I mean, there's something wrong with me where I don't feel my age – I feel a lot older. When I was nine, I felt twenty-one. See, I'm comparing myself to people outside, you see, its natural. I'm looking at normal, average, twenty-year-olds, and I think: Bloody Hell, I was like that when I was four.

Marianne also firmly believed that the sexualised environment in The Family added to what she terms her 'accelerated life' – children grew up very fast. Having witnessed sexual relations from a young age, Marianne feels, in hindsight, that she knew too much prematurely. Marianne herself was involved in sexual relationships as a child, both with other minors and with older men.

Its affected me in every single way you can think of – especially sex. And especially devaluating yourself. You know, not allowed to say 'no'. I used to get punished, locked away and made to read mountains of Mo letters on not being selfish and giving sex for love and, you know, if I said 'no' to somebody or squirmed away from someone: heaven forbid, because I wasn't in the 'right spirit', I wasn't sharing and caring, and I didn't have the love of Jesus.

As a teenager outside the group, she had a difficult time adjusting to a different value system. Behaviour that seemed 'normal' to Marianne stigmatised her among her peers.

Sex to me wasn't a big deal; I used to have sex with the boys, just like having a cup of tea. So I was labelled a slag. Just everything was too weird.

Another former Family member I interviewed, Stephen, spoke of similar experiences.[275] Stephen, like Marianne, also argued that during his childhood The Family was a highly sexualised environment. Having spent most of his life in large communes (called Combos and Jumbos at the time) in India and the Philippines, sharing was a normal part of the routine.

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[275] Interview 2001.

I remember, in India, walking into a room, and seeing some people doing [a sexual act], and they didn't even notice I was in the room. And it was, like, totally common. Just walk right in. And I remember people having sex all over the place when I was growing up. And also having sexual contact with grown-ups as well... a twenty-five-year-old beautiful woman comes up and wants to give you a kiss, and she's got no clothes on – you're not gonna say 'no' when you're twelve years-old, you know. And those kind of situations happened a lot in the Philippines. And I know of people who were on sharing schedules in the Philippines as well, and India. A schedule on the wall says who you're gonna share with that day.

As a child Stephen thought this was the norm, and when he later left he, like Marianne, had difficulty adjusting his behaviour. His ideas of normative behaviour were significantly different from those around him, and this caused a few broken relationships when he was a young adult.

But being in, you know, a normal Christian society, or I should say secular society, where those kinds of practices are taboo, it was actually quite hard... in relationships. And it took me about four or five years to realise that that portion of my socialisation wasn't gonna work in the future. And it wasn't gonna work in any sort of relationship – long-term relationship anyway. So over the last three years I have changed my mind and attitude towards sexual practices, I guess.

Throughout Stephen's childhood there was a need for constant adaptation: he regularly moved between his parents and foster parents, and he regularly moved countries, as well as homes. Stephen's parents separated when he was seven years old, after which he alternately lived with either his mother or father. By the time Stephen was ten, he was given the option to go to a 'teen training camp' in the Philippines, which was an honour to him. But the camp turned out to be different from what he had imagined, as The Family had started introducing new ways of disciplining their 'wayward teens', and experimented with these new practices in the training camps. At the age of fourteen Stephen began planning to leave The Family, and he left at the age of sixteen.

I promised myself when I was fourteen that I would leave when I turned sixteen. And the reason why I set sixteen as the date was I knew that if I'd leave before I turned sixteen that I – and I didn't get away with it, or if I got away with it for a few months and they'd catch me, then I'd probably get sent to a Victor training camp. And I knew that if I got sent there, I'd just become a vegetable. For one, I'd become a vegetable, and for two, I really didn't like the idea of going there.

Hence Stephen behaved very well by the standards of The Family and tried to not put a foot wrong, out of fear of the Victor camps. He applied for missions that would take him abroad as part of a small group, rather than living in a Combo, Jumbo, or other large communal structure. But all the change and fluctuation never quite offered the option of a fresh beginning – something he was craving.

[They] always used to tell us that, you know, when you move to a new home your records are destroyed and you've got a clean slate. But they'd also send a little manila envelope with you wherever you went that you were supposed to give to your shepherds. So – and it was quite obvious from the way you were treated in your new situation ... that, basically, you were put in a category and you pretty much were kept there, unless you made some extreme amounts of progress, in some, you know, unbelievable way.

Despite this, Stephen learned how to stay out of the Victor camps. But not all his friends managed to do this, and Stephen felt that the camp changed some people dramatically.

And it seemed most of them had just completely adopted whatever they had been taught at those training programmes, and were the most likely to rat on us. It's funny, when I left I read *1984* and there were so many parallels, specifically between the ones, you know, the ones that you can trust and the ones you can't trust. There was a whole set-up of people like that in the group ... our age – there was maybe about ten *per cent* of the kids you can trust, with your actual feelings and your actual attitudes on things. Then there was the mass that you really didn't know, and you weren't going to take a chance, and then there was about thirty *per cent* you wouldn't say anything bad to, or anything questionable to. And those were mostly the ones who came out of the training programmes.

According to Stephen, 'getting the Victory' was akin to losing one's personality – those who 'got the Victory' were the ones who, later, were 'toeing the Family line'.

In Stephen's words: "Getting the Victory is when the rat is eating your face - [when you finally submit] and then they can use you for whatever they want to use you for". Hence, he chose his friends wisely, trusted only a select few, and left at the age of sixteen.

Stephen argues that those who were 'treated badly' in the Victor Camps had a more difficult time letting go of their beliefs. Whereas Stephen, and some of his other friends who managed to avoid some of the more severe disciplining, had over the years developed a form of disillusionment.[276] He became disillusioned with what he began to see as hypocritical individuals (mostly leaders) as well as questionable teachings. Stephen explains that there was a difference between what they believed and what they were taught to believe in. He claims that he and his peers had doubts about many of the teachings.

> You know, we were taught to believe that it was all one wife and one family, although we saw that it wasn't in many ways. We saw how families that had higher status, as in leadership families, were treated differently than families that [sic.] had a lower status. So that sort of was, you know, it didn't really fit with that whole philosophy.

> But basically what I'm saying is that there's a difference between what I professed to believe and what I actually believed whole-heartedly. And there was a period of time when I did believe that I was going to Heaven and that – and I was really looking forward to that. But by the age of thirteen or fourteen I had sort of major doubts about that as well.[277]

According to Stephen, some pretended to get 'the Victory'; they figured out what to say and how to act. "You learned how to write the right reports... Because you knew

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[276] Those who attended the camps make for an interesting parallel with Festinger *et al.*'s theory of cognitive dissonance. In the case of those who were not severely disciplined, the members did not have this incentive, as Stephen argues, to adjust their dissonance, and this, mixed with teenage disillusion and differentiation from parents, eventually led to their rebellion (1956).

[277] Stephen 2002 Interview. Berg's 'One Wife' teaching re-defined the family unit - everyone within the community being 'one family' and, in a sense, married to everyone else.

it was all a matter of coolness, and if you were cool you were a revolutionary".[278] He

pretended, until he left. There were others who remained rebellious and left because

they never 'got the Victory'

This is Not for Me

In the cases mentioned so far the former members were unenthusiastic about their

childhoods and left disillusioned with the group in which they were raised.[279] This

was not always the scenario – in some cases former members had no particular

grievances with their childhood communities, but nonetheless wanted to move on.

They have 'been there, done that', and now want to experience new things – things

the group did not offer, such as higher education, a different lifestyle, or a certain

vocation or employment. Of course this was more likely to be possible in groups

which were flexible enough to allow the young adults to leave the fold without their

jeopardising relations with their parents and friends. As I described in the last

chapter, these young adults may have still been on the margins of the community, or

members by different rules and/or on a different level than their parents once were.

Sam, whom I mentioned in the previous chapter, did not, at the time of the interview,

foresee himself leaving the movement.[280] He believed the morals and values of

members to be superior to those of non-members, and felt he had benefited from the

movement throughout his life so far. Yet, he did not plan to have the same level of

involvement as his parents, who were missionaries. As a consequence of their

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[278] Stephen 2002 interview

[279] Although Marianne left with her mother, she reported having been disillusioned as well and, in hindsight, argues that she was happy to leave The Family at the time.

[280] Interview 2001

involvement in the Unification Church, they had not had enough money for Sam's schooling.

> I had to go out and make my own money to go to school. ...all my other friends have gotten help and in our society most parents help their children through school a bit. ...I've just gone out and done it myself, which has made me that much stronger, but I don't want my kids to go through that. So I wanna make sure I'm really successful at what I do, so they don't have to go through some of the hardship that I went through.

Sam stressed that he would not work for the UC full-time. Instead, he plans to tithe or support a particular project. This is a significantly different level of involvement from that of his parents. Although he still believes in the movement and what it stands for, it does not quite offer him the future he wants – the group will be relegated to a marginal position *vis-à-vis* his professional life as something he donates or tithes to. When asked whether, in the future, he plans to be an active member of the Church, he answered: "No, I'll be working full-time." And when asked whether he still planned to be involved in any way, he answered: "Yeah, I'd like my kids to get some of the values I've learned. I think it's really important they grow up with some moral standards." In response to questions about future family life, Sam said:

> I want my wife to do whatever she wants to do, as long as we get along. ...[I]f she wants to be involved with [the Unification Church], she can. She can do whatever she wants. I know what I wanna do. I'm not gonna do what my parents did, which is full-time – their work, their life, everything is for [the Unification Church]. But if she wants to do that, she can do that.

A the time of the interview Sam still considered himself a member, and planned to remain one.[281] Yet, he envisaged a membership at a significantly different level from that of most of the first-generation members. This is only possible because the movement has adapted to the second generation to some extent and has stretched the rules for them.

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[281] See chapter 2.

Is This the Right Decision?

The previously described experiences are almost stereotypical opposites – to 'look back in anger' or realise 'this is not for me' although fine for some. It is not always such a clear-cut experience. For some members their experiences are a mixture of positive and negative memories, and clear-cut decisions are difficult to make. Hence, some stick with the community, and leave later in life. And some are never certain whether leaving was the right thing to do. This was a position that came up repeatedly with former members of the Bruderhof. Anna, whom I have mentioned in previous chapters, left the Bruderhof. Despite loving the community as a child, and believing it was the place for her as an adolescent and young adult, she later in life left the community and its people behind. Over time she had come to realise that the ideal community of her childhood had some institutionalised problems. This realisation was a source of disillusionment.

> You had these teachings about faith, honour and honesty. At the same time
> you have this unspoken increasing power thing, where if you questioned
> power within the Bruderhof, you were actually questioning – they put it that
> you were actually going against God - because they were the representatives
> of God, and Christ. So it was extremely serious, anytime you were angry with
> them. But they could get as angry as they wanted to. Then it was justified; it
> was like Jesus in the Temple when the servants did it. But if you did it to
> them – and I was one of those people, I could take it so long, and then I'd
> scream… it was too much. Of course its not that they can't handle a person
> who's angry, its that the person has evil spirits. So suddenly you had this
> immature person being blamed for her immaturity and insecurity – totally
> blamed for her emotional sickness, as it were by a doctor.

Anna came to realise that the blame always fell onto the individual, never on the brotherhood.

> So, if you believe in a system where you can have people who've got more
> power than God, more power than the Pope over individual lives, and if
> [individuals] question that, then they're evil. And you've got children
> absorbing all that.

The issue of power and abuse of power in the Bruderhof has arisen repeatedly in this research. Janet, also a former member of the Bruderhof, spent most of her childhood in Paraguay, and she was also caught up in the Great Crisis as a young adult.[282] For her, the crises revolved around power relations within the leadership.

> And always these big clearings, as they called them, these spiritual clearings [were] always based on the fact that the Arnolds were trying to get power and then there was another clique trying to get power. And it all started back with the founder Eberhart, as he had three sons and two sons-in-law, and when he was dying he said – his sons basically he hadn't elected to be the bosses, he had elected his two sons-in-law. After his death there was fighting about that, endless, but it was never out in the open. ... And that's what undermined the whole community.

When Janet was a young adult, her parents were sent back to England. She was asked to stay in Paraguay, which she did. Despite the invitation to remain, she spent most of the time in exclusion for reasons unknown to her. At the time of the Great Crisis, the leadership decided to close the Paraguayan community, and Janet was caught in the subsequent mayhem as Ibatea, the community where she lived, was due to be closed. Many people were excluded, and sent away to their home countries, while a small inner circle was allowed to stay. The latter were sent to another community, and would eventually be moved to America.

> And then all the people around me began to shift, move, and I was left there. And my roommate came home one day. ...She was packing her things without saying a word to me. She just completely closed me off. She would come home and say nothing to me, wouldn't talk to me. They were treating me like a leper. She said: "Oh, we are all going to Isla". I said: "Oh, am I going?" "I don't know", she said, "you will be told". And then marched out. Well, then along came one of those American blokes, and he told me that I had to stay there. And that's all; I had to stay there. And I actually watched the exodus. I was the only single girl, the only unmarried person left in the village.

> And then, as time went on, and I couldn't tell you how long it was - one week, a few weeks. I would just wander about in the day, not knowing what to do,

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[282] Interview 2001

where to get food from – they just deserted us. And I found out that these people that [*sic*] were here and there, couples and a few families, were going to leave and were going back to Germany, or England, or France, or wherever they had come from; were being kicked out. And I thought: where does that leave me? And I was so sick with horror over what my supposed brothers and sisters were doing to me, I actually packed a case, and I was going to walk away from the community to a Paraguayan family and, I thought, even if I can't understand them or talk with them, I'll be happier with them than in this. I was going to walk away.

Eventually a young couple was sent to pick up Janet and take her to the new community, where she stayed with a family, doing menial work. She was still in exclusion, not allowed to speak with anyone. Then one day a minister wanted to see her.

[The] minister asked: "What's the matter with you [Janet], what's the matter with you?" And I didn't know. I thought, well, you ought to know, but I didn't know what to say to him. And it was so frightening, so fearsome, that he was being all sweet this time instead of shouting and screaming, I couldn't figure it out.

Eventually he said: "Would you like to leave here?" And I thought, 'yeah, I want to go to my family in England'. And before I could say that he said: "Would you like to go to the States?" And I was so frightened to say 'no, I want to go to England', because I thought that's how I'd gotten trapped in this mess, alone in Paraguay. So I said "Yes, ok". And three weeks later they sent me to the States, still in exclusion.

Janet still did not know why she was in exclusion. Eventually, in the United States, a minister asked her why she was not coming to meetings. Janet told him she was in exclusion, but that she did not know the reason why. He told her to 'forget about it' and join in the meetings. But eventually she left. Under the guise of looking after a relative she left the community (and lived with this relative), which enabled her to eventually make the decision to not return.

SUPPORT

Passing from one status to another is, both psychologically and socially, a significant event. Historically rites have been markers of status passage to underline its real and symbolic importance. But, as illustrated by Glazer and Strauss, the process of the passage can be varied, and 'agents' who help the 'passagee' through their process of change (and who may define and control the passage) may be more or less beneficial (Glazer and Strauss 1971). In the following section I shall discuss the roles of the sects, secular organisations and former members as agents in this status passage, and the ways in which they may affect the passage.

Support from the Groups

Religious groups generally do not offer extended structural support to first generation members (converts) who leave. After all, they are defectors, and these members are going back to something they know. Furthermore, why should they support those who negate what they stand for? Although some groups have agreements regarding those who leave after they have signed off all their worldly belongings to the community, other groups, somewhat controversially, do not. And although now most new religions offer some form of support to second or subsequent generation members who leave, this has in some cases been a rocky road. In some cases the members who leave are considered to be undesirable – because they are spiritually 'lost' and need to find their way before they can return, and/or because they are thought to be, or have proven to be, a bad influence within the community. These former members may be barred from contacting members, and vice versa. Of the twenty former members raised in religious communities who contacted Inform, and whose stories I analysed for this research, seven were former Jehovah's Witnesses

who had been disfellowshipped and consequently had very limited contact with former friends and relatives (except for one who still had contact with his mother). Such shunning practices (employed by the Bruderhof, the Jehovah's Witnesses and some Hutterite groups) have parallels to the attitude of Scientologists towards those they term 'Suppressive Persons' – those who speak critically of Scientology. Meredith, for example, who left the movement, may not raise criticism about or speak badly of Scientology to her relatives who are still members, and has had to promise she will not criticise the organisation or else they will have to disengage from her.[283]

Those movements that aim to isolate themselves from their surrounding community tend to have teachings and rules regarding what they consider 'negative influences' – these can be critics of the movement as well as relatives of members and former members. Publications in The Family, for example, have previously described former members as 'backsliders' and as 'Vandaris', a form of demon who uses former members as vessels through which s/he can destroy 'the pure' (Maria and Amsterdam 2002). In a Family children's publication that summarises information from publications in cartoon format, the term has been defined as:

> Van-dar-i [vən da'ar e'e] noun: SPIRIT WORLD: Agents of the netherworld; evil demons; hitchhikers; evil lords of the netherworld; set on preparing the ignorant to worship the son of perdition; bent on destroying what is pure; they seek to mar the truth; dark ones; work through vessels who yield to darkness; vandals of the spirit world [The "van" is derived from the word "vandals," the "dar" from the word "dark," the "i" spelling of the last syllable signifies "I," denoting self or selfishness] (XN 20 2003: 24-6).[284]

The existence of Vandaris has apparently been revealed in a vision and communication from the Lord, in response to Peter and Maria's questions about what

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[283] Interview 2006. I will discuss Meredith's experience in more detail later in this chapter.
[284] XN publications are Family comic books for ages 12 and up. The definition of Vandaris comes from Maria, who claims to have received it through prophecy from David Berg.

to do about those who are out 'to destroy The Family'. They explain this is an especially difficult question, as these are friends, children, and sometimes parents of Family members, and, consequently, there may be competing emotions at play. But the revelation clarified that there was 'increased enemy activity', and the 'emissaries of Satan' can take many forms (Maria and Amsterdam 2002). This labelling is significant in light of the discussion in chapter four – young Family members are told this and read comic book-type publications where they are warned about the powers and dangers of these 'polluting' and 'evil' people who are categorised as 'enemies'. Sources of criticism and opposition are reified and anthropomorphised, validating the group's ideology while suppressing debate.

> I saw a clean-cut, handsome-looking man, around his early 30s. He looked like a nice guy, well-groomed, together, confident and on top of things. Then all of a sudden he morphed right in front of me into the most grotesque creature! He turned blood red from head to toe, starting from his head down. His clothes were no longer defined once he morphed, but rather it looked like he was covered in some type of blood-red cloak that was clinging to his body-- it was like a hood over his head, and it covered him like a long cape all the way down to his feet.

> 136. His eyes look very bloodshot. His red cloak looks somewhat like the traditional cartoon picture you see of a ghost - the typical ghost covered in a sheet—only this covering is clinging to him and it's blood red. The horrible thing about it is that he seems to be dripping all over with blood. It looks like he's just come up out of a swimming pool or some body of water, like the ocean, and he's dripping wet. Only the outstanding and yucky thing about this is he seems to be dripping not water, but blood - from his eyes, his nose, his lips, his arms, his hands.

> 137. It's totally grotesque, and if I didn't know the Lord is protecting me, it would be downright frightening. It's horrible, disgusting! One minute he's this handsome-looking fellow, then he's this horrible, red, dripping creature. Then there were rats, of all things—horrible, big, filthy rats running all around!

There are antidotes, as Maria adds later in the same publication (*ibid.*):

> The Lord knows we need this Information to combat our enemies' attempts to destroy the Family. We need to pray both against the Enemy using our detractors and apostates, as well as misguided officials, sensationalistic reporters, deluded lawyers or publishers, and against the specific evil spirits, the Vandari, that inspire these people's ungodly actions and stories. Use the keys and the key promises to pray against our enemies, and against these vile, disgusting vandals that live in the filthy, putrid sewers of the depths of the netherworld!

The comic books for children and teenagers explain that prayer and the 'word of Jesus' is the 'key' that can protect them from the Vandaris (XN 20 2003: 27). It is significant that this information and advice are published in reading material geared towards the children and teenagers within The Family, as they are likely to have elder friends and siblings who have left with whom they might otherwise want to remain in contact with.

The belief that former members are polluting influences may be an obstacle to their receiving the necessary support from the religious groups from which they came. With the more socially isolated groups, the first cohort of members leaving their communities generally had the most difficult time – the groups were not accustomed to dealing with this issue, and in general offered no support. Also, there may have been little motivation to support those considered to be 'backsliders', 'traitors' and/or 'renegades'. Either the young members ran away, or they were cast out like bad fruit. Over time the groups, having learned through trial and error from the first cohort of their children leaving the fold, generally adapted to incorporate some form of support - be it structural, spiritual or emotional. But there is a large variation in the support given, some minimal and inadequate, and some substantial. Some young former

members have received a certain amount of cash to help them find their way, others were introduced to a friend or relative on the outside they could stay with for a while – or even work for. In some cases parents chose to change their level of membership (i.e. from missionary to fellow member in The Family) to enable their children to go to mainstream schools and/or adjust to nuclear households. But efforts on the part of the group to help its young members can be counter-productive. Parents feeling under pressure to change their level of membership to accommodate their wavering child may put significant pressure on this young member, who may feel guilty about uprooting the family. On a different level, meetings with elders or other religious leaders to help children who may be 'spiritually confused' can leave these children very confused indeed. After all, they may not necessarily know what they want (beyond a general feeling that 'this is not it'). Also, young members may not want spiritual or emotional support from a source they do not trust anymore, a source they may accuse of hypocrisy.

Spiritual and Emotional Support

Several of the people interviewed for this research spoke of having long talks with senior members and elders about their doubts and reservations, and almost every one had felt that this had been fruitless, and in many cases frustrating – it seemed that senior members always had an answer ready with doctrinal justifications. Although this may have been helpful for some, for others this was not always a helpful form of support. In some cases, such conversations may lead to problems, as senior members may report those who question teachings. Andrew Holden has written about such cases within the Jehovah's Witnesses, where questioning doctrine may be seen as apostasy, an offence that can result in disfellowship – and, consequently, shunning

(Holden 2002). But in most cases there will be room for continuing discussion so that the 'confused member' may 'understand'. In some cases this may take the form of Bible study, in other cases there may be courses or other programmes. Family members may be asked to spend more time reading Mo letters and writing Open Heart Reports so that they may find a parallel to their questions in doctrine, and realise what they are struggling with. Similarly, teachers and senior members in Scientology may employ special procedures to 'help' children who are disruptive, questioning, and voicing uncertainties about their situation. At Scientology's Walsh Manor School for Cadets a senior member explained that if/when a child wants to leave, or is having a hard time, 'they will go in and have a look'.[285]

> ... [N]ot because we're trying to keep them here, but just from the point of view of 'well, hang on a minute, that doesn't make any sense'. Then we'll come in and try and see if there is any problem that [is] being encountered here. Normally we get them through a complete word clearing action first, and see how they're doing. And if they're doing better but still maintain a wish to go or whatever then the parents get consulted or they go and stay with the other parent or with family members or whatever...[286]

If the child does not want to be in the Little Cadet School, or even in Scientology, the parent becomes 'unqualified' to be a Sea Org member. The senior member interviewed explained there are strict rules regarding Sea Org members and their children.[287]

> If a child doesn't want to be here than a parent is called before a board and looked at. And obviously there's things done internally to try, like word-clearing and applying ethics technology and so on to the child in the hope that he may want to stay here. But if he's really adamant that he doesn't want to be here then the parents would be asked to go as well. Because a family is a very important thing.[288]

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[285] Interview with Scientology staff member 2000
[286] Interview with Scientology staff member 2000. During a word-clearing action the student has to read text aloud while a tutor follows along and helps the student through usual 'clearing' exercises (such as looking up the word and checking progress with the e-meter), until the student can read the text out loud without stumbling or hesitating.
[287] Interview with Scientology staff member 2000
[288] Interview with Scientology staff member 2000

In theory this appears to be fair, although in practice this could put significant pressure on a young member who may not know exactly what s/he wants aside from feeling that the current situation makes her or him unhappy. But the knowledge that their decision may uproot the parents, or even the whole family, could be a significant burden to carry. Furthermore, the meetings, courses and auditing sessions involved in 'checking' whether the uncertainty or desire to leave is not about a 'misunderstood' or 'ethics' issue can be taxing on a young member. One young former member of the Church of Scientology, Meredith, explained to me that, although 'ethics' is said not to be punishment it did feel like that sometimes to her.[289] She took longer than others to accomplish her courses and goals, and had started to feel like she was known as a problem student. Meredith explained that she was afraid to go past any unidentified word as she had been taught they may cause problems in understanding and progressing in life. She was therefore scared of 'misunderstoods', and very diligent about avoiding them. So much so, that she frequently did not move on from a word or section she was not entirely certain she understood. Once she entered the Sea Org this became a problem, as supervisors occasionally interpreted her diligence and repeatedly asking for explanations (after being told to 'look it up') as a behavioural problem. For Meredith, some concepts did not make sense. Consequently, Meredith was sent to 'ethics'. There she also had problems with tasks, such as the OW, Overt Withold, which means that the member is believed to be covering up for an 'overt', a harmful act towards Scientology, and is asked to write up her/his behaviour and subsequent 'denial'. The problem was, however, that she did not know what was causing her to not understand her study materials, not 'get it'. In hindsight, after having been away from the organisation for a while, she told me it may have been that

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[289] Interview 2006

she did not agree with what she was learning – even when she looked up every single

word, she still 'did not get it'. But at the time she spent weeks writing OW letters,

trying to 'get her ethics in'.

> I was a good person, I didn't have anything to write up. ... I wrote down
> things like 'I looked at a guy'. Is that an overt? No. But me, being so
> conscientious, I was trying to – thinking that I had done something wrong,
> thinking I had to write something down. And then checking every time with
> the e-meter – and it wasn't it. Then I was thinking it had to be something
> really big, that I wasn't even thinking of. But it wasn't. I got really annoyed
> by that.[290]

Meredith was 'down stat' (which means that her productivity statistics were not up to

par) and was not allowed to go into town for personal errands. She had left school

prematurely so that she could take more courses at the Scientology headquarters.

Soon after, however, she regretted this, and went back into education to get her

qualifications. This gave her an excuse not to be 'on staff', and to distance herself

from Scientology, and a few years later she took the decision to 'become disaffected'.

Despite the best intentions, such spiritual or 'career' support, whether to help the

young members make up their minds to find out what they really want, or what is

bothering them, can sometimes be counter-productive. Those in leadership positions

may have the intention of helping a 'lost young members', yet they may inadvertently

(or intentionally) impose views, norms and standards while the young member may

be trying to define these for him/herself. The pressure to 'get it' and to conform does

not always result in assimilation and integration – and when not successful can have

the opposite effect and lead to alienation and estrangement instead.

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[290] (*Ibid.*).

Material Support

Material support could be more useful, and needs oriented, for the young member who wants to leave. But such support is not always readily available, as some religious movements may not have the necessary means, nor do they always prioritise leaving members as deserving beneficiaries. The Bruderhof, after the Great Crisis, was struggling financially, which, allegedly, was part of the reason for shutting down the Paraguayan communities (Oved 1996). Frank had been born and raised in the Bruderhof, and had spent most of his childhood in Paraguay. And despite some emotional and physical hardships, he had loved the country. In his own words: "There was something really, really wonderful about my childhood. Also some terrible things, but the fact is: there were some good things." As an adult in an American community he was not so fortunate.

> I had been falsely accused by a man in '62, and what he wanted I can't tell you now. He was a minister. He wanted to know, and I don't know what he wanted to this day. Anyway, I was out of the Brotherhood, and I was out sixteen years.

> ...I wasn't allowed to come to religious meetings, I wasn't allowed to break bread in the Lord's supper; I was shunned. I was told I was not allowed to marry, I had to give that up. And they would carry me, in other words: fellowship. You can stay here but that's it.[291]

In his sixteenth year of exclusion Frank decided to write down the things that were bothering him, but most drafts ended up in the waste paper basket. Some of these notes, however, also ended up on an elder's desk. Frank was excommunicated that same night.

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[291] Interview Frank 2001. No person who is not a baptised member of the Bruderhof may participate in the Lord's supper, a highly significant event within the community.

> They gave me an old Beetle, which couldn't get through Pennsylvania State testing, because Pennsylvania is far stricter than New York. ...They gave me hundred and fifty dollars for insurance, and they gave me three nights lodging in a hotel. And a box with Heinz beans... But I had no spoon, I had no tin opener, I had no scissors. I was allowed to drive so long on New York plates, then, I had to send the plates back because they belonged to the community.

> When I left I didn't have any clothes to bring but I did bring [home-made] wine, three boxes... That kept me warm, because I had no blankets.

Although Frank had trained as a mechanic, he did not have a diploma. He had taken the theoretical examinations, but not the practical segment necessary to receive a diploma – the leaders at the time had said he did not need the diploma, and he had had enough practical experience working in the community. Hence, after leaving the community, Frank had no papers, curriculum vitae, or references, and had to settle for low-end jobs with minimal wage.

Janet had been sent away for a period of time before she eventually left herself. At that time she had with her a few items of clothing. She was sent to work for a doctor's family where she could work in exchange for her lodging. Similarly, Anna had been sent to care for an elderly couple. She, too, received free lodging in exchange for her work. They both received a small wage typical of those lacking certificates or other necessary papers. More recently, a young woman left under similar circumstances; she was given £200 and housed outside the community with a friend of the community.[292] Her parents, not keen for her to communicate with outsiders, refused to give the contact details of two elder siblings who had previously left the community. In this case, however, the young woman had the necessary

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[292] From an enquiry to Inform in 2005.

qualifications to be able to choose whether she wanted to further her education or rejoin the community.

This has not always been the case. A lack of qualifications was a theme that came up repeatedly in interviews with former Bruderhof members.[293] All the former members whom I interviewed had several stories of others who had also struggled without formal credentials. One of the interviewees told me of her brother who had trained as an architect in the community. He received enough training to be able to work as an architect within the community, but not quite enough to receive the credentials. Anna told me that this was normal practice, and that members may be able to get the necessary qualifications if they get a job and finance it themselves. "They'll fund you for two years and then you have to make a decision as to whether you join the Bruderhof – otherwise you're on your own". Anna herself was not given permission to study what she wanted to study, but instead was asked to concentrate on something that would be more useful to the community.

For these former members, leaving the Bruderhof was challenging materially and emotionally. They left with a sense of inadequacy and low self-esteem, which was aggravated by the fact that they owned nothing, nor did they have material evidence of their training in the form of certificates or references. As Janet explained:

> You'll find that most of us are saying that we were kicked out, sent out. I
> think what happens is, psychologically - remember that we have nothing.
> When you're there you have no money, no bank account. In fact, nothing that
> you own is your own, you see. So that brings a much bigger fear about upping

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[293] The lack of education and certificates has also been a topic of discussion in 'Keep In Touch' (KIT) newsletters distributed among former members. It has also arisen as an issue for some former members of The Family and Scientology. In the case of the former, some young members had been raised in the Mission field and/or inadequately home schooled. In the case of the latter, training within Scientology had, for some, been a priority over more mainstream educational qualifications.

and going, because you have nothing! To get up and walk out is next to impossible. You have to first line up a job, which you can't do if you're still in the community. It's a very difficult thing.

The former Bruderhof members I have spoken to felt alone and deserted when leaving the community – there was no significant or helpful support from the movement.[294] Rather, many felt their childhood in the movement had set them back. Some had relatives they could go to, and who helped them adjust to a somewhat different society, but this was not always the case – and those who did not have relatives outside were, they felt, out on their own.

The first wave of young members who left The Family, during the 1980s and early 1990s, generally received little support. They also tended to be very critical of the organisation, and several of these former members have been accused of being Vandaris.[295] Such deviant typifications can be a point-by-point antithesis of core features of the group that fashions it – Vandaris being accused of being filled with evil and polluting to the 'faithful'. But the Family adapted over time to the reality that their children were leaving (during the 1990s between half and two-thirds of their children were leaving).[296] The movement eventually established ways to support young members who did not want to join in the missionary lifestyle. In some cases parents left the mission field and became fellow members so that their children could go to mainstream schools. In other cases the young members moved to another community or stayed in another home. Eventually The Family set up a special 'education pack' for young members who were leaving, which had information on the

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[294] These are former members who left within a decade or two after the Great Crisis. See also 'Expelled Bruderhof Members Speak Out' (Hostetler, date unknown).
[295] Some former members have re-appropriated the term and use it themselves. I discuss this further in chapter seven.
[296] From communication with a Family representative, 19/9/2007.

everyday aspects of life from which they had been largely shielded. The booklet

contained information on how to open a bank account, rent a flat, buy a car (and what

to look for in a second-hand car), write a CV and suggestions regarding job

interviews, as well as information about diet (alcohol in moderation) sexually-

transmitted diseases, and how to practice safe sex.[297]

The Unification Church has also changed in this respect, and its structure became

more conducive to supporting its young members. The leaders, movement and

parents by and large have become more flexible and the children and teenagers

generally have more room for negotiation.[298] ISKCON has undergone a similar

structural change where the group switched from a communal lifestyle to a more

nuclear one. This has made a significant difference for the children who then moved

from ashram schools to 'outside' schools. Furthermore, this shift empowered the

parents, who, as a result of moving from the ashram to their own households,

suddenly had more say over the way they raised their children. This empowerment of

the parents appears to be a significant factor, as the role of the parents, or lack thereof,

was an issue that came up repeatedly in this research.

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[297] In Inform archive.

[298] Of course one cannot generalise and individual families may have different interpretations of old doctrine, new teachings, and pedagogical suggestions. The Unification Church has members from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and these backgrounds account for differences in child rearing practices as well – the Eastern cultural values being generally stricter than the Western ones. However, as one young member argued, there is now peer pressure from 'hardcore BCs' which results in a lack of flexibility towards peers who attempt to stretch the boundaries and experiment with the accepted norms and practices. (See the discussion in chapter 5)

Parents as 'Middle Management'

This idea was introduced by Susan Landa in a paper published in 1991, and has since then been referenced by others.[299] Landa's paper was geared towards helping those in the legal profession dealing with 'cult' cases, especially child custody cases (Landa 1991). Landa argued that parents, as a result of mind control, are unable to protect their children from 'the cult's' child abuse practices (*ibid*.: 9).[300] She claims that the parents suffer from 'learned helplessness response' which is emotional numbing and maladaptive passivity of the cult member, who has realised that surrounding events cannot be controlled except by the leader's command (*ibid*.) In Landa's words:

> To the outsider the cult member, like the battered woman, does not appear as helpless as he or she perceives. However, due to this perception of helplessness, the member no longer has the knowledge or ability to prevent the abuses from happening to him or herself, let alone to someone else (*ibid*.).

This is, of course, a simplistic generalisation – and one that I do not find, overall, useful or representative.[301] But the idea of parents as 'middle management', to employ the term used by Singer at the 1998 American Family Foundation conference, does parallel some of the comments made by members as well as former members during interviews, which hinted at 'competing loyalties' or even 'priorities'. In the Bruderhof, for example, the structure is authoritarian, and several former members

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[299] The term 'middle management' applied to parents was introduced to me at an American Family Foundation (AFF) meeting in 1998, in a talk by the late Dr Margaret Singer. Dr Singer argued that in many cases parents are not those who make the majority of pedagogical decisions for their children. The AFF eventually became the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) in 2004.

[300] Included in her definition of 'cult' is a supposed 'covert mission to accumulate wealth and/or power, to benefit its leadership'. This is not exactly a value-free supposition, and does suggest that 'cults' are by definition immoral. Included in this discourse is an assumption that 'cults' commit child abuse.

[301] Not only does Landa frequently generalise from particulars, she does not offer a very precise and fair definition of her subject matter (cults), making the paper overall quite unclear. It is also contradictory in places. For example, on one hand Landa argues that parents stand by and sometimes even aid abuse as a result of 'learned helplessness' (p.9), yet on the other hand she later argues that deviant behaviour incorporated into cult doctrine is considered normal by cult members (p.12). Following the latter argument, parents would not necessarily need to suffer from 'learned helplessness' to allow, and be involved in, what is considered normal or even good behaviour in the group, but deviant behaviour in mainstream society.

have commented that the parents did not have as much say as the leaders in childcare and child- raising issues. According to Anna her parents were good parents, but their loyalties lay with the movement rather than with their children – there was a hierarchy of priorities:

> I think most of what my parents were sent away for is that they were not good enough parents. Well, we were never abused, we were never treated badly, they just weren't strict enough with us perhaps. Appalling. They were good parents. They were totally married to the cause and they weren't there for us. And the Bruderhof, as soon as something goes wrong with the children, they blame it on the parents. My parents never questioned any criticism of us, any punishment, nothing. What the Brotherhood said, went.

Janet has a similar opinion: "When times were hard and going all wrong because of their ideals, our parents would not come to our aid. They wouldn't defend us, ever." Anna has never been able to respect her father because she blames him for the fact that her family spent significant amounts of time in exclusion. (Hence the Bruderhof has, according to her, managed to drive a large wedge between her and her parents.) Frank remembers that his family was accused of having 'emotional ties' within the family when he was a child, and that consequently he was away from his parents from the age of sixteen.

> I had the impression we were kept deliberately away from our parents. They accused [my family] of having emotional ties in the family. And with me it was that way, but I was a lot by myself and did my own thing – I couldn't care who my parents were.

> I was away from my parents from the age of sixteen. I worked away from the Hof and then came home weekends, then I had to stop that, then I was sent to Woodcrest; they were sent to Evergreen. Then my father was sent away, my mother followed him. They were away eight years, outside. And I didn't dare to side with my parents because I knew I would be kicked out.

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Janet puts these sentiments in context:

> The communal life was such an ideal in our parents' minds that individual attention and love and kindness, in their minds, was so unimportant compared to this communal 'we all belonged to the community' sort of thing, you know.

Janet's brother spent a significant amount of time in exclusion as a young teenager; moreover he was physically sent to the margins of the community, not to be contacted by anyone.

> My parents let it happen, they didn't defend him. If somebody did that to my children, I would slaughter them. Out of the window would go all ideals of Christian non-violence.

> And I'd like to say, all these ex-Bruderhof people my age and younger and older, they all like to defend their parents and what's happened, but the truth is, I say, unless you can be angry at your parents and then still love them, you've lost it, because you're covering up the truth of the place. And the truth is that each parent is actually responsible for their offspring... And the thing is, our parents didn't defend us.

> And my parents didn't just up and leave these two farms that were only a stone's throw away – but I didn't know they were there. They didn't just get up and say 'we're not having this'. They waited until they could see it through with the brotherhood. There were so many times in my life that this kind of thing happened. ...The parents never ever went to defend you.

Similarly, Sam spent a significant amount of time away from his parents, who were missionaries for the Unification Church. As a teenager he lived in a house with school and church friends and their elder sister - she was in charge of this household. This is a similar scenario to Family homes which teenagers can move to while their parents are in the mission field. Young members who have grievances with the religious movements (and/or beliefs) frequently have grievances with their parents as well – simply because 'they weren't there', did not 'defend them' or because they had other priorities. This reduces the young members' avenues for support should they want to leave.

The 'Cult Scene'

If the young former members cannot always completely rely on their religious community or their parents for support, whether that is because they do not want contact or because the group and/or parents have limited means or inclination (that is, the 'rogue' member is shunned), then whom can they rely on? The religious diversity which has grown exponentially since the 1900s, often referred to as the 'cult scene' (Barker 2004), is an ideologically fraught scene where the different strands often argue they have 'Truth' on their side and hence are not willing to accommodate and meet halfway on moral and spiritual issues. Since the 1960s, as the spiritual diversity in the West has grown, accusations of moral depravity and spiritual danger have been abundant within this 'cult scene'.[302] This scene polarised as seekers looked beyond the traditional spiritual options and critics of the new religious developments organised into groups and communities, criticising the 'cults' and/or extremists and warning of their alleged powers of mental manipulation (Beckford 1995; Melton 1995; Barker 2004). This collection of groups and communities of critics is often referred to as the Anti Cult Movement (Barker 1986; Shupe and Bromley 1994; Melton 1999; Shupe, Darnell et al. 2002 2nd edition 2003). Their approach, generally, is one of attack rather than accommodation – one of accusation rather than communication. Often this approach comes from an emotive (the personal experiences of parents or former members) or doctrinal (apologetics) standpoint focussing on differences and incompatibilities, rather than from a value-free approach

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[302] I shall be referring here mostly to what is usually termed the 'cult scene' as the events described in this section are generally marginal to society as a whole (although most people have heard of 'cults' they tend to know little about them) yet important to the groups and organisations involved in this scene.

seeking explanation and/or inter-faith type communication (Barker 2002).[303]

Depending on their standpoint, critics will tend to rely on different types of

Information and have different aims, objectives, and methodology (Barker 1995;

2002; Cowan 2003). Consequently, there are different types of support available for

those who leave religious movements, each with their own biases. For example,

support from other religious organisations (such as churches) may involve theological

criticism as well as spiritual support. Psychological support is likely to focus on the

former member's wellbeing, although some counselling may still involve a particular

religious/spiritual bias. However, counsellors may be knowledgeable neither about

religious minorities and their associated issues, nor about the particular

issues/problems that young former members may have. Secular support is more

likely to be needs-orientated and less likely to concentrate on issues of religious

doctrine and practice (unless this practice is illegal or harmful), hence less likely to be

able to offer spiritual support.[304] Again, depending on the type of aid, secular

organisations may not be familiar with the unusual issues sometimes associated with

new religions. Lack of religious bias is not always considered the most desirable

factor in support for former members – the latter often prefer to speak with people

who have had similar experiences.[305]

Religious partiality, however, can have costs as well; some argue that the beliefs, or

the interpretation of doctrine and the practices, are the reason for the abuse. The

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[303] In "Watching for Violence: A Comparative Analysis of the Roles of Five Cult-Watching Groups" Barker argues there are different types of Cult Watching Groups, each type having their own agenda, biases, and so forth – and consequently all types come to different conclusions (2002).
[304] In practice secular (non-sectarian) support organisations often suffer from lack of funding, which also Informs the extent to which they can offer support.
[305] Although, again, one cannot generalise. Former members have contacted Inform specifically asking whether we had any religious agenda or connections. One second-generation former Jehovah's Witness specifically complained about a particular support organisation that, she claimed, tried to convert her to their particular interpretation of Christianity, which greatly upset her.

leader(s) as well as the parents are frequently blamed as those who have

'misinterpreted' doctrine or 'misused' religion to justify abuse.[306] The 'content' of a

group's doctrine frequently is blamed as the direct source and reason for the practice.

However, doctrinal content and practice are not always perfectly causally related.

Religious texts do get interpreted and re-interpreted constantly, and certain sections

are highlighted while others are downplayed, depending on how liberal or literalist the

movement. Hence the usual legal practice in Western countries to judge according to

behaviour rather than beliefs, and the insistence of research oriented bodies to criticise

problematic practices when present while steering clear of criticising potentially

problematic religious beliefs when there is no evidence of these directly and

necessarily influencing behaviour.[307] Such a distinction, however, is generally not

granted by anti-cult and counter-cult groups, who tend to assume that problematic

doctrine translates into problematic behaviour, and who frequently assume that past

behaviour predicts future behaviour without recognising and accounting for changes

within the groups. Those coming from an anti-cult or counter-cult position frequently

argue that distinguishing between beliefs and practices, and not passing judgment on

the religious beliefs and doctrine, amounts to 'cult apologetics'.[308] Hence there is a

polarisation between different positions in what is often termed the 'cult scene' (and

in most cases it is a position rather than a movement or group). Some countries have

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[306] I do not, however, intend to downplay the leader(s)' responsibility regarding doctrinal interpretations and religious teachings, and parents do have a responsibility regarding the way they choose to raise their children.

[307] At the time of finalising this thesis (September 2007), a court case in Canada is debating a fine example of this dilemma – polygyny, the most common form on polygamy. Although the Canadian criminal code prohibits this practice, it is being practiced in some communities, and in the case against one of the leaders of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Warren Jeffs, the issue of polygyny will not be on trial as legal experts have already debated the extent in which the State should be pronouncing over this particular practice and lifestyle that some people argue is their religious right. Hence, in this case, Jeffs is accused of abetting in the rape of a minor by arranging her marriage.

[308] Athough the use of the term is not always limited to accusations regarding methodology; polemics frequently enter the debate (Robbins and Robertson 1990; Barker 2002).

a governmental position that is critical of cults' or cultic practices (i.e. Russia, France), whereas elsewhere it may be NGO organisations that are part of the cultural diversity which hold such positions.

The cult scene has changed with the maturation of the second generation of the most infamous NRMs.[309] Most of the institutions and organisations that are critical of 'cults' have had conferences, meetings or have written reports on the topic of those born in NRMs.[310] The argument, in general, is that whereas their parents were, to some extent, consenting adults, these young members were not.[311] Many of these organisations offer much needed support for 'born-into' members who have left; they offer themselves up as agents to the status passagees. And as the second-generation (or, in the case of 19th century sects, the third or fourth generation) members have come of age, many of them have left their communities (although of course the numbers differ per community). Of these, many have inadvertently remained within the 'cult scene' by either joining anti-cult organisations or creating their own self-help organisations to help their peers. They have chartered their own passage and are offering themselves as agents for the next cohort of passagees. This has been an important development, as these former members can offer the knowledge and specific support that young former members need. These are a type of self-help and campaigning groups that have emerged as institutional expressions of anger and grief,

[309] Those NRMs that came to the West and were controversial in the 1970s are demographically similar in the sense that their second generation grew up and started making their own decisions at around the same time, in contrast to 19th Century sects (such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Watchtower Society), who are now dealing with their 3rd, 4th and further generations.

[310] The American Family Foundation held a conference in Philadelphia in 1998 entitled 'Children and Cults'; Fecris, a pan-European cult watching group, held a conference in Barcelona in 2002 also entitled 'Children and Cults'.

[311] The degree to which the converts consented has been debated by many anti-cult organisations and authors, who claimed that converts were deceived into joining without knowing the full extent of the 'cult's' beliefs and practices, frequently with the use of 'mind control' methods or other forms of manipulation. See, for example, Conway et al. (1978), Hassan (1988).

in a sense not dissimilar to those described by Paul Rock in his research on collective

responses of bereaved people to the aftermath of violent death (Rock 1998). I

certainly do not mean to imply that the types of transgressions can be compared (in

this case violent death and having been raised in a sectarian movement), rather the

collective responses and the creation of self-help groups, I believe, can. Rock

describes the self-help groups in his research as victims' organisations striving to

reassert meaning and control in a world that has been turned upside down (*ibid.*: xi).

In my research, teenagers and young adults have often not lived outside of their

communities before, and finding other former members offers a sense of comfort as

they speak the same language (in the sense of word choice and matters of speech) and

have an idea of what the former members have gone through and where they are

coming from. Those who leave tend to prefer the familiarity of other former members

to whom they do not have to explain their past and their problems, and to whom they

do not have to explain their worries and fears. They frequently fear the 'outside' – a

society with which they are not familiar and of which they have often been told

disparaging and frequently fearsome stories. Hence this type of support can be

exactly what they are looking for. As Rock explains, the survivors claim a existential

understanding which is different in kind from other forms of knowledge (*ibid.:* xxiii).

Such self-help organisations claim that they are the only people who can understand,

and that by their experience they are qualified to help others in similar circumstances.

In some cases, however, such support comes with a bias, as those providing the

support often have had a problematic involvement themselves – these people have had

their own reasons for leaving the group. And although this gives them an expertise on

the one hand, it can also provide an emotional motive for wanting to discredit the

religious community. According to Rock this dynamic is not unusual among self-help

groups. He describes the self-help movement of the 1960s:

> Individuals who had hitherto been separated by grief, confusion, fear, and rage
> came together and they experienced in that encounter a shaping, affirmation,
> and collectivisation of a powerful passion that created an emotional field,
> identities and identifications, sensibilities and motives, and boundaries
> between the 'us' of the survivors and the 'them' of the world outside (*ibid.*:
> 324).

Such binary opposition is reflected, too, in the self-help groups for former sect

members, where support frequently emphasizes 'wrong doctrine' or other issues of

content that allegedly have led to problematic practices.[312] Such an emphasis is more

likely to alienate the former members from their parents and the religious community

than to move them towards dialogue and/or accommodation.[313] Of course this is a

generalisation, and not all former member self-help groups can be easily classified

like this. Below I describe in more detail the two main former member support

groups I have come across in my research that are mostly geared towards those born

into the religious movements the founders originated from.

Support from Former Members

KIT

One former member of the Bruderhof, Ramon Sender, started a round-robin

newsletter which was initially meant to bring former members together in order to

keep in touch with one another (hence the name, KIT, which stands for Keep In

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[312] Here I am speaking of cases where the abuse/neglect has not been systemic and/or a direct, and necessary, result of teachings.
[313] Although some former members argue that this is justified because of the abuse they suffered within the religious movement, and they do not want a dialogue unless the group and/or parents repent and change.

Touch). He had been motivated to do this after finding out that his adult daughter, who had remained a member, had died; he had not been notified at the time. He wanted to research her life (as he had not been told of her marriage, children, illness, and other major life events either), and attempted to do this by contacting other former members who may have known her while in the group. The communication *via* KIT increased, and soon the initiative developed into The Peregrine Foundation (a non-profit organisation which aims to illuminate the nature of experimental social groups and assist those who want to leave them) and within it the Carrier Pigeon Press (a publishing house which has published and distributed the memoirs of former members of the Bruderhof). Over time the network expanded and in 1995 individuals associated with the Peregrine Foundation founded Children of the Bruderhof International (COBI) and initiated a toll free number for people inside and outside the Bruderhof who wanted Information or assistance.

Within two years of the foundation of KIT, members started meeting at conferences. One of these first meetings, in 1990, led to an open letter from approximately fifty former members (many of them second-generation members) addressed to the Bruderhof communities. The open letter pointed to the frightening prospect of expulsion. It requested guaranteed financial support and the right to contact relatives in the community for those who wish to leave, and that children be educated, 'acculturated' and given meaningful choices, including the choice to leave without fear of being cut off. The open letter asked the Bruderhof to address physical and psychological abuse, and offered to help the organisation address these issues.[314] The contents of the open letter were largely rejected by the Bruderhof, who were of the

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[314] Posted on http://www.perefound.org/archives.html accessed 20/9/2007.

opinion that the requests were unreasonable and out of line with their religious

tradition (Oved 1996). This marked the beginning of a period of antagonism, an

antagonism that increased dramatically with the founding of COBI. The Bruderhof

filed a civil lawsuit against COBI the year it was founded, and reached an out of court

settlement a year later that ended the work of COBI.[315] The antagonism continued

and culminated in another legal case in 1997, a defamation lawsuit initiated by the

Bruderhof against the founder of KIT, the Peregrine Foundation, the main initiator of

COBI and a leading academic who had been commenting publicly on the Bruderhof

and KIT.[316] In this suit, the Peregrine Foundation was described by the Bruderhof's

legal representation as being established "…for the sole purpose of undermining the

goals and membership of the Bruderhof", with the aim being the dissolution of the

Bruderhof communities.[317] Sender was described as the chief proponent of the

dissolution of the Bruderhof, along with others.[318] The case revolved mainly around

the Information disseminated by the Peregrine Foundation, considered defamatory

and libellous by the Bruderhof. The suit was dismissed that same year, and the

Bruderhof dropped their appeal and withdrew the lawsuit against Sender.[319]

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[315] For more Information on the relationship between COBI and the Bruderhof, see Rubin (1998) and the Court case, which can be accessed on http://www.perefound.org/B_vs_3.html accessed 7/9/2005.
[316] See the 1997 New York Supreme Court case, Bruderhof communities v. the Peregrine Foundation, Ramon Sender, Julius H. Rubin and S. Blair Purcell, individually (posted on http://www.perefound.org/B_vs_3.html accessed 15/6/2004).
[317] *Ibid.*
[318] One of the defendants, also a former member of the Bruderhof, had been broadcast on a radio station, stating: "We're out to destroy the BRUDERHOF" (*ibid.*).
[319] *Ibid.* The academic involved, Rubin, was still the subject of a SLAPP suit. This process is described in more detail in his paper "Contested Narratives" (1998). He has had an ongoing dispute with the Bruderhof as well; his 1997 paper titled *The Other Side of Joy* was included in an edited SPCK publication. The Bruderhof put pressure on the publishers to pull the chapter, which the publishers eventually did (*ibid.*).

Moving On

The website Moving On was specifically created for the second-generation members
who had left The Family International – it was created by second-generation
members for second-generation members. Not an organisation as such, the website
revolved around supporting former second-generation members by providing
information and offering a discussion forum. Like KIT, Moving On will post critical
comments about The Family (including open letters to the organisation and the
leader). Moving On has developed over time and the founder has established the Safe
Passage Foundation (SPF), a non-religious and not for profit organisation. Like KIT,
the SPF aims to use its network of former members and friends to offer material as
well as emotional support to those who have left their religious community. They
also offer information and advocacy. Unlike KIT, however, SPF offer to help people
who have left what they term 'high demand organisations' – they extend their support
to those who have left organisations other than The Family.[320] Having adopted the
United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child as the statement of its guiding
philosophy, it was geared towards helping those who, as children, have had these
rights denied and who, as adults, need help in adjusting to 'the system'.[321] The SPF
and Moving On certainly have disagreements with The Family, although so far none
have gone as far as the courts.[322] But there are competing websites from young
members within the Family contesting the information provided on Moving On, and

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[320] See their section on high demand organisations on their website
http://www.safepassagefoundation.org/ accessed 12/9/2007, for more information on this.
[321] For example, in 2003 communication on Moving On revolved around a Brazilian Family
community that had been partially excommunicated. SPF worked to mobilize people to help those who
wanted to take this opportunity to leave The Family, and also sent information (via friends and
relatives) to the members in Brazil with information on ways to best get funds together and leave the
country, and where to go from there. See, for example,
http://www.movingon.org/article.asp?sID=4&Cat=46&ID=1422 accessed 12/9/2007. They aim to offer
this type of support to those leaving other 'high demand' organisations as well.
[322] Although both offer to help those in legal battle with The Family, individuals as well as authorities.

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open letters from former members to current leaders, and vice versa, point to the

ongoing differences of opinion and point of view.[323]

There are many other, similar, organisations – it appears that each minority or

marginal religious community eventually creates its own 'anti'-community. The

Watchtower society has its renegades who have created the Silent Lambs website

which discusses child abuse and sexual abuse (as well as child sexual abuse) among

Jehovah's Witnesses. Former members of the Exclusive Brethren created Peebs.net,

which has a large list of 'helper locations' across the world where there are Exclusive

Brethren communities, to help those who wish to leave. Ex-Scientologists can choose

from many online discussion forums they can join, anonymously, to discuss and

criticise the teachings and practices; something they cannot do overtly with their

relatives and friends within the organisation without being penalised.[324]

Interestingly, this is not a trend specifically linked to 'cults' or new religious

movements; older and more established religious minorities can elicit similar

responses. The communities of the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints who

practice polygamy have their communities of critics in the form of anti-polygamy

activists such as Tapestry Against Polygamy (TAP).[325] In Israel and the USA there

are organisations whose aim is to help those who have been born and raised in

orthodox Jewish communities and want to leave, such as Footprints in New York and

Hillel in Jerusalem. Similarly to KIT and the Peregrine Foundation, Hillel is an

organisation which aims to help young members who leave a particular religious

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[323] See, for example, discussion on http://www.myconclusion.com and http://www.myreaction.net and open letters, from The Family and to The Family, posted on the Moving On website.
[324] A few examples are Clambake on http://www.xenu.net, http://www.whyaretheydead.net and http://www.factnet.org/scientology/exsci.htm.
[325] See http://www.polygamy.org for TAP's website.

community to adjust to life 'outside'. In Israel there are young *Haredis* who are disillusioned with the scholastic path they are expected to follow. Despite being enrolled in their Yeshivahs they wander the streets and explore the secular world. They are referred to as *Shababnikim* (Haredis who have secular thoughts and attitudes). Leaving, for them, involves many problems also experienced by those who have left the Bruderhof. It involves a break with family members, and with the community. Adjustment to the 'outside' world is complicated following an 'inappropriate' education and socialisation (after all the educators had a different end-goal in mind), and consequently former members struggle to find employment. Once their 'rebellion' is known, they are often not welcome in their communities, as they have ventured into a world forbidden to them. They are, then, not only school drop-outs, but also exiles from their community.[326] Hillel was created to help such young *Haredis* in Israel who have left Orthodox Judaism. Hillel helps by offering host families (when possible) and assisting in other immediate needs including education, professional training, preparing for military service, and so forth. As with KIT, Hillel is also made up mainly of former *Haredim*, who frequently work there on a volunteer basis. The main difference between Hillel and KIT is that Hillel does not seek to criticise orthodoxy, nor do they want to change people's minds. Although Hillel does not criticise the Orthodox, it does get attacked by them.[327] And in many ways their presence causes a bigger rift between the Haredi and those who have left. In this way the dynamic is very similar to that between KIT and The Bruderhof.

There are a variety of approaches and consequently a range of levels of antagonism between the religious groups and their former members. But despite the differences,

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[326] Hella Winston has written about such 'Hassidic Rebels' (Winston 2005).
[327] See news articles on http://www.hillel.org.il/?categoryID=220 accessed August 2003.

there is almost inevitably antagonism, because both the religious communities and the former members have different 'needs' and different priorities.[328] The former members are frequently drawn together into new communities. [329] In this case, the young former members have frequently had hurtful personal experiences, and they do tend to seek one another out and create a community of 'renegades' who have something in common. They are critical of the religious community they came from, which instantly puts them in a position of antagonism with these very communities who try to protect their members from outside 'pollution'. With what is generally an antagonistic relationship, the former members frequently expect to initiate the changes they want within the religious groups from outside or even from the margins. Over time, they frequently can expect change. The 'outside' presence of young former members can initiate changes within groups over time, as the parents and the group realise that some of their children are unhappy and aim to accommodate them more and minimise criticism. But with rigidly sectarian groups this is not always possible. The presence of KIT did change dynamics within the Bruderhof but these were not the changes KIT requested - the group intensified its rigidity and became litigious towards former members and critics. However, they do have more flexibility towards younger cohorts of former members.

Cohorts of Leavers

Over time both The Family and the Unification Church changed levels of membership to accommodate those who wanted more options and flexibility. The Family

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[328] For instance, TAP want to offer support for those who leave but they also campaign against polygamy, and lobby the government to act on what is, officially, an illegal practice in the USA. This, of course, causes great conflict between TAP and the polygamous communities.

[329] This is reminiscent of Durkheim's observation in *The Division of Labour in Society* where he argued that deviation performs a service by drawing people together in a common posture of anger and indignation, making them focus on what they have in common (Durkheim 1893).

produced stricter rules to regulate sharing and the disciplining of children after complaints from young members (and the rules were further tightened after outside intervention as mentioned in chapter three). ISKCON also developed internal controls and structures to safeguard the children within the organisation. These are constructive developments, and they did have consequences. As a result of these changes there are cohorts of young (former) members who have had significantly different experiences. As the religious group moves towards a position of more responsibility towards its youngest members, akin to Niebuhr's theory of denominalisation, this results in a stratified second generation as the first cohort of children has had significantly different experiences from the second cohort (Niebuhr 1957[1929]).[330] In a sense, the older cohort of children have paved the way for their younger 'community siblings', who now frequently have more options, and who have benefited from the introduction of new rules and measures to safeguard them.[331] Consequently, the younger cohorts of children tend to have better relations with their parents and with the religious community than their elder community siblings. However, the flip-side of the coin is that they occasionally do not have as good relations with their elder siblings. In some cases the younger cohort have blamed their elder siblings for causing problems for the movement.

For example, a discussion among devotees and former devotees in ISKCON centred on the argument whether one should be allowed to blame Prabhupada for the

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[330] One might almost say that the stratification shows up the difference between, to generalise, the children of the new religious movement and the children of the denomination – the denomination being older and more experienced than the new religion, and has adapted to the wider society. Interestingly, Eileen barker has noticed, in her recent research of the Unification Church, that more members of the first cohort of the second generation have left than of later cohorts.

[331] With 'community siblings' I mean siblings in the sense that these children have grown up together, if not in each other's direct vicinity, then at least within similar communities and contexts. They often refer to each other as 'brother' and 'sister'.

abuses.[332] First cohort *gurukulis* felt that many of the younger *gurukulis* were doing exactly that – rejecting Prabhupada's teachings along with the practices of which they were critical. Young *gurukulis* were accused of hating ISKCON, Prabhupada, and anything India - this being the result of being 'too young to know', and hence not 'understanding'. Raghunatha in particular argued that the young *gurukulis* were too young to have known Prabhupada, hence could not distinguish the organisation from the Guru (Anudasa 2000). This discussion pointed to a significant difference between cohorts of the second generation. Similarly, within The Family there was significant criticism from young members towards another second-generation member whose round-robin letter had been published in a Family distribution entitled "The Professionals" (Amsterdam 2002). The responses illustrated a difference between cohorts of members, as well as between Goodies and Rebels – or, in this case, the one who overcomes obstacles and the 'loser'. In the words of one respondent to the initial letter:

> I can't help but grow a bit weary of all this whining that keeps going around amongst our spoiled second generation. (I take liberty to say this as I myself am of the second born.) I wonder, when are these certain people going to realize that we've grown tired of hearing about these insignificant complaints and all this nauseating "poor me"?

> I mean, really brother, who wants to hear about how you've had such a drrrreadful past, and how you're destined to such a drrrreadful future, and every single one of your actions will be conditioned negatively, because of "this horrrrrible way in which you were raised?" I don't know about everyone else, but I've heard about as much complaining as I can possibly take.

> In this world and throughout life anywhere you are going to encounter a great many obstacles; those who use these obstacles as a justification for not doing anything with their life and who choose to live in the past are commonly known to most as LOSERS. Yet those who choose to use even those same supposed obstacles in their favor and who are determined to make use of what

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[332] These discussions have been saved and archived on http://www.oldchakra.com. Good examples are "Nimala has stolen my day in court" by Raghunatha Anudasa and "Prabhupada Pure and Blameless" by Vrin Parker (Anudasa 2000; Parker 2001).

God gave them are sooner or later bound to succeed in some aspect or other of their life. And furthermore, no one out there is going to stop and feel sorry for you (don't be fooled), so quit taking advantage of the fact that people in the Family are so loving and concerned about your needs and are willing to hear you out (2002).

Of course the elder cohort has criticisms of the younger siblings; the young members are considered innocents who do not understand. In the words of one former member: "Do you really expect us (your much older brothers and sisters who grew up in your same group and who are now living very different lives) to believe you know what you are talking about?"[333]

KIT is made up of a very specific cohort of former members – those who experienced the Great Crisis. Many of the KIT members were either excluded during this crisis, or left after the upheaval that followed. But over time some fault lines appeared within the Peregrine Foundation, and another similar discussion group began appearing – Bruder Christo, which was a discussion group for the former members who still considered themselves Christians. But this group, according to Justin, one of the former members associated with KIT, also became more popular among the later cohorts of former members of the Bruderhof. In his words: "I think the young people that leave now take away with them the idea that people outside that are against the community, such as KIT, are very, very evil".[334] Justin argues that young people who are leaving the Bruderhof now tend to keep a low profile and stay away from KIT so that they can occasionally come back to the community and visit their parents. They are likely only to contact people whom they know, and who they know are Christian. As for support outside, Justin argues that the communal lifestyle has engendered a

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[333] On
http://www.xchildrenofgod.xfamily.org/viewtopic.php?t=426&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=30 accessed 16/9/2007.
[334] Interview with KIT staff member 2002.

closeness that remains, and outside they are likely to seek support with others of their generation, rather than someone from the older generation who has been vilified within the Bruderhof.[335] But Justin does not seem to think this is a problem; "If they have no contact with KIT they'll probably be able to visit back and they'll have at least emotional support from their parents".[336]

My research suggests there may be other cases where the younger cohort ignores their elder siblings who have left; either because they believe these former members have lost their way (the elder members of their generation have often been labelled and demonised, as I have discussed in chapter four), and/or because they know that when contacting someone from this elder cohort they may jeopardise their own position with current members. Consequently, members from a younger cohort who want to leave often choose to stay away from their elder siblings. This is problematic when the only support available for them is organised and run by this elder cohort who have left. This type of support, as useful as it may have been for many former members, might also alienate those members who did not have the same experiences as their elder siblings. Seeking this support could have a high cost, and they could find themselves in a position where they have to choose to either lose contact with their parents and community, or ignore the only other community of people out in the wider society who have a somewhat similar background. But there may be other factors. Stephen, for example, has argued that the better you 'land' when you leave the cult (for instance a family takes you in), the more likely you are to hold on to some of your old beliefs and integrate new ones. Whereas the worse the transition is (having no support, being on one's own) the more likely the former member is to

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[335] Interestingly, according to Justin the younger cohorts of children also do not understand the Great Crisis.
[336] Interview Justin 2002

reject everything, and become 'an atheist'. Stephen equated this with the level of trauma associated with being 'out there on your own' and the resulting anger. This sentiment was also reflected in the Inform cases, where most of those who called were looking for some form of help in adjusting to the 'outside' – either in the form of a support group or counselling. One former Jehovah's Witness reported having entered an abusive relationship the moment she left, because, she claimed, she had immersed herself into a world she did not understand.[337] Another former Jehovah's Witness was looking for someone to talk to because she could not stop worrying over whether she had made the wrong decision taking her young children with her, and possibly condemning them to an awful fate – to be alive in the End Times yet not as Jehovah's Witnesses.[338] Yet another former Jehovah's Witness was seeking help because he could not relate to the people 'outside'.[339] Stephen suggested that young members who leave should be taken in by another family outside the movement. This sentiment was shared by a foster carer, Joyce.[340] She argued that the young former members need to be fostered – they need to enter a family environment that they can rely on in the long term.

> [T]hey need to be fostered and it has to be a long term commitment. It can't be we're taking care of you for a couple of years, it's got to be someone they can trust to be there for them, to stick up for them, to be in their corner for them, you know, so if things go wrong and they lose their job, with pressures that come later on in life and they find all this bubbling up again, it's got to be someone that they can go back to... So you do need a commitment from somebody who's going to love them and make a lifetime commitment, because I cannot get across to anybody how very very disturbed these youngsters are. They are so shattered and so wounded in every way.

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[337] Inform
[338] Inform
[339] Inform
[340] Interview 2002. Joyce has fostered several young adults from one particular religious community which is communal. In order to respect her confidentiality I will not mention the name of the religious community.

Joyce's comment here is interesting in its emphasis on the commitment and the extent of the support necessary. One can understand why young former members are likely to seek each other out and form a community of support. And many of them do; the Safe Passage Foundation, as KIT did in the past, aims to create a network of people who are willing to take a former member in. But they appear to be locked into a position of antagonism with their 'parent community', which, in turn, appears to have an effect on the relations between the cohorts as well as the desirability of this support for the later cohorts.

Other Support

Support other than self-help support is hard to find. Young former members further complicate this matter, as they often have an unusual combination of ordinary as well as specialised needs – on the one hand they may need very straight-forward directions (such as how to apply for a loan and how to enter the education system) while also requesting very specific spiritual and emotional support (such as discussions about religious doctrines which are often obscure and strange to the non-believer and pressing questions about the truth or falsity of these doctrines). Consequently they are challenging clients to any aid organisation - certainly secular organisations. As Joyce has argued, when talking about the kind of support young former members need:

> They need grounding, you've got to really ground them, you know, but it is hard. And of course they have so much fear. They're frightened of the Devil and they're frightened of God, you see, they haven't got a leg to stand on, have they? ...Frightened of the world, frightened of themselves, it's a life of fear and of course, fear does awful things to people.

Over time many of the self help organisations mentioned previously have developed to incorporate more sources of information and a more thorough methodology in their

research. Joyce herself tries as much as possible to steer clear from religion and religious teachings when she is fostering a former member, as these have often been connected to abuse as well as to the people from the former members' past.

> Although I am a Christian and can articulate a good theological argument against many of the teachings of [this particular group], I know, from my own experience and from the experience of helping others, that this does not work. With spiritually abused people I always work from the premise that it does not matter what others say about God or religion, it is what best integrates wholeness within an individual which will work for them. It is difficult not to get entangled with fierce condemnations of doctrines and philosophies which have resulted in the abuse I am trying to heal. On the other hand, it does no good to simply condemn people who may be very dear to my client; on the other hand, it would be dangerous for me [to] allow certain ideas to go unquestioned and unchecked when they have clearly resulted in such personal devastation. I tend to try and focus on the character of God Himself, rather than what 'God-people' of any sort say about Him. This is by far the safest route and helps the person to make a genuine faith-link for themselves which ultimately strengthens them.

Support for young people who have left sectarian religious movements is a complex issue, and one on which opinion is divided. One of the first organisations in Europe geared towards helping children born in isolated religious communities that incorporated personal experience and knowledge as well as a legal and human rights approach was the Norwegian Go On, funded by Save The Children Norway.[341] The idea for Go On was born when a few teenage former members of The Family and one of their outside relatives contacted the Norwegian authorities, lobbying for more research on the subject of children growing up in isolated religious movements. The project leader, a lawyer, contacted Save the Children for funding to look further into possible infringements of children's rights. Save The Children offered start-up funding for three years for the establishment of Go On, a small charity aiming to help

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[341] Inform had been helping individual young former members who had left, but was not founded for this particular purpose, and as of 2007 has been unable to secure funding for this particular focus. ·

children reintegrate back into Norwegian society. A representative from Save The

Children agreed that some of these children were losing their rights in a difficult and

complicated landscape where children's rights are balanced against their parents'

rights.[342] Hence Go On was established to safeguard children's rights, and ensure that

children who had been socially isolated would receive help in integrating into

Norway's complicated welfare system. According to the project leader, Turid Berger,

Norwegian law and the children's rights were the starting point for the project.[343]

Berger argued that, in the stories of the former members, she had heard a variety of

infringements of their rights; from restricted access to information, curtailed freedom

of expression, lack of privacy, censorship, and lack of education, to physical and

emotional harm and unsatisfactory healthcare.[344] In the end, Berger concluded, the

rights of parents are pitted against the rights of children, and one is left to wonder,

which convention is definitive – the European Human Rights Convention or the

Children's Convention?[345]

Go On had a carefully chosen perspective; they did not aim to be therapists or

counsellors. Instead, the objective for Go On was to be a centre that would help

young former members to solicit help from other offices in Norway's welfare system,

and to provide society with more Information on this topic.[346] The main focus was to

'create a new future for young former members', but the project failed to find more

funding and ended after the three-year start-up funding ran out. Go-On was

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[342] From a talk at the Go On conference in November 2001 in Oslo, translated from Norwegian on location.
[343] *Ibid.*
[344] *Ibid.*
[345] *Ibid.*
[346] It was a small-scale project (and unlike research projects it had no special methodology). Go On had in-depth contact with 13 young adults and 20 adults, and received enquiries from approximately 60-70 others. Altogether they have had contact with approximately 100 people.

frequently criticised for its position – trying to be non-sectarian and human rights orientated in an area where this is considered, by many, to be impossible and undesirable. At a Go On conference summarising the evolution of the project and their conclusions, several perspectives came forward: whereas some involved with the project remained within the framework of children's rights, other speakers ventured towards criticism of religious beliefs and practices – many of which supposedly fall within parental rights. Hence representatives from certain religious communities who were present argued that they felt discriminated against and that there was a focus on negative issues – arguing that they have been practising within their rights according to freedom of religion clauses. But stigmatising the movements was not necessarily the aim of the former members who initiated the project:

> This is an important point, that we're not interested in attacking religious groups or making it difficult for small religious schools or something. We just want to say that children also have rights, and those need to be acknowledged and recognised. And that also goes when it comes to religious groups.[347]

But in such a sensitive arena this is a very difficult balance to negotiate for support organisations and charities. Even academics researching NRMs, who frequently opt to adhere to a value-free methodology, are likely to be accused of being either anti-cult or cult-apologist at some point in their career. One particular publication that highlights this divide sees academics accusing one another not only of questionable research and methodology, but also of accepting money from NRMs - all this being linked to ongoing discussions about theory and definition, especially around the idea of human susceptibility to 'mind control', this itself being a hotly debated concept (Zablocki and Robbins 2002). Such disagreements, combined with the view that a value-free approach is nothing but an unwillingness to take a position on issues of

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[347] Michael, a former member of The Family, speaking at the Go On conference 2001.

morality, of 'right and wrong', frequently make the research-oriented approach

unpopular among some. Paul Rock found a similar distaste for the academic

approach in his research of self-help organisations, where he observed the discrepancy

between the anger-fuelled passion of the self-help groups versus the more 'rational',

or removed, approach of their audience.

> I suppose I should never have imagined it could be otherwise but, to those
> who want passion and advocacy, sociology can appear to be a distancing
> discipline, the sociologist a stranger, and print a cool medium (1998: xxiii).

In the words of Stephen:[348]

> It is discouraging for second generation x-members [sic] when they read
> statements put forth by The Family's leadership trying to portray the
> [movement] as an innocent Christian missionary organisation, and when we
> see that the 'experts' [academics] are so easily fooled by the façade that is
> [hereby] portrayed.

THE INEVITABLE CONFLICT

Religious diversity can create conflict; and this conflict becomes especially

challenging when the rights of parents and those of children clash. Religious freedom

is fairly ambiguous in the best of circumstances, but in this case, one hears arguments

for 'freedom to' as well as arguments for 'freedom from' - freedom to, for example,

act on such beliefs as 'spare the rod, spoil the child', or, instead, freedom for the child

to grow up without biblically-proscribed corporal punishment. Of course some

countries have developed rigid laws surrounding child disciplining, but there is

always a minority of parents who argue they should be allowed to raise their children

according to their religious beliefs. And, in general, they do have this right, to take

their children along on their spiritual journey and, in some cases, reinvent

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[348] From written communication to the author, 2001. This perspective possibly also is exacerbated by a
lack of understanding regarding academic language, methodologies, confusing values and meta-values,
and so forth.

'conventional childhood' – but occasionally this right clashes with the children's rights. Thus members of religious groups and their children may simultaneously feel their rights have been trampled upon. This rift continues as the children leave, and deepens as factions of society take a side in what is then presented as a moral debate. Many of the former-member support groups and those set up to help the young members who have left argue that the religious community should apologise, make amends, rectify wrongdoings, or repent in some way. In some cases the religious groups have not made significant changes; for example, the Bruderhof have not significantly adapted their rules to unify former members with their relatives in the communities. This would be in contravention with their beliefs, and the leadership have decided against this. Similarly, the Exclusive Brethren in Australia have requested amendments in the Family Law Act to "ensure that a child is not subject to a radical lifestyle change without compelling reason".[349] They requested special treatment in family courts to avoid the 'outside' parent receiving visitation rights, as the father who was no longer a member of the community could subject the children to different views in contravention to those of the Exclusive Brethren. More recently a mother has ignored the Judge's orders (visiting rights for the father of the children) and denied the father access.[350] In many cases, however, the religious groups in question have made changes; ISKCON has set up the Child Protection Agency and the Family has created the Charter.[351]

Yet despite the changes in some groups, accommodation between the group (and the parents) and the children still appears to be a complicated issue. The Internet is a

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[349] by Michael Bachelard ("The Age," December 27, 2006).
[350] *Op. cit.*
[351] I am not judging here whether the changes were sufficient and/or successful. Opinion has been divided on this subject.

cornucopia of websites, discussion groups, blogs, and more, giving voice to a large

spectrum of views and opinions about religious groups, many of them the views of

members or former members. Viewing the websites created by former members

alongside the sites run by the religious communities – the parents – can be very

disconcerting. Usually the stories do not add up – they portray widely varying

realities. Furthermore, there are many accusations, from both sides, that the other is

lying or, at best, being economical with the truth.[352] Both sides offer their own

monologues – but they do not meet to form dialogue or communication. The religious

groups and the parents tend to separate any act of violence or neglect from doctrine

and tradition ('it was a bad apple', a 'misinterpretation', and so on). The former

members, especially those who have been the subject of abuse and/or neglect, tend to

not make this distinction (especially if they have been in touch with other former

members or organisations critical of the beliefs/doctrine, as I mentioned in the

previous section). Hence they may now generalise and consider the group a

'destructive cult' or blame a 'perverted cult leader' of disseminating 'false teachings'.

This is understandable, as in some cases the young members' experiences were

traumatic, life and identity defining events. They do not want to move on without

there being some sense that the group and/or the parents repent, apologise or are

doing something to prevent this from happening again. On the other hand, the

religious groups tend to look ahead, protect their members and chart their course of

future action. Whilst history is written by those who were victorious, in this case

there are two histories, written by both sides of the conflict. Mismatched stories and

accusations of lies and/or apologetics are typical of this discrepancy. In a larger,

sociological context, they make sense – they are human and institutional responses to

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[352] See www.myconclusion.com versus www.myreaction.net.

the problematic histories these people and organisations have shared, which I have

discussed in the conclusion to chapter three in light of Stan Cohen's research on

denial. The Family, as an organisation, is in interpretive denial, while former

members argue there is implicatory denial – the extent of the abuse having been

largely denied while the proverbial bad apples were blamed. The situation is

exacerbated when labelling is used to discount the other's story (as mentioned in a

previous chapter). Frequently critical former members are devalued (as, for example,

having adaptive problems, spiritual problems, anger issues, being troubled, and so

forth) and/or accused of making money from selling their story.[353] Similarly,

members are labelled in such a way that their beliefs, opinions and priorities are

devalued in the eyes of non-members. They are described as brainwashed,

indoctrinated, ignorant of 'what is really going on', and so forth. In this way both

sides are undermining the other – and increasingly so as the discussion intensifies.

Both The Family and ISKCON have not addressed the issues to the satisfaction of

many of their former members. A 'generally agreed upon' knowledge of what

happened (that is, despite of what the group maintain, 'everybody knows') is never

going to satisfy the young former members who have been harmed and/or neglected.

As Cohen writes: "There is a distinction between knowledge and acknowledgement"

(Cohen 2001: 225). The young former members want acknowledgement; an official

admission that something went wrong. "Acknowledgement is what happens to

knowledge when it becomes officially sanctioned and enters the public discourse"

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[353] Here I am not discussing what some may consider the 'true' version, or the 'Truth'. The former
member may be making money selling her/his story to the media (this may be because they do not have
the necessary paperwork, skills, etc for most employment), and the current member may be consciously
or unconsciously embellishing good points while glossing over problems. This may be because they
have a job and spouse and children who are dependent on them and are working (in Festinger *et al.*
style) to minimise any cognitive dissonance (1956). I am merely looking at the ways in which each
party devalues the other.

(*ibid.*). This is significantly different from 'everybody knows' – a knowledge that

comes from the grassroots (usually the Internet, where many different claims to 'the

Truth' compete) and which has not been acknowledged and sanctioned. As Cohen

explains, a final justification for truth-telling lies in the sentiment 'never again': the

eternal hope that exposure of the past will be enough to prevent its repetition in the

future (*ibid.*: 226).

Solidifying the Gap Rather than Building Bridges

These various forms of denial, comprehensible as they are, jeopardise the building of

bridges. The main complaint from former members is that the religious communities

'cover up' their problems, or offer justifications or excuses - that they either deny the

seriousness of the issue or deny full responsibility. In the case of The Family, a long

and drawn-out court case was necessary to generate a public admission that abuse

occurred and that some of Berg's teachings were not appropriate. Yet, this was not a

public apology specifically intended for the victims, and in the internal literature a

different tone was taken. There had been a prophecy from Berg, who by that time had

passed away, that it was acceptable to 'bend' but they should not 'break' - they could

blame Berg here and there as long as they did not deny him or the Law of Love – that

would be considered 'breaking' (Maria 1995). The Ward case was followed by a new

revolution and missionary zeal, and the movement focused on the essence of their

tradition and teachings, the Law of Love, by instituting the Loving Jesus

Revelation.[354]

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[354] This is quite reminiscent of the work by Festinger *et al.* where a setback, in their case a failed
prophecy, was followed by more intense proselytising (1956).

In the case of ISKCON, special organisations were instituted to provide support and compensation for the children who had been abused. ISKCON argued that they were dealing with the problem and making amends. Internally, there was much 'soul-searching' and discourse regarding the writings of Prabhupada and the extent to which these may have created a context. The conclusion generally agreed upon was that some 'bad apples' do not necessarily spoil the larger message and the aims of Prabhupada and ISKCON. The perspective of some of the young former members was generally, to paraphrase, *'plus ça change...'*. Two former *gurukulis* and victims of abuse I have communicated with have never received support or financial compensation from the agencies set up by ISKCON. They argue that the money goes into salaries for devotees, and that some of the perpetrators are still at the temples as highly respected devotees. Their view is shared by other former members communicating on the Internet. Similarly, former members of The Family argue that several of the main perpetrators are still in the leadership – and that in reality nothing has changed.

This course of events works to solidify two camps with two different perceptions of their history, and one is left to wonder if ever the twain shall meet. The young former members are accused of only focusing on the negative experiences (and of embellishing them), while the groups argue that this is not in the essence of their beliefs, and in some cases they may argue that they have changed their behaviour. On the other hand, one has to respect that these negative experiences have had a profound influence on the young former members' childhood, and on their formation. This mis-communication and mis-understanding is perhaps most profoundly illustrated by a horrific event that took place in 2005. Ricky Rodriguez, also known as Davidito,

had been born in The Family and raised by his mother Maria and David Berg. He had

had a high profile in The Family, as the son of Maria and a 'Fish', and as the main

role model for the End Time Teens. As a young adult he left, and soon became very

disgruntled and angry about his past.[355] In a bid to find his mother (who has lived in

hiding for several decades) and kill her, he arranged to meet with a close friend of

hers, Angela, to find out where Maria was living at the time. Angela had also been

one of his nannies when he was a child. The night that they met, he shot Angela, and

killed himself several hours later. In a telephone call to his wife after having shot

Angela, he voiced his frustration that, as Angela lay dying, she still did not understand

what she had done wrong (Goodstein January 15, 2005).

Reconciliation of different realities is a delicate matter, but when religion is involved

it often seems near to impossible. By its very nature, religion is not a topic that

devout followers can easily discuss objectively and dispassionately, and it frequently

is interpreted as speaking of absolutes. In a scenario where there has been abuse or

neglect and families are divided, the issues become touchier, fraught with emotion,

and the proverbial bridges fewer and far between. A member of The Family

interviewed for this research said about the Go On project:

> It is a good thing. People do need help. ...You get a young person who has
> grown up differently than the majority of the people, and they're gonna have
> an adjustment... maybe their parents lived in the embassy, they lived abroad.
> Maybe they worked for a multi-national company and they lived abroad. Or
> maybe they're part of one of the less popular religions; they're orthodox Jews
> or they're Muslims or whatever, and they come to a Western country, and
> there's gonna be an adjustment. And it's not the fact of their upbringing, it's
> just that they're moving to a different way of life... So giving them practical
> help to make the adjustment, yes. ...But if, in the midst of that, you then sit
> down and knock their upbringing, and even put them in a position that they
> feel that in order to get this very practical help they have to criticise their

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[355] For more Information on his views towards The Family and his mother, see his post on
www.movingon.org (Rodriguez 2002).

parents, their families, their former life – I personally think it really hurts their self-esteem. And then they can't go on with their life. Because if you're ashamed of where you come from, how can you be a happy, well-adjusted adult?[356]

The miscommunication intensifies when one side is concerned with a group or community, while the other side presents a personal perspective. In the words of Stephen:

> The problem for second generation x-members [sic] when trying to deal with their past and find some way to either correct the mistakes or gain recognition that abuse took place, is that The Family has been working for ten years or more on its public image. The Family has had teams of experts working with their own teams on [court-cases] in a number of countries. They have restructured the laws of The Family (hence the Charter) and written statements that are well developed and pre-planned to debunk any form of complaint or accusation. The abused party in this situation, the second generation x-member [sic], stands more or less alone. If she is lucky she has a loosely connected network of other second generation x-members [sic] who have experienced similar abuse. However, that is hardly what is needed to combat a well organised organisation.[357]

Stephen points out some of the 'tactics' he has identified, used by The Family, to neutralise negative media portrayals and diminish the appearance of wrongdoing.

> The primary tactic is to blame whatever wrongdoing has occurred on individuals and say that such action[s] are against the laws of the Charter. This is fine when dealing with wrongdoings that have occurred after 1995 when the Charter was established, but it in no way counts for The Family's actions before that time. It does not nullify the actions that were done by individuals who were acting in accordance with David Berg's "Revolutionary Laws" which is when, and by whom, most of the abuses occurred. To say that these were just isolated incidents is absurd and blatantly false.[358]

Blaming the individual often involves blaming the parents, and Stephen objects to this, arguing that:

> In most cases, however, it is not the parents that we have had our main griev[ances] with, but rather The Family and The Family's leadership. It was when we were away from our parents and under the supervision of The Family

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[356] Interview 2001
[357] From written communication to the author, 2001
[358] From written communication to the author, 2001

and treated by Her 'One Wife' principles that things started to go wrong. To put the blame on the parents is irresponsibility on the part of The Family's leadership and points to their cowardly behaviour in their relation to second generation x-members [*sic*].[359]

In contrast, parents whom I have spoken to in The Family have either stressed the personal problems of young former members (i.e. mental or spiritual instability) or argued that a particular case of abuse was an isolated incident. One parent argued that young former members had personal issues against the parents and she compared this to mainstream children having grievances with their parents, either as the result of divorce, an overbearing parent, a working parent, and so on.[360] It appears that one side refuses to put the religious group into the picture, while the other refuses to leave it out.

CONCLUSION

The 'cult scene' consists of a large variety of groups, organisations and communities, both geographical and ideological, many with strong ideological and/or social boundaries – and, in the case of cult watching groups, methodological standards. In many cases the support that second-generation former members received when leaving their religious communities, helpful as it may have been, also removed them further from the relatives and friends with whom they may otherwise have remained in contact. The self-help approach for former members apparently entered with relative ease the dualist perspective endemic within the 'cult scene', and demonised the 'other' side. As for the young former members, their immediate needs may be met on one level, but on another they are also alienated from their childhood

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[359] From written communication to the author, 2001. One Wife is the term used in The Family to connote that everyone is married to anyone else; everyone shares one symbolic wife.
[360] Interview 2001

environment, primarily because they were unhappy there and now, in a different social environment, they realise that their childhoods were not quite 'the norm'. In some cases they may 'turn against' their childhood as part of a process to 'better integrate' into what they perceive as the norm and values of the outside society. In this different social environment, the religious groups from which they came are frequently stigmatised, and the former members, eager to move away from their past and adapt to their new surroundings, tend to 'join' the other side's worldview and begin to view their past as 'freakish' and deviant. The more socially isolated and doctrinally rigid the group, the more likely the former members feel they have to make such 'either/or' decisions. Consequently, the sectarian divisions intensify. The groups who have adapted have, over time, managed to create foundations for some sort of bridge.

Later cohorts of children have often managed to negotiate different levels and terms of membership - they have generally been able to do so without as much sacrifice of old relations as made by earlier cohorts.[361] In some cases they have received support from the religious community to enable them to more easily make the transition from the group to the outside. This is a constructive development, although it does not always work out as intended. Material support is essential, although in many cases it is not sufficient. The Family's information packages were useful, and a transition via marginal membership into 'the system' provided young members with adjustment time. Spiritual or emotional support was not always well received by the former members interviewed for this research. As I have mentioned before in this chapter,

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[361] Of course here I am generalising, but this has been the case with groups such as ISKCON, The Family, and the Unification Church. Groups such as The Bruderhof and the Exclusive Brethren, on the other hand, have retained their social boundaries. The Bruderhof will allow contact, as long as a former member does not contact other former members and/or KIT. More research is needed on this topic.

such support, or measures to help the young member realise what they want out of

life, can often be counter-productive and become another reason to leave. In the

words of Stephen:

> I think in a practical sense, it's good that a child who is leaving doesn't have
> to worry too much about [his or her] economical situation… and can learn all
> the practical things. But that doesn't necessarily mean that that is gonna be
> the most important thing for the child at the time. And often, I think, if the kid
> decides to leave, he'd almost want to make a break with the entire
> organisation. And that's why I feel its important to have some sort of set-up
> where they can get all the aid from something that's detached from the group.
> And I would say that it doesn't necessarily help their … mental or their
> psychological or their philosophical problems at all, that sort of situation.[362]

Aside from the psychological and emotional problems that may be associated with the

group, the world the young adult plans to enter is the world the parents and the

sectarian religious groups have consciously rejected – usually because they believed it

to be problematic in some way. Are they, then, the best ones to be preparing their

children to enter it? The agent accompanying the passagee from one status to another

can control the process and affect the shape and quality of the passage.[363] As Stephen

argues:

> …[I]n the liminal stage the important thing for them to be, I think, is under the
> guidance of the society that they will be entering. Not the society that they
> will be exiting. Because the whole idea in the liminal stage is that you have, at
> least from historical perspective, … some kind of mentor [who] will guide you
> into your new status.[364]

Generally the groups that have adapted and made changes to accommodate their

children, either for them to stay by different rules, or to provide them with some

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[362] Interview 2002

[363] Glazer and Strauss argue that "[a] prominent source of a passage 'going out of shape' is an incompetent or inappropriate agent" (1971: 77).

[364] Interview 2002. The Latin word 'limen' literally means 'a threshold', and in the theories of rites of passage by van Gennep and Turner this passage involves changes to the participants – especially in their social status (Gennep 1960; Turner 1986). This stage comes, by definition, with ambiguity as one identity is dissolved in order to bring about a transition.

support when they leave, have developed a better relationship with their young generation over time. But in some cases this has led to a schism between the cohorts of second generation members, who often feel they do not share the same experiences, and disagree with each other's view of the religious group and their past.

At present the majority of external support increases the distance and polarisation between the parents and the religious groups on one side, and the young former members on the other. There is a reason new religious groups are stigmatised – there have been horrific cases of abuse. The perpetrator groups, however, are a small minority within the religious diversity, but these are real cases nonetheless. The external support at the moment is, in general, still heavily influenced by this generalised stigmatising stereotype. The attitude of the sectarian groups is that the outside is polluting, and too much contact with this will affect the purity of the group. Hence, The Family ward off Vandaris, and Scientology aim to keep away from suppressives. As a result of these two different perspectives, young members who leave such stigmatised groups find themselves in a difficult limbo. They have to, in general, choose what side they want to be on, and sacrifice the other side in the process.

There are other variables that make their limbo difficult; the link that has been established between religion and abuse or neglect, and the stigmatising labels that have been applied to them by the group leaders, their parents and their peers. For many of the former members the abuse they suffered has been connected to God – God has been a powerful part of the equation. In power relations when God is perceived to be on someone's side – that then becomes the more powerful side. And

it is difficult to go against God if you believe in this God. Hence the former members

frequently feel that they have to leave their God behind as well – or redefine God

according to their own definitions. This cuts into their very sense of who they are –

their identity. Furthermore, they have been 'identified' as being 'bad', 'rebellious', as

not being 'in the right spirit', or having the wrong attitude. This affects them as they

leave their communities, and after.

CHAPTER 7

IN THE WILDERNESS

One of the biggest issues for the young adults who leave isolated religious movements is finding themselves alone and in an unfamiliar place. Terms that have arisen in interviews and communication with second-generation former members were all reminiscent of a strange and foreign place: 'out in space', 'a jungle', 'out there', 'in limbo', and so forth. These descriptions have in common that they were perceived as alien places in which the former members felt like exiles, akin to the Israelites 'in the wilderness'.[365] This idea of being 'in the wilderness' came up in a variety of ways throughout the research and interviews. Themes that arose repeatedly were of former members feeling they had been left by their family and their God, left on their own, in exile. And having left, many did describe the feeling of wandering in exodus, a space they did not know, in which they felt 'fragmented', lonely, and unable to blend in. This symbolic comparison to being 'in the wilderness' also ties in to their sense of identity, as these young former members have been frequently labelled as rebels, bad apples, or 'bad' in the sense that they were 'in the wrong spirit' and/or a 'bad influence' on others. In many cases they have been accused of 'murmuring', and often they no longer completely and wholeheartedly believe in the God of their

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[365] The Hebrew title of 'Numbers', the fourth book in the Old Testament of the Bible, means 'In the Wilderness'. It continues the narrative, begun in the Book of Exodus, of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan, the promised land. Mary Douglas has used this title for a variety of works based on this narrative. In a separate article she studies Leviticus, where diet and bloodline are explained in detail. At the time, these boundaries were important; the Israelites were moving from one culture to another, and while they were in limbo, 'in the wilderness', they established new rules in order to unify their group and create boundaries in regards to 'others' – hence create a group identity. Bloodlines tied them together and diet set them apart from others (Douglas 1970). This is interesting in light of the previous chapter where I described how the young former members frequently grouped together in new communities of opposition to the one from which they came.

childhood - like those in the wilderness (Heb. 3:19).[366] As a result the 'exiles' often

no longer know what or whom to believe and trust.

Nora wrote:

> The best illustration I can think of to illustrate this dilemma is that of a small
> animal, locked up in a cage most of [its] life, and then suddenly set free to
> manage as best as it can in the jungle. Or, as another cult kid I read about in a
> Norwegian newspaper described it; being raised in a sect is like growing up in
> a spacecraft, protected and confined, and then one day leaping out into space.
> Compared to the chaos, the overwhelming freedom and incredible loneliness I
> encountered out in the big cruel world, being an Unblessed Child in the
> Moonies seemed like peanuts. After all, at least I was part of something, even
> if it was the lesser part of an otherwise perfect family. Orbiting the Outside
> World, having cut all ties linking me to the Mother Moonie Spaceship, I felt
> utterly and completely alone.[367]

Some of the people interviewed described a feeling of being in limbo, not sure who

they were and where they belonged. They described what sociologists may refer to as

anomie, a state of being where an individual may experience deep and profound

dread, a feeling of being out of control (normlessness), that he or she cannot trust

anyone, has had his or her emotional insulation removed, and perceives the world as

being in disarray.[368] The changes experienced when moving from their childhood

communities, and the discrepancies in structure, organisation, standards and meaning,

have often left them feeling confused in regards to 'how things should be'. Stephen,

in the last chapter, spoke of the liminal stage he felt he was going through when he

left. Others interviewed for this research have spoken about the urge to find a new

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[366] According to biblical sources murmuring reveals a 'rebellious heart', i.e. Vs. 26 "Nevertheless you
would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God and you murmured". The
murmuring of the Hebrews in the wilderness called forth the displeasure of God, which was only
averted by the earnest prayer of Moses (Num. 11:33, 34; 12; 14:27, 30, 31; 16:3; 21:4-6; Ps. 106:25).
Murmuring was forbidden by Paul (1 Cor. 10:10).

[367] Nora 2001. Unpublished paper.

[368] These are all 'symptoms' mentioned by Kai Erikson throughout his book *A New Species of Trouble:
Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community* (1994). I do not aim to imply that having been
raised in a sect is comparable to the types of disaster described by Erikson in his book, rather that the
resulting feeling of anomie can be compared. In both cases individuals felt they could not trust the
world around them anymore, and felt that their rhythm of life had been totally turned upside down.

community, new 'labels', concepts, rules, and most importantly, a new identity. This

involved leaving the past behind - a challenging endeavour. And, it describes a desire

to leave behind what is essentially an anomic state, and find a structure where

'things', and 'they', make sense.

BRANDED BY THE PAST

Joyce, being a foster carer, has met several young adults who suffer from what she

refers to as 'personality fragmentation' – they feel as if they do not fit in.[369] This

feeling is deep-seated and, according to Joyce, affects them at the core – they feel

'branded' by the group and their past. Her term is comparable to other descriptions of

identity crisis and 'fragmented identity' that point to a sense of discontinuity and/or

disconnection in the storied selves that make up a narrative identity.[370] Joyce

illustrated her concept with an anecdote about one of the young women she fostered,

Isabel:

> She said on many occasions that she felt different from anyone else; she felt as
> if she had been tattooed or permanently marked in some way and that because
> of this tattoo she would never be normal. I asked her what the tattoo was and
> she said, [the name of the group].

This is reminiscent of Goffman's *Stigma*, where he himself drew a parallel to the

Greeks tattooing 'stigmas' onto the bodies of those who should be identified as

stigmatised, i.e. slaves, criminals, and traitors (Goffman 1963). A young man in

Joyce's care, Allan, also felt that he had been 'branded' by the community, and that,

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[369] Interview Joyce 2002.

[370] Erikson famously developed the term 'identity crisis' to refer to persons who had lost a sense of
personal sameness and historical continuity, and connected this to life stages where individuals' social
roles had not been developed (1968). Later theorists developed the crossovers between the
psychological concepts of identity and the sociological concepts of social roles, and a more
complicated image of identity emerged. See, for example, Goffman (1963), Mead (1967), Berger
(1963) and Deleuze and Guattari (1972; 1987) and Ricoeur (1994).

as a result, everybody could see where he was from. This was tied in with feelings of

inferiority and of 'not fitting in'. Joyce said:

> For a long time it was difficult to get him to go out, but eventually I hit on the
> idea of him walking a dog and we borrowed one daily for this purpose. He
> said he felt more normal walking a dog. When I asked him to expand on this,
> he said, 'I feel I've got no right to be walking down the street, as if I'm doing
> something wrong and I keep expecting someone to pounce on me and collar
> me and drag me off'. Allan told me that he had never been allowed to go out
> in public without an escort lest he should become tempted by the world.

Allan, reportedly, had no concepts of 'rights', opinions or choices, concepts that were

not valued in his particular religious community as much as they are 'outside'.

Furthermore, having been raised communally he had different concepts of agency and

ownership from those he encountered outside the community of his childhood. Joyce

explained:

> He found the experience of having an opinion/choice both fascinating and
> frightening. Allan did not seem to understand boundaries and frequently
> allowed people to step way over his boundaries without stopping them. He
> did not consider that he should own anything and was always giving
> possessions away.

> On coming out of community I noticed that, for Allan, everything was a big
> thing. The smallest things we take for granted like being able to go for a walk,
> decide what we will wear, what we will eat etc. were mountains he had to
> climb... For many months Allan could not decide what biscuit to have from a
> plate because he was afraid that too luxurious a choice may have been
> indulging in the sin of gluttony or vanity. Allan lived as if his salvation
> depended upon every move he made... Even when he was recovering a little
> and was behaving normally, inside he confessed that he felt he was 'only
> pretending to be normal' and that he felt like a 'reject' and a 'freak'.

Similar experiences and feelings were also described by others, especially those who

had joined their parents in a missionary lifestyle. For example, in Nora's words:

> Nevertheless, for me, the most enduring and overwhelming side effect of
> growing up as a cult kid is the relentless, almost haunting yet mostly
> exasperating feeling of never quite fitting in, *anywhere* (having been set apart
> from society at large and carefully protected in a dogmatic cocoon for the

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most part of my formative years). I have yet to discover whether this is a blessing or a curse, probably a little of both.

> Still, it is as if all this moving about; learning new languages, making new friends, adapting to different environments only to be torn away from it all and repeat the process all over again..., somehow turned me into a weird little muddled misfit. I was doomed to feel like a perpetual stranger, forever the foreigner, like some bizarre product of shoddy enculturation, sloppy socialisation or whatever one wishes to call that process through which young children experience a sense of belonging and identify with their nearest and dearest.[371]

As I have explained in the previous chapter, Nora struggled with feelings of inferiority at two levels. She felt she had taken a secondary position within the Unification Church as an 'Unblessed Child', and a secondary position in the 'outside society' as one who does not fit in. She was, in both cases, marginal.

> Understandably, after many years of this kind of treatment, there is always the danger of feeling vaguely inadequate and prone to a slight sense of inferiority with respect to those Holier Than Thou.[372]

FROM ONE CULTURE TO ANOTHER

The feeling of being 'in the wilderness' is also tied in with a necessary shift from primary to secondary socialisation as the young adults move from one culture to another.[373] As mentioned previously, the community of their childhood has had a significant influence on them. Many have either escaped in some form, or feel they have been rejected by their communities. This will have an impact on the way they perceive themselves – they did not 'fit in'. Furthermore, they often did not easily assimilate into the wider culture, hence they did not 'fit in' there, either. The feeling

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[371] Nora 2001. From an unpublished paper and written communication with me. Emphasis in the original.

[372] Nora 2001. Unpublished paper.

[373] Although socialisation is a lifelong process, I refer to primary and secondary socialisation here to underline how different the two types of enculturation are frequently perceived to be for young people who have come out of sectarian communities.

of not 'fitting in' anywhere often makes them question their identity. Some former members have referred to feeling brainwashed, not necessarily in the sense of their previous knowledge having been 'washed clean', rather they felt, in hindsight, that what they perceived or assumed to be their intrinsic individual will and identity had been 'whitewashed' and subverted while the group's doctrine and culture had been imposed.[374]

This brings us to a difficult and emotionally fraught topic. There is a danger of being patronising and biased regarding the young adults' primary socialisation – arguing it was not appropriate, did not prepare them for the wider world, and some may argue it was immoral, abnormal, and/or heretic. This quickly becomes a value-laden and subjective argument. Some of the former members themselves feel very strongly about the religious group in which they were raised, and argue that it has been the bane of their existence. This is understandable, as some of these individuals had problematic childhoods, and often left under unfortunate circumstances (i.e. they were in exclusion, shunned, abused, escaped, and so forth), events which, understandably, inform their memories of the group. There have been cases where people's primary socialisation had left them unprepared for the society outside, as I have mentioned in the previous chapter. And primary socialisation does influence the ways in which, as young adults, they are going to view the world, including the outside world and 'others'.

Is this a conscious decision on the part of the 'cult' to impose 'mind control' (to use the language frequently used)? In some way it is, of course, as the groups wanted to

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[374] I am here paraphrasing a theme from my interviews and research and will not elaborate on the reported assumption of an intrinsic identity, will or individuality.

socialise the children within the culture and norms and values of the community, while keeping their children distant from the contaminating impact of the larger society. And the parents wanted to raise their children within their (chosen, in the case of converts) world-view, as is their right. This is a process of which we are all 'victims'; each social community has its own socialisation, which has its effects and consequences - we are all shaped by the environment in which we are raised. In contemporary society the diversity ensures that there is a large variety of modes of socialisation – all with common grounds, but many also with their own distinct aspects. Muslim children in Western countries, for example, might attend Madrassas after school and on weekends, in order to receive supplementary education that is not provided in the majority of mainstream schools. The same is true for many other children, whose parents feel that the existing socialising forces are not providing sufficient education. Hence children may attend a Sunday School in Church, or classes at a Temple or Mandir, or, indeed, courses at the Scientology centre, camps run by the Unification Church, and so forth.

Yet, some forms of socialisation are deemed more acceptable than others. There are cases where international human rights organisations unanimously condemn infringements of rights over and beyond cultural values and differences. Generally, it is agreed (by, for example, the European Convention of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others) that there should be no child soldiers, children should not live in poverty, and children should not be trafficked and/or sold as child prostitutes. But there are grey areas where public opinion is divided. For example, the children throwing stones at Israeli soldiers during the second Intifada were also seen, by a significant minority, as agents who were voicing

their opinions. The tradition of arranged marriages, when one of the spouses is considered to be under undue pressure to comply, is referred to as 'forced marriage' in the UK and consequently re-defined as domestic violence – a serious abuse of human rights.[375] Polygyny is the norm in many countries, but illegal in the West. Human rights differ depending on geo-political contexts. And human rights are not always the same as the rights people believe they have been granted by their deity or deities. The latter, in the minds of the believers, may overrule the former. In several parts of the world, for instance, there are struggles between those who want religious law (*Sharia*, theocracy, etc.) and those who want man-made laws. Some religious groups flaunt the latter in order to 'truly' follow the word of their God.

The question of what is legal is contingent, varies according to geopolitics and is often parochial. There are significant variations, not only globally, but also within Europe. For example, the concept of 'illegal practice of medicine', which can send one to prison in France, legislates against alternative healing practices which are allowed and abound in other European countries. Thus one is generally 'encultured' into a particular place, space, and time. Yet in a diverse society subtle varieties of norms and values abound and it becomes difficult to establish and agree upon what is an infringement of rights, what should be legislated against, and what should be accepted as part of diversity. Clearly there is one set of hegemonic rights enshrined in law, but on a different level there is ongoing ambiguity regarding 'lesser' infringements. For example, should criticism of religion be allowed (for instance the UK's proposed religious hatred bill), is there such a concept as 'spiritual abuse', and

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[375] Although there is no law yet against this practice in the UK, perpetrators – usually parents or family members – could be prosecuted for offences including threatening behaviour, assault, kidnap, abduction, imprisonment, rape, and related offences. The Home Office, including the FCO and NHS, do provide guidelines and distribute the report written by Eleanor Stobart on the issue (2005).

can one legislate against 'mental manipulation' (the apparent aim of the French About

Picard report)? Diversity relies on accepting the cultural relativity of values and the

rights of parents to pass their own values on. But at the same time a state has the

responsibility to ensure that the rights of children are not being overlooked. This, of

course, is another grey area, and there are many debates surrounding what exactly

counts as an infringement of children's rights when minority religions (or so-called

'cults') are concerned. This debate aside, there is one aspect where those born in

isolated religious groups can be at a disadvantage. Those who have been raised in

religious movements have had a significant portion of their primary socialisation

within the religious movement. This is a different experience from adults who have

converted to a religious movement, but who still have their primary socialisation to

fall back upon should they leave. The former can be left, as mentioned before, 'in the

wilderness' – feeling like strangers in a place that is often, on paper, their 'home'. In

this sense the young former members' sense of disconnection can be compared with

that experienced by migrants and asylum seekers – the latter also being 'in exile'.

Interestingly, this is not a common comparison in the literature discussing cults and

NRMs, where the focus tends to be on the acceptability of the religious community

and the childhoods of the young members involved – frequently with assumptions that

the young members have been adversely affected by the religious groups from which

they came.

Stephen Lukes has conceptualised several dimensions of power relations, some of

which may be helpful in this part of the discussion. When describing what he termed

the first dimension of power, Lukes defined power as A exercising power over B

when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests (Lukes 2005). The premise is

similar to Weber's definition, which forms the basis of many other discussions centring on unequal interaction. It forms the basic theme of many of the arguments which are critical of the so-called 'cults'. The *Leitmotif* in these works is that cults (and their leaders) exert power over their recruits, and as a result these recruits, against their better judgement, do things that are contrary to their interests. In this literature the word power is used alongside terms such as 'brainwashing', 'mind control', and other terminology that brings to mind a victim whose morals, ideals and dispositions have been overruled by those in power. In some of the older writings the process is described as a sudden, irresistible and irreversible change of personality as someone succumbs to the power of a stronger (and/or even sinister) person in power.[376] Such theories were strongly disputed by academics, and over time the tone and language mellowed (Wright 2007). The term brainwashing was largely replaced by more 'gentle' terms such as 'mental manipulation', which pointed more towards a process rather than an instant 'snapping' from one mental state to another.[377] Notwithstanding the terminology, the discussion does beg the question: to what extent can different structures influence the 'minds' (mental manipulation), 'identities' and 'thoughts' of those growing up in them? When looking at social structures, one is inevitably looking at ways in which individuals can be enabled or limited depending on the social arrangements around them. Of course it is important to remember that there is always an interplay between agents and structures; agents have choices and can choose to comply or dissent, but choices can be restricted in several ways, by other agents as well as structures. Hence one may speak of active and passive power.

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[376] The best example of such a theory refers to a 'sudden personality change' as 'Snapping' (Conway and Siegleman 1978).

[377] But the debate does continue. See, for example, *Misunderstanding Cults* (Zablocki and Robbins 2002).

[378] According to Lukes, power is not necessarily a direct influence from someone in a superior position (active power), it can operate impersonally by 'shaping the field of the possible' in which actors are more likely to make certain choices (passive power).[379] But how can the researcher investigate such subtle 'influencing', this 'shaping the field of the possible'? How can a researcher conceptualise such power in a meaningful way and distinct from the concept of socialisation, and how does it provide a context to this particular research?

Just as theories from the 1970s and 1980s are, in hindsight, too simplistic for the complicated process of conversion, Lukes, upon reviewing the criticism of his first edition, considered that his first definition of power was too simple and binary. Hence he developed the concept of the third dimension of power, which includes the possibility of power mechanisms working against people's interests by 'misleading them, thereby distorting their judgement' (2005). This is not necessarily an intentional process 'done unto' them by 'those in power' – it is a by-product of the social structure that has developed historically.[380] Although such a structural approach can be useful, it is important to remember that individuals are more

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[378] Foucault put the emphasis differently, and described power as the capacity both to repress (negative) and produce (positive). Repression prohibits and constrains, setting limits to what agents do or might desire. Production creates, guides pleasure, forms knowledge, and produces discourse. More specifically, it produces 'subjects', forging their character and normalising them, rendering them capable of and willing to adhere to norms of sanity, health, sexuality, and other forms of propriety (Foucault 1980: 119; Lukes 91). Foucault argues that these norms 'mould the soul' and are 'inscribed upon the body' (1980). But Lukes and Foucault disagree over the extent to which power can 'mould' an individual. Lukes argues that Foucault undermined the rational, autonomous moral agent (2005: 92).

[379] Lukes describes a study by Hayward of two schools where social exclusion and feelings of social superiority were internalised by the pupils at the schools. The author is not arguing that the power lies with the teachers and/or the pedagogy, rather that it operates impersonally by 'shaping the field of the possible' (Hayward 2000 in Lukes 2004: 104).

[380] This is similar to Bourdieu's theory of the acquisition and maintenance of *habitus* – where people see their conditions as natural and even value them, failing to recognise the sources of their desires and beliefs (2000). Lukes' concept of power also overlaps with the sociological theories of Berger and Luckmann, who argue that people create and recreate their own realities – but these realities are a result of internalisation of the objective (reified) structures around them (Berger and Luckmann 1967).

knowing, reflexive and critical than such theoretical approaches often leave room for.

There are, after all, Baddies and Rebels. Young members can go along with the status

quo, they can rebel, they can leave, they have the option of a variety of actions and

choose those within a context of imagined consequences – this worldly and other-

worldly (from 'my community will shun me' to 'I'll go to hell'). However, the

imagined consequences, options and interests will have been shaped by the

surrounding (power) structure. Hence in this argument, power becomes a

complicated entity enmeshed with the social structures and an integral part of

socialisation. Its definition then becomes subjectively tied to the process of influence

– if we like the content it is labelled education, if we loathe the content it is labelled

brainwashing, mind control, and other terms that suggest a negative action 'done

unto' the 'victim'. As Barker has argued, allegations of brainwashing are often more

about content than they are about process (Barker 2007). Parents have by default a

position of authority; a responsibility for their children. And, crucially, in a

democracy and signatory country to the United Nations Convention on Human

Rights, they have the right to raise their children as they see fit. But the way parents

choose to raise their children has consequences – they are, in a sense, partly shaping

the field of the possible for their children. I say partly, because they do so in

conjunction with other socialising influences, such as teachers, peers, and others

(although in some cases the majority of these other forces may be part of the same

religious community). Furthermore, individuals have historically consistently

transgressed their imagined 'field of the possible'. Although some fields may have

been shaped differently than others, this is something of which we must be aware in a

multicultural and diverse society.

Parts of this research have explored the extent to which the social structure and culture of a religious group may have affected the (perceived or imagined) field of possibilities for the subsequent generation. Rigid sectarian groups tend to have strong ideological as well as social boundaries that are conducive to an 'absolutist knowledge-base', meaning that the children are likely to have been socialised within a specific world-view presented as 'Truth', often without a significant comparative context. They tend to have a dualistic attitude, interpreting information in a 'true/false' or 'black/white' way. Fluid (non-sectarian) groups have more flexible social and often conceptual boundaries and as a result the members of the subsequent generation have a more 'relativistic knowledge-base', which includes a larger variety of information from a variety of sources. Consequently these members are more open to alternative ideas and shades of grey. The concepts of and formation of 'absolutist' and 'relativistic' knowledge bases are similar to the 'formation of character' resulting from internalised constraints as described by Mills (1959), and the 'adaptive preference formation' of Elster (1983). This, again, is similar to Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* (1990; 2000).

The concluding part of my research is concerned with the ease or difficulty with which young members who leave integrate into the surrounding society. Here certain questions arise: How 'rigid' is their knowledge base, and how does new information fit into their pre-existing worldview? How deeply entrenched is their primary socialisation? Does new information easily integrate into a relativistic worldview? Or does new information have to replace previous discourses because it is incompatible with the old absolutist principles? These questions parallel those of Charlotte Hardman in her paper investigating the ethics and moral rules expressed by

children in three new religious groups (The Family, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and the Findhorn New Age community).[381] Hardman investigated the relationship between the kinds of moral rules the children expressed and their sense of self and authority – whether their sense of self was constructed within a framework of belief in one absolute Truth, or whether there was a sense of relativity (1999). She found that whereas children in The Family learned to 'surrender their egos to God and community', those in TM and Findhorn were more individualistic – the emphasis being on self-realisation rather than submission (*ibid*.: 233-4). Furthermore, the New Age children (from TM and Findhorn) had a relativistic attitude toward moral and conventional rules that was unthinkable to those in The Family (*ibid*.: 235). As Hardman writes:

> The implication of these findings is that Family children have a hard time conceiving of someone being a 'really good person' without being a member of The Family, having 'been saved', and adhering to Family rules. Yet, for children in TM or Findhorn, moral discourse comes from within, and they wholeheartedly accept the notion that someone can be a 'good' person *without* being a member of their respective communities (*ibid*.: 240).

For those who come from a background with a necessarily exclusivist religious world-view where there are absolute truths and falsities, there is a distinct difficulty in integrating competing information. The latter requires, to some degree, a 'change of mind set' – an adjustment of one's cognitive framework. It requires a shift in meaning system, as well as an adjustment of norms and values. For example, a young person from a traditional and sexually conservative upbringing may have to adjust his or her behaviour towards the opposite sex when leaving an environment of matchmakers and arranged marriages. Conversely, those from a 'free love'

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[381] See chapter 4 for a more detailed introduction to her research.

background will have to adjust their expectations when dating in a more conventional environment, as reported by Marianne and Stephen and discussed in chapter five.

Having to 'switch', as it were, between two worlds, frequently comes with questions of allegiance, of where they belong.[382] The old culture, knowledge, and norms and values are often a far from perfect match with the new environment. This experience may lead to what is often termed an 'identity crisis' or what Joyce referred to as a 'personality fragmentation'.[383] This is significantly different from the hybridised identity conceptualised by Paul Gilroy where people have combined a number of identities into one, such as Black people from Britain whose ancestors have journeyed from West Africa and the Caribbean as a consequence of the slave trade and who now have what he refers to as a Black Atlantic identity – an amalgamation resulting from this journey and its different destinations (1992). What Gilroy refers to as a Black Atlantic culture embraces its past, the journey and the range of destinations into one culture and hybrid identity, rather than a fragmented one consisting of non-compatible segments.

But in my research the individuals who had run away or been exiled from their sectarian communities did not seek this type of hybrid identity, rather they aimed to discount and suppress the past and sought to blend into the 'outside' by forging a new identity adapted to that of outsiders. This is very similar to a process Goffman has termed 'passing', the management of undisclosed discrediting information about oneself. Passing entails concealing information about one's real social identity while

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[382] This is a feeling also frequently described by what is generally referred to as 'third culture kids', children who have been raised between cultures, such as missionary children or army children (Pollock and Reken 1999).
[383] See footnote 6 in this chapter.

receiving and accepting treatment based on false suppositions concerning oneself (1963). Burke Rochford has described 'passing' of young ISKCON members who removed stigma symbols that associated them with the organisation – trying to pass as 'regular' pupils at school and blend in (1999). There was a feeling that the past identity was not compatible with the new identity needed to integrate into the outside world. Of course 'whitewashing' one's past identity is hardly entirely possible, but my discussion here is about the desire and aim conceptualised and voiced by young former members who sought a method to adjust to their new surroundings.[384] In some cases former members had great difficulty to conceptualise and voice their feelings. For example, one former member who contacted Inform put his partner on the telephone (whom he had met since leaving the Jehovah's Witnesses) to speak on his behalf and tell me what she thought the issues were, because he could not articulate what was bothering him beyond the general statement that he felt that, since leaving, everybody was against him.[385] This process of switching from the 'old' to the 'new' was often a complicated adjustment, and required an understanding of the 'new' world. Ironically, this process of 'unmaking' and 'making' identities is not unlike the process of conversion.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Joyce fostered a young woman whom I shall call Isabel. Isabel was born and raised in a communal evangelical Christian group and came to Joyce at the age of 17. Isabel, according to Joyce, felt confused, alone, helpless and afraid. She felt tremendous guilt about her 'sins of the flesh' and felt she was innately evil, which had been

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[384] Hence I am here not discussing the theoretical aspects of identity and change, rather I am reporting themes and attitudes that have come up in my research.
[385] Inform.

underlined, reportedly, by the treatment she received from her father. But, according to Joyce, there was also a part of her that 'knew' her father was wrong, although this was difficult for her to admit and accept.

> She did not know who were the 'goodies' and who were the 'baddies' in her life and she did not know which category she fitted into either. She was beginning to suspect that there was something deeply wrong with the way in which she was brought up and with the philosophy of her family and those around her yet she felt that without them, life would be unbearable.

A doctor diagnosed Isabel with depression and anorexia and advised that she should separate herself from her parents and the community. Her mother argued that Isabel was demon-possessed and needed to repent and receive 'deliverance ministry' to deliver her from these alleged demons. According to Joyce, Isabel was caught between the two world-views, and consequently was never confident she was doing 'the right thing'. She could not easily integrate the two world-views and felt she had to reject one or the other, which led to confusion and anxiety. This sentiment was also reported by a former Jehovah's Witness who contacted Inform, and stated she did not believe in those teachings anymore – except when watching the news, after which she always assumed the world would soon end – and agonised over having made the wrong decision in leaving.[386]

This theme of being caught between two worlds has arisen repeatedly. For example, teachers and parents in ISKCON have told me about children having had a difficult time adjusting to 'outside' school or 'outside' friends when changes within the organisation demanded everyday-life for 'householders' be moved from the ashram.[387] One teacher relayed an anecdote from what she termed the 'early days',

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[386] Inform.
[387] Interview ISKCON teachers 2001. More about this shift in lifestyle was discussed in chapter two and for further information see Rochford (Rochford 2001).

when everyday life was within the ashram where members lived and where children went to school. She spoke of a young member in her early teens whose plans for the future were either to sing in the ashram or take care of the cows. These were the only two options she could conceive at the time (alternatives, in a sense, to other young teenagers who may want to become a veterinarian or a pop star).[388] As mentioned previously, life in ISKCON has changed, and, since the nineties, most members lived in their own accommodation rather than the ashram, and most children went to local schools rather than *gurukulas*. For those children who started their education on the ashram and then had to change and attend 'outside' school, this was a significant and often stressful shift.[389] Interestingly, this was a shift in which, according to Burke Rochford, former *gurukulis* often sought to adapt and fit in with their new surrounding culture (1999). This was frequently at the expense of ISKCON traditions they had been expected to conform to in the past, such as particular clothing, comportment, and diet. But this was frequently a challenging adjustment and not all previous values and traditions were replaced by all former *gurukulis*. One of the teachers spoke of her son who went from the ashram school to an 'outside' school, and she described the difficulties he had and his feelings of not fitting in. It took him a long time to adjust to the uniform, and the concept of keeping his shoes on, all day, while indoors. He did not know how to present himself, and the unfamiliar dress was not helpful. Other teachers repeated similar stories, and they raised other issues as well. The main issue for many of the pupils was lunch: the children could not get themselves to eat meat, and many did not join their 'outside friends' at the lunch table because they could not be near their friends while they ate meat.[390]

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[388] Interview ISKCON teacher 2001.

[389] See Rochford on 'passing', the coping mechanisms children applied in order to try and fit in at school (1999).

[390] Interview ISKCON teachers 2001.

In the words of a former ISKCON member from the USA:

> Some (like me) decided to simply conform to society as quickly as possible, become somewhat of a wallflower in society, blending right in so no one knows of my past. For some, blending in meant befriending whoever they were able to associate with first who would accept them.

> We had no training. I told my teacher she was going to [Hell] for eating a hamburger. I was sent to the principal in tears, I never understood ANYTHING about the outside. It was so scary. I could recite the entire Bhagavad-Gita in Sanskrit, but couldn't tell you how many states were in the US, or who was the president of the United States.[391]

In the words of Nora, a former member of the Unification Church, who says that she never has overcome the feeling of being a 'misfit':

> Children, as a rule, don't like to stand out, and Lord knows I did my best to fit in. I made friends easily, was unusually outgoing, learned languages and dialects in record time, joined the girl scouts, the swim club, the ski club and even a [chorus], I wore the right clothes and probably liked the right things, but to no avail, that feeling just never left me.[392]

Anna argues that young people in the Bruderhof are not enabled to leave – let alone create a life for themselves and earn a living. Consequently, she argues, it is frightening to leave. She also assigns difficulties she encountered to the different value system in which she has been raised. In the Bruderhof humility is a great virtue, and a brother or sister would not dwell on their talents and skills. This is significantly different to the values of contemporary middle-class English society, and, for Anna, this particularly came up when looking for work or when faced with competition at work.

> I think about every time I go for an interview. I use a lot of the 'being confident about myself' and 'believing [in] myself', and all this stuff – and every time I write for an interview I am wincing. This is wrong with my

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[391] From written communication with Madhu 2005.
[392] Nora 2001, Unpublished paper.

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upbringing, saying: 'I'm good at this'. Still now, having some of these thought patterns that are sabotaging my going out fully to do what I really want to do most.

In the community you just don't choose to have power or to acquire a job with more power. It's about humility and modesty and all that kind of stuff, and others make those kinds of decisions for you – if you've got what it takes. If you desire it, it's a selfish ego-trip. And ambition is wrong - whereas in our society, ambition is right and encouraged.[393]

Anna still struggles with the values she was raised to believe are the most important, but that are not helpful to her in her current life. For example, she has a difficult time standing up for herself, something she considers a necessary skill in her career, but that was frowned upon within the Bruderhof. Janet has had similar problems that she attributes to her Bruderhof upbringing. In one case her boss wanted her to apply for a certain promotion, but she told him she could not possibly do that. Janet blames this on the Bruderhof mentality. Also, as she explains, interview settings make her very nervous: "I've never known a bunch of people assembled unless it was to tell me off and to shout at me".[394]

The discrepancy between what the young former members are used to and what they actually encounter when leaving can be problematic. They may have a hard time understanding 'meanings' – cultural contexts may be lost to them. Their different sets of norms and values are likely to put them at odds with the 'mainstream' in a variety of ways. Anna, after having been in exclusion for a few years, away from the community, noticed that she had been having difficulty making decisions (which is hardly surprising for one emanating from a hierarchically authoritarian organisation).

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[393] Interview Anna 2001
[394] Interview Janet 2001

She never was quite sure whether she was doing the right thing, and had recurrent

doubts about her decision to leave. But over time this slowly changed:

> And I was starting to listen to my inner monitor. We don't have an inner monitor. Children in the Bruderhof have no idea that they – well, I mustn't generalise, but that was my experience. You don't know that you have your own inner monitor. That you don't have to run to an authority figure every time – every time that some small decision needs to be made.

> I think my biggest fear [in] leaving the Bruderhof was 'getting it wrong', totally not realising that I had my own inner monitor – to get comfortable with it and operate from it.

For some, adult issues and responsibilities were topics they never prepared themselves

for; they did not imagine themselves as 'grown-ups'. In The Family, during the

seventies and eighties, teachings centred around the belief that the World as they

knew it would soon end. In the words of Stephen:

> I was taught that the world was gonna end. I mean, when I was a kid I never thought I'd live to be sixteen. And when I was sixteen I never thought I'd live to be twenty. And when I was twenty I never really thought I was ever [sings] 'what are you gonna do when you get to be twenty-five' – I never thought about that... That's an impossible situation for me to be in.[395]

> I was expecting the world to change fundamentally, and I mean to a point where the person I am today is not really the same person. It's a person that [sic.] has powers that are completely different than the kind of powers he has today.[396]

SHAPING IDENTITIES

The sense of a 'self', and of one's identity, is tied to a frame of reference in which

people locate themselves by reference to actions or performances, and expectations,

both about themselves and others, in particular social settings. Individuals tend to

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[395] Stephen Interview 2001

[396] Stephen interview 2001. Stephen is referring to the powers Family children were supposed to gain when, according to their beliefs, Jesus returns in the new millennium. These powers include the ability to walk through walls, fly, travel through time, and more. In some cases children, teenagers and young adults were taught they would have these powers in a matter of years (Stephen 2001).

position themselves by reference to a previous pattern of behaviour recognized by significant others. In this they rely on constructed stereotypes of 'generalised others'. Hence identity formation is also a process of construction of meaning. Identification is a process of naming, of placing ourselves in socially constructed categories (Mead 1967). Psychological and sociological views of identity place different foci on the idea of an internal identity – an 'inner self' - or an external identity forged through the internalisation of social roles. The latter can change and mutate as people's 'sense of self' changes as a result of different social experiences. Hence identity can be fragmented (different identities, according to gender, ethnicity, class, etc as well as roles), and undergo alterations as social reality changes. To the sociologist, by and large, identity is socially bestowed, socially sustained and socially transformed (Berger 1963). The socially dominant group project their own experience and culture as the norm, rendering invisible the perspective of those they dominate, while simultaneously stereotyping them and marking them out as 'other'.[397] In chapter four I discussed this in reference to the young members born in religious groups, who were labelled according to their behaviour and the extent to which they rebel or conform. The idea of defilement which Mary Douglas links to the enclave culture of the tribes 'in the wilderness' (in the Book of Numbers) is in a way an appropriate metaphorical parallel to these individuals. Upon leaving they have often been labelled as problematic influences on the community to which they initially belonged – defiling to the community of believers. In a way, their identity has been dominated; they have been identified (as, for example, rebels) by the majority of their community.

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[397] Of course one can also resist a group identity, reject it, exchange it for another, and so on. This research is about people who rebel against their identity, leave their identity behind', 'select a new identity', shape it, and so on. Although there is an aspect of labelling throughout this process, there is also an aspect of choice where the agents opt for one identity over another.

There is no single interpretation of domination however. Domination is more than just subjecting populations or minorities or individuals to external coercions and constraints that restrict their options to live as they choose. There are also internal constraints that complicate the picture – the formation of preferences, internalisations, and hegemony. These formations are also influenced by external pressures, but they interact differently with each individual's personal characteristics, hence the variety of choices made by members as they grow up, and the variety of ways in which the members negotiate their roles within the communities. There are ways to subvert the dominant paradigm - covert subcultures of dissent as well as more open, but disguised, transcripts of dissent, such as gossip, satirical jokes, 'folk tales' or 'urban myths', and so forth – actions that Lukes refers to as the 'theatre of the powerless' (2005: 125). These are the everyday actions of those who resist the group identity. There are many forms of dissent to be found within culture, in literature, art, media, and so on.

Within sects one can see parallels with the forms of dissent initiated by the young members expressed on online discussion groups, in gossip and interactions at camps and other events for young people – some seeking to stretch the boundaries of the status quo and change things from within, and some dissenting so much they opt to leave altogether.[398] Such dissent notwithstanding, there is no doubt that these young members will have been significantly 'shaped' by the dominant influences in their environment, especially through their primary socialisation.[399] A persuasive example

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[398] This has been discussed at length in chapters 4 and 5.

[399] What concerns Lukes is not whether or not this 'moulding' is religiously induced or encouraged, but the shaping of agents' desires and beliefs by factors external to those agents (2005: 134). He argues that preference is shaped by a lack of alternatives and the resulting adaptation of desires, adjusted to the limits of what is seen to be feasible (*ibid.*) States of mind can be by products of 'domination by default' (the social structure that exists), as well as that of a more purposeful domination –

of such moulding and manipulation, partly religiously induced, is the almost global

and historical dominance of men over women.[400] Nussbaum argues that Indian

women have accepted what she considers their unequal fate as normal; the outcome of

lifelong socialisation and absence of information (2000). John Stuart Mill argued

that, at the time, 'The Subjection of Women' consisted of a combination of external

and internal – and internalised – constraints (1989). Bourdieu regards 'masculine

domination' as 'symbolic violence' – a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible

even to its victims (2001). It shapes the '*habitus*' (internalised and embodied

dispositions which become an unconscious part of the world view and are considered

natural) and as a result is deeply embedded.[401] Other examples of dominance, or

'symbolic violence', are, for example, ethnic dominance (i.e. in the USA before, as

well as after – in different ways - the civil rights movement), and religious dominance

(i.e. laws and/or norms against conversion in India, regulations against minority

religions, and so forth).[402] It is important to note that the processes discussed here,

whether they are referred to as mental manipulation, indoctrination, or shaping the

field of the possible, are neither new nor unique to religions, let alone sects – they

permeate society. The issue here is whether and to what extent such processes may be

more powerful in some isolated communities, and the difficulties this raises for those

who move away from their communities. The process of adaptation to a new

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manipulation from one social group over another (*ibid.*: 136). There are countless examples of such domination, often unquestioned for a long time as a result of lifelong socialisation and absence of information. I agree, by and large, but argue that religion can have a significant impact as well by taking the level of this 'shaping' to another level – by suggesting that certain choices may be detrimental to one's spiritual career and salvation. This adds a risk factor to one's choices.

[400] In this example there is, of course, also a history of physical dominance, including violence, which will significantly affect one's choices and decisions.

[401] In Bourdieu's explanation social agents are endowed with habitus, inscribed in their bodies by past experience - social norms and conventions of the various fields are incorporated, or inscribed, into their bodies, thereby generating a 'permanent disposition', a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking (in Lukes 2005: 141; Bourdieu 2000). This inscription of social structure in bodies, however, can change through bodily incorporation, hence it is not completely irreversible (*ibid.*).

[402] In both these cases physical violence may be a factor as well.

environment involves a number of shifts, including an almost inevitable shift or adaptation in identity.

From the 'Old' to a 'New' Identity

As Nora says: "... I was never really on the inside, just like I'll never really be on the outside, you'll find me floating in those fuzzy grey zones, in between".[403] In some cases, there is a major shift from the identity the young former members had within the group to that they had to establish outside the group.[404] The meanings, interactions and expectations outside are significantly different and the previous roles that partly made up a young member's identity may not exist outside. The young members may, when leaving the sect, not be able to continue their 'roles' as missionaries, End-Time Teens, or Blessed Children - they have to address many questions. Can they just drop some of their old roles and beliefs and add some new ones, in a 'pick and mix' fashion? Can they build onto their old identity and knowledge base? Children in mainstream society generally are subjected to a variety of socialising influences. These children encounter different nuances, whereas children in socially isolated communities may have been raised with restricted and censored socialising influences. This affects their 'knowledge base' – their conceptual and imagined field of the possible. At the Go On conference a child psychiatrist argued that the word 'isolated' was the most critical word at the seminar, as the children develop and construct their reality without having been offered alternative views - hence they come out with an incomplete picture of the reality

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[403] Nora 2001 – unpublished paper.
[404] This is especially the case with some of the more sectarian religious groups.

accepted by the mainstream.[405] In some cases the young former members feel they have been lied to, and that everything they know 'must be wrong'. In many cases religion is seen as part of the problem, and, in the case of absolutist belief systems, new ideas and beliefs may not be compatible with the old ones – hence the young former members may feel that rejecting the old is an easier solution than attempting to blend seemingly incompatible concepts. Also, as I mentioned in chapter five, the previous religious teachings may have vilified the culture in which these young former members now live and have to operate. Hence some opt for a radical rebirth – they attempt to replace all their old beliefs, norms and values with new ones. This, of course, is radical indeed, and is very demanding both emotionally and intellectually. What does one do with the beliefs, norms, values and roles that have been the context of one's life so far? The approach appears to depend partly on the emotional and spiritual connection, or lack thereof, the former members kept with their childhood beliefs and/or community. Some who had made a clean break, such as the Baddies and some Rebels, had later become atheist or agnostic. Some others had had a religious experience 'outside' and had joined a new, but loosely structured, religious community.

Stephen has, as he puts it, shifted from one 'paradigm' to the other. He has become an agnostic – rejected all the 'old' and accepted a new paradigm according to what he has learned in university.[406] Hence he is now critical of The Family's teachings about the End Times.

> First it went from being three years to being five years, then it went from being five years to being ten years. And then it went from ten years to being about forty years. And now I'm thinking, my grandfather tells me he wants to

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[405] Go On conference 2001.
[406] Interview 2001

be a hundred, and he's eighty, and I'm twenty-five. Sounds good. But I don't think about it like that anymore. I mean, of course I know the different paradigms, and I know how different they are. I only believe one of them. I don't really believe the other one, although I've been taught to believe the other one.[407]

But the process of 'changing his mind' has been challenging:

I describe it initially as total chaos and really not knowing what to do for about the first year and then I sort of just put it out of my mind for a while. But when I started dealing with it again at the age of nineteen, it took a lot of work and a lot of actual research and reading all kinds of humanistic literature and philosophical literature to sort of figure out what parts I was gonna keep and what parts I was gonna throw away.

But I realised later on that a lot of my notions were still determined by that socialisation, specifically the idea that there is a right and a wrong. That was something that took a long time, for me to discard that. That it's not just a matter of finding the truth, but it's a matter of finding a perspective. That was something that took a long time to understand.[408]

Hence, in Stephen's words: "I didn't really stop believing it, I just sort of changed

my belief about it."

Marianne still considers herself a Christian: "Because I'm too afraid not to be".

It was drummed into me in the group all my life, that Jesus was gonna come back in '93. That was it. He was coming back in '93. The world is gonna be destroyed in '93. All my life that's what I thought. '93 comes, you know, and it goes.

By 1993 Marianne had left the group, but part of her still believed Jesus would return.

Yes. Deep in the subconscious, yes. On the outside, I was like 'crap, I couldn't give a shit, all the lies – bollocks.' But subconsciously, it's there, because you were told it's important. It's your whole make-up for the rest of your life.[409]

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[407] Interview 2001
[408] Interview 2002
[409] Interview with Marianne 1998

But she has adapted her beliefs after years of living away from The Family. She argues that according to her old beliefs she, as a 'backslider', would go to Hell. But she does not believe in that anymore. She has adapted her beliefs to something more conducive to her current lifestyle, in almost perfect reverse of what Festinger *et al.* described (1956).

> Whatever happens, happens. I mean, I'm a good person... And if there is a God, then God will know my heart. And he'll know that I can't do better because of the group. ... I'm confused, I'm hurt, and I'm suffering. And He'll know that I've had no help, and He'll know – He'll just know. Because God is God, in the end. ... So if that is the case, and there is a Heaven and a Hell, and there is a God, then He'll know me. And He'll make sure I'll go to Heaven. He won't want me to go to Hell. He won't want me to suffer, you know. He won't make me suffer. He knows I've suffered enough. And that's how I feel, you know, I'm quite content with that.

The changing or significant adapting of the religious beliefs is for some unavoidable, because their past is so closely intertwined with religion, any criticism of their upbringing involves criticism of the religious beliefs, practices, or at least interpretations of these beliefs. Hence young former members occasionally feel they have to 'drop all the old'. But, of course, this depends on a number of variables, and one can never generalise. Having said this, there are a number of themes and clusters of shared experiences that have come up over the course of this research.

Those who were Baddies within the group were more likely to, when out of the group, have a black/white approach to their past as well as their religion (i.e. 'it's all rubbish'). They are more likely to have been raised in an absolutist and dualistic environment, where the 'True' path is singled out and all other paths are rejected as 'False' – not leading to the 'Truth' (be it Heaven or a similar concept). As a result of such doctrinal (and often resulting behavioural) rigidity, non-conforming children were labelled as 'Baddies' (and probably as Rebels on the way to becoming Baddies).

These Baddies were likely to have left on bad terms, frequently they either escaped or were cast out. And if they found and received support, this support would have been likely to be critical of their upbringing as well as the teachings of the community (often for good reasons). Hence, Baddies are more likely to 'drop' the vast majority of their old norms, values, and beliefs, and look for new ones. This may leave them, in a sense, temporarily 'normless', without familiar roles and a sense of what is 'good' or 'bad'. To quote one former member who described the kind of switch she had to make:

> It was a matter of becoming somewhat of a chameleon in many ways. If you fit in, you were accepted. If you were funny, did drugs, had sex, all of the above, you were sure to be accepted somewhere. All we knew was that EVERYTHING we had been taught about the real world being so evil was now our only choice to survive[,] so yes, most of us have conformed.[410]

Both drugs and sex (not for the purpose of procreation) were supposed to be taboo in ISKCON, the group in which she was raised.[411] The former Jehovah's Witness who had left and instantly entered an abusive relationship claimed, in hindsight, that this was not the result of a lack of beliefs – rather the result of not knowing 'who she was'. She asked upon what people based who they are, and whom she could trust.[412]

Joyce has encountered what she termed a sense of normlessness and lack of roles on several occasions with young former members she fostered who came from a very strict communal group. She attributes this to what she calls the lack of freedom they had when growing up.

> And the freedom that they've missed is awful. And giving them permission to have that freedom again is very very hard to do, because to them it's like stepping out on their own, it's the great unknown. And the freedom to make their own choices. They've had all their choices made for them, they've never

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[410] Emphasis in original.
[411] Although this is doctrinally the case, she reported she was sexually abused as a child.
[412] Inform.

chosen their own clothes. It's like if you don't do something, you don't have the ability to do it, if nobody teaches you to write, you can't write, can you? Well if nobody teaches you to make decisions, you can't make them, so you grow up incapable of making decisions, you know, and that's a terrible thing, cos that makes you so vulnerable you're just constantly at the mercy of other people, who can make the decisions for you. So even if you get out of the [group], you're still looking for somebody who can make the decisions for you.

… they wouldn't know what to do, they really wouldn't. This is a hard thing for them, and as I said, they'll come in and say things like, 'shall I put the lid on the toothpaste'? 'Which colander shall I use, shall I use the plastic one or the metal one'? Well it doesn't matter. 'Yeah but which one'? Well it doesn't matter which one you use, darling, use which one you want. 'Yeah but which one do you want me to use'? Well I don't mind, you use which one you want. By this time the potatoes are getting cold, the peas are getting cold, you know, but I will never give in, I will not make a decision for them that they can make for themselves, so we go on like this for half an hour. I say, 'which one do you want to use'? And they say, 'well I don't mind, I'll use whichever one you want me to use', and it goes on and on… but you can't give in. You have to say, look it's getting cold now and I'm not going to make a decision, so if you're not, we're not going to eat, so it's up to you. And then after we've ate, they'll say, 'do you think I should have used the plastic one'?

In some cases the young former members she fostered had no sense of ownership

because they had been raised in a community where all things were either shared or

allocated. In her own words:

So there's never that sense of anything belonging to them and this, it has an impact, and when you try and get them out of this you realise that they think they don't deserve anything of their own. And so when you buy them their first lot of clothes and possessions, you've got to be very careful cos they give them away, and you say, what happened to that sweatshirt? 'Oh I gave it to Adam'. What did you swap it for? 'Oh I didn't swap it I gave it to him'. And in the end I had to go and rescue everything and explain to people this is all he's got. But they feel reluctant to own anything and it's a sense of unworthiness, 'I'm not the sort of person who can own things, that's too much for a person like me cos I'm not worthy of that'. And it's the same when they've earned their first pay packet, they'll give it all away. And you have to monitor their friends a bit because if you're not careful, the friends will catch onto this, you see, and they start taking them for a ride. And they'll buy a packet of cigarettes and smoke one and then give the rest to their friends. They're easily taken advantage of so you have got to watch out a bit. And I knew what was going on and I would say to his friends, look, you can stop taking all his money off him and you can stop taking his cigarettes off him and you know you can take advantage of him but I'm watching you.

And this affects their sense of self and related concepts of self-worth, and what Anna

referred to as her 'inner monitor'.

> It's that thing that somebody else always knows best and it makes them doubt
> themselves terribly, and that's why they're so full of self doubt, full of self
> doubt... They will bow to another opinion of themselves very easily,
> especially if that person's opinion is negative of them, but they find it very
> hard when you praise them and to teach them to stick up for themselves is
> murder.

On the other hand, those who have left more relativistic groups, including the Rebels,

tend to have had a less extreme experience in the sense that there was more

negotiability in some way or other (if not in belief, then possibly in practices or level

of social isolation). In such groups there tends to be more than one way to reach the

'Truth', or there may even be a number of truths. As a result there is less rigidity,

and, often, more space for children to experiment and find their own ways. Hence,

they are not necessarily 'non-conforming' children or Baddies, they are more likely to

be seen as rebels, explorers, and so forth (as discussed in chapter four). This relative

flexibility means that they are more likely to have left on a better note than their

Baddy contemporaries, with possibly a few bridges intact (in the form of personal

contacts). Such bridges make the need for outside support less urgent, especially if

there is some form of support coming from the home community (be it emotional,

spiritual, or financial). Such bridges also make it less likely that the young former

members feel that the primary socialisation has been 'useless' at best and that they

have to drop all the old beliefs, norms and values. The 'rebels' and those who have

left more fluid groups tend to have an understanding of shades of grey. As a result

they feel able to, and tend to 'pick and mix' new ideas and practices into their existing

worldview. Where they feel able to embrace aspects of their childhood we may see

some hybridisation of their identities blending old and new roles, concepts and beliefs.

CONCLUSION

The young former members who find themselves 'in the wilderness' undergo a process of enculturation into new surroundings that demand levels of adaptation of their attitudes, roles, selves – their identities. Of course, on one level this is just a continuation of their personal history, an ongoing and infinite process of identity construction. Yet on another level, for those coming from sectarian groups that are by their very nature opposed to the wider society, there is also a significant set of differences between the place they came from and the place they choose to go to. Consequently their process of identity construction involves a further level of work to overcome old roles and constructions that may not be necessary, or may even be counter-productive in the new social and spiritual environment. One significant aspect of this is overcoming or coming to terms with their stigmas - their 'tattoos', the way they had perceived to have been 'branded' and labelled in the past. This is a significant part of what has shaped them, and forms part of the baggage they take with them into the wilderness. Although most reported this enculturation process to be challenging, they did find empowering ways of managing it. The young members often embraced their labels and in this sense developed a resistance identity where they defined themselves on the basis of principles different from, and often opposed to, those permeating the sects from which they came. Those who had been devalued and stigmatised created a subculture of Baddies and Rebels in resistance, and frequently celebrated their supposed 'spiritual troubles'. Outside they frequently embraced these previously stigmatising identities and used them as a cohesive force to

bind themselves to a community of other 'outsiders' with frequently shared pasts and experiences. They embraced and reclaimed their labels as rebels and baddies – be it as backsliders, Vandaris, being demon-possessed, and so forth. Hence they may have rejected the old beliefs and practices and other aspects of their old identity, but they embraced the aspects that put them in a position of resistance to the community of their childhood.

The young former members came from one religion and often then join and/or adapt to another hegemonic religious culture (where religion may be covert or overt). In this case there is the potential for the hybridisation of identity as described by Gilroy (1992). But I have found that, in contrast, those who left sectarian groups had no desire for such blending and rather sought to replace the old with the new – 'convert' instead of hybridise – convert to the culture, the norms, the roles, and in some cases the accepted religion, spirituality, or lack of religion made possible within the spiritual supermarket. Although, inevitably, there is a level of hybridisation in that not all history can be easily erased, and some has become the foundation to the new roles and identity. One example of this is the way in which the young former members often embrace their old labels and turn them into an aspect of the new identity that they appreciate and are proud of – such as the subversive and rebellious aspects. There is a parallel to Gilroy's work and his description of the way negative meanings given to the enforced movements of Black people are somehow transposed:

> What was initially felt to be a curse – the curse of homelessness or the curse of enforced exile – gets repossessed. It becomes affirmed and is reconstructed as the basis of a privileged standpoint from which certain useful and critical perceptions about the modern world become more likely. It should be obvious that this unusual perspective has been forged out of the experiences of racial subordination. I want to suggest that it also represents a response to the successive displacements, migrations, and journeys (forced and otherwise)

which have come to constitute these black cultures' special conditions of existence (1992: 111).

Of course it is not my intention to compare the history of slavery and its subsequent diaspora with the experiences of those born into sects. But I do think there is a parallel on some level around the feelings of homelessness, enforced exile, and the feeling of displacement, as well as the negative and stigmatising labelling – in this case spiritually rather than ethnically. And there is a parallel in the transposition of negative meanings. Hence there are those who, in hindsight, feel blessed that they were not Blessed Children, and embrace their un-blessed nature. And there are those who are proud to be Vandaris, or fulfilled over their sense of ambition and pride, pleased of their worldliness, and satisfied about drinking, smoking, and/or their promiscuity.

I will conclude this chapter with a poem written by a former member of the Family and posted on the website www.movingon.com:[413]

> We are the Vandari,
> Yes we do, we do
> We are the Vandari,
> That's our name it's true,
> We are the Vandari,
> We are red and drool
> We are the Vandari,
> On Zerby we will chew

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[413] (http://www.movingon.org/article.asp?sID=8&Cat=12&ID=866). Zerby is Maria's (whose given name is Karen) surname.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory research has brought some issues to light that need further, more systematic, scrutiny. I have argued that sectarian socialisation has its consequences - one may speak of a segregated socialisation. For those who leave, this segregated socialisation may become a stumbling block for integration into the wider society. They feel they fit neither 'here' nor 'there'. In a world which is increasingly globalised, it is significant that the sectarian attitude is still attractive to some, and that this attitude engenders another form of sectarianism as well, where a population organises itself in opposition to another population. It would be interesting to compare some of the findings from this research with the feelings and attitudes of those who have been raised in established religions but lost their faith. Do lapsed Catholics or Muslims struggle with a sense of normlessness? Do they struggle from what some may consider a 'mis-matched socialisation'? This discussion may become increasingly interesting when also compared to other forms of subcultures and minority communities. For example, the second generation within immigrant communities may grapple with some similar issues, such as feeling they are between two cultures, two influences, and that one aspect of their diaspora identity is always devalued by the other side. In a paper by Schiffauer this was illustrated with the example of a young Turk in Germany, who described a sort of 'crisis'- he feels he belongs neither in the culture of his parents, nor in the one of his German peers (1999). His world, so far, has been conceptually segregated into 'Turkish' and 'German', and he carries a stigma from both, hence cannot easily integrate in either. Eventually he joins a community where the worldview and conceptual framework

explain his diaspora identity and his surroundings in a way satisfactory to him, and which help him develop strategies for dealing with his 'crisis'.

Similarly, the young former members in my research have been raised in a subculture different from the rest of the surrounding society. There were those who stayed within it, considering it better than what was on offer 'outside'. There were others who left and suffered some sort of 'crisis' as a result of their 'mixed' identity, occasionally geographically diasporic following the missionary work of their parents, usually cognitively different following a sectarian upbringing and education. A further similarity is the stigmatisation suffered by those who left who were negatively labelled by their parents and community (for not 'fitting in'), and who feel stigmatised by others around them (again, for not 'fitting in'). Having left, they were straddling both worlds, much of their identity based in one while attempting to fit in the other, which often left them feeling like 'misfits'.

SEGREGATED SOCIALISATION

Sectarian upbringing by its very definition begets segregated socialisation. The young members who choose to leave frequently have difficulty adjusting to the norms, values, and culture 'outside'. But it is important to keep in mind that sects, and the childhoods of those in sects, are not static. There is an inevitable process of change and adaptation in a quest to manufacture the perfect environment conducive to the aims of the community.[414] The birth of a second generation puts pressure on existing practices, dynamics and resources. And the sect may have to adjust practices to

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[414] This hinges on a number of variables, charismatic leadership or the negotiability of a historical tradition being significant influences to the attitude towards changes and adaptation, as described in chapter two.

comply with standards set by the wider society. All this challenges the 'group' as defined by Mary Douglas, changing the balance between social boundaries and internal hierarchy simultaneously (1970). In some sects changes are initiated in efforts to keep the status quo despite challenges from outside and within. In others this change is an effort to adapt to changing circumstances; to 'go with the flow' as it were and sacrifice some previous priorities in favour of a new priority – be it the wellbeing of the children, reduced tension with the wider society or both. Change towards adaptation is usually in response to outside scrutiny, inside disagreement and/or disputes regarding controversial missions, practices and/or revolutions that are frequently experimental and short-lived, and in response to demands by the maturing members of the second generation.

But changes and the attitude to change are strongly influenced by the style and structure of leadership. The Unification Church and The Family, both initially charismatic groups, managed to initiate changes relatively quickly over time, and eventually adjusted to the demands of their children – The Family by establishing different levels of membership, and the Unification Church by allowing membership according to different rules. The Bruderhof and ISKCON were both more resistant to change in an effort to maintain ties to certain traditional ways. ISKCON's gurus deemed problematic were not easily deposed, and the Bruderhof refused to allow critical exiles to break the Hutterite *ausschluss* rules. Scientology's charismatic leader installed a bureaucratic system that is very resistant to change – neither former members nor second-generation members have managed to institute significant changes. These efforts of boundary maintenance have been reflected in the types of labelling applied to those challenging the status quo.

ADAPTATION OVER TIME – THE CREATION OF DIFFERENT COHORTS

Change is a process, which means that the first cohort of young members usually have a significantly different childhood from that of their younger siblings. They, in a sense, 'break in' their parents, the leaders and the structure and initiate the modifications and pave the way for their younger siblings. Rebels and Baddies will have challenged the boundaries – often before leaving. This, however, puts a wedge between the different cohorts, as they have had different childhoods, and different experiences as young adults. The first cohort of children may have had more tumultuous childhoods as a result of 'trial and error' and a process of adaptation to their presence and the new responsibilities. Also, leaving for them has often been more of a challenge as the sect had not faced this issue before, hence there may have been less support and understanding. The later cohorts typically have left under different circumstances; the sect has adapted and become more experienced in this respect. It may have established new levels of membership for those young members who do not want to be governed by the same 'rules' as their parents were, or who want to work outside yet still have contact within. Or there may be ways in which the members can gradually leave, adjusting to outside while receiving support from inside.[415] The sect has, in short, denominationalised in some significant way. But this can be balanced with an increased sectarian stance on another level. The Family, for example, has created several membership levels to enable some to stand with one foot in both 'worlds' while enabling others to be immersed full-time in a revolutionary sectarian missionary movement.

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[415] In some cases support from the group, although undoubtedly with good intentions, has backfired leaving the young member confused and pressured. This is understandable when leaders or parents try to get the young member to understand and conform to an 'undeniable Truth' – this may be precisely what the young member is doubtful about or questioning.

SUPPORT

The process of leaving has been a different experience depending on which cohort the young members belonged to within the history of their group. The first cohort of leavers within the second generation often chartered their own passage; they became their own 'agents' on a do-it-yourself basis. Later cohorts frequently had the opportunity of choosing an agent within the self-help movement created 'outside' who could help them through the status passage. Furthermore, the first cohorts often received little material or structural support from the group, whereas the latter cohorts often did. Specialised support outside has, so far, been mostly organised by those who have had previous experience with the groups. In many cases, this self-help support came with theological, doctrinal, and/or moral criticism towards the communities of their childhood. The young former members often joined the opposition to the groups that they had been exiled from, by whom they were stigmatised. The opposition (virtual and/or social networks), aside from providing support, often had a secondary role of also providing a secondary socialisation, providing a different worldview and explanations to ultimate questions.

On the one hand these self-help groups are significant. These young people are often fearful of the world they are entering, and it is helpful for them to join a group where they are recognised, where the people understand who they are and where they are coming from, and what they have gone through – a group where they do not have to explain themselves.[416] But on the other hand, connecting themselves to such groups (by communicating with the group, joining the network, attending meetings, and so

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[416] Recognition was a theme also picked up on by Schiffauer in his research (1999).

forth) often alienates them from their relatives and others in the sects in which they were raised. The dualistic world of 'us' versus 'them' which is part of the sectarian stance does not often tolerate contact with those who have gone to 'them'. But the young former members going outside and joining other subcultures, and creating their own, has changed the outside. Hence, for the later cohorts who leave, the world outside is a slightly different place.

Former members have created their own self-help groups outside because they experienced a lack of support useful to their situation when they left. As one young former member commented when calling Inform, there is support for parents who have difficult children, there is support for gay people who are not understood by their parents – why is there no support for people like her whose parents do not accept their child for who she is?[417] (She had rung a few help lines for children and young people, but had found them neither knowledgeable nor helpful for her particular situation.) She argued she was suffering from religious intolerance from her parents and religious leaders, because they did not accept her desire to leave the religion, and were pressuring her to stay. She felt there was nobody to turn to for help and support. She made a good point, although this cuts two ways; the existing support was not desirable to people like her, who feel that the majority of counsellors have a lack of understanding about their particular world-view, language, and cognitive framework. Also, they often worry that they may be ridiculed for what they realise, by then, to be unconventional worries and fears ('will I get it wrong?'; 'what if they were right and the world is going to end').

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[417] Inform.

Counsellors may be unaware of the special institutional, social, inter-personal, emotional and spiritual dynamics that may be the norm in particular sects but unusual in the wider society. And if a young former member has difficulty formulating her/his concerns and troubles, then this may be a significant challenge to counsellors who are not familiar with the language and conceptual world the young former member has come from.[418] It is exactly for this reason that the self-help groups are attractive and helpful. These are organisations and individuals who offer more specialised support to those leaving sects, and who 'understand'. They have the motivation to establish support organisations to help young former members like the one described above (and often also to keep it going on a shoestring budget). But this frequently comes with a bias. This bias has a significant polarising effect on the general 'cult scene', and interfaith relations within the cultural diversity, as the discourse widens the gap between sects and their critics rather than creating a bridge towards communication, and possibly understanding (if not reconciliation). The latter, at the moment, appears to be a far-fetched ideal. The different cohorts of children were, in some cases, divided as well. The first cohort frequently had to choose more starkly between either relations with the group or relations with other former members – jumping, in a sense, from one community to another. The later cohorts tended to have better relations with the parents and the group, but often at the cost of relations with their elder siblings, whom they saw as being against the group and the parents and as being potentially disruptive to their own 'bridge' with the community.

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[418] It is, of course, not an un-surmountable problem. Inform frequently works together with counsellors and therapists by providing them with the specialist information about a particular religious group so that they may be more knowledgeable in their work.

Consequently a complicated map of allegiances and divisions has been established. Secular organisations, which form a middle way in this complicated map, occasionally even mediating between different factions, struggle to get the funding to undertake the work they deem necessary. Also, in this polarised debate between sects and their critics, secular organisations are frequently challenged and regarded with suspicion by those who take a valued position on either one side or the other. The religiously plural diversity found in many Western societies is hardly one of peaceful coexistence as yet. In this environment, people occasionally struggle to bridge and/or travel between absolutist subcultures that, rather than representing hybridised cosmopolitanism, represent clashing parochialisms.

THE PASSAGE

The passage from one such subculture to another culture can be a significant challenge. I use the term passage here purposefully and mindfully; the young former members go from one place to another, they are, in a sense, passing through a liminal stage. It is a journey – metaphorically, spiritually and conceptually not unlike Gilroy's route, a spiritual diaspora, where they have to travel through different cognitive and spiritual frameworks (1992). Also, it is a passage in the sense that they often feel their journey is an isolated one that they travel on their own, or at least in very small numbers, enclosed from other people's experiences. A passage after which they hope they will be free from normlessness, able to assign meaning and find a structure in a strange world. Finally, it is a passage where the passagee is often seeking for an agent who will help, and for some, define and control aspects of the passage.

I have used the term 'segregated socialisation', because from all the second-generation former members I have interviewed and spoken with, as well as from literature I have read and from discussions I have followed in online discussion groups, it has become clear that the young former members feel like strangers within the society they have entered upon leaving the sects. This sense of being 'in the wilderness' was experienced on several levels. Former members have reported feeling a discrepancy in knowledge and skills, ranging from the material lack of qualifications to a lack of information, knowledge and/or understanding. They have also reported discrepancies in norms and values, not knowing what is considered normal or deviant, and not knowing how to act in familiar and unfamiliar situations. These feelings combine to a general sense of not fitting, having been 'branded', and fears that people will find out that they are 'faking it'. Former members reported that they lacked the necessary or appropriate 'mindsets'; the necessary cognitive framework to 'understand' the world they were now living in.

In chapter seven I referred to Kai Erikson's research, and the way he described trauma and the resulting anomie, to underline my point. Erikson's research refers to a 'new species of trouble', toxins that invisibly contaminate and pollute rather than 'merely' and visibly damage and wreck, and he argues that it is their unbounded and frameless nature that traumatises in a different way (Erikson 1994).[419] It is the notion of an invisible, 'contaminating and polluting' influence, unbounded and frameless, which I find interesting in light of my own research. Although I would not define a religious primary socialisation as 'contaminating and polluting', it has, reportedly, affected

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[419] Toxin disasters have unclear beginnings, never end, and have no 'plot' – they are unlike conventional disasters and dramas (*ibid.*:149). Hence such disasters leave the victims shaken to the point of anomie, because they could not previously see or smell the cause of the disaster, they can never again trust their surroundings, nor can they trust their senses.

some of the young former members' cognitive framework, which now is 'useless' for understanding and operating in the world in which they want to live, hence their sense of anomie, of disjunction.[420] Hence one could interpret such influencing as being unbounded and frameless in the sense that it fully affects (contaminates) rather than taints in a compartmentalised way. The 'toxic' language and terminology, when taken symbolically as Mary Douglas would, is apt. Many former members described a fear of 'outside', which seemed evil, 'dark', or 'black'.

Interestingly this is a significant contrast to those who choose to remain within the groups, who 'understood' the difference between inside and outside, embellished it, and used it as an example of why their way and/or values were superior. The ones who left, in contrast, often came to the opposite conclusion, pointing to the differences, occasionally embellishing them, and using them as an example of why the sect is inferior. In some cases it is possible that feelings of disillusion and dissatisfaction with one's past have intensified as a result of the type of support young former members have received upon leaving – where the sect and their childhood is likely to have been criticised and labelled as immoral and possibly heretical (Shupe and Bromley 1981; Wright 1998). In other cases such criticism follows a childhood where abuse has occurred. And it is certainly not my intention to downplay this, on the contrary, these real cases often get lost in the generally overblown 'cult' discourse where it becomes part of an overly generalised and frequently theological and/or moral agenda. In such an atmosphere, different sides are demonised and accusations run high. These discourses are interesting sociologically both for who makes such charges and how they may affect the subjects. For example, some parents have

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[420] The primary socialisation has been roughly defined as contaminating or polluting by others (as discussed in chapter six), as well as by former members – perhaps not in exact terms, but certainly in essence.

argued that the young members who leave 'have to' make a switch and denounce or even accuse their parents and/or the group in order to gain acceptance 'outside', and/or in order to 'get ahead' – by selling their story to the news, and so forth. One regional leader and parent described some young former members as 'pawns' in a political and ideological battle waged between The Family and a particular support organisation that criticises the movement. In this battle, he argued, the young former members are not thinking for themselves.[421] The parents argue that, consequently, the personal issues between them and their children become politicised and the group as a whole is blamed. Meanwhile, the former members complain that the leadership always blame individuals, 'bad apples', for institutionalised problems. Sally explained this dynamic in light of sexual transgressions within The Family, and begrudged those who, while having a problem with another individual while in the group, shifted their vendetta towards the groups as a whole after leaving. Sally argued that this happens because 'there is something in it for them – they can sell their story'. And the feelings intensify – Sally said:

> If I could, I would have a list of all the people that had any of that type of abuse and I would make sure that none of them ever came near any of my loved ones in The Family.

Young former members are 'pawns' on a variety of levels, often labelled one way within the religious community (Baddies, Rebels), and labelled another way outside the religious community ('victims', 'brainwashed'). This makes it very difficult for the former members to journey between the old and the new community, or to connect the two together in some conceptual and meaningful way. The past and present are frequently like disconnected islands. These young former members have

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[421] Interestingly, this is what some outsiders have accused them, the converts, of while they were in the sect – 'victims' of the sect's 'indoctrination'. And this is what some accuse the parents within sects of – 'middle management', not able to be responsible for their offspring, and not 'thinking for themselves'.

found themselves in an arena where opinions are strongly divided and where disputes are emotionally loaded. Furthermore, their passages have often been coloured by agents who have affiliated themselves to one particular side of this polarised debate.

Mixing and matching new information within their existing cognitive framework often does not work for the young former members; they frequently prefer to denounce and reject significant aspects of their old beliefs and habits in favour of new paradigms that facilitate 'passing for normal'. These former members have not overwhelmingly chosen the pick and mix religiosity of the spiritual supermarket. Many of them end up in virtual communities or networks where they are ideologically and emotionally opposed with the communities from which they came. Hence they have chosen a side of a spiritual or moral argument rather than hybridised the different discourses. Consequently, they become an integral part of the alienating and separatist discourse of the cult scene, a significant kink in the social reality of religious diversity. Akin to what Glazer and Strauss have termed a 'socially alienating passage' that has only apparent mutual desirability for both agent and passagee alike, it provides meaning only to those involved (1971). As Rock wrote about self-help groups in his research, their work "... attacks alienation by giving that inner turmoil an outer cladding of structure, stability, communality and direction" (1998: 325). The way in which those who left put themselves in opposition to the communities they came from, shows they have not quite rejected all the norms and values of their childhood. They may have joined the wider society, yet they still put themselves in sectarian opposition to the communities of their past. In keeping with the dualistic and absolutist frameworks of their childhoods, they join the opposition,

as it were, and manage to hybridise the framework of sectarianism with a new 'anti-sect' discourse.

AMISH

The Amish are an Anabaptist Christian denomination that are known for their plain dress and limited use of what they consider to be modern conveniences such as automobiles and electricity. The Amish, who have communities in the USA and Canada, separate themselves from mainstream society; they do not join the military, they draw no Social Security, nor do they accept any form of financial assistance from the government, and many avoid insurance. Members speak a German dialect, although they also learn English in school. There are approximately 200,000 Amish (including un-baptised children).

ANANDA MARGA

Ananda Marga (which means 'path of bliss') was founded in India in 1955 by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. The movement spread to the West in the 1970s. Through a system of meditation techniques, yoga postures (asanas), spiritual gatherings, and social service the Ananda Margis (followers of Ananda Marga) strive to develop themselves as human beings, while also working towards the betterment of others. The movement defines itself primarily as a philosophical or political organisation that engages in social welfare and education rather than as a religious movement. Members are expected to follow certain ascetic spiritual practices, practice Yoga, and chant to focus the mind on the supreme consciousness. The movement claims to have between two and three thousand nuns and monks. It has drawn controversy when the leader was jailed in a political dispute, and followers set fire to themselves in protest.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE (THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST)

Founded in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy in the USA and based on her book Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures (1875). Special emphasis is placed on the eradication of sin and illness through prayer; physical suffering is seen as an illusion that can be conquered by the spirit-filled mind. At times the group has taught a 'radical reliance' on spiritual healing, as spiritual healing and allopathic medicine were seen to be incompatible, and could counteract one another. Over time this has changed as the message became more moderate. The church estimates (2006) that there are 400,000 or more students of Christian Science in over 60 countries worldwide. There are anywhere between 1,850 to 2,000 branch congregations in the Christian Science church.

EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN

The Exclusive Brethren are a 19th century Christian sect originating from the British Isles and generally described as the Plymouth Brethren (where, historically, their largest congregation was located). They are distinguished from the Open Brethren from whom they separated in 1848 after one of the leaders, John Nelson Darby, initiated a rift. The distinction between the Open and Exclusive Brethren is that the latter do not share communion with those who do not agree with their principles. They remove themselves from aspects of the world that they consider 'evil', including aspects of modern technology. The Exclusive Brethren, currently under the leadership of Bruce Hales, are found throughout Europe and the English-speaking world. According to their own figures, 40,000 Exclusive Brethren meet in 300 assemblies throughout 19 countries.

THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY (JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES)

A Christian millenarian movement founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1884. Witnesses tend to interpret the Bible literally, and reject much of mainstream Christianity in favour for what they consider to be a restored form of Christianity. They reject the Trinity, and believe that only they will rule with Christ in the Millennium. They obey 'divine law', which has led to clashes with some governments. For example, they refuse military service, do not vote, nor salute the flag. They do, however, pay taxes and are told to obey civil law. Yet, they refuse blood transfusions, which has also led to further clashes with authorities. Jehovah's Witnesses are represented world-wide, and they claim six million members world-wide.

NEW AGE

An umbrella term applied to a vast network of individuals and groups with a wide range of beliefs and orientations who share a family resemblance. The range on New Age beliefs and practices is historical and global, stretching to pre-Christian times and across the cultures and religions of the globe. New Age beliefs may include concepts associated with complementary medicine, the Human Potential Movement, Paganism, Occultism, astrology and more. Groups tend to be amorphous and syncretistic.

ONEIDA PERFECTIONISTS

The Oneida Perfectionist Community was founded in 1848 by John Humphrey Noyes in New York State. Noyes advanced his social theory and philosophy which he termed "Perfectionism." The Perfectionists was a Christian Utopian commune with socialist overtones. Noyes challenged accepted notions of a family structure, and

implemented a variety of different structures throughout the history of the group. Housing, work and finances were communally operated and shared. The Oneida Community dissolved in 1881 having only ever had, at its peak, just over 300 members.

OSHO (BHAGWAN SHREE RAJNEESH)

Rajneesh, an Indian who claimed to have been self-realised at the age of 21, founded an Ashram in Puna, India in 1974, where he taught new and radical teachings that mixed Eastern and Western influences. He rejected the ascetic tradition of the East in favour of more chaotic and dynamic practices, one of which was the practice of dynamic meditation. In the early 1980s he moved to the USA where he founded Rajneeshpuram in Oregon. The ashram in Oregon was controversial, and after the movement in the USA spiralled out of control, Bhagwan moved back to India where he changed his name to Osho. After his death in 1990 the movement divided into several strands, each following different pupils of Osho.

SAHAJA YOGA

A movement based on the teachings of her Holiness Mataji Nirmala Devi, referred to as Mother within the movement, who claims to have been born self-realised. She began teaching her techniques to reach self-realisation in India in 1970. Self-realisation is seen by Sahaja Yogis as both a physiological process and a spiritual transformation in which the Kundalini is awakened within and passes along the spinal cord through six chakras. Emphasis is on meditation. The movement has become syncretistic, as Sri Mataji has included New Age teachings and influences into her

teachings. According to the movement, there are 20,000 members in India and a further10,000 members outside India, half of which are full-time followers.

SULLIVAN INSTITUTE (FOURTH WALL COMMUNITY)

The Sullivan Institute is a self-improvement group within the Human Potential Movement founded by psychoanalysts Jane Pearce and Saul Newton in 1957 in the USA. The Institute developed into a commune designed to nurture the personal growth of its members by removing them from conventional structures regarded as oppressive, such as marriage and the nuclear family. During the 1970s the commune began reaching out in an effort to initiate social change; in the following decade it collapsed following internal conflicts.

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