

PEUT-ON FORCER QUELQU'UN A ETRE SCIENTOLOGUE ?

Une personne ne peut pas progresser spirituellement en Scientologie sans un profond désir d'amélioration. L'Église n'accepte pas qu'une personne suive les services religieux de Scientologie à moins qu'elle ne démontre un réel désir d'amélioration spirituelle. De même, toute personne décidant qu'elle n'a pas ce désir est libre de quitter l'Église. Il est inutile de demander à quelqu'un de rester au sein de l'Église s'il ne le veut plus.

Tout le monde n'est pas en quête d'amélioration spirituelle. De nombreux chercheurs ont étudié les nouvelles religions, parmi lesquels Eileen Baker, fondatrice du Réseau d'information sur les mouvements religieux (INFORM-Information Network on Religious Movements). Dans son livre, *New Religious Movements*, publié par le gouvernement anglais, elle écrit : *“...il est maintenant établi sans controverse que des membres quittent en permanence tous les mouvements connus, de leur propre volonté, même après de nombreuses années de participation.... Il y a des personnes - comme les déprogrammeurs qui ont un intérêt financier dans la propagation des thèses sur le lavage de cerveau - qui continuent d'ignorer ou de rejeter ces statistiques. Mais ils le font sans apporter de preuves contradictoires en dehors des témoignages d'un petit nombre d'ex-membres...”*

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- Extrait du livre d'Eileen Barker *New Religious Movements*.

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NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

A Practical Introduction

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LONDON: HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

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NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

movement realise that the movement's beliefs or practices are not what they had initially thought them to be, they leave the movement. It can also be argued that once some people have actually joined a movement on the basis of false information, they are more likely to stay because they have become subjected to further influences; they may, for example, have formed strong emotional attachments to members of the movement during the 'extra time' that was gained through the deception.³⁹ Deception is discussed further in a later section.

There is by now a substantial body of research on the subject of joining and leaving NRMs.⁴⁰ This has repeatedly shown that most people are perfectly capable of rejecting the movements' overtures if they so wish. For example, out of a thousand people who had become sufficiently interested in the Unification Church to attend a residential 'Moonie' workshop in the London area in 1979 (when the movement in Britain was at its height and accusations of brainwashing were rife), about 90% resisted the members' proselytising efforts and declined to have any further involvement with the movement. About 8% joined as full-time members for more than a week; less than 4% were still full-time members two years later – and, with the passage of time, the number of continuing members who joined in 1979 has continued to fall.⁴¹ If the calculation were to start from those who, for one reason or another, had visited one of the movement's centres in 1979, at least 999 out of every 1,000 of those people had, by the mid-1980s, succeeded in resisting the persuasive techniques of the Unification Church.

In some years in some movements, there may be more joiners than leavers; in other years, the number of those who leave exceeds the number who join. Subud, for example, has had around a hundred people joining and around a hundred leaving each year, so that its total membership has remained between 1,200 and 1,400 for some time. But whether the general trend is upwards, downwards or steady for any particular movement, it is now incontrovertibly established that members are continually leaving *all* the well-known movements, of their own free

39. There is, at the time of writing, a legal battle being fought in California that, to some extent, hinges on such arguments. *Molke and Lea v. Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity et al.* See Barker (1984), chapters 5 and 7, for a more detailed discussion about the relationship between mind control and deception.

40. For further information and discussion on these matters, see Barker (1984); Beckford (1985); Brockway & Rajashekar (eds) (1987); Bromley & Shupe (1981); Bromley (ed.) (1988); Enroth (1977); Levine (1984); John Lofland and Norman Skonovd "Patterns of Conversion" in Barker (1983), pp. 1-24; Melton & Moore (1982); Lewis Rambo "Current Research on Religious Conversion", *Religious Studies Review*, vol. 8, 1982, pp. 146-59; Robbins & Anthony (eds) (1981) (section VI); Rochford (1985); Streiker (1978); David A. Snow and Richard Machalek "The Sociology of Conversion" *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 10, 1984, pp. 167-90; Waius (1983); Williams (1987); and Wright (1987).

41. Barker (1984) p. 146. Similar statistics were revealed by Marc Galanter in "Psychological Induction into the Large Group: Findings from a Modern Religious Sect" *American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 137, no. 12, 1980 p. 1575. See also Rochford (1985).

Il y a à présent une quantité substantielle de recherche sur l'adhésion à des NRM (Nouveaux Mouvements Religieux) ou leur abandon. Cela a démontré de façon répétée que la plupart des gens sont entièrement capables de rejeter les propositions des mouvements si tel est leur souhait ...

will, even after several years of involvement.⁴² (See *Appendix II* for a more detailed discussion of membership figures.) A small number of movements practise techniques that may adversely affect the reasoning powers of those involved (this is discussed in a later section); but, even in such movements, people can and do leave of their own accord. There are those, such as deprogrammers with a financial interest in propagating the brainwashing thesis, who continue to ignore or dismiss such statistics, but they do so without providing any contrary evidence beyond the testimonies of a small number of ex-members, several of whom will have been *taught*, while undergoing forcible deprogramming, that they were brainwashed.⁴³

The 'brainwashing thesis' is discussed further in Part Two: the point to be made here is that, whatever individuals might claim as a result of their personal experience, the statistics make it abundantly clear that it simply is not true that 'anyone' is susceptible to the 'lure of the cults'. What is true is that there are people whom others might have thought to be immune to NRMs, who do, in fact, become involved in one or other of the movements.

It is, of course, of little comfort to a distraught parent whose son or daughter makes up part of the percentage which joins and remains in a movement to learn that many others have resisted it. But the figures do suggest that it might be sensible to find out what it is that distinguishes those who do not join or who leave from those who have converted and who stay in a movement. In other words, it is not only the movement, but also the personality (the hopes, fears, expectations, and past experiences) of the convert that need to be taken into account when trying to understand why he or she has joined a movement. Relying merely on the brainwashing thesis to explain a person's continuing membership is more likely to confuse than to clarify the situation.

Conversion processes and techniques of persuasion

Furthermore, serious research suggests that many of the *processes* involved in becoming a member of an NRM differ little, if at all, from the sorts of processes that occur in the family, the school, the army, or, indeed, some traditional religions. There are those who have argued that adult conversion involves less control by others than that which is involved when a child is born into a family with a strongly held religious tradition. The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, in response to a request from the Ontario Government to state their reactions to the

⁴². Bromley (ed.) 1987; Levine (1984); Robbins and Anthony (eds) (1981); Wright (1987).

⁴³. See Margaret Singer's testimony in the *Daily Mail* trial, quoted in Barker (1984) p. 129; Lewis (n.d.); and Trudy Solomon "Integrating the 'Moonie' Experience: A Survey of Ex-Members of the Unification Church" in Robbins and Anthony (eds) (1981), pp. 275-294.

(...) La thèse du "lavage de cerveau" est examinée en détail dans la deuxième partie; il faut mettre l'accent sur le fait que, quoique les individus puissent dire de leur expérience personnelle, les statistiques sont très claires et il est tout simplement faux de dire que "tout le monde" est susceptible de tomber dans les pièges des sectes. La vérité est qu'il y a des gens dont on aurait pu penser qu'ils seraient immunisés contre les NRM et qui en fait s'engagent dans l'un ou l'autre des mouvements. "