TECHNIQUES OF COERCION (*)

How can a movement maintain control of the minds of its members?

ISOLATION: a loss of reality is induced by physically separating you from society and outside references.

PEER GROUP PRESSURE: the suppression of doubt and resistance to new ideas are achieved by exploiting your natural need to belong.

GUILT: teachings of salvation are reinforced by exaggerating the "sins" of your former lifestyle.

FEAR: loyalty and obedience to the group is maintained through warnings of serious spiritual or physical repercussions for not conforming to group norms and ideology.

LOVE-BOMBING: a sense of family and belonging is contrived through hugging, kissing, touching and flattery.

REMOVAL OF PRIVACY: your ability to evaluate the group objectively is diminished by preventing you from being alone. You may also be pressured into divulging personal information; information which may be used against you.

The use of these behaviour conditioning techniques may be dangerously effective, leading to a state of deep dependence. In this regard, two basic principles are:

1) If you can make a person behave the way you want, you can make that person believe the way you want.

2) Sudden drastic changes in environment can lead to heightened suggestibility and to dramatic changes in attitudes and beliefs.

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- Foundations
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- Corporations
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IF YOU NEED HELP...

Many of us have been approached to sign up for a course, join a group, or make a donation to what might seem like a worthy cause. At such times it is always important to acquire as much information about the organization as possible, so that any decision made is an informed one. Sometimes this is difficult to do. If you need more information, contact Info-Cult. We can certainly help.

INFO-CULT

(RESOURCE CENTRE ON CULTIC THINKING)

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Info cult

RESOURCE CENTRE ON CULTIC THINKING

Our ever-changing society has witnessed the emergence of many spiritual, political and psychological movements which claim to be interested in helping people achieve their full potential.

Although many of these groups may have beneficial aspects, some of these organizations have been the subject of severe criticism because of the way in which they exploit their followers and the population at large. Their presence is a source of concern to Info-Cult as well as to the general public.

INFO-CULT'S OBJECTIVES

Info-Cult was founded in 1980 under the name Cult Project. Info-Cult's main objectives are:

- To help families of cult members and ex-members of cults
- To inform the public about the cult phenomenon
- To promote the study of the cult phenomenon

SERVICES OFFERED BY INFO-CULT

- A bilingual library containing books, journals, newspaper clippings, video/audio cassettes and other pertinent documents from around the world (please call for library hours)
- Consultations with specialists on cults and cultic thinking
- A research service for those who cannot visit the library
- Bilingual educational programs on the cult phenomenon and cultic thinking

CULT: A DEFINITION

A cult is a highly manipulative group which exploits its members and can cause psychological, financial and physical harm. It dictates, in an absolute manner, the behavior, thoughts and emotions of its followers. Manipulation techniques are used to transform the new recruit into a loyal, obedient and subservient member.

Cults claim a special status, for themselves or their leader, that usually sets them in opposition to mainline society and/or the family.

Cults conceal their real nature and goals from prospective members by adopting deceptive behaviour in order to attract new recruits.

CULTIC THINKING

Cultic thinking is a way of conceptualizing reality and society by dividing them in two monolithic blocks (black/white, saved/damned, good/evil). Within this framework there is no room for gray areas. Individuals and movements with this kind of thinking automatically classify themselves in the category of the pure and the saved. Subsequently, they look for scapegoats in order to explain problems experienced by them or by society. Cultic thinking can lead to intolerance and extremism, and is particularly prevalent in times of personal, social or economic crisis.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

You are attracted to a particular group and you would like to know whether its true nature is being revealed by the recruiter. Here are some questions to ask so that you can make your own evaluation.

HOW IS CRITICISM PERCEIVED BY THE GROUP?

In certain groups, criticism is not well received. The leaders are often perceived as those who possess the truth as a result of their own testimony or from God. If this is the case, it can become difficult to criticize the leaders of the group.

ARE THERE MEMBERS WHO DO NOT DO EVERYTHING THE LEADERS ASK OF THEM? IF SO, WHAT IS THEIR REPUTATION WITHIN THE GROUP?

Certain groups limit the freedom of its members and do not accept dissent.

ARE ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED?

The leaders or representatives of groups sometimes avoid answering questions which they feel the newcomer is not ready to understand. This could be a sign that they wish to hide something from you, namely the real nature and goals of the group.