

Roy Wallis

SALVATION
AND
PROTEST

Studies of Social and Religious Movements

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*Coping with institutional
fragility: An analysis of
Christian Science and
Scientology*

The tendency for some sectarian groups to undergo a gradual process of modification in organisation and ideology towards a more denominational form, has been extensively explored (see, for example, Niebuhr, 1957; Pope, 1942; Wilson, 1961, 1967a). A somewhat neglected area of concern, however, has been the prior processes sometimes involved marking the transition from loosely organised cults to cohesive, authoritarian sects.

Ideal typically, the cult is generally presented as a loosely structured, ephemeral, individualistic group with little effective cohesion, prone to disintegration and disappearance unless the transition to sectarianism is successfully negotiated (Becker, 1932; Yinger, 1970; Eister, 1950; Nelson, 1968; Mann, 1955). Two manipulationist movements which began in this way have been outstandingly successful in developing a highly cohesive sectarian form: Christian Science and Scientology (for the concept of manipulationism, see Wilson, 1970b). After a brief introduction of these two movements the analysis will be organised in terms of three distinct problems acutely faced by manipulationist movements: the problem of ideological precariousness, the problem of authority, and the problem of commitment.

Christian Science

Mary Baker Eddy began her career as healer and teacher after herself receiving treatment from Phineas P. Quimby in 1862. Originally practising Quimby's methods of mental healing, she later claimed (after an accident around the time of his death)

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to have experienced a 'spiritual awakening', which enabled her to recover, and led her to develop a method of healing different in many respects from that of Quimby. Her method, originally called Moral Science drew a small following in Lynn where she set up practice with Richard Kennedy.

The publication in 1875 of her textbook, *Science and Health*, brought notice from farther afield and led to gradual expansion. A formal organisation began to emerge in June 1875, when several of her students pledged themselves to pay her a small salary to speak to them regularly each Sunday, but this arrangement proved unsatisfactory and in 1876 the Christian Scientist Association was formed.

The incorporation of the Church of Christ (Scientist) in Boston in 1879 marked both a shift from the earlier largely secular mode of organisation, and an interest in wider fields of endeavour than that provided by her small following at Lynn. The Massachusetts Metaphysical College was also chartered in Boston in 1881. This decision to expand farther afield was precipitated by a crisis among the Lynn students. Eight of her core disciples resigned from the Church and Association amid complaints about Mrs. Eddy's leadership, her 'frequent ebullitions of temper, love of money, and the appearance of hypocrisy' (Bates and Dittmore, 1933). The rebellion and subsequent events at Lynn attracted much attention in the press, with the result that Mrs. Eddy became aware of the need for a more effective means of communication among the following generated by the distribution of her book and the migration of her students. The *Journal of Christian Science* was founded in 1883.

As the movement grew, the notice of other former patients of Quimby was attracted by the publicity attendant on the growth of Christian Science and they began to defend his claim to priority in the press. Successful practitioners within Science were eager to challenge Mrs. Eddy's sole right to teach and expound the doctrine, and were sometimes resistant to her claim of complete authority over their actions. Some of her students, who had established Colleges and Institutes farther afield seemed to be developing ideas at variance with her own. Heretical ideals appeared to be a danger even among her closest following, and altogether outside her control were a growing number of teachers of 'Christian Science', often defectors from or expelled members of her own movement, now teaching very much their own ideas.

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The followers of Quimby were attacked in the press, those with heretical or independent leanings within the movement were expelled and followers forbidden to write on Science or read other metaphysical literature than her own.

The need for radical reorganisation became more evident as her students took an increasingly independent line. To prevent the possibility of her followers subverting her authority, Mrs. Eddy acquired ownership of the property which they were purchasing in order to erect a church building. In 1889 she closed the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, and later dissolved the Boston Church, and directed the National Christian Scientist Association to disband.

These steps were designed to demolish the haphazardly developed structure of the movement and cleared the way for the creation of a highly centralised bureaucratic organisation administered by Mrs. Eddy through a personally appointed Board of Directors. (On Christian Science see: Bates and Dittmore, 1933; Dakin, 1929; Wilson, 1961; Braden, 1958; Studdert-Kennedy, 1947; Zweig, 1933; Beasley, 1953; Pfautz, 1964, 1956; England 1954.)

Scientology

L. Ron Hubbard's career effectively began in 1950 with the publication in a science fiction periodical of an article on Dianetics shortly followed by the appearance of his book *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. Hubbard's ideas of a simple lay psychotherapy which could be practised by any two people to relieve psychosomatic illness and psychological disturbance, had an enormous appeal. Small groups of 'auditors' (practitioners) sprang up throughout the United States and individuals practised the technique (called 'auditing' or 'processing') on family and friends.

The Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation had been chartered in New Jersey shortly before these publications appeared, but as Dianetics experienced a brief boom, dissension began to develop at the centre. The other directors of the Foundation became alienated by Hubbard's authoritarianism and resigned. The Foundation moved into debt and was subjected to attacks by medical agencies.

A businessman offered to help the Foundation financially and it was moved to Wichita only to be pursued by its creditors. In Wichita, Hubbard found himself increasingly constrained.

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Whilst having been president of the New Jersey Foundation he was only vice-president of that at Wichita. Disagreements between Hubbard and his fellow directors again emerged and Hubbard resigned, moving to Phoenix. There Scientology was launched and the Hubbard Association of Scientologists International (HASI) was formed.

The early Foundations had attempted to organise the loose, widely diffused following of Dianetics by promoting auditor groups in local areas, with the Foundation acting as a central clearing-house, research, training and professional therapy establishment. Association with the Foundation was purely voluntary, no attempt being made to coerce affiliation. Under this *laissez-faire* system, local groups and leaders had a high degree of autonomy and several established independent and competing Institutes and Foundations, offering to do all that Hubbard could and more, refusing to be directed by him, and introducing their own theory and techniques, or compounding Dianetics with other practices. The following of the movement was split between these competing schools.

Hubbard early saw the need to curtail this tendency to fragmentation, dilution of doctrine and financial competition. After establishing himself in Phoenix he attempted to assert control over the autonomous groups and to eliminate his competitors. Competing practices and independent journals were severely attacked in Scientology publications and their sponsors accused of practising 'Black Dianetics'. Certification of professional auditors was centralised in the HASI, and all earlier certificates declared revoked unless their owners became members of Hubbard's organisation. Subsidiary organisations, from 1953, were denied the right of certifying auditors except at the most elementary levels. A major step in gaining control over the autonomous groups and individuals was through the ability of the HASI to withhold from non-affiliated groups the new information that Hubbard was generating.

Groups were not however, an effective means of organising his following. Independent amateur groups were therefore progressively dropped in favour of locally established professional auditors franchised by the HASI (and later Missions, franchised by the Church) which ran introductory courses and low-level auditing. On completing the introductory courses or for advanced auditing, the student would be sent on to one of the central organisations (the Franchise receiving a commission payment).

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An attempt was made to secure conformity from trained auditors engaged in practising Scientology by requiring them to post a bond of \$5000 as a guarantee of good behaviour. From the late 1950s, however, a fully articulated system of internal social control began to emerge, described as a Code of Ethics, and enforced by Ethics Officers.

Scientology embraced a very much wider metaphysical domain than Dianetics and although Hubbard presented his followers with a more pragmatic rationale, there were certainly strong arguments for declaring Scientology a religion broadly conceived. A Church of American Science was incorporated in 1953 and practitioners began using the style 'Reverend'. It was not until 1954, however, and the incorporation of the Church of Scientology of California that Hubbard widely announced that Scientology was a religion.

From 1955 to 1959, Hubbard was mainly established in Washington, where the success of the Church of Scientology of Washington came to the attention of tax authorities concerned about the three-quarters of a million dollars earned during this period by the tax-exempt Church. In 1959, Hubbard moved the centre of his operations to England. By this time the organisation had several small branches in other English-speaking countries. During the ensuing few years, Scientologists were to find themselves 'the people everywhere spoken against' as in each of these countries Scientology was attacked in the press and official enquiries into its activities were instigated.

As a result of the widespread attacks on Scientology through the 1960s Hubbard declared in 1966 that he was resigning all directorships of Scientology organisations and withdrawing from the movement. As the Foster Report indicates, however, Hubbard clearly remains in active control of the movement (Foster, 1971). Its policy is still issued by him. All its literature is copyrighted in his name. His wife is the Guardian World Wide of Scientology and on his death control over the movement is vested in an International Council headed by his wife and appointed by Hubbard. The most advanced courses of Scientology are taught only on the 'Sea Org', a fleet of nine vessels owned by a corporation independent of the Church and the HASI, which effectively forms the international headquarters of the movement. 'Missions' despatched by the Sea Org have full powers to take over other organisations of the Church and HASI temporarily in order to straighten out their administration, processing or training. At such times, they may impose

what Hubbard himself has referred to as 'martial law'. (On Scientology see, Cooper, 1971; Malko, 1970; Vosper 1971; Kaufman, 1972; Foster, 1971; Anderson 1965; Jackson, 1966; Jackson and Jobling, 1968; Lee, 1970; Wilson, 1970b; Whitehead, 1974; Wallis, 1976.)

Doctrinal precariousness

Doctrinally, manipulationism frequently emerges as a synthesis of prevailing theories and practices available in the surrounding cultic milieu (Campbell, 1972). Christian Science originally emerged as a primarily secular healing system, Moral Science, in which Mrs. Eddy saw herself as mainly expounding the ideas on healing she had learned from Quimby. Quimby's own ideas had developed out of Mesmerism into a method of suggestive treatment based on the theory:

that health was man's natural state; that only man's false ideas, suggesting impotence and misfortune to his whole self from earliest childhood were responsible for holding the race in the thrall of disease . . . he maintained that a beneficent God could and would not have created disease and suffering — only man himself was to blame because of the falsity and error in his concepts (Dakin, 1929:42).

Disease for Quimby was a matter of false thinking. Thus to eradicate the false thought was to cure the disease, and in his practice therefore he would sit opposite his patient and explain to him this theory in the expectation that the patient's acceptance of it would produce the desired improvement in his physical condition.

Mrs. Eddy's developing system drew heavily on Quimby's work as well as owing a lesser debt to other currents of thought then prevalent in New England: Transcendentalism, Swedenborgianism, Spiritualism and possibly Hegel's Subjective Idealism (Wilson, 1959b). Her early following was in large part drawn from Mesmerism, Spiritualism and the healing cults such as hydropathy and homeopathy then prevalent.

Scientology emerged originally as a form of lay psychotherapy. Whilst its intellectual antecedents are less well established than is the case for Christian Science, Dianetics clearly also reflects the intellectual milieu from which it emerged. In Dianetics, the mind was conceived as embodying two parts; The *Analytical Mind* which controlled man's conscious, logical reasoning, and the *Reactive Mind* which came into operation in

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moments of emotional stress, pain or unconsciousness, recording all the perceptual details involved in this situation. These recordings, or engrams, it was argued, reactivated in situations having some perceptual similarity to the original situation, and caused individuals to behave in aberrated ways.

The earlier the engram has been formed the stronger its effect. Consequently the technique of therapy directed the patient (pre-clear) in Dianetic 'reverie' to earlier and earlier periods in search of the first engram, or 'basic-basic'. This was held to occur typically shortly after conception. This theory published in 1950 appears to have drawn on a number of trends in mainstream and marginal psychotherapy then current.

Hubbard's notion of the Analytical and Reactive Mind parallels the Freudian conception of the Conscious and Unconscious Mind, and the process of engram formation is analogical to the mechanism of repression. Psychoanalysis had, in some of its less orthodox forms, evinced an interest in progressively earlier periods of individual development (Wallis, 1976). Otto Rank and his followers had directed their attention to the 'Birth-trauma' as a vital episode and Phyllis Greenacre and Nandor Fodor had published works on the pre-natal period and its influence on psychological development (Greenacre, 1941; Fodor, 1949). The deconditioning techniques developed to handle war neuroses are strikingly similar to Dianetic auditing. Another fairly clear influence on Hubbard's formative thought was the work of Alfred Korzybski in General Semantics. Many of Hubbard's early followers were former adherents of Korzybski, whilst others had engaged in the practice of hypnotherapy, chiropractic, or various healing and self-improvement cults.

Christian Science and Scientology in their emergent forms did not differ radically from the cultic background from which they were derived. They were essentially a modern form of magic offering a metaphysical means of compelling the cosmos in lawlike ways, their founders magical healers able to collect a sufficiently stable following to institutionalise their mystagoguery. Unlike the ethical prophet, the mystagogues who lead manipulationist movements rarely call for a radical break with the prevailing social order. The theories and techniques they offer, are primarily means of achieving the valued goals of this world rather than new salvational goals. The world is tacitly accepted (even if it is held not to exist) and the adherent seeks new means of attaining the good things it has to offer. As Bryan Wilson has argued

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Manipulationist sects are secularised sects, for which only the means to salvation are religious: the goals are largely those of secular hedonism (Wilson, 1970b: 141).

Since the manipulationist movement offers no radical break with the world and is founded on a doctrine syncretically derived from current, if marginal or deviant, thought, it suffers from doctrinal precariousness. There exists a danger that under the impact of a membership recruited from cultic groups with which its doctrine has affinities, it will be dedifferentiated into the component parts to which its adherents are attracted, becoming reabsorbed into the cultic milieu as it is, in turn, subjected to synthesis and mixing with other cultic doctrines. Some of Mrs. Eddy's early apostate students accused her of teaching 'mere mesmerism', threatening the reassimilation of Moral Science to its origins. Later, others were to practise or argue for the combination of Christian Science with hypnotism, theosophy, or even with orthodox medical practice, threatening a loss of doctrinal distinctiveness.

Many of the early students of Dianetics similarly argued that its theories and practices could be combined with psychoanalysis, chiropractic, or Yoga. Followers of both movements were heard to argue that although their founders had taken a significant step forward there was no reason why others should not develop their ideas further. In short there existed a problem of controlling the distinctiveness of the doctrine and its development to prevent its disappearance as a result of modification and compounding. Both movements evolved a number of mechanisms to handle this problem and thereby create a cognitive space between themselves and their surroundings.

One such step was the development of a transcendental theology or metaphysics to provide a wider framework and a theodicy within which the healing practice could be located and legitimised. The early elaboration of a transcendental doctrine had a number of advantages. It effectively distinguished the movements from competing secular systems. It also facilitated the abandonment of elements of theory and practice which most closely linked them to the alternatives then current. Mrs. Eddy developed a systematic theology of a radically Idealist kind. Her theory passed from Quimby's acceptance of the physical world and the causal priority of thought, to a sweeping monism in which God alone exists, and the material world and evil are mere errors of thought. She dropped the

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practice of manipulation and that of arguing the disease away, which had been associated with Quimby. Instead silent affirmation and denials became all that was required. Her textbook was persistently modified until all the more obvious traces of its origins were obliterated.

Mrs. Eddy claimed that her writings, in particular *Science and Health* were inspired revelations whose profundity and true impact could be understood only by constant study. Some aspects of the teaching became hidden doctrine available only to those undergoing special instruction, thereby protecting and elevating the ideology by surrounding it with an aura of mystery and secrecy. A 'hierarchy of sanctification' developed based on knowledge of the more esoteric teachings, the Normal Course being taught only to selected students vetted for their loyalty to the Church and forbidden to take notes.

Hubbard was able to achieve a more radical break with his early derivative system. While it could claim to be a revolutionary development of Dianetics, Scientology had much less obvious links with the surrounding cultic milieu and current psychotherapeutic practices. From a 'do-it-yourself' psychotherapy Scientology evolved a systematic metaphysics based on a theory of reincarnation. The notion of the 'Operating Thetan', a spiritual entity, the essential persistent element of the individual which transmigrated at death, emerged. The goal of the practice therefore shifted from that of resolving the impediments to full human potential, to 'rehabilitating the Thetan', restoring the individual to his full capacities as a spiritual being 'at cause over Matter, Energy, Space and Time'. This movement towards increasing esotericism did not cease, however, with the invention of Scientology. Its theory and practice underwent continual modification over the years following its inception. From a relatively simple theory and technique that could be practised by the layman, it became extremely complex with its own highly technical language and literature, and required lengthily acquired skills in handling the E-meter, an electropsychogalvanometer, in order to practise. Higher level courses were made available only to those of proven loyalty to the movement, after 'security checking', and these courses remain a closely guarded secret.

Transcendentalisation permitted the founders to claim the doctrine as a direct personal revelation, and thereby to establish themselves uniquely as the source of doctrinal innovation and adaption or even doctrinal interpretation. Until the

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establishment of the Board of Education, only Mrs. Eddy could claim to teach the advanced levels of Christian Science. Students were required not to indulge in writing on Christian Science or reading other metaphysical literature, and heretical teachers not responsive to excommunication were pursued by Mrs. Eddy in the press and the law courts for infringements of her copyrights. There had to be a clear ideological boundary between Christian Science and any other metaphysical system, and this boundary was heightened by the fear instilled into her students of malicious animal magnetism held to be particularly the domain of heretics, apostates and imitators. On her death, the Board of Directors took over as the authoritative interpreters of Christian Science. In Scientology, ideological boundary-maintenance was enhanced by Hubbard's attacks on heretics and imitators in his publications, threatening legal action for infringement of his copyrights, and describing their activities as 'Black Dianetics' or 'suppressive'. Hubbard remains the sole permitted interpreter of Scientology.

Both movements have a common antagonism towards presentation of their doctrine by outsiders — whether former members or not — believing that only an officially approved and practising Christian Scientist or Scientologist could accurately portray these movements and their beliefs. Christian Science and Scientology have exerted themselves strenuously to discourage the publication of accounts of their activities by non-approved writers. The Board of Directors of the Mother Church has acquired copyrights and the plates of various books on Science and Mrs. Eddy which do not meet their approval, and the Church of Scientology has been extremely active in litigating against the authors and publishers of books and newspapers which published commentary on Scientology.

The problem of authority

Both Mrs. Eddy and Hubbard have had to face challenges to their authority, indeed in the early years of both movements such challenges were frequent and present a problem common to many manipulationist movements. Since these movements have largely instrumental goals for whose attainment techniques are offered, the purveying of such techniques through practice and teaching usually has a much higher priority than any devotional activities. Individual practitioners and teachers thus acquire a clientele whose loyalties are directed primarily

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towards the practitioner rather than the wider collectivity. Practitioner-based movements tend to disperse charisma to the lower echelons and therefore to suffer from schism as local practitioners assert their autonomy from the movement leadership (see, for example, Nelson 1969). The leadership may also be challenged by aspiring practitioners who believe themselves able to advance the doctrine beyond the pioneer work of the founder, or who feel that their own following is sufficient to permit them to challenge the leader's decisions on questions of policy. A variety of mechanisms for centralising authority are likely to be invoked in such contingencies.

As we have seen, an early step taken by the leaders of both movements was that of securing transcendental legitimation for their authority. In Mrs. Eddy's case, *Science and Health*, and indeed all her writings, were claimed as divine revelations, and although her position on this seems to have changed periodically, she was certainly indentified by some of her followers as the 'woman clothed in the sun' prophesied in Revelations. Hubbard, on shifting Dianetics to a more occult level identified himself as the discoverer of the 'source of life energy', and the transcendental realm of the Operating Thetans, whose origins only he had plumbed. Scientology publications have also suggested that Hubbard might be the Maitreya Buddha, believed to be due to follow the Gautama Buddha, and to offer a new path to Enlightenment. These developments appear to have enhanced the charismatic authority of the founders.

The personalities of these leaders became all pervasive in the movements they founded. Mrs. Eddy's name was to be mentioned before each church service and at each reading from her *Science and Health*. Christian Science lecturers are required to refer to the exemplary life of the founder in their lectures, and the Church Manual still bears her name as the Pastor Emeritus and the head of the Church. Only her writings and a limited range of further works are thoroughly approved reading for members. Hubbard's presence is felt throughout Scientology. Virtually all the literature of the movement is written by him. All internal policy directives bear his name. His photograph, larger than life dominates Scientology offices. But while omnipresent as persona, both Mrs. Eddy and Ron Hubbard became increasingly distant as real people. Mrs. Eddy gradually withdrew from day-to-day contact with more than a tiny nucleus of trusted followers in her home. Ron Hubbard did likewise aboard the Flag Ship of the Sea Org. By thus

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secluding themselves the leaders enhanced their charisma by adding to the mystery surrounding them. By creating social and ecological boundaries they also protected their charisma from defilement particularly through seepage of information concerning their health and behaviour as they became elderly, information which would contrast with the elevated expectations of followers.

The authority of the leader was also heightened by undermining alternative loci of power within the organisation, and its centralisation in the hands of a personally appointed executive. Branch Churches and societies in Christian Science are subordinated to the central organisation by the requirement that the Readers of the Branch Churches be approved by the Mother Church Board of Directors. In Scientology there is a strict organisational hierarchy. Franchises (i.e. the semi-independent subsidiaries) are licensed only for members in good standing with the HASI or Church of Scientology, and subsidiary Churches and branches of the Church and HASI are controlled by direct appointment of leaders as well as the presence within each organisation of offices responsible directly to Hubbard and his wife. Missions of the Sea Org have full authority to take control of organisations to which they are despatched by Hubbard. Communications are also highly centralised and controlled by the organisation. Only authorised literature is permitted and publication of non-approved materials in the case of either movement is liable to lead to exclusion. Whilst approved, loyal members may be permitted to publish works on Christian Science or Scientology, these will be suppressed if the writer subsequently apostasises, such suppression being facilitated in the case of the latter by the fact that the copyrights on their works are almost invariably held in Hubbard's name.

The authority of local teachers is further undermined by constraints on teaching beyond the preliminary levels of doctrine. Whilst little is taught at the Normal class with which a student of the Primary class would be unfamiliar, and in the case of Scientology most of the advanced materials are available in various of Hubbard's books, advanced training remains an essential requirement for teaching and mobility within either Church, and carries a mystique endowing its graduates with high prestige. Subsidiary organisations of Scientology are permitted to train and process only through the lower levels, higher levels of professional processing and training can

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be acquired only through the central Advanced Orgs.

Two further developments have vastly increased the power and authority of the leader at the expense of practitioners and teachers. The first of these is the progressive impersonalisation and standardisation of practice and teaching. After 1895 the only pastors permitted in Christian Science churches were *Science and Health* and the Bible, preachers were reduced to Readers whose performance was controlled to the extent of standardising the emphasis with which passages were read. Their expository task was taken over by a Board of Lecturers, appointed by the Directors and obliged to submit the text of their lectures, in advance, to the Mother Church. The technique of healing had long been standardised in Mrs. Eddy's textbook. The annual re-election of Lecturers by the Directors and the requirement that Readers could hold office for three years only precluded the development of these offices as a source of independent authority that could be directed against the Church leadership. Teachers were brought under increased control by permitting them to hold a class only once a year, for no more than thirty students, and forbidding gatherings of teachers and their students on other occasions.

In Scientology, the shift from Dianetics, the practice of which had been something of an art, with a growing reliance on the E-meter, led to a complete standardisation of training and processing. Both are organised around texts produced by Hubbard. Teaching is entirely based on duplicated course materials written by Hubbard, from which no deviation is permitted. No interpretation of training material is allowed to instructors who are required simply to direct the student to the appropriate location in the materials written by Hubbard for the answer to any difficulties. Processing is based on standard lists of auditing commands and questions issued in a trained stereotypic fashion. No lectures above the most elementary level are given other than by Hubbard, and these are heard by students from tape-recordings.

Finally, both movements employ effective mechanisms for isolating disaffected teachers and practitioners. In Christian Science this mechanism takes the form of placing a teacher whose loyalty is suspect on probation in the Church. While on probation he may practise but not teach, and may not convene his student association. Since his readmittance as a full member is dependent upon his good behaviour he must strive to conform to the requirements of the Board of

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Directors, and probation is therefore a means of sanctioning the dissident and isolating him from his followers, whilst not fully alienating him from the Church. Excommunication of a teacher brings with it the further consequence that all his students are required to retake the Primary class under another teacher, and thus incurring the disapproval of the Board puts the standing of the teacher's students in jeopardy as well as his own. Practitioners can be controlled by the threat of having their names dropped from the *Journal* with the result that loyal members will no longer seek their services.

Scientology here, as elsewhere, employs a more differentiated procedure. A hierarchy of Conditions is available, ranging from Power to Treason, in which a member can be located. Being assigned a 'lower condition' incurs a range of penalties, out of which the individual must work himself, again sanctioning the deviant whilst making him work harder to retain his standing. Committing a 'High Crime' against Scientology* results in the assignment of a Condition of Enemy and a declaration that the individual concerned is a Suppressive Person.

At least until 1966 it was a requirement that all members who had any association with a Suppressive Person were obliged to cut off all connection with him. It remains the case that they are regarded as Potential Trouble Sources and are required to signify and demonstrate their continued loyalty to Scientology. The penalties of probation and the Conditions serve to undermine the influence of the individual penalised with other members whilst often maintaining his loyalty.

The members of the Christian Science and Scientology movements have no official voice in policy and decision-making, and little basis for united opposition to the leadership. In Scientology even meetings 'to protest the order of a superior' are forbidden. Since the highest officials hold office only on sufferance of the leadership, it is hardly to be expected that lower echelon members will have any effective influence.

The problem of commitment

Manipulationist sects are faced with a further major problem, that of maintaining membership commitment. This problem exists principally because they arise in secularised societies in which the domain of religion is highly restricted, and in which religious institutions are obliged to compete with secular agencies as sources of knowledge and technique to control

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the world. As the natural world has been rendered more explicable by natural science the concern of new religious movements has been directed towards the less predictable and less well explicated areas of human relationships, psychology, health and social achievement. Their solutions to these problems are offered as a service purveyed on a quasi-commercial basis and it is this service-orientation that provides the rationale for affiliation.

While sometimes including as part of their doctrine and ritual the traditional, communal, features of religious institutions, these typically have no central role in the ideology or practice of the movement. Congregational and devotional aspects of both Christian Science and Scientology are relatively peripheral. In the case of Scientology particularly there is complete absence of devotional elements, and attendance at church services is in no way a requirement of church membership. These services principally involve an exposition of some very basic element of doctrine directed towards those unfamiliar with Scientology rather than the initiated.

In highly differentiated societies such movements emerge to supply a relatively specific need and typically employ the modes of organisation and communication utilised by successful commercial organisations. Presenting themselves as service agencies, albeit of a peculiar kind, the involvement of their adherents is, as Bryan Wilson (1970b) has indicated, often occasional or of limited duration and segmental. Retaining, enhancing and institutionalising membership commitment under these circumstances thus presents a not inconsiderable problem. Failure to find an effective solution to this problem may lead to the typically very limited involvement and declining adherence characteristic of Spiritualism, and many movements in New Thought.

Christian Science and Scientology have generated a number of mechanisms for maintaining cohesion and heightening involvement among the general membership. Not only do they offer services of a highly specific kind as does contemporary spiritualism, but foster a wider theoretical and doctrinal concern. Adherents are expected to grow in knowledge of the gnosis through extensive study of the movement's literature. Greater returns can be expected from movement practices the higher the level of understanding of the exponent. Impersonalisation and standardisation facilitate involvement with the movement on an entirely solitary basis. They also generate

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loyalty to a wider social unit than the practitioner-client relationship. The leader particularly offers a focus of loyalty transcending the purely local, and membership in the wider corporate collectivity (the Mother Church, the HASI or Church of Scientology) is encouraged, fostering a commitment to the movement as a whole rather than any particular unit. Instruction in the highly articulated doctrine is also differentiated, only the more elementary components being provided by the local subsidiaries or semi-independent practitioners, whilst advanced instruction can be received only from the central organisation. A desire to progress in the doctrine thus carries as an almost automatic concomitant a growing identification with the central organisation.

Christian Science and Scientology also require greater commitment in both time and financial resources than many similar movements, e.g. Spiritualism. While the cost of treatment or processing may not be excessive in comparison with private medical or psychiatric attention, there is also the cost of class instruction and training, as well as the cost of literature, which makes the financial commitment involved more extensive than would be the case for members of most other denominations, although considerably less than for many utopian or millennialist sects (Kanter, 1972). Similarly a thorough understanding of the literature will require a considerable investment of time. Resource commitment is fostered among some adherents by the opportunity available and aspiration to become practitioners or teachers of the technique on a professional basis.

Commitment is further enhanced by ideological insulation, the prohibition or denigration of alternative sources of opinion, ideology or involvement. Christian Science frowns upon other metaphysical literature, officially prohibits membership in other groups or movements outside the Church, and even forbids private meetings of members in which Science may be discussed. Involvement with alternative occult ideologies is regarded as 'suppressive' in Scientology and doctrine is regarded as finally and conclusively given in Hubbard's writings. Interpretation beyond the very preliminary levels is regarded as 'invalidating the data of Scientology'. Only Hubbard's voice may be heard as authoritative.

Although eschatology plays a negligible role in manipulationism in comparison with millennialism, Christian Science and Scientology have a sense of mission which seems lacking

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in most other manipulationist movements and commitment is enhanced by a conviction of historical inevitability. Christian Scientists see themselves as part of a progression towards the time when error and false belief will be eliminated and the material world with all its powerful apparency will yield to a purely spiritual order in which illness and death can have no place. Scientologists see themselves as engaged upon a mission to 'clear the planet', to clear the Reactive Minds of the world's population and rehabilitate man to his full potential as Operating Thetan, a mission whose urgency is enhanced by Hubbard's oft-voiced prophecy that it is a race between Scientology and the atom bomb.

As Simmel long since indicated conflict may have adaptive consequences, tending to enhance group integration. The ideologies of Christian Science and Scientology have led them into conflict with the wider society. Their engagement in healing — or what has been construed as the practice of healing in the face of disclaimers from both movements — has tended to generate institutional opposition from both the state and medical agencies. Scientology has also caused antagonism through the practice of 'disconnection' when members were encouraged, and sometimes ordered, to cut off relationships with family or friends regarded as 'suppressive'. While such conflicts have sometimes caused defections they have also tended to heighten the solidarity and commitment of those who remain, viewing themselves as a beleaguered band bravely proclaiming the truth in the face of intolerance and prejudice.

Finally, both Christian Science and Scientology exhibit an acute preoccupation with an enemy and offer a conspiracy theory of its activities. This enemy provides an opportunity to heighten solidarity through vilification. As Orrin Klapp has indicated,

Vilification is a kind of symbol-making that groups engage in . . . in order to repair and defend the social structure and to build consensus and morale . . . (Klapp 1959).

The enemy of Christian Science is, of course, malicious animal magnetism. Originally practised by apostates but now by the Catholic Church, its activities form the basis of every threat to Christian Science. The former enemy of Scientology, 'Black Dianetics', has now largely been replaced by the activities of the 'psycho-politicians', the psychiatrists who provoke every attack on Scientology through 'front groups' such as the British

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Government, the World Federation for Mental Health, etc. The adherent of Christian Science or Scientology is sensitised to the fact that the world outside the safety of the movement is a place full of dangers whose existence he never suspected prior to affiliation.

A note on differences

Drawing attention to parallels between Christian Science and Scientology in order to illuminate the processes leading to sectarianisation inevitably blurs the differences between the two movements. Apart from the obvious differences in beliefs and practices, Christian Science is much closer to the traditional model of the religious association. While highly centralised, it is very much more dependent on the personal charisma of practitioners and teachers. Its religious services have a more important role and retain some of the communal features of more traditional Christian collectivities.

The more extensive *Gesellschaftlich* pattern of Scientology, its more thoroughgoing centralisation, standardisation and social control, and the more extensive commitment encouraged through the differentiated ladder of courses and their considerable cost, clearly reflect features of the period and social environment from which this movement emerged. The more prominent secularism of Scientology reflects the greater secularism of Western society in the formative years of this movement in at least two respects. Scientology has had a wider range of organisational styles from which to choose. The existence of models of highly bureaucratised business corporations, institutions for the mass distribution of higher education, and totalitarian political parties, has clearly been an important influence on the development of Scientology organisational structure. Moreover, these models do not simply exist, but flourish, and enjoy higher prestige than the earlier more typically adopted model for voluntary associations, the Church. Secondly in a more secular age, its potential clients are less likely to require their philosophies of life and theories of the mind and human behaviour to assume a religious form.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued the view that manipulationist movements face a number of common problems which tend to

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inhibit the development of a cohesive collectivity. Their ideologies, derived from movements of thought common in their cultic milieux, tend to be precarious and liable to dedifferentiation; authority tends to be widely dispersed in practitioner-based movements leading to factionalism or schism; and extensive commitment among the following is difficult to generate owing to the specific service-orientated basis of affiliation and segmental and occasional involvement of members.

A survey of Christian Science and Scientology suggests the development of a cohesive collectivity may be enhanced by the elaboration of a transcendental ideology legitimising authoritarian centralisation and rigorous control. Impersonalisation and standardisation facilitate the undermining of alternative sources of authority. The focusing of commitment upon the leader and central organisation, and engagement in conflict with the wider society and competing belief systems, tend to enhance the integration of the movement and more clearly define its ideological boundaries. Thus pursuing a strategy of *sectarianisation* is one viable and attractive mode of adaption for the leadership of fragile ideological movements.

* See for example, Hubbard (1968). Such High Crimes included: making 'Public Statements against Scientology or Scientologists . . .'; 'publicly resigning staff or executive position in protest or with intent to suppress'; 'seeking to resign or leave courses or sessions and refusing to return despite normal efforts'; 'continued adherence to a group pronounced a suppressive group . . .'; 'dependency on other mental or philosophic procedures than Scientology (except medical or surgical) after certification, classification or award'.