

# PRIVATE EYE

MARCH 1993

ENGLAND

## CULT CORNER

### The life and death of Mr Motivala



**M**YSTERY still surrounds the death of a father of three who feared he might be attacked because of his fierce criticism of the "church" of Scientology.

The body of 38-year-old Khushroo "Chris" Motivala was found hanging from the loft of his Greenford home last September. An inquest last week heard that, despite allegations he had been murdered and that his death was out of character, there was no evidence anybody else was involved. Hammersmith coroner Mr Paul Burton recorded an open verdict.

Mr Motivala's fight against the cult began after his live-in girlfriend Ruth Turk joined the church. He too dabbled briefly, and together they went on the Scientology cruise ship *Freewinds*, where he took the cult's "communication course" and "purification rundown".

But Mr Motivala found the courses useless and objected to his girlfriend's deeper involvement. Eventually they split up. He suspected she had spent more than £16,000 on Scientology courses, some of which he thought had come from their courier business which subsequently ran into difficulties and was sold. It was a claim Miss Turk denied.

Mr Motivala began a battle for custody of their three children fearing they too would become members of the cult. He embarked on a campaign to expose the church but became increasingly worried about his own safety. He had many arguments with the cult's staff at its London "Celebrity Centre" in Tottenham Court Road where Ruth Turk had attended courses, and with senior staff at its East Grinstead headquarters.

He began building up information on the cult to use in his fight to retain custody of his daughters, and in the months before his death threatened to sue the movement for the return of money which he and Ruth Turk had spent on worthless courses.

Shortly before his death he met journalists in an effort to expose what he saw as the cult's evils. At the meeting, at which journalists thought he had a bodyguard, he said he feared he might be attacked. He claimed the cult had told him that if he continued to campaign against them they would make sure he would never see his children again.

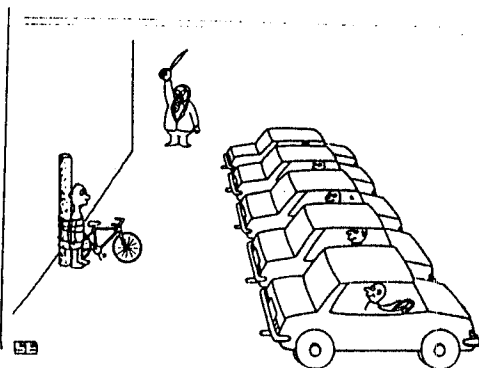
During his brief involvement with the cult he had undergone some auditing sessions at which new recruits are encouraged to reveal all their past misdemeanours. He was also afraid the cult might use the information in his files against him during the forthcoming custody battle.

His campaigning became so intensive the cult issued him with a "non enturbulation order" warning him to stop his anti-Scientology behaviour and his negative attitude towards them. Failure to comply would lead to him being declared a "suppressive person" and an enemy of the church and someone who, according to its founder L. Ron Hubbard's own edicts, could be "tricked, lied to or utterly destroyed".

The court heard that he never met representatives of the cult alone and on one occasion he took a friend along to act as "minder". It was also told he kept a large knife by the front door in case of attack by members of the cult. His girlfriend said: "He made a point of harassing the Scientologists. He was always afraid there would be an attack on him."

Friends were astounded by his death and none could understand it. His employer said he was in good spirits at the time he died because his lawyers had told him he stood a good chance of getting custody of the children. He would, he said, be astounded if Mr Motivala had taken his own life as he would, effectively, have been conceding everything that he had fought for.

After hearing of his fears for his safety, police initially treated the case as suspicious. They carried out tests to see if he had been poisoned or drugged before being hanged but were unable to find anything to suggest anyone else was involved in his death.



# Los Angeles Times

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LOS ANGELES TIMES

## Cult's Believers Waiting for Judgment Day

By LARRY B. STAMMER  
TIMES RELIGION WRITER

For 50 years, the cult involved in a violent and bloody shootout Sunday with federal agents near Waco, Tex., has been preoccupied with the long-foretold catastrophic end of time—an awful day of reckoning when the wicked would be brought to judgment.

But as federal agents stormed the cult's armed fortress on Sunday, it was the group's leader, David Koresh—a man who claims to be Jesus Christ—that agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were attempting to bring to justice. The agents hoped to arrest him as they executed search warrants for guns and explosives.

When the smoke cleared Sunday, at least four ATF agents were dead and another 15 agents had been wounded. At least one cult member was killed and several more were injured. At nightfall, the standoff continued, with up to 100

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## CULT: Members Believe End of the World Is Imminent

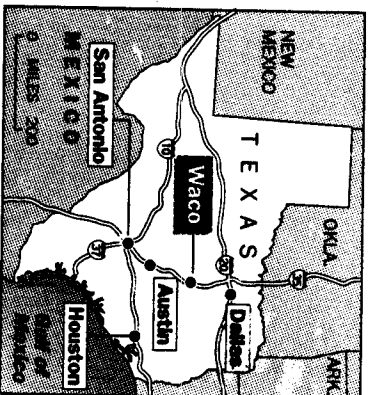
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people, about a third of them children—holed up in the compound.

Koresh, 33, reportedly is believed by his followers to be the "lamb" referred to in the New Testament's Book of Revelation (Chapter 5) and is the only one who can open the seven seals that unloose the judgment of God—wars, pestilence and other catastrophes—upon the Earth.

From its beginnings, the Branch Davidians, an offshoot of the Seventh-day Adventists, have been concerned—some would say obsessed—by the final days.

That concern had its roots in the Seventh-day Adventists, who originally expected the Second Coming of Christ to occur in 1844. Today, Seventh-day Adventists say the return of Christ is imminent, but they give no date.

The breakaway Branch Davidian group involved in Sunday's shootout had its beginnings in 1929 when Victor Houteff, a prominent member of the church in Los Angeles, developed a following of



his own and moved to Texas, and called the group the Shepherd's Rod.

Other Seventh-day Adventists viewed Houteff's group as eccentric, according to James R. Lewis of Galeia, who for the past 10 years has studied cults in the United States. He is affiliated with the nonprofit Assn. of World Academics for Religious Education, organized last year.

Lewis said that although Houteff's group was not totally communal, they shared in a farm and

had their own school and printing press.

At the beginning of World War II, Houteff changed the group's name to Davidic Seventh-day Adventists. Ironically, Lewis said, Houteff believed that the Seventh-day Adventists were not passive enough because they allowed their members to serve in non-combat roles in the armed services.

When Houteff died in 1955 he was succeeded by his wife, Florence. Florence Houteff predicted that Christ would return on April 22, 1959, prompting hundreds of new followers to join the group after selling their property and businesses. Membership swelled to about 1,400.

When the hoped-for Second Coming failed to materialize, Florence Houteff stepped down and a new group emerged. Like cells dividing, the cult split again in 1959 and then again in 1984, with Koresh heading the Branch Davidians involved in Sunday's shootout.

It was not the first time that a religious group obsessed by the

end of the world had moved from a kind of spiritual apocalypse to a secular apocalypse.

Lewis said it is quite common to have a religious group that claims to have unique access to the truth. Many such groups are millenarian; they believe in the imminent end of history.

The Seventh-day Adventists come out of the tradition of expecting the advent or second advent of Christ. But there is no connection today between the Seventh-day Adventists and the group involved in the gun battle Sunday.

"The difference here is when you get into stockpiling arms," said Lewis. "You probably have some kind of survivalist mentality in which you are thinking more of a secular collapse, a non-religious end of time in which the economy goes to pot and you're going to have to defend yourself from non-believers around you," Lewis said in an interview.

"It doesn't happen a lot, but it's something that happens with disturbing regularity," Lewis said.

# Cult awareness and education must be taught

By Cynthia Kissler

**T**HE drama of David Koresh that has been played on the front pages of newspapers and on the televisions in living rooms across America has stirred many troublesome questions about cults.

Groups such as Koresh's Branch Davidians are certainly not a new phenomenon. And the real story is not that this violence has occurred, but that there are many other groups in society that could turn to such dangerous behavior.

It is true, however, that there are some groups that are on the surface odd or different but are not really abusive to its members. These groups reflect the diversity of thought and religious freedoms that make America great.

But the dangerous cults are the ones that must be addressed. Despite its continuing presence, the cult problem is little understood, little studied and troublesome to contemplate. For us to acknowledge the problem, we must acknowledge our vulnerabilities and come to grips with constitutional and human rights issues.

Many cults were formed by leaders with a lust for power, a willingness to cross the bounds of ethical and moral behavior to satisfy that lust, and a knowledge of how to use influence techniques (some call them mind-control techniques) to control others in a bid to satisfy that lust.

Lacking an awareness of how mind-control techniques work, millions of Americans tragically are swept into cults that these ruthless leaders build. Some victims are financially exploited. Other times there is physical control that is the cornerstone around which true destructive cults create their deceptive paradise.

Many people may be unaware of the impact these destructive cults have on American society. The cost to taxpayers of dealing with the problem is high. The state of Oregon spent close to a million dollars on medical care, special education and counseling for the 51 children removed from the Ecclesia commune in 1988, which saw the beating death of a 7-year-old child. Taxpayer dollars underwrote the criminal trial against the group's leaders — the largest mass slavery trial ever brought in the history of the United States.

Cults also hurt society when their members undermine the democratic process by voting in solid blocks or by providing free volunteer labor to campaigns in return for favors from candidates. The larger, wealthier cults influence the media's ability to provide news and information to its audience, sometimes even purchasing newspapers, radio stations, magazines, and cable networks themselves and subtly injecting propaganda into their news coverage and features.

Cults compete unfairly against legitimate businesses, having members work long hours at low wages and avoiding payment of their fair share in Social Security and federal withholding taxes. In 1985, Tony Alamo of the Alamo Christian Foundation was assessed \$7.9 million in taxes for

## Public needs to be educated on the cult phenomenon

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operating businesses as religious enterprises where his followers worked in sweatshop conditions for as little as \$20 a week.

Ultimately, though, the cost to American society of refusing to come to grips with the cult problem is far greater than the millions in dollars that can be calculated on paper. For every child that suffered and endured physical and emotional in the Jonestown, Guyana, massacre in 1978 — where 913 people died under the orders of cult leader Jim Jones — dozens more have suffered in other groups.

We owe it to these children to start educating the public on what the phenomenon is truly about. It can be identified, and it can be addressed. If we can educate about the dangers of drugs, AIDS and gangs, we can provide important information about cults.

We can teach individuals how to think critically and how to ask the right questions so that they know what they're truly joining.

We can teach our young people not to let any organization gain control of their time or convince

them to make any major changes in life without first discussing their decision with someone they trust and respect.

We can encourage them to research the background of the leadership and the history of any group that promises them attractive-sounding opportunities.

Families that have a loved one caught up in a destructive cult can gain support and insight from learning about the experiences of other former cult members. These families also can benefit from understanding the dynamics of mind control so they can learn how to maintain contact with and express their love for their relatives in ways that may eventually convince these cult members that there is a worthwhile life to be had outside of the cult.

One can measure the cost of the cult problem in America by the loss of bright and curious minds of individuals who could benefit society. For those caught up directly in destructive groups and for their relatives, cults violate constitutional rights, destroy the family and exploit the weak. Cults are, ultimately, a human rights problem.

*Cynthia Kissler is executive director of the Cult Awareness Network, a Chicago-based national nonprofit educational organization, which was incorporated after the Jonestown tragedy. The group provides help to former cult members and families victimized by such groups.*

# Los Angeles Times

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Historically, law enforcement authorities seemed bent on quick ends to siege situations. But today, authorities would rather wait them out.



San Francisco Examiner



Associated Press

Members of his cult lie dead in Guyana at the feet of the throne used by leader Jim Jones, inset.

## When Worlds Collide

### For Some, Cults Hold All the Answers

By ROY RIVENBURG  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

**D**isenchanted with college, unsure about a career and turned off by his Orthodox Jewish upbringing, Henry Kriegel hitch-hiked around the country 16 years ago on a personal and spiritual quest that ended at a lecture sponsored by Elizabeth Clare Prophet's Church Universal and Triumphant.

As he listened, something clicked that hadn't with the other philosophies he'd explored—and after several months of study and reflection, Kriegel joined the controversial sect, which came to be widely known for its massive Montana bomb

shelter.

For Kriegel, who's still a member, the question of why people join fringe sects is easily answered. It's a voluntary decision based on the group's beliefs and practices.

But experts say a host of other factors is at work: age, emotional state, social unrest and—maybe—deception and mind control.

"I keep getting asked, 'Who are all these crazy people who join these groups?'" says Rachel Andres, director of the Commission on Cults and Missionaries for the Jewish Federation Council. "And my answer is, 'I don't think they're crazy at all. I think they're all of us at one point or another in

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## CULTS

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our lives."

In general, that "one point or another" occurs in the late teens or early 20s, says Gordon Melton, director of the Santa Barbara-based Institute for the Study of American Religion: "That's the time when people are [forming their adult identities and are] most open to changing their religious outlook."

Another expert notes, "You don't see too many elderly folks in cults." (The Branch Davidian sect in Waco, Tex., a Seventh-day Adventist splinter group, may be an exception. Some news reports have mentioned older members, but experts say they probably grew up in the organization, which was only recently taken over by David Koresh.)

Andres believes the age issue is part of a broader category of "transition times in life." The breakup of a relationship, the death of a loved one and other major changes leave some vulnerable to the lure of a cult, she says.

Corey Slavin, for example, now an associate of Andres, was drawn toward the Church Universal and Triumphant in 1988, when she had just moved, started a new job and was grieving over the death of her grandmother. The emotional upheaval shook her faith and self-esteem, she says: "I was a lost soul."

Others agree that the "lost soul" syndrome plays a key role in attracting people to fringe sects. In an "anything-goes" society, some people want the structure and authority of a cult, says psychiatrist Mark Goulston: "It's a way to simplify your life . . . a chance to just give up all your worries and frustrations. It's very seductive."

And unlike most strict mainstream and fundamentalist churches, cults give members life that "is structured 24 hours a day," says University of Nevada sociologist James T. Richardson.

Although some observers insist that cults have always existed in the United States, Richardson and others say the phenomenon mushroomed amid the tumult of the 1960s and '70s. The assassinations, anti-war demonstrations and challenges to traditional authority created a moral vacuum that new sects capitalized on, Richardson says.

"The times were so confusing," says Steve Greeter, a 1970 recruit to a sect called the Children of God. "When I met [my group], I felt like I'd tried everything—football, drugs. I'd been in the 82nd Airborne in Vietnam; I'd been a hippie." Greeter still belongs to the organization.

Melton estimates there are 600 to 700 "alternative" groups in the United States, with "maybe 1 million or 2 million followers on any given day. The membership is very unstable."

The range of philosophies is mind-boggling.

James R. Lewis, an expert in new religions, recalls a new-age conference at which a man claimed to channel for dolphins. He wasn't saying stuff like, "Destroy all tuna boats," Lewis notes. He was just up there making dolphin noises. And hundreds of people were listening.

Melton says any belief system seems unusual to the uninitiated. Just try explaining Christianity to an outsider, he says: "An ex-carpenter who was executed 1,900 years ago holds the key to the universe. . . ."

But many observers contend that a sect's philosophies have little or nothing to do with why people join. Some are attracted by the charisma of a leader or the warmth and enthusiasm of its members.

It's a way to feel acceptance and a sense of belonging, says psychiatrist Goulston: "When the agony of being alone and confused and misunderstood becomes too great, giving up your mind and identity to belong is not too high a price to pay."

Others find a more ominous explanation for why people accept seemingly bizarre belief systems: mind control.

"The common misperception is that people [who join cults] are looking for something spiritual," Andres says. "That's not true. Most join because they think the group is something other than what it ends up being."

In some cases, that's because the sect careens over the edge as the leader becomes corrupted by power. Many of Jim Jones' followers said the early days of the cult were marked by a feeling of brotherhood and the promise of a utopia, but it disintegrated into violence and—ultimately—mass suicide.

In other cases, a group deliberately conceals its identity or beliefs to avoid scaring off potential recruits, cult critics contend. A Children of God member, for example, says it was six months before he even heard the name of the group's controversial leader.

"Cults have gotten a lot more sophisticated," says Andres. "It doesn't work now if you wear robes and sell flowers at the airport."

Rather, groups offer innocuous-sounding classes or seminars and, from there, gradually lure recruits toward deeper involvement, she says.

Slavin's experience with the Church Universal and Triumphant is typical, according to Andres and

other cult critics. As Slavin tells it, a co-worker, without mentioning any ties to the sect, subtly played on her emotions at a vulnerable time in her life, slowly pulling her away from family and friends and into the group's orbit. There, five hours of daily chanting, a limited diet and hours of manual labor induced a "trance-like state": "My thoughts were not my own."

Ex-cult members list other methods used to weaken a person's judgment: sleep deprivation; limiting access to books, movies and other outside ideas; and lack of privacy and time for reflection.

It's mind control, Andres says.

But that argument has been widely attacked by sociologists and other researchers. "Mainstream academia has rejected brainwashing," says Lewis. "When you actually go in and talk to the people [in these groups], nothing seems to be wrong with their information processing abilities."

Richardson calls mind control an "after-the-fact rationalization" used by ex-members to explain away behavior in the group about which they're now embarrassed or ashamed. Basically, "people join because they want to. . . . I don't think they're tricked into it."

Lewis asserts that the alleged mind-control techniques used by fringe sects aren't much different from methods used by the military, Catholic religious orders and college fraternities. But people only use the term, he says, for groups they don't like.

Others argue that if mind control really worked, *everyone* would be in a cult.

On the other hand, if mind control doesn't work, then deprogramming—its opposite—also shouldn't have any effect. Yet it often does.

For that reason, some experts occupy a middle ground on the mind-control issue.

Marc Galanter, author of "Cults: Faith, Healing & Coercion," says people can't simply be manipulated to believe anything: "They have to encounter something that resonates with them."

Still, that doesn't mean they aren't being controlled and shaped, he adds: It's just that part of it is their own doing.

Goulston contends that cults use a form of salesmanship that produces a mild hypnotic trance, but he notes that regular salesmen are often adept at the same technique.

And, in any case, the effects are often short-lived. Studies show that "a large percentage, maybe even a majority, of those involved in [full-time or] high-demand groups leave within a year or two," Melton says.

Says Lewis: "If that's brainwashing, it's not very effective."

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 1993

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

## **Tax Report**

**A Special Summary and Forecast  
Of Federal and State Tax  
Developments**

**THE SCIENTOLOGY CHURCH** hasn't had many victories in its extensive tax battles. One came when U.S. appeals judges upheld a ruling quashing an IRS summons for voluminous records of the sect's Boston church. Now the U.S. district court in Boston says the IRS's position in the case wasn't justified and has ordered the IRS to pay the church \$80,787 for legal costs.