The Jehovah’s Witnesses sect: a social-psychological analysis

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THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SECT:
A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Since early man could not have adequate knowledge about many of the problems of life, he drew on his imagination for answers. Out of his imagination, he evolved the idea that the phenomena he could not explain naturally must be due to supernatural forces. The belief in supernatural forces is at the heart of religion. ¹

The nature of religion includes a broad range of experiences, actions and attitudes, even in the confines of our own society. Religious experiences extend from emotional ecstasy to highly rational speculation, from private contemplation to collective frenzy. ²

In this study, however, interest will be directed towards a somewhat neglected sphere of religious organization, namely, the religious sect.

With respect to minority religious groups in America, much has been written. In general the purposes of the writers concerned with minority religious groups have been either to exploit the strange and bizarre elements within the groups and thereby to interest and to amuse the reader or to expose their

weaknesses, to refute their claims, to laugh at their idiosyncrasies and to discredit them. True, there have been some relatively objective studies of minority groups, but the great bulk of the studies have been violently partisan, either for or against.\(^1\)

Elmer T. Clark in *The Small Sect in America* presents a study concerned, among other things, with the origin, growth and decline of small sects in America. Clark points out that:

Many of these small sects adhere to principles diametrically opposed to the culture and learning of their day. Most of them, indeed, take pride in that fact. Unbending opposition to the findings of astronomy, biology, geology, geography, history, psychology, and literary criticism is by no means rare among the sectarian members. Sects do indeed flourish mainly among the ignorant, yet it is a strange phenomenon that therein will be found modernly educated persons who accept tenets utterly at variance from the scientific spirit which modern higher education, supposely at least engenders.\(^2\)

John M. Mecklin in *A Story of American Dissent* presents a broad and historic view of minority religious groups. Of special interest here is the chapter in this work entitled the "Sociology of Dissent." Mecklin points out that the sectarian tradition tends to embrace a lay Christianity as opposed to a hierarchy, that the emphasis is not upon sacrament but upon immediate religious and moral experiences.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Charles S. Braden, *These Also Believe* (New York, 1946), p. 5.


Arthur H. Fauset presents an anthropological work *Black Gods of the Metropolis*, in which he relates a study of five Negro sects in northern cities. Fauset points out that in the sect, there is one main attraction that stands out above all others and that is a desire to get closer to some supernatural power, be it God, the Holy Spirit or Allah. Some other factors to which Fauset attributes the rise of cults and sects are racial and national consciousness, miraculous cures of illnesses, dissatisfaction with christianity, disdain for the orthodox church, mental relief, and a common bond of friendliness and understanding. In Fauset's study, he was primarily concerned with Negro minority religious groups and he concluded that: "It is a fair inference that the apparent overemphasis by the American Negro in the religious sphere is related to the comparatively meager participation in other institutional forms of American culture such as business, politics and industry."\(^1\) This condition is bound up intimately with the prevailing racial customs which restrict the normal participation of Negroes in many avenues of American life.

Liston Pope in *Mill Hands and Preachers* presents a study of minority religious groups and denominations in Gaston County, North Carolina. Pope found that the poorest mill workers have afforded the invariable starting points of the

sects in Gaston County, but as the new sect passes towards denominational status, the percentage of mill workers in its membership has correspondingly decreased; and that, roughly the degree to which any sect has the status of a denomination at a given moment varies inversely with the percentage of its membership which is composed of mill workers. Pope lists several aspects of the religious movement as it moves from the sectarian stage to the denominational stage. Some of them are indicated in the following transitions: (1) from membership composed chiefly of propertyless to membership composed of property owners. (2) from the cultural periphery to the cultural center of the community. (3) from self-centered religion to cultural-centered religion. (4) from non-cooperation, or positive ridicule, towards established religions to cooperation with established churches of the community. (5) from suspicion of rival sects to disdain or pity for all sects. (6) from an unspecialized, unprofessionalized part time ministry to a specialized, professionalized, full time ministry. (7) from a psychology of persecution to a psychology of success and dominance and (8) from adherence to strict Biblical standards, such as tithing or non-resistance, to acceptance of general cultural standards as a practical definition of religious obligations.¹

Ellsworth Faris in his essay "The Sect and the Sectarian" poses some interesting hypotheses with respect to sectarian groups. Faris feels that each type of sect has a peculiar type of person composing the group. He suggests that there is a typical Mormon and that his personality can be described. Faris sees the sect as being analogous to the primitive tribe, and he states that "the primitive tribe has long been recognized as being productive of a specific type of personality." These types, Faris feels, are the results of social heritage and breed true socially for long periods of time.

The sect is not necessarily small, though many of them are. The members of the sect may be recruited from heterogeneous backgrounds showing differences in wealth, rank and education. Frequently the sect feels that it has a divine mission to save outsiders; therefore, it seeks converts. Some scholars have stated that other-worldliness occupies a prominent place in most sects.

The above mentioned studies suggest some of the approaches in an attempt to gain a broader understanding of sectarian groups. This study of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, varies to some extent from most of those mentioned above in that the main interest is directed towards the sectarian himself rather than towards the group. Elmer T. Clark makes the following statement with respect to sectarian members: "The religious

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sect appeals to types of minds which cannot be comfortable in conventional folds of the great denominations."^1 Seemingly, Clark is suggesting in this statement that there is something unique about the temperamental make up of the persons associated with the sectarian groups which would not be true of non-sectarian members.

Since the sectarian members come from all walks of life and this cannot be explained solely on the basis of cultural and economic factors, it is believed that a study of their personalities will cast some light on the nature of the religious sect. Therefore, our basic assumption advanced here is that the Jehovah's Witnesses Society tends to attract a certain type personality consistent with and congenial to the ideological and organizational nature of this sect.

This study is limited to an examination, through the use of personality inventories, of the personalities of twenty members of the local Negro branch of the Jehovah's Witnesses Society. This study is concerned only with the overall personality configuration of the people attracted to one type of sect, namely the pessimistic, which will be described later.

Method of Study

The writer made his initial contact with the Jehovah's Witnesses Society in January 1950 at one of their Sunday after-

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^1Elmer T. Clark, op. cit., p. 183.
noon lectures. Thereafter frequent visits followed for the next four months. After several visits to the lectures and Watch Tower study classes, the writer came to know many of the members and was always received and invited to the next meetings. The writer has been invited to become a fully participating member of the group.

A month and a half following the initial contact the writer revealed his purpose to some of the members of the group. The idea was not very favorably accepted at the outset. The writer was told that he would have to get permission of the ministerial body before any kind of investigation could be attempted. The nature of this study necessitated the cooperation of the group, so arrangements were made to have conference with the ministerial body. As a result of this conference, the way was cleared for the writer to proceed with his investigation.

Twenty of the regularly attending members were selected systematically. Twelve males and eight females were selected and to these twenty persons the writer administered the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, in order to secure personality data for this study. The Bernreuter Inventory is made up of one hundred twenty-five questions, all of which may be answered "yes" or "no" or omitted. The latter has significance when the test is being scored. This inventory, like most instruments for studying personality, has weaknesses. The data can easily be distorted if the person being tested
answers the questions incorrectly. The writer attempted to minimize this possible importance of answering the questions incorrectly. This test is designed to measure six aspects of personality. They are: (1) neurotic tendencies, (2) self-sufficiency, (3) introversion-extroversion, (4) dominance and submission, (5) the extent to which a person possesses self confidence, and (6) sociability and gregariousness.

The writer was also permitted to review the official records of the group such as the membership roll, and also the yearbooks and pamphlets.

Data over and above that related to personality were obtained through non-controlled observation and examination of official records.

It might be well to point out here that the writer is aware of the fact that supplementary aids such as the study of the case histories of the sectarians, the use of questionnaires or some other methodological techniques would have strengthened this thesis immeasurably. However, because of the length of time available, this was not possible. We feel, nevertheless, that inasmuch as the study of personalities is the primary objective here and that the Bernreuter Personality Inventory has received wide acclaim, this project will prove to be of some scientific value.
CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS SECT: A SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

The primary aim in this chapter is to present a general picture of sectarian groups with respect to their emergence, general characteristics, rituals and functions.

The church, the sect and the cult are often thought of as distinct kinds of groups. Admittedly, there are distinctions to be drawn between these groups; these distinctions, however, are not hard and fast. They tend to shade into each other. The church or the denomination, the cult and the sect have been characterized as follows by Howard Becker:

The denominations are simply sects in an advanced stage of development and adjustment to each other and to the secular world. The early fervor of the self-conscious sect has disappeared, as a general thing by the second or third generation, and the problem of training the children of the believers almost inevitably causes some compromise to be made in the rigid requirements for membership characteristic of the early phases of the sectarian development.

The sect is a relatively small plurality pattern that has abandoned the attempt to win the whole world over to its doctrine; the phrase "come ye out from among them and be ye separate" is followed literally. It is seen that the sect is an elective body which one must join in order to become a member. At bottom the sect is exclusive in character and appeals to strictly personal trends, and emphasizes ethical demands; it frequently requires some definite type of religious experience as a prerequisite of acceptance. It therefore attaches primary importance to religious experience of its members prior to their fellowship with the plurality pattern, to the so-called "priesthood of all believers." It
frequently rejects an official clergy, preferring to trust for guidance to lay inspiration rather than theological or liturgical expertness. In many instances sects are persecuted, but this persecution only reinforces the separatist and semi-ascetic attitude towards the world inherent in the sect as a social structure. At times it refuses participation in the government; at times seeks to sever bonds which tie it to the common life of the larger plurality pattern within which it develops. In general, the sect prefers isolation to compromise.

Tendencies towards religion of a strictly private personal character—tendencies fairly well marked in the sect—come to full fruition in the cult. The goal of the adherence to this very amorphous loosely textured, uncondensed type of social structure is not the maintenance of the structure itself, as in the case of the church and sect, but is that of purely personal ecstatic experience, salvation, comfort, and mental and physical healing. The cult verges on the abstract crowd, although its well marked ideology probably entitles it to a place among the abstract collectivities.¹

**Emergence of the Sect**

In order to understand sectarian movements, we should be familiar with the setting under which they emerge and can best survive. The social setting and the physical environment have been thought of as factors affecting sectarian groups.

Many factors conditioned the problems of "dissenters" in the American colonies. Primary among them were race, economic interest, the form of colonial government and the theories of government or ideas of religious liberty championed by such leaders as Rodger Williams, William Penn, and Lord Baltimore.²

Thomas Edwards writing in 1646 was concerned with why people join sects and what factors give rise to these groups. Edwards gives a list of motives among which are the following:

Some were needy, broken and decayed men who hoped to get something in the way of financial help from the new sect; some were guilty, suspected and obnoxious men who were in the lurch and feared arrest or indictment and to these the sect was a sanctuary; some had law suits and hoped to find friends to help them in their litigation; others were ambitious, proud covetous men with a mind to office; still others were libertines and loose persons seeking less restraint than the community insisted on. Another group were wanton-willed, unstable persons who pretended to be convinced while others were quarrelsome people who liked to stir up trouble; and still others included those who have quarreled with their church, and have thus gone off disaffected.¹

Much support may be found for some of the ideas set forth by Thomas Edwards in 1646. These sect groups originate mainly among the religiously neglected poor who find the conventional religions of their day unsuited to their social and psychological needs. This is true of Christianity itself, for that sect was three hundred years old before it attracted considerable numbers of the socially well placed.²

In the second generation the sect begins to lose its character. The need for indoctrination of the young in the peculiar doctrines of the sect arises and those who are trained in the sect seldom expound its principles with the same intensity as those who were initiated by their personal

²Ibid. p. 551.
experiences. The virtue of frugality and industry bear fruit and when prosperity comes, the reason for the sectarian revolt disappears and the manner of life against which the fathers rebelled is embraced by their children.¹

A close scrutiny of most sectarian groups will reveal that poverty and economic insecurity have some influence upon them and their emergence, but there are other factors that must be considered. The sect arises at a time when the fixed order is breaking up, or tending to break up; the sect is an effort of the whole community to integrate itself anew. It is order arising from social chaos, though the order may not be over stable nor the chaos a condition of utter disruption.²

Much of the literature on minority religious groups suggests that more often the sect is originally constituted not by non-religious persons, but by those who have broken away or split off from existing religious organizations.

classification of sects

Because there are numerous sects in this country with varying ideologies and doctrines, it is well to examine some of them in this respect. Elmer T. Clark has grouped them roughly into seven main categories according to their ideologies and beliefs. He points out that the line which divides them is not clear and distinct, for here as elsewhere,

¹Elmer T. Clark, op. cit., p. 18.
²Ibid., p. 269.
training and social pressure have operated and since a given sect embraces several different principles, there will be considerable overlapping. The categories are as follows.¹

(1) The Pessimistic Sect

These are typical groups of the disinherited, who despair of obtaining through social processes the benefit they seek. They see no good in the world and no hope of improvement; it is rushing speedily to hell, according to the will and plan of God. The adherents of such sects magnify millenialism and the imminent end of the present world order by means of a cosmic catastrophe. They have turned against the world, and they seek escape through a cataclysm which will cast down all those who have been elevated and secured to the faithful important places in the new kingdom as well as eternal bliss in heaven. The Seven Day Adventist and other offshoots of millenites agitation are the best representatives of this class. Their philosophy is the leading principle of the so-called Fundamentalist movement and is found in nearly all the denominations and many small sects. The Jehovah Witnesses fall in this category.

(2) The Perfectionists

They seek holiness, perfection of life, or freedom from temptation and "desire of the flesh." They are the

¹Elmer T. Clark, _op. cit._, pp. 271-273.
experimental type, realizing their hope through strong emotional reactions. The early Methodists were fine examples of this type of mind, and the present day Perfectionists are nearly all offshoots of Methodism. Among these sects are the Nazarene, Holiness and similar bodies.

(3) The Charismatic Sect

These bodies seek "gifts," the "spirit of prophecy," the blessings and spiritual grace. They are perfectionists of a radical order and are frequently called "holy rollers." Speaking with tongues," trances, visions, the jerks, and various strange motor reactions characterize their worship. Examples are found in the "Pentecostal" sects, and some of the Church of God groups.

(4) The Communistic Sect

These groups withdraw from "the world" into colonies where they secure the social approval which is denied them elsewhere and where they engage in economic experiments. Community of goods is the common characteristic. Some of these groups have espoused free love or community of women and their rites have run into orgiastic and antinomian excesses. None of these sects have been able to preserve their pure communistic character over a long period; many have appeared and died, some have gradually merged with the society about them, and a few are maintaining struggling existence. Among these
religious colonies may be mentioned the Shakers, now practically extinct, the Amana Society, the House of David, the Church of God and Saints of Christ, at Belleville, Virginia.

(5) The Legalistic Sects

The term "legalistic" has been used to designate a group of sects which stress certain rules, objective forms, observances, or "things" which can be definitely performed as essential to true religion. Frequently the distinguishing mark is the rejection or denial of some practice. These sects derive their rites or taboos from some portion of the Bible and usually look upon themselves as the "true church" or restorers of primitive Christianity. In this group are the foot-washing sects, those which insist upon some peculiarity of dress, as the "hook-and-eye" Mennonites and those that cover the heads of the women, the Presbyterians that sing the Psalms and reject the hymns, the Churches of Christ with their unbending antipathy to musical instruments and missionary societies, and the Primitive Baptist, who oppose Sunday Schools. Included also are the sacramentarian or sacerdotal sects, offshoots of the Catholic and Episcopalian Churches. They set great store by their sacraments and the "apostolic succession" of their higher clergy. Examples are the Old Catholic Churches, of which there are three in America, Reformed Episcopal Church, and the African Orthodox Church, a Negro group.
(6) The Esoteric Sects

These are devotees of the mystic. They espouse doctrines into which one needs to be initiated. They are nearly all offshoots of Hinduism and can hardly be called Christian sects. They specialize in mysteries and the occult, and their literature is scarcely understandable to the ordinary man. The best examples are the Theosophists, Spiritualists, Vedantists, and Bahais.

(7) The Egocentric Sect

These have physical comfort, personal exhilaration, and freedom from pain, disease, and ennui as their objectives. The Christian Scientists, Divine Scientists, Unity School of Christianity, and New Thought groups are examples of this type.

Functions of the Sect

As to the functions of the religious sect, they are many and varied, depending upon the particular sect to which one may address his attention. It has been pointed out that the sect, in many instances, becomes the mechanism by which a certain recognition or status is gained, particularly for the leaders and more socially dynamic members. The sect offers a haven for many baffled and disillusioned church goers (as well as that stream of people who carry on a desultory acquaintance with the evangelical church) who actually have become fearful that mere attendance will not bring them to the promised
Historically and generally, sects serve as agencies of protest against conventional religious organizations. This protest, interesting enough, is directed towards many of the secular institutions. This, it seems, is an inevitable conclusion when one examines the transition of the sect to the denomination or church. This protest function is manifested in what may be called a rather peculiar conflict relation, in that it does not aim to change institutions or the objective social order but instead seeks a moral regeneration of the world. The sect serves as a refuge for the emotionally starved, impoverished socially disinherited. The religious sect satisfies what one writer calls a "craving for objectivity" and to an extent this particular need is satisfied in most religious groups. The point of difference, however, resides in the fact that in the conventional churches or denominations, the rites and practices, symbols and images are simply psychological aids to worship and not possessed of moral significance in themselves. The important point here is that most sects regard the Bible as the product of divine inspiration and therefore infallible.

Summary

In this chapter some of the fundamental differences between

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1Author H. Fauset, op. cit., p. 95.
the denominations, cults and sects have been pointed out. It has been pointed out that the denominations are simply sects in an advanced stage of development and adjustment to the outside world.

The sect has been defined as a relatively small plurality pattern that has abandoned the attempt to win the whole world over to its doctrines and which has not become accommodated to the cultural center of the community.

The cult has been defined as an amorphous, loosely textured, uncondensed type of social structure. The goal of the members of the cult has been stated as one of purely ecstatic experience, rather than maintenance of the structure of the organization itself.

The writer presented in this chapter some of the reasons why people join sects, as set forth by Thomas Edwards in 1646. Edwards felt that many of those who joined the sects, joined with the hopes of gaining financial aid, social status and to find friends. Others feared arrest and were looking for a sanctuary.

A classification of religious sect with respect to ideology and organization has also been presented in this chapter. The categories of religious sect discussed are: (1) The Pessimistic Sects, (2) The Perfectionist Sects, (3) The Charismatic Sects, (4) The Communistic Sects, (5) The Legalistic Sects, (6) The Esoteric Sects and (7) The Egocentric Sects.

Some mention has also been made concerning the function
of the sect. To some, the religious sect serves as a symbol of status. Others felt that through the participation in the religious sect, they were closer to the supernatural, and to others the sect served a psychological need for security.
CHAPTER III

THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS SECT

Origin and History

The origin of Jehovah's Witnesses does not differ significantly from that of many other similar groups in this country. The movement now known as Jehovah's Witnesses was begun by Charles Taze Russell, better known as Pastor Russell, in 1872 in the city of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Russell was not a preacher but a layman member of the Congregational Church.¹

They have not always been called Jehovah's Witnesses. The name was officially adopted as late as 1931 at the suggestion of the then head of the movement, Judge J. F. Rutherford. Before that they were called "Russelites," "International Bible Students," "Millennial Dawnists," and other less complimentary names. But if the name came late in history, Jehovah's Witnesses are said really to have begun with Abel whom they recognized as the first of their line.²

Russell, the founder, states that one night he attended a meeting of the Second Adventists "to see if the handful who

¹ Charles S. Braden, These Also Believe (New York, 1949), p. 359.
² Ibid., p. 360.
met there had anything more sensible to offer than the creeds of the great churches." Though the scriptural exposition he heard there was not wholly clear or satisfactory, "it was sufficient, under God, to re-establish my wavering faith in divine inspiration and to show that the records of apostles and prophets are indissolubly linked."¹

This marked a turning point in the life of young Russell. He became an ardent student of the Bible and, although without college or theological training, he began to expound the scriptures with great assurance. And the people listened. Out of this grew the movement now known as "Jehovah's Witnesses," though Judge Rutherford, who succeeded Russell, was later to declare that "it would be blasphemy to claim that any man is the founder and organizer of Jehovah's Witnesses."²

In 1879, Russell established a magazine, Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence, and about 1880 published his first book, Food for Thinking Christians. In that same year he sent representatives to England to begin work there. The first formal organization was in 1884 when Zion's Watch Tower Society was established. The movement spread rapidly. By 1888 it was reported that the "Word" was being preached not only in the United States and England but also in China, Africa, India, Turkey and Haiti.

¹Watch Tower, (July, 1936).
²Theocracy, (Brooklyn, 1936), p. 19.
No group or organization can thrive over a long period of time without an ideology. In a sense, the ideology provides the rationalization or justification for the members.

The concept of ideology stands for the organized system of thought and emotion out of which comes the more specific verbal reactions in the form of stereotypes, cliches, folklore, legends, social myths, guiding fictions and other elements in this all important subjective baggage.1

One may ask, "What are the tenets or teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses?" They may be stated quite simply. The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The end of the age is near. Armageddon is just around the corner, when the wicked will be destroyed and the theocracy, or rule of God, will be set up upon the earth. Fundamental to everything else is the idea of God. Because God is the kind of God he is, everything else follows quite logically.2

What, then, do they hold with reference to God? All of their doctrines are based upon the Bible. The method of establishing the truth is to support it by an array of Bible quotations taken from any part of it—Old Testament and New Testament alike. God appears, therefore, to possess all the attributes which are attached to him in the Bible. God is Creator, Law Giver, Judge, Avenger, Father, Rewarder of Good

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2Charles Braden, op. cit., p. 370.
and Punisher of Evil. But the stress seems to be upon the side of His power and His inexorable justice rather than upon the side of His love and forgiveness.¹

One of Christ's tasks is to set up the Theocracy or rule of God in the world. Here is the most distinctive teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses. It is their one constant point of emphasis. But before the final establishment of the Theocracy there must first come the Battle of Armageddon and the destruction of the evil ones. This is thought to be imminent.

"A small remnant, the righteous, will survive the destruction of Armageddon and shall remain on earth from generation to generation, that is, forever. To them will be given the great and unspeakable privilege to be fruitful and fill the earth with perfect creatures under the immediate direction and ministration of Christ, the King of the great Theocracy."²

Perhaps the most notable thing about the Witnesses is their insistence upon their primary allegiance to God, before any other power in the world. It was this that brought them into conflict with the State at two major points, first in the refusal of their children to salute the flag, and second in their refusal to participate in the war on the terms demanded by the government.

¹Ibid., p. 372.
²Ibid., p. 377.
In other respects they are not as strict in their moral teachings and practices as the extremely conservative groups are. For example, in sex matters the Witnesses follow, in general, the mores of the local communities.

Organization

The organization of Jehovah's Witnesses is hierarchical and highly authoritarian. There is little democratic participation in the management or in the formation of policies of the movement as a whole. This is taken care of by a relatively small group of directors of the society. There are three legal corporations through which the society functions: (1) The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, the first incorporation of the movement, founded in 1884, as Zion's Watch Tower Society, (2) The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, incorporated in New York as the People's Pulpit Association, in 1909, but changed in 1939 to the present name, and (3) The International Bible Student's Association, incorporated in 1914 in England, the name under which most of the work outside of the United States is carried on. The New York Corporation is actually the controlling body. It is apparently self-perpetuating and made up of about forty members, most of whom are actively engaged in some phase of the movement's work. This group elects annually a Board of Directors who are the real power in the direction of the movement as a whole. According to the 1945 Jehovah's Witnesses Yearbook, all three
corporations are empowered to hold property, and other corporations have been formed for holding property in still other countries.¹

Probably the most active phase of the Jehovah's Witnesses' work is its publishing activity. It has its own great modern printing plant in Brooklyn, which annually turns out a large quantity of printed matter for circulation all over the world.

The society owns a very large home called Beth Sanin at San Diego, California, where the Judge spent most of his time in later years. The name means "House of Princes" and its purpose is, according to Rutherford, to serve as "some tangible proof that there are those on earth today who fully believe God and Christ Jesus and his faithful Kingdom, and who do believe that the faithful men of old will soon be resurrected by the Lord, will be back on earth and take charge of the visible affairs of earth."²

The Witnesses also own several farms. The most notable perhaps is the Kingdom at South Lansing, New York, which supplies much of the produce for Gilead Bible School and Bethel Home in Brooklyn. In addition the Witnesses own various radio broadcasting stations.³

Any observing person will have noticed the Witnesses in

¹Ibid., p. 364.
²Salvation, (Brooklyn) (n.d.), p. 311.
³Charles Braden, op. cit., p. 370.
their house-to-house canvassing, sale of literature, use of phonographs and their public meetings. The Jehovah's Witnesses have wide ramifications. The 1949 Yearbook contains annual reports of their work in one hundred and four different countries.¹

As previously stated the Jehovah's Witnesses are highly authoritarian. Whether Judge Rutherford's successor exercises as much power as he did, is difficult to say. Braden points out that in recent years the organization has taken on the character of a secret society.² Members have been excommunicated from all meetings and activities of the organization because they ventured to write a letter to the Board of Directors criticising certain practices of Judge Rutherford and other officials and workers living at Bethel House.³

Judge Rutherford died January 8, 1942 at the age of 72. He left active direction of the movement to Mr. N. H. Knorr who succeeded him in the Presidency. Little is known of Mr. Knorr personally. He is a middle age man, and is believed to be quite competent.

The members of the movement seem not to be disturbed by this autocratic concentration of control at headquarters. They accept whatever is handed down.

²Charles Braden, op. cit., p. 365.
³Ibid., pp. 365-366.
Continuing from the top downward, the next step below the central controlling powers are what are called "regional servants." The term "servants" is used instead of minister or preacher, or priest, though the functions are in many ways similar. In the United States there are six regional servants who superintend the work in their areas and report to the Board of Directors by whom they are appointed. The "servants" have little to do with local groups, but mainly with the next lower order of workers, the "Zone Servants" of whom there are one hundred fifty-four in the United States.

The local group, corresponding to the local church, is called a "company," a term reminiscent of an early stage when military terms were employed, as in the case of the Salvation Army. The local meeting place is called the Kingdom Hall. This is usually a rented hall or store room, never a church building. It is simply furnished, with little or no attempt at adornment. The groups, which are rather more like a study group than a congregation, are not large, seldom being more than two hundred in number. When this size is reached a new group is formed.

Appointed over the local company are "company servants" or service directors who correspond to the local pastor of a church. Full-time workers are known as Pioneers, or Pioneer Publisher. There are two classes, the Special Pioneer and the General Pioneer. The Special Pioneers usually contribute more hours of work. The Pioneers are, in a sense, the clergy
of Jehovah's Witnesses. Formerly without specific training, there is now a training school located at South Lansing, upper New York, where special training is given them.

Each person among Jehovah's Witnesses is really considered a minister of the gospel since everyone has the responsibility of taking the work to "people of good will" and "outsiders."¹

Summary

The primary aim in this chapter has been to present some historical facts about the Jehovah's Witnesses sect, some indication of the organizational structure and ideology of the group.

It has been pointed out that the organization now known as Jehovah's Witnesses Society was founded in 1872 in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Charles Taze Russell founded this Society when he became dissatisfied with the theological teaching in the congregational church of which he was a member.

The group now known as Jehovah's Witnesses was previously called "Russellites," "International Bible Students," "Millennial Dawnists," and other less complimentary names.

The ideology was suggested briefly through the following statements: The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The end of the age is near. Armageddon is just around the corner, when the theocracy, or the rule of God will be set upon the earth.

¹Interview with C. E. Spears (Jehovah's Witnesses Society Atlanta, Georgia, February 1950).
It has also been established that the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses is authoritarian and that there are three legal corporations through which the Society functions. They are: (1) The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, (2) The International Bible Students Association, and (3) The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of New York.

Mention has also been made of the great importance attached to the publishing activities in this group and of the modern printing plant in New York owned by the group.

The organization has had three presidents, up to the present. The first was Mr. Russell, the founder, who was succeeded by Judge Rutherford. After Rutherford's death, Mr. N. H. Knorr of whom very little is known came into the Presidency.

On page 30 will be found a chart showing the hierarchial organization of the Jehovah's Witnesses Society.

In the next chapter we shall be concerned with the type of personality (or personality traits) which appears to be dominant among the followers of the sect described herein.
Hierarchical Organization of the Jehovah's Witnesses Society.

Jehovah's Witnesses Society

Board of Directors

Regional Servants

Zone Servants

Company Servants

General Pioneers  Special Pioneers
CHAPTER IV

DOMINANT PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF TWENTY
JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES FOLLOWERS

In the preceding chapter the Jehovah's Witnesses Society
was discussed in some detail. Some indication of the scope
was pointed out. Attention was also given to the origin and
history of the group, its leadership, membership and general
structure.

Before proceeding directly to the personality description
which is the major concern of this chapter, it would be well
to give a brief description of the people studied. The twenty
people who were subjected to investigation are part of a
larger group of colored Jehovah's Witnesses constituting a
company. This group is made up of approximately eighty-five
members. The ages range from twelve to sixty-five. Sixty-
three of the members, however, are adults. The number of men
and women is about equal in this group; however, the men are
the recognized leaders in all the activities of the group.

As indicated earlier, from the group described above,
twenty were selected for study which number included twelve
men and eight women. The personality inventory was
administered to each.

The Instrument

We are inserting additional information on the instrument
used at this point so that it will be easier and more convenient to interpret the personality data which follow.

The Personality Inventory represents a new departure in the measurement of personality in that it measures several different aspects of personality at one time. Traits measured by the Bernreuter Inventory are identical with traits which have been measured by previously validated tests. These tests are the Thurstone Neurotic Inventory, the Bernreuter Self-Sufficiency Test, the Laird Introversion Test, and the Allport Ascendance and Submission Reaction Test. In the construction of the Personality Inventory, six traits were used to locate individuals who possessed the various traits to an extreme degree.

The Bernreuter Personality Inventory is made up of six parts; more specifically, it is designed to measure six personality traits. The six scales are designated by the symbols B 1-N, B 2-S, B 3-l, B 4-D, F 1-C, and F 2-S, and may be briefly described as follows:

B 1-N. A measure of neurotic tendency. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be emotionally unstable. Those scoring above 98 percentile would probably benefit from psychiatric or medical advice. Those scoring low tend to be very well balanced emotionally.

B 2-S. A measure of self-sufficiency. Persons scoring high on this scale prefer to be alone, rarely ask for sympathy or encouragement, tend to ignore the advice of others. Those
scoring low dislike solitude and often seek advice and encouragement.

B 3-1. A measure of introversion-extroversion. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be introverted; that is, they are imaginative and tend to live within themselves. Scores above 98 percentile bear the same significance as B 2-N.

B 4-D. A measure of dominance-submission. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to dominate others in face-to-face situations. Those scoring low tend to be submissive.

F 1-C. A measure of confidence in oneself. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be self-conscious and to have feelings of inferiority; those scoring above the 98 percentile would probably benefit from psychiatric or medical advice. Those scoring low tend to be wholesomely self-confident and to be very well adjusted to their environment.

F 2-S. A measure of sociability. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be non-social, solitary or independent. Those scoring low tend to be sociable and gregarious.

It should be pointed out at this point that traits measured on these scales represent extremes. For an example, on the B 3-1 scale of introversion-extroversion, between these two extremes fall most subjects who show features of both introversion and extroversion. This, in general, is true of all the traits measured in this study. However, it is possible to ascertain the dominant traits through the Personality Inventory.
In analyzing the scores on the inventories, the scores will be compared with the percentile norms which were used in standardizing the Personality Inventory in 1938 by Robert G. Bernreuter. The groups upon which norms are based are divided into six categories; namely college men, college women, high school boys, high school girls, adult men and adult women. The number of cases used in standardizing each of these categories and each score differs. For an example, in the category used to standardize the scores for adult men on the B 1-N scale 300 cases were used, on the B 2-S scale 310 cases were used, on B 3-1 scale 99 cases were used, F 1-C scale 914 cases were used and on F 2-S scale 914 cases were used.

Presentation of Findings

On the B 1-N scale, a measure of neurotic tendencies, the median percentile score for the twenty persons tested was 81. The mean percentile score for the twenty persons tested was 80. The mean percentile score of a group of 121 persons on which this scale is based was 54. In comparing the two scores for the two groups, we can see the extent to which the twenty cases deviate. This deviation tells us that there is a high degree of neuroticism and that they are emotionally unstable.

On the B 2-S scale which measures self-sufficiency, the median percentile score was 67. The mean score secured was also 67. The mean percentile score based on the standardized distribution of 300 cases was 47. The difference between the
percentile averages on this scale again reveals the extent to which the twenty cases tested deviate from the norm. This deviation in mean score of the cases we have tested suggests that these persons, in general, prefer being alone; are independent and rarely ask for advice and encouragement.

The B 3-1 scale measures introversion and extroversion. The median percentile score obtained by the twenty persons on this scale was 90. The mean score obtained on this scale by the group here studied was 92 percentile. The mean score of 92 for our group and the mean score of 52 for the 99 cases of the standardized group on which this scale is based suggests very clearly that there is an abnormal number of introverted persons in this group.

On the B 4-D scale which measures dominance and submission, the median score secured by the twenty cases studied was 49. The mean percentile score on this scale was 49. The mean percentile score obtained by the standardized group of 311 was 47. This similarity of scores between the two groups reveals that the mean score of the twenty cases studied does not deviate from what is considered the norm.

The F 1-C scale measures the extent to which persons possess confidence in themselves. On this scale the group here studied obtained a median score of 91, and a mean score of 89. The average score for the 914 population used by Dr. Bernreuter was 55. What does this difference in the two averages mean? This difference means that a high percentage
of the persons studied here are highly self-conscious, and possess feelings of insecurity and inferiority.

The F 2-S scale is designed to measure sociability. The median score here for our sample group was 70. The mean score obtained by our sample group was 74. The average percentile score based on this scale in Bernreuter's sample was 50. We can readily see that here the average obtained by our sample deviates significantly from those averages upon which the test is based. This difference suggests that the members of our sample are for the most part non-sociable, independent and solitary.

In the comparison of the scores secured on the six scales by twenty Jehovah's Witnesses followers and the scores obtained by a standardized group, there is a vast difference. What do these discrepancies mean? They suggest several things. First, there are significant differences between the personalities of the twenty persons tested here and the unselected group with which these persons were compared. The scores secured by these persons suggest that they possess a high degree of neuroticism, that is, emotional instability. The scores suggest that they are highly introverted and self-conscious. The scores further reveal that many of these persons possess feelings of insecurity, and are inclined to be solitary and lonely in the sense that they tend to isolate themselves from the world of material objects, to live largely in the realm of theories, ideas and ideals. Only in respect to one category
was this sectarian group similar to the Bernreuter group, namely dominance and submission.

The above mentioned information concerning the twenty cases studied here and the population used in Dr. Bernreuter's work are presented in graphic form in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Also a distribution of the twenty cases studied is presented in tabular form in Table 1.
Figure I. The Mean Percentile Rank of A Population of 2,849 Used In The Standardization of the Personality Inventory Based on Scores Secured on Six Personality Traits.
Figure II. The Mean Percentile Rank of Twenty Jehovah's Witnesses Followers Based on the Scores Secured on Six Personality Traits.
TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF PERCENTILE SCORES OBTAINED ON SIX PERSONALITY TRAITS BY TWENTY JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES FOLLOWERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>B 1-N</th>
<th>B 2-S</th>
<th>B 3-1</th>
<th>B 4-D</th>
<th>F 1-C</th>
<th>F 2-S</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>94</td>
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<td>95</td>
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Summary

In this chapter the writer has described the instrument used in gathering personality data in this study. This instrument, the Bernreuter Personality Inventory is designed to measure six personality traits. These traits are neuroticism, self-sufficiency, introversion-extroversion, dominance and submissiveness, the confidence one possesses in oneself and sociability.

The data of this chapter described the overall personality configuration of the twenty Jehovah's Witnesses studied as follows: First, the Bernreuter's Inventory scores suggests that they are basically neurotic and emotionally unstable. This is accompanied by pronounced introversion and feelings of self-consciousness and insecurity. Finally, the subjects studied show tendencies to withdraw from the world at large in a solitary preoccupation with ideas and ideals. With respect to the traits of dominance and submission, these twenty Jehovah's Witnesses show no deviation from the norm, which suggests that neither dominance or submission are basic traits in the personality profile of this group.

Two figures have been placed in this chapter in an attempt to make a vivid comparison between the personality configuration of the twenty Jehovah's Witnesses studied here and the group Doctor Bernreuter studied. A table showing the scores secured on the six aspects of personality by the twenty


subjects studied is also presented in this chapter.
CHAPTER V

Conclusion

In this study we have seen that religion includes a broad range of experiences, actions and attitudes and that religious experiences extend from emotional ecstasy to highly rational speculation, from private contemplation to collective frenzy.

We have noted further that religious organizations may be classified with reference to the degree of organization they possess. As a result, sociologists frequently make a distinction between the cult, the sect and the denomination. The goal of the cult is that of purely ecstatic experience, salvation, comfort, and physical and mental healing. The cult is loosely organized, almost amorphous and it verges on an abstract crowd, however, it has a well marked ideology.

The sect is a relatively small plurality pattern that has abandoned the attempt to win the whole world over to its doctrines. The sect attaches primary importance to the religious experience of its members prior to their fellowship with the plurality pattern. In many instances the sects are persecuted, but this persecution only reinforces the separatist and semi-ascetic tendencies. The sect is fairly well organized as a single entity, but has not developed working interrelationships with the institutions of the larger
community. As a matter of fact, the sect is actually at odds with the outer community and becomes, therefore, what Hadley Cantril calls "a microcosm within a macrocosm."¹

The denominations are merely sects in an advanced stage of development and adjustment to each other and to the secular world. The denomination is a well organized religious group. Where the cult and sect are condemned by the community and looked upon with disdain, the denomination is accepted.

We have been primarily concerned with sectarian groups in this study. Nevertheless, merely to limit our discussion to sectarian groups in general was not sufficient in terms of adequately describing the particular sect with which this study has been concerned. For this reason, we followed the classification of sects given by Elmer T. Clark.² The classification is seven fold and is as follows: First, we have the Pessimistic Sect, which is typical of the disinherited. The members of this sect see no good in the present world order and little hope for improvement. The Jehovah's Witnesses adhere strongly to these doctrines, which are exemplified in their literature. The Perfectionist sect members seek holiness, perfection of life and freedom from temptation. The Charismatic Sect members seek the "spirit of prophecy." Members of this group are sometimes referred to as "holy

Clark's next classification is the Communistic Sect, whose members frequently withdraw to colonies where they secure the social approval which is denied them elsewhere and where they engage in economic experiments. The Legalistic Sect has been designated as such, because here certain rules are stressed. Frequently the distinguishing qualities are the denial of certain practices, following some scripture passage of the Bible. Next we have the Esoteric Sect whose members are recruited largely from Hinduism and can hardly be called Christian. They specialize in mysteries and the occult. Lastly, we have the Egocentric Sect, whose members seek physical comfort, personal exhilaration, and freedom from pain, disease and ennui. The Christian Scientists and Divine Scientists are examples of this type.

Concerning the Pessimistic Sect and more specifically the Jehovah's Witnesses Sect, our data indicate that the people studied were largely neurotic and emotionally unstable. In addition, they were characterized by a high degree of introversion accompanied by pronounced withdrawal tendencies. Further, they possessed traits of inferiority and insecurity, insofar as the cases studied here are representative of the Jehovah's Witnesses group at large. The above personality picture may be conceived as more or less typical of this type of sectarian. It might be well to speculate briefly regarding the extent to which this type of personality pattern might be congenial to the theology of this sect. The central ideas of...
the Jehovah's Witnesses religious beliefs are that the end of the world is imminent, Armageddon is just around the corner, when the wicked will be destroyed and a theocracy or rule of God will be established. It is our belief that this core theology is particularly congenial to the personalities whose adjustments to society have been poor, thereby inducing inferiority and insecurity. By joining the sect and in accordance with the teachings alone, mere association guarantees them the exalted status of the "saved." They gain further comfort and security through the integration into a religious community which this theology promises will be established in the near future. It is also our belief that this particular type of religious orientation is particularly congenial to the introverted, insofar as it encourages only a minimal contact with the outer world and places emphasis on individual interest in terms of striving to cleanse oneself of worldly taint in preparation for admission to the community of the "saved."
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