Cults week 2:

* Cults thrive when society is in a bad state, the great depression, etc
* Cult refers to unorthodox or unethical groups
* Have always generated fear and antagonism, sometimes unwarranted
* US and Canada is a good home for NRGs due to “freedom”
* 1st colonists in Americas: Puritans or Pilgrams, reformers from the church of England
* Shakers: Ann Lee was the leader, and required all members to be celibate. Named shakers because of the way that they danced
* Many new groups that have been referred to as cults emerged on the 19th century
* 1820-1860: The second great awakening, Gave rise to mainly religious groups
* 19th Century
  + Marginalized people were attracted to new, unconventional groups
  + As a result of socioeconomic changes in 1800s, the US evangelical movement grew massively
  + Many new religious groups popped up, often breakoffs from mainstream religion: “Sects”
* Cult vs Sect
  + Cults are small religious groups considered to be outside the mainstream society
  + Sects are subgroups within larger religious groups, often formed due to differences in beliefs or practices
* Oneida Community
  + Utopian settlement experimented with religious/social theories
  + Founder: John Humphrey Noyes -> 20
  + Revelation: Anyone who gave himself to god could be perfect
  + Created complex marriage
  + Fled to Canada
* Amana Society
  + Founded in 1714 in Germany, but bigger in 1842
  + Also know as “the Society of True Inspiration”
  + Primitive form of christianity
  + Christian Metz is one of the leaders took 800 members out of Germany in 1842 to New York
  + God spoke through an inspired instrument
* Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
  + Founded by Joseph Smith in 1830
  + Smith said he received visions from angels and apostles
  + Met with opposition, travelled from state to state, settled in Utah
  + Not considered a cult
  + The breakoff group FLDS led by Warren jeffs is considered a cult
* Church of Christ, Scientist
  + Christian Science Church
  + Founded and led by Mary Baker Eddy – believed in the idea of unity with god
  + This group does not believe in modern day medicine
* Occult Groups
  + In the Victorian era a lot of people became interested in the spiritual
  + Many formed around teachings of Russian medium and psychic Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
* Early 20th Century:
  + Santeria: originated in West Africa, then to Cuba, then spread all over the world
  + Mix of magic and traditions of Catholic Church
  + Millions of people in Latin America
  + Confilct over rituals (animal sacrifice in particular)
* Unification Church
  + Reverend Sun Myung Moon from Korea
  + Converts called “moonies”
  + Instituted church in korea in late 1950s
  + Ideas were outgrowths of Christianity
  + Says he is the Messiah, him and his wife are the true Parents
  + Mass weddings and political influence
* The Summit Lighthouse
  + Founded by Mark L. Prophet in 1958, leaders are messengers of ascended masters
  + Originally called the summit lighthouse, then changed to Church universal and Triumphant
* Peoples Temple
  + Leader and founder James Warren Jones (Jim Jones)
  + What put the spotlight on cults
  + Started off very well, soup kitchens, etc
  + When the IRS started giving them isues, their member became more isolated from their families
  + Became much larger in the 60s and 70s
  + Relocated his group and members to Guyana
  + Originally used the bible as a sacred text, but then switched to communist newspaper and lectures
  + November 18th 1978, almost 1000 people died because of this man
* Scientology
  + Founded by L. Ron Hubbard
  + Science fiction writer
  + Used the study of Dianeticss as a unifying force in the group
  + Huge group these days
  + Tom Cruise is a very popular member
* 20th Century- 1960s
  + Fertile grounds for NRMS
  + These groups appealed to marginal groups
  + Appealed to disenchanted youth
  + Fascination with both spiritual and exotic, reaction Vietnam and bad government
  + Eastern religious based ideas had arrived
  + Introduced to Americas by Asian immigrants after 1965 (relaxation of immigration laws)
  + Each self appointed mesaiah claimed to have the truth
* The children of God
  + Christian based group, established by a ministry of young adults
  + Founder David Berg later called Moses David
  + Claimed California would experience a massive earthquake, moved to Texas
  + Communal living/sexual freedom
  + Controversy due to pushing sexual acts on children
  + Now known as the Family International
* International Society for Krishna Conciousness (hare Krishna)
  + One of the first eastern oriented groups to recieeve great public attention
  + Swami Prabhupada
  + Well knows for child abuse
* Satanism
  + Church of satan and satanism is different
  + Traditional satanism has long history
  + Worship Christian devil, defiles Christianity
  + Started becoming more popular in the 1960s
  + More recently, new kind of satanism -> stanic ritual abuse
* Church of Satan
  + Founder was Anton LaVey, advocated that anything is permissible as long as it does not hurt someone in an undeserved way
  + Black mass
* The Manson Family
  + Late 1960s/early 70s
  + Lots of drug use
  + Members argues it was a commune not a cult
  + Murders of at least 9 people happened at the hands of this group
  + Members were manipulated by Manson, believed Manson was a manifestation of Jesus Christ
  + Apocalyptic themes within group (relating to race wars), Manson was insistent that racial tensions between blacks and whites were about to erupt
* Communes vs Cults
  + Drug abuse and violence took toll on hippies, so went to communes
  + Cults/NRMS are established by charismatic leaders who control power: communes minimize structure and don’t like power seekers
  + Cults/NRMS posses some revealed word in form of book, manifesto: communes invoke general commitments to peace
  + Cults create fortified boundaries – not easy to come and go, communes you can come and go if you please
* Divine Light Mission
  + Founded in 1960 by guru Hans Ji Maharaj (India)
  + He died in 1966, and his youngest son Prem Rawat was successor (8 years old)
  + When he was 13, he fled to the us in 1971, bcame know as guru Maharaji
  + Belief is that there is divine light within each person, can reveal this through meditation and practice of knowledge
  + Many became disillusioned when large crowds didn’t gather
  + Members also left when Guru Married, required celibacy of members, he married a western woman and was labelled a playboy by his mother

1970s

* Heavens Gate
  + 2 leaders, founded by Marshall Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Nettles in 1975
  + Bonnie died of cancer in the 1980s
  + How and When Heavens Gate May Be Entered – screen play
  + Rented out a millionaires masion, made money through web development
  + They were waiting for a comet that would take them to heaven
  + Commited suicide in 19197 in the mansion, wearing all black, black nikes, and a purple shroud

1980s

* Psychological, Occult, and Prosperity groups
  + Psychological: psychotherapy cults popular in which either professionals go astray and have multiple relationships with clients or non professionals form “therapy groups”
  + Occult: interest in topics that appear to be hidden/secret, search for secret techniques to alter consciousness, spoken disdain for mainstream religion – channelling very popular
  + Prosperity: tightening of economy in late 1980s, concerned with money, get rich quick schemes, continued to flourish all through the 90s – isolation from family/friends
* Order of the Solar Temple
  + Founded in the 1980s in Switzerland
  + Esoteric movement, only for a certain few
  + Lead by Joseph Di Mambro and Luc Jouret
  + Became famous for the mass deaths of numerous members in the 19190s, 19194, 1995, and 1997
  + Act9ve mainly in French speaking counties
  + Total of 74 people dead in three waves
* Aum Shinrikyo
  + Founded in 1987 by Shoko Asahara, gained official religious status in 1989
  + Asahara obsessed with Biblical prophecies, used anime and manage to express religious ideas
  + Allegedly held people against their will, deceived recruits, forced monetary donations
  + Carried out deadly Sarin attack on Tokyo subway in 1995 (killing 13, seriously injuring 54). More were supposed to die, but they made mistakes
  + Also had carried out a Sarin gas attack in 1994 in Matsumoto (8 died)
  + Asahara and six followrs who had been on death row executed in July 2018, 6 more followers executed in July 26th
  + 2019, 9 people injured when someone drove a vehicle into crowsds as protest
* Movement for the Restoration of the 10 Commandments of God
  + Religious movement founded by Credonia Mwerinde and Joseph Kibweteere in Uganda
  + Several hundred members died in the year 200 as a result of membership (suicide/murder)
  + Died in a fire and in a series of poisonings/killings
  + More than 300 people died in the fire, 400 others found dead in pits
  + Goals -> obey the 10 commandments and preach the word of jesus
  + Largely silent (discouraged talking), sex was forbidden, soap was forbidden
  + Declared an apocalupse would happen December 31st, 1999, when it didn’t, leaders were questioned, new date chosen March 17th 2000
* NXIVM
  + Led by Keith Raniere who is now in prison, founded with Nancy Salzman
  + Founded in 1998, based in Ney York, had centres in US, Canada, Mexico
  + Self-improvement group, MLM: trying to help personal and professional development
  + 700 members at its height
  + Women assaulted, branded and made to pose for nude photos which were used as blackmail
  + Sex trafficking, grooming, sexual assaults/abuse
  + Raniere sentenced to 120 years
  + Somehow Raniere is still directing a few loyal members from prison
* 7M Films
  + Founded by Robert Shinn in 2021
  + Documentary “Dancing for the Devil: the 7M TikTok cult”
  + American talent management company abased in LA, labelled a cult
  + Tied to the Shekinah Church (estab;ished in 1964): Shinn founded the church
  + Allegations of brainwashing, secual, emotional, and physical abuse and also theft. Former dancers and members of the church filed civil lawsuits against Shinn

Not all new religious, personal growth, self help, or radical psychotherapy organizations are knows to use mind control or other cultic techniques of deception/persuasion