

# Curing the cult curse

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The rise of religious cults in the 1970's throughout North America and abroad has touched off heated discussion in family, legal, and clergy circles everywhere. The murders of Leo Ryan, a U.S. Congressman and three newsmen, to be followed by the mass suicide and murder of over 900 followers of Jim Jones's People's Temple in the jungle of Guyana last November served notice of the potential destruction these pseudo-religious cults could indeed have.

As a means of counter-acting these so called mind-bending, soul destroying groups, the technique of deprogramming to combat what was termed to be cult programming or mind control of group members became a worthy topic of discussion.

Many of the parents of these individuals, alarmed by the changes they said they had witnessed in their children, began to claim that they had been "brainwashed" by one cult or another. They told of their children's shaving their heads, changing their names, signing over their money and possessions to their group leaders and denouncing their families and society as agents of "Satan's World."

The cult members denied all allegations of insincerity, claiming that they had found peace, love and happiness in their new religious groups and that their freely chosen forms of worship were entitled to full protection under their First Amendment right to freedom of religion.

In an effort to divert them from their belief, parents began kidnapping their children and were subsequently dealt with lawsuits from them claiming they had violated their constitutional rights.

In the ensuing controversy, one man has emerged as the kingpin in the deprogramming method; Ted Patrick, who has been waging a one-man crusade against the cults since 1971.

In that time, Patrick has claimed to have deprogrammed 1600 members from various cults by helping parents abduct a son or

daughter and practice his controversial deprogramming technique on the unwilling subjects.

This technique has met with furious opposition from every camp including the majority of clergymen and leaders of larger organized religions who claim Patrick's activities may be the impetus for still broader inquisitions. And both the legal community and the media have condemned deprogramming.

Patrick defends his method saying that cult rituals and techniques destroy the cult member's ability to think and make choices for himself. When that happens, he says, the individual is no longer entitled to constitutional rights of freedom of religion. It then becomes his parent or guardians right, even duty to remove him from the cult.

In essence then, Patrick argues that "our society does not acknowledge as he so readily does that an individual can be stripped of his free will or that he can be induced to say or do anything in the absence of actual physical coercion."

Though Patrick has been arrested and convicted on numerous charges, including kidnapping and unlawful detention, last year in Rhode Island, where a lawsuit for unlawful detention was dismissed, the court ruled that deprogramming itself is not an illegal act.

Patrick has been outlawed to practice his deprogramming practice in Canada.

## A clean break requires

## clear thinking

The following questions are among those that former cult members have had to answer to themselves in order to "break the grip of the mind-bending and soul-destroying indoctrination" they had experienced. It is a form of self-deprogramming. Professional deprogrammers ask many similar questions when attempting to break various cult members from a pseudo-religious cult.

Why did you first get involved?

What was promised?

Was it delivered?

What made you think it was?

What made you think it would be?

What did you learn?

What were you led to believe?

What was true?

What was false?

What was your feeling about authority?

What were you told about authority?

What was true about that?

What was false about that?

At what point did you start to obey commands without question or hesitation?

What brought about that state of mind?

What were the dangers to yourself in that?

What were the dangers to others in that?

What individual would benefit from that?

What organization would benefit from that?

Would you benefit from that? behavior?

What would eventually become of you if you continued obeying commands without question or hesitation?

What would be upset if you questioned orders?

How did your personal ideals before you got involved compare with your ideals after you got involved?

How did your future plans before you got involved compare with your future plans after you got involved?

Did you do anything while you were involved that you didn't feel right about doing?

Why?

Were you able to speak openly with outsiders about

what you were doing?

What did the organization tell you about that?

What is your opinion about that?

Was there anything you didn't like or felt uneasy about in the organization?

What happened when you mentioned that?

What were you told would happen if you left?

Who said that?

How much has it cost you?

How much has it cost in lost wages?

What did you really get out of it?

What do you have to show for your involvement?

Have you seen anyone get anything out of it?

What did they get out of it?

How does what you got out of it compare with what you put into it?

Each question is fully covered until the person is able to see what really has been happening, and how he has been gradually led to accept control of his actions and direction of his attention and thoughts.

# Cult launches lawsuit against ex-members

Brendon Moore is among the eight former members of Scientology who have denounced the organization as a fraud and were subsequently dealt with a \$100,000 lawsuit. Moore left the group in 1974, six years after joining on the advice of his brother who, as of this writing, is still heavily involved with the organization. The lawsuit against Moore and the other ex-members has not been taken to trial as yet although the legal battle reached a critical development last December, probably not anticipated when the scientologists launched their suit two years ago. At that time, Justice A.M. Dechens imposed three orders upon them:

1. Deposit \$2,500 with the court as security for costs including the defendants legal costs should scientologists lose.
2. Answer all relevant questions in the preliminary examinations for discovery.
3. Possibly most distasteful of all to scientology and most illuminating for the public, providing a record of all its income and spending from 1975 to the present.

This development, says Calgary lawyer Ken Starosik who represents seven of the eight defendants, is a first in the legal history of scientology: "This is the first time that one of its lawsuits has been successfully used against it, to force it to provide information on its own affairs."

The preliminary stages of the lawsuit have involved the usual examinations for discovery where the opposing lawyers question those involved in order to establish the basic facts. But while Moore and his cohorts eagerly discuss their experiences and opinions, scientology representatives have apparently displayed less enthusiasm.

Besides, since Moore's group defence is that what they're saying is true, the scientologists must provide back-up documentation as required.

This story contains excerpts from a recent interview with Mr. Moore who has just begun "getting my head straight" as a result of what he maintained to be brainwashing techniques administered by the cult. He is presently employed as an electrician in the city.

**Journal:** I've talked to Lorna and she tells me that all of you had been brainwashed into this cult.

**Moore:** Oh yes, most definitely. I was so fanatical that I would watch a television show where this interviewer was giving this cult member a rough time and I just couldn't watch it. I sincerely thought that this interviewer was evil, just the same feeling I had about society in general because this was programmed into our minds day in day out.

**Journal:** Couldn't you listen to the interviewer objectively and maybe reason out that some of the things he was saying were true.

**Moore:** No, because you're trained not to. It's very deceptive the way they program people. They're always telling you to accept the beliefs that feel good to you. They destroy your objectivity. They tell you that when you have critical thoughts about the cult, it's your aberrated mind at work. So what they do is corner you so you can't even think about what you're into. You just follow it. A person who has never experienced this can't imagine the severity of it. They have one process where they get a person to go over to a wall and the person goes there. Then they say thank-you. Then you get over to the wall and they say 'touch that wall, thank-you, turn around, thank-you.' They do that for hours on end to a person.



**BRENDON MOORE**  
... favors deprogramming

- Journal: What is the purpose of this?
- Moore: It's just a form of reinforcement to get a cult member to heed their command. You lose all objectivity. Another technique they use is for two people to face each other for hours and they tell them not to blink. Anything society dictates as normal, we would try to fight it. We were taught to disagree with the physical universe.
- Journal: You said you held a job down in the outside world as well as being involved with this cult? How did you manage this?
- Moore: It was very hard. I went through so many jobs. It just literally devastated my life. I couldn't concentrate. My mind was completely gone. I was lucky to have a job at all. I'm just getting straightened now.
- Journal: Let's try to focus our attention on the morality of deprogramming. What are your feelings on this issue?
- Moore: Do you mean whether deprogramming is moral or immoral?
- Journal: Yes, there's been a lot of talk about this technique being an infringement on the freedom of religion and the First Amendment.
- Moore: Well, I certainly would say if I had children in a cult, I would think nothing of bodily kidnapping them and having them deprogrammed. No question about that. What I know of cults, it would be very wise to get them out. I don't even think it would be kidnapping. Kidnapping falls under a criminal act and doing this kind of thing certainly does not have criminal elements.
- Journal: Yet, the cult says this is kidnapping and many times the law agrees.
- Moore: The law in this situation should be more flexible. These cult members are mentally kidnapped before any so-called physical kidnapping occurs.
- Journal: So you think deprogramming is moral?
- Moore: Yes.
- Journal: If you believe that cult members are brainwashed and deprogramming is a moral means of getting a member out, why don't you attempt to get your brother out?
- Moore: I feel I am, indirectly. With these lawsuits and other legalities going on and interviews like this, I hope we can expose these cults as money-making racketeers. At that end of the scale, I think I'm doing quite a lot. It's tragic the way this thing in Guyana had to happen. It took a thing like this to open people's eyes to the magnitude of damage these cults can have. It scared a lot of people and yet I'm still not so sure that people know a lot about it or whether they want to look at it. Guyana seems like such a remote place to them. And yet, something like that has a potential to happen closer to home than most people think. If these 900 members could have been taken and forcibly deprogrammed, they would be alive today.
- Journal: What do you think of a man like Ted Patrick and his deprogramming techniques?
- Moore: I have a lot of respect for him. I think the man is really dedicated despite some of the claims made against him. He sees it as a necessity. He sees the harm that is being done.
- Journal: From the situation you're in now, would you have wished a man like Ted Patrick to have come and bodily kidnapped you?
- Moore: Well, it would have saved me a lot of money and all those years I put into it.
- Journal: Your unprogramming amongst yourself and the group took several months. Do you think a deprogrammer could have 'snapped' you in a matter of days or even hours as they have claimed to do?
- Moore: I'm sure it would have. It's just a matter of getting a person to become objective in his thinking. I'm sure it definitely would have worked.

# Former member fights cults

In September 1976, three local scientology missions launched a \$100,000 lawsuit against eight residents of Edmonton and Calgary, claiming they had been damaged by false and injurious statements.

In this particular legal action, the Calgary, Edmonton, and Old Strathcona missions of the Church of Scientology sued Evelyn Hamden, Les Jackman, Elizabeth McCoy, William Reid, Neil Taylor, David Wallace, Brendon Moore and Lorna Levett, all were former followers of the organization. Lorna Levett was a senior minister and holder of the organization's Calgary franchise until she quit in 1974. Scientology officials complained that thereafter she devoted herself to working against them, offering a type of deprogramming by way of "personality reinforcement", and a group formed around her which carried on a damaging campaign of letters to public organizations and officials.

The letters are said to have been sent to Better Business Bureaus, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Immigration Department and the National Revenue Department, among others. The message, generally, was that the scientology movement was evil and a menace to Canadian citizens, and that its financial affairs would bear looking into.

After the lawsuit was issued, the eight defendants embarked upon the defence of truth, the most difficult, if the most effective defence against a libel or slander action. They further argued that they had acted in the public interest. Their letters were justified, they claimed, "for the common convenience and welfare of society". After two and a half years, the lawsuit is still in the preliminary stages. Today aside from her involvement in warning people about this and other "pseudo-religious cults" and the ensuing legal entanglements, Levett serves as a counsellor for marriage problems, shyness, and dabbles in psychic consultations.

**Journal:** Where does your first priority lie though? Is it in the eventual demise of these so-called cults?

**Levett:** I would say educating people to be aware of their vulnerability is my first priority. Educating them to seek fulfillment and self-knowledge with themselves rather than following someone who is saying he is going to do it all for you and you find he does it all to you.

**Journal:** You were involved with this particular cult for twelve years.

After so long, what exactly provoked you to leave and denounce them as a fraud?

**Levett:** Well, in my own case it came gradually. I had taken up a liberal training in this particular cult I was a part of where it's kind of like their own secret police, a behind the scenes action, the kind of people who put out this kind of article (pointing at a small stack of paper and pamphlets). Part of the study is a book called "Insurgency and Counter-insurgency" or "The Spy and His Master". And, I went through that training, this was after being in it for quite a few years, and then not long after that, someone gave me the book "1984" to read and it was quite a shock to me because here was exactly the same thing I had been trained on the last few months. Also, looking at the people I had seen go further to upper levels of this cult, they were simply zombie-like. They were definitely not the perfect individuals they were supposed to be. For example, one of them had got further to the upper levels courses in the cult and was a child molester. Another one tried to poison his roommate who was progressing quicker than he was in the cult. Another one, ended up in a psychiatric ward. Another one, a mother of an eight-year-old girl left her daughter with a man she knew was sexually molesting her (the daughter) while the mother went away for, I think it was two or three weeks, for further cult training. And these were the things I was observing and these were supposed to be perfect people. And I had to face the fact that something wasn't right.

**Journal:** What brainwashing techniques, if any, were used on you to become as involved with the cult as you did?

**Levett:** Actual brainwashing techniques are gradual, more and more alienation from society. One is generally conditioned into thinking that the ordinary society is evil or stupid or there is something wrong with them. At this time, however, we didn't realize that we were indeed brainwashed.

**Journal:** I'm glad we've begun to focus our attention on deprogramming. What are your feelings, now

that your on the outside looking in about the morality of deprogramming:

**Levett:** I'm still confused about it. Kidnapping people against their will I don't feel is moral but I also feel that mentally kidnapping and coercing people and tricking them into mental slavery is immoral. I feel it's a dilemma. As you can see, I haven't come to grips with the issue as to what is right for another person.

**Journal:** Okay, but what if you get involved with a cult again. Wouldn't you want someone to attempt to kidnap you and deprogram you?

**Levett:** I know for me, if got involved with a cult again, and being human, one is always vulnerable given the right circumstances and the right pressure, I would sure hope that some of my family or people that involved with would kidnap and deprogram me.

**Journal:** So you do the same for others?

**Levett:** No, I don't believe in actually doing that myself. At this point I still can't take the responsibility of kidnapping someone and getting them out. If their parents wanted to

kidnap them and then got their agreement to talk with me I would talk to them. But maybe I'm being morally lax in that. I feel that at this time what I am doing at this time is sufficient. I kind of point out the hole to those who are not in it. But maybe, I'm being morally lax.

**Journal:** I know a guy I went to school with who went down to San Francisco on a vacation and ended up joining a Moonie cult. His family has been down there numerous times to try to talk him out of leaving with no luck. My brother is a devotee in the Hare Krishna movement, but my parents have never made any real attempt to get him out, aside from

**Journal:** talking to him. Do you feel that parents should be obligated to at least make an attempt if they feel their son or daughter is the victim of brainwashing?

**Levett:** Well put it this way. If it was my son or daughter, I haven't had any family, but knowing what I know, I would do it. Maybe I'm fortunate in not having any family from that viewpoint. Yet, when I look at it, I'm not prepared to take that kind of responsibility over someone else's life. So, it must be kind of a selfishness on my behalf. I don't feel very good about that.

**Journal:** What about Ted Patrick, the deprogrammer. You must feel good about what he is doing?

**Levett:** Oh yes. I think that the very fact that he is taking it on and doing it, he sees it as a moral obligation and I think that we are fortunate there are people who will do this. Certainly, although they may charge a great deal, they do not make a lot of money out of it. I've heard of deprogrammers charging astronomical figures for their services.

Because the legal suits that the cult slap on them. It's very, very expensive to keep good lawyers going with all these lawsuits for kidnapping. I remember talking to Steve North, (a deprogrammer who has worked in Canada and was in Calgary recently) and he said the only way to do it is you've got to charge so the money is there to pay your lawyers. Its not as though you make a large amount.

**Journal:** Do you see yourself doing this kind of thing for some time to come?

**Levett:** Yes, I think so, until we get some kind of courage from an MP who has enough guts to get it through in the House that there should be an investigation into just exactly what the cults are doing in Canada. Of course, the things that are happening in the states are going to help now that Patty Hearst is out of prison. She may have something to say on brainwashing. Because that was very obvious to me that she was brainwashed. I know it can be done.



LORNA LEVETT  
cults need investigating