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Shipwrecked in the Spirit: Implications of Some Controversial Catholic Movements

**Judith Church Tydings, M.A.
University of Maryland, College Park**

Abstract

Three recently published books charge that certain officially sanctioned Roman Catholic movements manipulate and abuse at least some of their members and may be cults [sects] within the Church. The books describe the personal experiences of former members of some Catholic movements and call on the Church to pay more attention to reports of abuse within these movements. The books are reviewed and questions concerning Catholic movements are examined so as to increase understanding of this understudied subject, prompt Catholic pastoral responses where appropriate, and, because no definitive conclusions can be made at this time, stimulate dialogue and an integrated program of historical, sociological, and psychological research.

At Pointe du Raz on the coast of Brittany in Western France, visible from the sea as well as land, there looms a large lovely statue of a Madonna and Child, Notre Dame des Naufragés, Our Lady of the Shipwrecked. The Christ Child bends and extends his small arms towards a boy in tattered clothes who is reaching up to be rescued. The Mother looks on with loving concern.

In the last decade or so some French Catholics speak of having been shipwrecked, a metaphor they use to describe distress associated with their participation in Catholic charismatic communities. This same metaphor can be applied to Catholics who have left certain Catholic groups and movements in other countries. Allegations are made of psychological abuse and manipulation, intrusion into the marriage relationship, invasion of privacy, alienation of children from parents, and arranged marriages. Some of these former members of Catholic groups have visited with their bishops to report their experiences. Others have written about their difficult time inside a Catholic movement or community in an effort to reach out to their Church for understanding and comfort. Usually expressing themselves respectfully, these former members share the desire that their Church become informed about their experiences so as to assist Catholic hierarchy in overseeing Catholic movements and communities.

The claims of these former members are remarkably similar to those of Protestant Evangelicals concerned about cultic processes in Protestant groups, particularly the shepherding movement (Burks & Burks, 1992). Indeed, in *Churches that Abuse* Enroth says: "A central theme of this book is that spiritual abuse can take place in the context of doctrinally sound, Bible preaching, fundamental, conservative Christianity. All that is needed for abuse is a pastor accountable to no one and therefore beyond confrontation" (Enroth, 1992, p. 189).

There are 1,005,254,000 Roman Catholics worldwide, about 17.4 percent of the global population.¹ Most are primarily linked with the Church through a parish, which is a

¹ Bunson, Matthew (Ed.). 2000 *Catholic Almanac*. (1999). Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, p. 345. The

subdivision of a diocese presided over by a bishop. For increasing numbers of Catholics, however, the primary bond is with one of many Catholic movements, and only secondarily with a parish, if at all. Characterized, some say, by secrecy and elitism, the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful of these groups are: the Focolare Movement, Neocatechumenate (NC), Communion and Liberation (CL) and Opus Dei². Membership in the first three numbers in the millions (Keeler, 1998; Urquhart, 1999a). Opus Dei counts close to 80,000 members in over 80 countries (Jones, 1998; Martin, 1995). Much smaller numbers of Catholics are to be found in the Vatican approved Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships and other covenant communities which do not yet have official Church recognition (Gillis, 1997a, 1997b; Rush, 1994).

It is difficult to gather statistics on these groups, even some of the larger ones. In 1988, for example, a priest from the diocese of Clifton, England, tried to find out about the Neocatechumenate (NC) movement, which has existed since 1964. He could find only a handful of articles (Buckley, 1988). With the exception of the inspirational writings of founders, much of what has been written, positive or negative, about the new Catholic movements has appeared in the last ten years. Much of that literature has been critical.

It is important to note that a great many Catholic organizations and communities have not come under attack. These groups appear to be less authoritarian and less highly structured than controversial groups, although the factors differentiating controversial from noncontroversial groups are not well understood. Moreover, the members of even the most controversial movements are well intentioned and sincerely aspire to holiness. Criticism is generally directed at the usually unintended consequences of institutional structures and/or practices that are at risk of harming people.

This essay will review and comment upon three popular books that are critical of certain Catholic NRMs in order to:

1. increase understanding of some of the criticism leveled at certain Catholic movements and communities,
2. stimulate dialogue and research inside and outside of the Catholic Church, and
3. prompt Catholic pastoral responses where appropriate.

The three books on which the essay will focus are *Beyond the Threshold: A Life in Opus Dei* (Tapia, 1997), *The Pope's Armada: Unlocking the Secrets of Mysterious and Powerful New Sects in the Church* (Urquhart, 1999a), and *Les Naufragés de l'Esprit: Des Sectes Dans l'Eglise Catholique* (Baffoy, Delstre, & Sauzet, 1996). All three of the books were originally published in Europe. The first two are now available in American editions.

Almanac lists 9,005,254,000 as the global Catholic population, an obvious typo as the world population is listed at 5,820,254,000. The correct figure is 1,005,254,000, confirmed by a communication between Rev. John Dillon, Ph.D. and Matthew Bunson, Feb. 7, 2000 (personal communication with Rev. John Dillon, Ph.D., February 10, 2000).

² Older than Focolare, NC, C&L, and Charismatic Renewal, Opus Dei eschews the term "movement" when speaking of itself and instead prefers the designation "Personal Prelature," a Church status it has enjoyed since 1982. Some writers call Opus Dei an "old movement" (Urquhart, 1999a) or an "NRM" (Walsh, 1995). NRM scholar Father John Saliba calls Opus Dei a "conservative movement" (Saliba, 1994), as does journalist Riding (1989). The Media Relations department of Opus Dei's Office of Communications sent me a letter (dated October 15, 1999) that included this sentence: "For your research you should recognize that Opus Dei is not a 'movement,' but rather a personal prelature. A personal prelature, unlike a movement, is a part of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church." The letter then referred me to *The Canonical Path of Opus Dei*, available from Midwest Theological Forum in Chicago.

Definitional Issues

Varying terminology and differing methodologies hamper popular and academic exchanges regarding what are sometimes called "new religious movements" (NRMs), "cults," or "sects." Popular accounts emphasizing extreme examples, such as the suicides/murders of Jonestown, the Solar Temple, and Heaven's Gate, have added a negative and sinister connotation to these terms. Although some cult critics (e.g., Rosedale & Langone, 1999) emphasize the variability among groups and the limitations of these terms, the subject still seems to be stuck in a "definitional quagmire" (Bromley, 1998).

My review of Catholic literature (popular, academic, Church pronouncements, and addresses by bishops) reveals that the terms "cult," "sect," and "NRM" are used to mean sometimes the same thing, other times different things. In traditional Catholic usage "sect" refers to schisms from mainline churches, such as occurred in the case of the Mormons or the Jehovah's witnesses. "Sect," however, is now often used in writings coming from Europe in place of the word cult (Langone, 1995). British writer Gordon Urquhart, author of *The Pope's Armada* (1999), speaks Italian and lived in Italy. In his book Urquhart explains that the Italian language makes exclusive use of the word "setta" [sect] where English speakers would commonly use the word "cult." He says that the Pope and official Church pronouncements have adopted the Italian term. As a further complication, in Latin America up until Pope John Paul's visit to Mexico and his exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, (1999) there has been an official Church tendency to use the word "sect" for all groups that are not Catholic (Arinze, 1991),³ much to the chagrin of Latin American Protestants.

Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schönborn defines "sect" in the traditional way as a group broken away from the Church (Schönborn, 1997). He concludes that referring to "sects" within the Church is a linguistic contradiction. However, a Vatican document that was the work product of four Vatican Secretariats demonstrates an appreciation of the fact that even when critics may inappropriately employ a label, such as "cult" or "sect," the thrust of their criticisms may sometimes have some validity:

It will help to distinguish sects that find their origin in the Christian religion from those that come from another religious or humanitarian source. The matter becomes quite delicate when these groups are of Christian origin. Nevertheless, it is important to make *this distinction*. Indeed, certain sectarian mentalities and attitudes (i.e., attitudes of intolerance and aggressive proselytism) do not necessarily constitute a sect, nor do they suffice to characterize a sect. One also finds these attitudes in groups of Christian believers within the churches and ecclesial communities. [Italics in the original] (Vatican, 1986, p. 64)⁴

When groups³including groups within the Catholic Church³seem tainted by what the Vatican document calls "sectarian mentalities and attitudes" those who belong to or value aspects of such groups understandably defend them when the groups are labeled "cults" or "sects." These groups' defenders, however, may become preoccupied with correcting linguistic errors, thereby overlooking the intended message of a particular criticism (however ineffectively that message may be communicated), namely, that certain practices

³ See Cardinal Francis Arinze (1991). Available also as Appendix IX in Gesy (1993). Cardinal Arinze heads the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Of interest is Saliba's commentary on Arinze (Saliba, 1994).

⁴ This version of the document omits three sections, one of which is the bibliography. The complete document may be found as Appendix IX in LeBar (1989). For other versions see the first footnote in Saliba (1992).

may sometimes harm some people. This state of affairs may make some Church authorities uncertain about how to meet their pastoral responsibilities toward those who may have been harmed by sectarian mentalities and attitudes, as well as those who value the missions and ideals of the groups that are criticized.

Adding to the confusion is that movements within the Catholic Church have been variously called: new movements (John Paul II, 1988), lay movements (John Paul II, 1981), spiritual movements (Cordes, 1988), and new religious movements (NRMs - Arbuckle, 1994).

The definitional confusion that troubles Church authorities has also affected academia, splitting researchers into two opposing camps, although some productive dialogue between members of the two camps has begun (Langone, 1999). British researcher Eileen Barker (1986) has pointed out that most psychiatrists and psychologists are sympathetic to the position of cult critics, sometimes known as the "anticult movement." Researchers who maintain that some cults are psychologically harmful and produce negative reactions, including depression, guilt, passivity, disassociation, psychotic breaks and fear of cult reprisals, include psychologists Paul Martin (1993) and Margaret Singer (Singer & Ofshe, 1990) and psychiatrist, the late Louis Jolyon West (West & Martin, 1994).⁵ Some academics in this camp, including ethnographer Benjamin Zablocki (1998a, 1998b) and sociologist Ronald Enroth (1977), believe that "there is more than friendly persuasion at work" (Enroth, 1997, p. 37) in the dynamics of some groups, whether it be called undue influence, some sort of mind or thought control, or brainwashing. Many in this academic community eschew the label NRM as too restrictive, for it eliminates groups that are not religious and ignores the issue of harm that is central to the controversy. Some, consequently, use the term, "NRM," to designate groups which are innovative, unconventional, or unorthodox but which are psychologically benign. The term "cult" is then reserved for those groups that are exploitative and manipulative (Langone, 1995).

Sociologists and religious studies researchers, on the other hand, prefer "NRM" precisely because it is viewed as less derogatory and more value-free than the word "cult," which clearly has taken on a negative connotation in common usage (Saliba, 1993). Religious studies professor John Saliba (1995) and sociologists David Bromley and Anson Shupe (Bromley & Shupe, 1981) and Thomas Robbins (Robbins & Anthony, 1980) are among those who belong to this second camp in the NRM/cult research community. But because sociologists used the term "cult" for many years, even academics in this camp have problems with the NRM classification. Barker (1986), for example, said: "It is, indeed difficult to decide which movements are most usefully classified as new religions and/or cults" (p. 332-333).

There are Catholic priests in both camps, on either side of the NRM/cult divide.⁶

⁵ See Aronoff, Lynn, & Malinowski (in press) for a methodological critique of research that addresses this question.

⁶ This situation, although perhaps confusing to the average Catholic, is not unexpected. Catholic priests have varieties of callings within their Church. Some are more pastoral, dealing directly with the faithful and their concerns; some priests serve as scholars giving advice to the Church. See my discussion of von Hugel's construct (Tydings, 1977). Fr. James LeBar has been a cult consultant to the Archdiocese of New York and is author of a popular book (LeBar, 1989). Fr. Walter Debold of Seton Hall University has taught world religions and has appeared on New Jersey television as a cult expert. Fr. Debold has counseled many former members of American Catholic charismatic covenant communities as well as others from high demand, high control groups. Fr. Lawrence Gesy, a priest of the archdiocese of Baltimore, produced a popular book (Gesy, 1993). Fr. James Saliba is a Jesuit priest and NRM scholar who has an interest in Catholic dialogue with new religions and fringe religious movements (NRMs). His writings include Saliba (1992) and Saliba (1993). Fr. Saliba is unsympathetic to the anticult movement.

Academics are sometimes viewed as cult sympathizers or cult apologists because their focus on cults as alternative cultures can make them seem like advocates for NRMs (LeBar, 1989). Saliba says that the "neutral stance of the social sciences [is] a stance which has often been interpreted as favoring the NRMs" (Saliba, 1994, p. 213).

That sociologists of religion tend to be more dispassionate, impartial, and nonjudgmental than scholars from other disciplines has been called into question (Enroth, 1997). Some support for this point of view comes from the fact that academics in both camps have testified as expert witnesses in cult-related litigation. Also, some academics "found themselves becoming part of their own data" resulting "from the sponsorship of conferences (and subsequent publications of proceedings) by some of the movements" (Barker, 1986 p. 332). It is worth noting that *Nova Religio's* premier issue (October, 1997) called for papers for a print symposium on the subject of "Academic Integrity and the Study of Religious Movements." One of the questions raised is: "Should scholars publicly disclose funding from and other relationships with new religious movements?" (p. 10). Enroth recently commented that those like himself who "attend professional meetings where the topic of NRMs is debated have seen the touted objectivity of both sides more than a bit frayed and wanting" (Enroth, 1997, p. 36).

My review of the literature suggests that one camp, comprised mainly of academicians, tended to have neutral-to-positive views of groups that were traditionally termed "cults." In the 1970s and 1980s mental health professionals and some academicians began to criticize certain "cults" for their exploitatively manipulative practices. The media tends to report on the negative side of the cult phenomenon (Richardson, 1997). Academicians in the first camp, upset by this one-sided, negative picture, began to use the term "new religious movement" in order to restore a neutral-to-positive tone to their research. But their attempt to inject balance into the controversy seems merely to have aggravated it, for their writings are often interpreted as attempts to minimize reported harm; hence, the label "cult apologists" (Langone, 1993). The use of the terms "horror stories" (Saliba, 1995) and "atrocities tales" (Bromley & Shupe, 1981) in some analyses reinforced this perception, for these phrases imply that negative reports of former members are false by definition. These researchers don't call positive reports of former or current members "benevolence tales" or "spiritual growth tales"; only people who say "bad" things about cultic groups are telling "tales."

Zablocki says, "in instances where a great many individuals independently report similar accounts of disenchantment, and where there are no apparent financial or emotional incentives for fabricating evidence, these accounts deserve to be taken seriously" (Zablocki, 1998a, p. 231). Psychologist Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi warns that "recent and less recent NRM catastrophes help us to realize that in every single case allegations by hostile outsiders and detractors have been closer to reality than any other accounts. Ever since the Jonestown tragedy, statements by ex-members turned out to be more accurate than those of apologists and NRM researchers" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1997, p. 5).

When pushed, most people in both camps would probably acknowledge "some groups harm some people sometimes" (Langone, 1999, p. 2). The fundamental problem seems to be that scholars and professionals make different judgment calls about the magnitude and prevalence of harm in new groups that are sometimes called "cults." They must make judgment calls because the empirical evidence is simply incapable of resolving the dispute at this time (see Aronoff, Lynn, & Malinoski, in press, for a review of research studies). Unfortunately, judgment calls are sometimes passed off as scientific "findings."

Zablocki (1997) offered a possibly useful clarification in a talk at an AFF (American Family Foundation) conference, in which he defined a cult as "an ideological organization held

together by charismatic relationships and demanding total commitment." According to Zablocki, cults are at high risk of becoming abusive to members, in part because members' adulation of charismatic leaders contributes to their becoming corrupted by the power they seek and are accorded. This is a neutral definition that does not make "cult" a derogatory label.

Zablocki's formulation lays out a middle ground between the two camps, for he sees cults as at risk of producing harm, but not necessarily harmful or harmful by definition. The question of harm, then, remains empirical. Unfortunately, the empirical data are severely wanting. Consequently, the anecdotal reports of harm described below should be interpreted as information that may illuminate how potential abuse may manifest. These negative reports should be construed as warnings to those, like myself, who believe in the positive value of charismatic and communal groups. The criticisms should not be construed as blanket judgments on the groups in question, even if the former members making the criticisms imply or overtly make such judgments. People who have been abused may describe their abusers in one-sided and distorted ways. The reported abuse, however, may be very real. It may be an "atrocity fact," not an "atrocity tale." Nevertheless, these anecdotal reports are only part of the story and should be related to other information.

The Pope's Armada: Focolare, Communion and Liberation, and Neocatechumenate

Background

Chiara Lubich, then a 25-year-old primary school teacher, began Focolare in 1943 in Italy. The message of this Catholic movement is universal love and the unity of all mankind. According to Gordon Urquhart (1999), author of *The Pope's Armada*, there are members in 180 countries and Lubich has "a following of several million 'adherents' with 80,000 core members who have made vows, promises or other forms of commitment" (p. 6). Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore put the figure at 100,000 vowed members and more than two million associate members. (Keeler, 1998). Members live in a variety of situations, some in single sex groups in apartments or houses or in one of the twenty or so model Focolare villages, one of which is located in Hyde Park, New York.

A cradle Catholic, Gordon Urquhart left Focolare in 1976 after nine years of membership. Recruited at age 17, Urquhart spent two years in Focolare training in Italy in the remote Tuscan countryside where the movement has a model village. There, Urquhart and others were isolated from the world. Access to newspapers, radio and television was banned. They were taught not to think: "Cut off your head!" (p. 47) was a frequent slogan. Following this training period, Urquhart worked as an interpreter at the Focolare Center in Rome, where he met many supporters of Focolare, including Cardinal Suenens and Pope Paul VI. Vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, Urquhart was later assigned to help begin a Focolare community in Liverpool. Appointed leader of the male youth section in Great Britain and Ireland, he also was editor of the English edition of the Focolare magazine *New City*.

Urquhart devotes only a few pages to his own story, his reasons for leaving Focolare, and his "long and painful recovery from its influence" (p. 15). He left the Church for ten years. He says that he had to learn to think all over again. As he was returning to a practice of the faith, Urquhart saw the Church's interest in the new movements, and wondered whether Pope John Paul II really knows the nature of some of the groups of which he seems to approve. Urquhart was convinced that journalists had "failed to penetrate the wall of secrecy that surrounds these organizations" (p. 14). It was clear to him that "the movements could only be known from within" (p. 14). He believed his inside knowledge of Focolare would be

a key to an examination of two other wealthy and powerful Catholic movements, Communion and Liberation (CL) and Neocatechumenate (NC).

Urquhart recounts that Spanish artist, Kiko Arguello, began NC in 1964 on the outskirts of Madrid. Early in Christianity the sacrament of baptism was preceded by a period of initiation and instruction called the Catechumenate. This beginner's period usually lasted three years. NC believes that large numbers of baptized Catholics are "pagan" (p. 23) in all but name. According to Urquhart, Arguello's solution has been to devise a campaign of aggressive recruiting and intense formation and instruction that takes place after baptism. Arguello's version of the Catechumenate, the Neocatechumenate, lasts twenty years. Moving to Rome four years after its beginnings, NC swept through Roman parishes and then around the world. Urquhart quotes figures for 1991 which list an NC presence in 600 Catholic dioceses with 10,000 communities in 3,000 parishes. In Poland, for example, Urquhart writes that NC is well established "with 500 communities—some parishes have thirteen to fourteen communities, each with forty to fifty members—thousands of local catechists and twelve itinerant teams" (p. 216). In a new closing chapter to the American edition, Urquhart states that since NC began "in the Manhattan parish of St. Columba's over twenty years ago, the Neocatechumenate has established three hundred communities in dioceses throughout the U.S." (p. 442). NC has been most successful in Texas, San Francisco and New York where there are large Hispanic populations, and less successful in West Virginia and Montana, according to Urquhart. He estimates current membership in NC to be a million.

The leader of Communion and Liberation (CL), which began in Italy in 1954, is an Italian priest, Luigi Giussani. Urquhart states that much of CL's energies have gone into politics and publications. CL members, according to Urquhart, have been dubbed "Stalinists of God" and "Samurai of Christ" (p. 6). CL has been the most visible of the new Catholic movements in Italy. Urquhart states that Giussani heads the two sections of the movement that have official Church recognition: "the 25,000-strong Fraternities, forming the core membership of CL, and the *Memores Domini*, the movement's communities of celibate members . . ." (p. 29). Giussani is said to exert a powerful influence over tens of thousands of Italian young people; sometimes 3,000 or more will attend his talks at Italian universities. In his new chapter for American readers Urquhart notes that Giussani did post-graduate study on American evangelical Protestantism in the United States and that CL has in recent years been spreading rapidly in the U.S., basing itself "around college campuses on the East and West coasts" (p. 443).

Troubling Features

As Urquhart proceeds in his examination of Focolare, CL, and NC, he lists features that, based on his experience in Focolare, could be cause for concern. His list includes: "the personality cult of the leader, a hidden but rigid hierarchy, a highly efficient internal communications system, secret teachings revealed in stages, a vast recruitment operation using sect-like techniques" (p. 15). Urquhart also makes reference to FAIR (Family Action Information and Rescue) a British anti-cult organization and its list of classic cult characteristics and to Eileen Barker's book, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (Barker, 1992).

According to Urquhart, NRM researcher Barker considers public confession to be a sect [cult] technique that is one of the more dangerous. Urquhart says that while NC practices the more traditional Catholic form of individual confession, its members "are also required to take part in painful group sessions in which they are encouraged to talk about their worst actions in the most intimate detail" (p. 36). Urquhart notes that Barker says, "public confession gives cults a hold over members" (p. 37). In addition, besides binding members

to the organization, Urquhart writes, "sins confessed in NC communities soon become common knowledge in the parish" (p. 37).

Something that strikes Urquhart as a cult of personality is the way Focolare uses singing. Normally, hymns are addressed to God. Focolare members, however, also sing hymns to Chiara Lubich. Urquhart (1997) cites this striking line: "We come to you, Chiara, we sing to you, with our lives we relive you" (p. 368). In *Armada* he notes that members sing sentimental songs to Lubich, calling her "Mamma." In Focolare, Urquhart says, the word, "Mamma," is reserved for Lubich, while the biological mothers of members are called "little mothers" (p. 32). It is considered vital, Urquhart says, that members hear Lubich's voice, so Focolare has been taping her words since the fifties. Urquhart found it odd when first visiting Focolare centers to listen to tapes of Lubich explaining Focolare, rather than listening to local leaders. In the early eighties Lubich began making conference calls every two weeks to Focolare centers spread around the world.

In NC members sing songs written by the leader, Kiko, use images painted by Kiko, and purchase liturgical vestments that he has designed.

Focolare and NC, says Urquhart, have secret texts of unpublished writings that circulate amongst the most loyal members. The constant shuffling of groups hinders the formation of friendships and attachments to individuals, but enhances the attachment to the organization. Members only have significance in terms of their membership in the movement. They have no worth as individuals. All three movements keep members busy with little free time. In Focolare, if a member has a problem, the member is to blame. Obedience and following the leader are demanded in the three groups, Urquhart maintains.

Urquhart is convinced that Focolare's mass rallies and certain other total-immersion experiences produce a brainwashing environment. "I believe in brainwashing because I have experienced it at first hand," he writes (Urquhart, 1999a, p. 54). "If undue pressure is being used to change the way people think, it has to be named for what it is" (p. 54). Urquhart is aware that the British Home-Office-backed INFORM (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements) questions the concept of brainwashing, opining that if it existed no one would leave a cult. For Urquhart, however, this only shows that for those people the brainwashing wasn't completely effective.

From his experience as a vowed member of Focolare, Urquhart details in his book the way Focolare is organized and the control it has over the lives of its internal core members. Total obedience is demanded, but Focolare houses create the "illusion" of freedom and spontaneity. According to Urquhart, the reality is that the *focolarino* gives over his salary at the end of the month, and the superior has to be consulted on even the tiniest purchases. Although the *focolarino* may stop off to or from work to hear daily mass, he could not make any other stops without prior permission. This is probably the kind of control Nicaraguan Bishop Abelardo Mata Guevara alluded to in 1987 when he talked about the movements' monopolizing priests who are members of the movements (p. 167).

The movement's control even manifests in mental health treatment. Urquhart is disturbed that a clinic staffed by Focolare psychiatrists was established near the movement's center in Rome in order to treat Focolare members for depression and other mental illnesses. (Urquhart claims that depression is rather common among members.) Urquhart questions whether this might be prejudicial to those whose illness might be caused or exacerbated by membership in the movement and "for whom the solution might be to leave" (p. 63).

Urquhart makes many observations, asks questions, and comes to some conclusions. He believes that for Focolare members, the regular conference call from Lubich "effectively

squeezes out any possibility of a personal spiritual life" (p. 33) for members. Members are to center on whatever theme is promoted in Lubich's talk. He speaks of the obedience to the catechist that NC requires, not of vowed monks and nuns, but of husbands and wives. Thus, their duties to each other and to their children take second place to the movement. Within Focolare Urquhart says, there is a doom-laden view of contemporary society. He says Focolare rejects wholesome human motives like love of family and friends, or the creative impulse. The movements claim to be unstructured and spontaneous, but they are in fact "secret hierarchies on a multinational scale, exacting blind obedience from members, with a personality cult surrounding the charismatic founder who wields supreme authority" (p. 412).

Regarding money, Urquhart says the attitude of the new movements towards money has much in common with the prosperity gospel preached by televangelists in the United States. He observes that CL, NC, and Focolare members are predominantly middle class. Financial success is seen as a sign of God's favor. Urquhart says that Lubich lives the life of a wealthy woman. Her home is set in landscaped gardens in the Roman Hills, and she has several other houses for her personal use. She has "a large and stylish wardrobe" (p. 308) and travels in a large chauffeur-driven vehicle. Urquhart reports that Lubich, who likes Switzerland, has for the past few decades spent two months every summer in a villa in a fashionable area in that country. Urquhart says that Focolare founder Lubich and Focolare members would claim that Lubich is not personally wealthy. They would say that the material trappings are seen as signs of the affection Focolare members feel towards Lubich. But Urquhart remarks: "hers is not the most credible of positions from which to rail at materialism and prophesy the imminent collapse of the Western world" (p. 308). Urquhart says that Focolare members are not allowed to know where their money goes and that some of the most questionable practices of the movements are those used to separate members from their wealth.

Because the new movements have papal approval and so many priest members, it seems likely that persons leaving Focolare or NC or CL or another Catholic movement may feel that they are leaving the Church, or even God. The movements don't appear to do anything to dispel that impression. Many ex-members say they would have left sooner but the presence of so many priests in their group made them think that their perception must be wrong.⁷ According to Urquhart, Catholics who have devoted years of faithful service to God and the Catholic Church in a movement like Focolare are treated as outcasts when they leave, as dead persons who have failed spiritually. Their formation in the movement causes them to think, "if we had problems, then we alone were to blame" (p. 53).

My own contact with former members of controversial Catholic groups supports Urquhart's observation that many have been led to believe that if they leave their groups, they will lose their salvation and end up in hell. Some people give up any practice of or belief in Christianity. Urquhart, for example, left the Church for ten years. People become so traumatized that they say they can no longer listen to a hymn or attend any kind of ceremony. Some former members of Catholic movements liken the experience to a spiritual rape.⁸ Urquhart writes: "Looking back, I feel that the mental violence I experienced was a kind of rape of the soul by spiritual heavies, leaving deep and lasting scars" (p. 399).

⁷ Referring to his former nineteen-year membership in an American charismatic covenant community, one priest has said: "we gave everything that was going on at the community legitimacy. That's the greatest evil the priests performed in the community." Father Thomas Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap. in Gillis (1997).

⁸ See the statement of Christopher West in Gillis (1997a, p. 14).

Urquhart calls for the establishment of support groups and help lines for those leaving these movements. "Like ex-members of any other sect [cult], defectors from the new Catholic movements are losing an enormous emotional, spiritual and possibly financial investment" (p. 416). He mentions that some former members may be led to civil action and, in this regard, discusses a case in Italy where a wife accused four NC catechists of subjecting her husband to unreasonable pressure that resulted in the destruction of their family.

Urquhart says that the Second Vatican Council was to have contributed to the formation of a Catholic laity capable of thinking for themselves and bringing their special expertise to Church teaching. Although NC, CL, and Focolare present themselves as the embodiment of Vatican II values, Urquhart sees them as a sad return to a brainwashed, submissive flock whose only duty is to heed and obey.

Seeking Credibility and Support

The significance of the title of Urquhart's book lies in the fact that the three worldwide Catholic movements he examines have managed to place themselves directly under the Pope, thereby circumventing as much as possible the scrutiny and authority of local bishops. In some cases he says the movements have successfully recruited the local bishop. In others large monetary contributions are made to bishops. About the Vienna meeting of European bishops in April 1993 and the Roman meeting of African bishops in January 1994, Urquhart writes: "NC paid all the hotel and travel bills for the bishops and cardinals who participated" (p. 303). Urquhart says some theologians and clergy wonder whether this plays a part in a lack of ecclesiastical interference.

Focolare and CL have their own structures. Only NC bases its activities in the traditional parish. *The Pope's Armada* notes that these movements have money and manpower and can be counted on to back this pontiff's special interests, one of which is large-scale youth days.

Urquhart claims that the movements initiated the first World Youth Day, which was held in Rome in 1984. The event so impressed the Pope that he has held many more since. The first World Youth Day outside a Catholic country took place in Denver in 1993. Urquhart attended and reported that the Day bore the unmistakable stamp of the new movements. "The habitual smiles of the *focolarini*" were "eerily familiar" (p. 93).

As for NC, it seemed undaunted that it would have to fly in most of its participants at enormous cost. According to Urquhart, Kiko had made a public guarantee to Pope John Paul that there would be at least 50,000 NC members present in Denver. Urquhart arrived at Cherry Creek State Park in Denver in a press bus. As he passed near the stage where the Pope was to lead a vigil, he glanced out at the throng of thousands and noticed the familiar NC motifs on banners and tee shirts and he heard the flamenco chords of Kiko's songs. That evening during the pontiff's address Urquhart stood in front of the stage and looked out at the huge crowd. One by one Neocatechumenate banners were raised in an orchestrated fashion. "They were a private message to the pontiff, pledging allegiance, but they also said: 'We are here and we are thousands.' It was a chilling display of strength" (p. 197). Ten thousand NC members were present from Italy alone. Three thousand young people had come from France, most associated with NC in a country where, Urquhart said, the French Bishop's Conference did not recognize NC as a Catholic association. (I do not know if this situation has changed since Urquhart wrote about it in 1995.) The official NC total of participants in Denver was 40,000, well over a fifth of all those registered. Urquhart says that the participation of the movements at that gathering "was out of all proportion to their numbers in the wider ecclesial community" (p. 197). Their influence was obvious.

Another special concern of the Pope is the worldwide shortage of priests. Urquhart writes that "the Pope's armada" (the Catholic movements), is providing him with priests. NC has thousands of priest members whom it has successfully recruited. But NC is now producing its own priests who have been through or are going through the lengthy twenty-year initiation process.⁹ Urquhart reports that in 1993 NC had twenty-four seminaries in twenty countries with 850 seminarians in training. CL has provided many men called to the priesthood, and Focolare, although it has long had the support of many diocesan and religious priests, has had men ordained who come from its own ranks.

Not all bishops share this Pope's enthusiasm for NC seminaries. Urquhart points to the 1987 Synod on the Laity in Rome, where Monsignor Abelardo Mata Guevara, Bishop of Nicaragua, voiced his concern. "The bishops are worried by the fact that young priests whose vocation [calling] has developed in the context of the spirituality of a particular movement continue to be monopolized by that movement; it is equally worrying that special seminaries are being promoted where all the young people with vocational intentions from the Neocatechumenate groups go to study with the aim of going on to serve their community" (p. 167).

Urquhart lays the blame for the aberrations of the movements "at the door of a timorous and indecisive episcopate" (p. 414). He points out that local bishops are in a position to know what is going on in their dioceses and have a duty to be informed. And the faithful have a right to be informed of the dangers inherent in various groups. "Respect for the Pope or fear for their careers does not absolve them from their responsibility to the faithful" (p. 414).

Reviews of the Book

Two long reviews of *The Pope's Armada* appeared in England, where the book was published four years before the American edition. Michael Walsh, the reviewer chosen by *The Tablet* (Walsh, 1995), the most widely known British Catholic magazine, has written a book highly critical of Opus Dei (Walsh, 1992). The Oxford *Journal of Contemporary Religion* review article of Urquhart's book is by an Anglican woman who belonged to Focolare when Urquhart did and who still has some level of affiliation (Bowie, 1996, p. 107; Urquhart, 1999a, p. 420). The reviews display these biases but the reviewers are up front about them. Both reviewers reacted very negatively to Urquhart's use of the term "brainwashing." But in the end Walsh said he closed Urquhart's book "convinced that what the Catholic Church needs is an objective sociological analysis of the new phenomenon of sectarianism within its ranks" (Walsh, 1995, p. 865).

While criticizing Urquhart on various fronts, the *Journal of Contemporary Religion* review acknowledged that many of Urquhart's criticisms were valid: "A tendency, for instance, to see relationships as potential recruiting grounds, a belief that the Focolare's message of unity is the only valid form of Christianity in the Church, the ready willingness to take sick-leave from a place of work to attend the Movement's gatherings in Rome, the heavy-handed didacticism of Focolare teaching which passes for 'dialogue'" (Bowie, 1996, p. 106).

A very interesting and long review by a priest of the Dominican religious order stationed in Rome (Christian, 1996) appeared in an obscure publication, *Inside the Vatican*. Christian first faulted *The Pope's Armada* for three major flaws. He found the structure unclear. Second, he wished that Urquhart had dwelt on the spiritual hunger that drives people to the

⁹ The period of diocesan seminary formation for a college graduate is ordinarily about four years.

movements in the first place. And lastly, Christian felt that although Urquhart demonstrated "remarkable theological competence" (Christian, 1996, p. 54), he occasionally allowed his own difficulties with certain Church teachings or with ecclesiastical politics to intrude on the pages, thereby reducing his credibility. In part, Christian may be referring to Urquhart's candid admission of his homosexuality and his discussion of the Church's teaching and Focolare's practice in this area.

Fr. Christian concludes, however, that the strengths of Urquhart's book far outweigh its weaknesses. The priest reviewer admits to having served for a year as a presbyter [priest] for a NC community in a Roman parish and "entirely agrees with Urquhart's description of the serious shortcomings of NC" (Christian, 1996, p. 54). He predicted that *The Pope's Armada* will "infuriate many people" but in the end "Urquhart's angry voice may serve to promote more sober analysis" of the movements (Christian, 1996, p. 55).

Two years after Urquhart's book was published and two years after *The Tablet* reviewed it, Urquhart was invited by that publication to write an article in a three part series on Catholic movements. *The Tablet* entitled Urquhart's article "A Dead Man's Tale" (Urquhart, 1997). The significance of the title lies in the fact that former members of the movements are usually nonpersons unless they return to the movement. Urquhart says he was hounded for a year after leaving Focolare. His refusal to return resulted in an irrevocable break with those he had been so close to for nine years. This proved to be an abrupt awakening from the Focolare dream of practicing Gospel love. Urquhart says there are detailed files kept on all who have contact with Focolare. Former members like Urquhart are kept in a section marked with a large "M" for "Morti," the "Dead."

Urquhart has produced an important book. Not surprisingly, the book seems to have brought some clarity and comfort to former members of Catholic movements. Urquhart referred to this in his 1997 *Tablet* article, saying that letters from and conversations with readers have demonstrated that his book has helped former members of Catholic movements to deal with their feelings of guilt and failure. This was reiterated in the new chapter of the *Armada* included in the American edition.

Three negative qualities of the book stand out. Readers who are unfamiliar with the Catholic Church, its internal workings, politics, and history, may find a few parts of the book tough going. Urquhart paints with a broad brush, so some of what he says should be taken with a grain of salt. Lastly, he discusses so many names and dates that there are bound to be factual errors here and there^{3/4}not a reason to dismiss this book. Parts of the book, however, are almost gripping: his training time in Tuscany, his visit to the Denver Youth Day, his account of the 1987 Synod on the Laity, and the account of how NC tore a suburban London parish apart.

The Pope's Armada provides a context for approaching the next two books.

Les Naufragés de l'Esprit: French Catholic Charismatic Communities

Background

Unlike the other four movements discussed in this essay, the Charismatic Renewal movement had no founder (Csordas, 1997). What is called the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement began in America in the late 1960s. It is a Catholic expression of the Pentecostal movement that began with the Azusa street revival in California in the early 1900's. American Protestant congregations in the 1950s and in the late 1960s Catholic parishes and university campuses (in particular, Duquesne, Notre Dame, Catholic University

of America, Fordham, and Michigan State) were suddenly dotted with prayer groups that were characterized by much singing, praying in tongues, laying on of hands for healing, and baptism in the Spirit (Connolly, 1971). A sense of close fellowship and community was strong and over time some prayer groups, mostly the Catholic ones, evolved into intentional communities.

Most of these communities called themselves "covenant" communities (Rush, 1994, p. 234). Members bound themselves by a covenant agreement to God, to each other, and to their leaders. American Catholic charismatic covenant communities have had names like True House, People of Praise, People of Hope, Lamb of God, Word of God, Mother of God, Bread of Life, Servants of Christ the King, Community of God's Delight, and Alleluia.

Charismatic prayer groups first appeared in France in 1972 (Burgess & McGee, 1988) where the central experience of baptism in the Spirit was known as "effusion de l'Esprit." The Charismatic Renewal movement spread like wildfire in France as it had in the United States. As in the States, intentional communities arose. In France the names were: le Pain de Vie, le Verbe de Vie, les Fondations du Monde Nouveau, l'Émmanuel, la Sainte Croix, le Chemin Neuf, la Théophanie, and le Lion de Juda, which has changed its name to les Béatitudes.

The Catholic world has always known much more about the American Charismatic Renewal and the American communities than the renewal movement in France or the French communities. What did seem to be known was that the charismatic communities had been welcomed with open arms by the French bishops (Burgess & McGee, 1988). The second book considered here, *Les Naufragés de l'Esprit: Des Sectes dans l'Eglise Catholique* confirms this. The first part of the title refers to victims of shipwreck, so an accurate rendering would be "Shipwrecked in the Spirit." The significance here is that charismatic Catholics have attributed the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement and the communities that arose out of it to the action of the Third Person of the triune God, God the Holy Spirit. The latter part of the title reads: "Sects in the Catholic Church."

Les Naufragés has three collaborators listed on the cover, Thierry Baffoy, Antoine Delestre, and Jean-Paul Sauzet. They assure readers that they have merely compiled the book and that the real authors are the people whose stories are told. The compilers say that over the years some members were expelled from the Catholic charismatic communities in France while some left voluntarily. These former members have all been so traumatized that they have suffered in silence, some not even telling their families the whole story. Many are seriously dysfunctional. People feel shamed and humiliated, finding themselves in a state of psychological and spiritual distress, often accompanied by financial insecurity. The high rate of unemployment in France leaves many ex-members professionally off-track with little hope of a job: "Comment valoriser dans un *curriculum vitae* cinq, dix ou quinze années de vie communautaire?" [How can you market five, ten, fifteen years of community life?] (p. 13).

The compilers say in the introduction that up to now the media coverage of the French charismatic communities has dealt either with the unusual and extraordinary, such as reports of healings, or with the initiators or founders of the communities, who present them as utopia. Coverage has been very positive. Never covered was the harm caused by the communities' authority structures. Never examined were community finances, which are so necessary to the development of the communities.

According to *Les Naufragés*, the French bishop's conference in 1994 listed forty charismatic communities in three hundred locations. *Les Naufragés* says that the three most important monastic-type communities are les Béatitudes, le Pain de Vie [Bread of Life] and le Verbe de Vie [Word of Life], which have members, vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as several thousand associate members. Of the communities not of the monastic type,

according to *Les Naufragés*, the largest are l'Emmanuel, les Fondations du Monde Nouveau, and le Chemin Neuf, which account for about five thousand active members. I stayed for several days in the Fall of 1995 in a Chemin Neuf location, l'Abbaye de Hautecombe in the Savoy region, lunching privately with the head [Responsible] of the Chemin Neuf Community, Fr. Laurent Fabré. That same year I visited their center in Lyon.

In the introduction *Les Naufragés* explains that the French Catholic Church is weakened in numbers and influence and that the charismatic communities are looked upon as an unanticipated rebirth. Careful observers, however, have noticed serious dysfunctionality in the charismatic communities. A few communities have disappeared. Among those that remain, *Les Naufragés* contends that some groups have totalitarian characteristics. The authors claim that it is taboo to speak about problems in the French charismatic communities and that the Church and the communities themselves have systematically hidden the problems, sometimes through disinformation. The Church wants the focus to be on the dedication of people who have laid down their lives in the communities, not on the people who leave. The Church has been manifesting a surprising incapacity to face reality, according to *Les Naufragés*.

Former Members' Stories

In recent years former members began running into each other in Paris and Lyon. They began telling each other their stories and got a group together. Some wrote out their accounts because they had lost the ability to freely express themselves. They found healing in the writing. This group of French former members decided to publish their stories. They wanted to alarm people who might be seduced into harmful groups as they had been. They wanted to get information to their bishops. They wanted to wake up people who were already members of charismatic communities. They wanted to encourage other former members to open up about their experiences. Most of all they wanted to provoke debate.

What strikes me in reading this book is that the authors express fear, insecurity, and worry about reprisal while bending over backwards to appear balanced. This detracts from the effectiveness of the book's message. The suffering of these former members is palpable and heart-rending. The compilers say that most would only allow their first name to be attached to their story. As the book reached its finishing stages, some pulled their story at the last minute. A proverb that had been thrown at some of them as they prepared to leave their Catholic charismatic community rang repeatedly in their ears: "Malheur à celui par qui le scandale arrive" [Bad luck to those through whom scandal comes] (p. 13).

One former member relates how she was expelled from her community because she had doubts. For her, like many others, "the community was me." After eleven years she says she was expelled like a baby outside the mother's womb and felt like a ghost wandering in the middle of ruins. All guideposts disappeared. She loved to sing when in the community but can't sing now. She began to search for answers and found them in a book about a young woman who married a member of the Khmer Rouge. The ex-member of the French charismatic community says she could relate to the woman's struggles with depersonalization in Cambodia.

Another former member tells of being in Chemin Neuf for only a few months before being assigned to buddy [spiritually guide or mentor] someone. When the member expressed anxiety she was told she would be given "easy people" (p. 102). She was also told that she thought too much; she should just pray and go on. This member saw some people being put in charge of fifteen or twenty people. The buddies [spiritual mentors] had had little training. New members were told by some buddies to give up their psychotherapy because being in

therapy showed you had no confidence in God. Confidentiality was not observed. People who were over other people kept notes and revealed confidential information to leaders. There was no respect for privacy.

The book also includes contributions from married couples, who reveal how these communities can adversely impact family life. Simone and Guy joined Le Pain de Vie community because their parents belonged. On arrival they say they found a huge institution, not the expected warmth of a fraternity. Le Pain de Vie community leaders dismissed any spiritual experiences the couple might have had in their past life or in the Holy Cross community to which they had previously belonged.

Heads of Catholic charismatic communities are often called shepherds. Simone felt the shepherd's wife didn't like her because Simone was a nurse. (Urquhart points out that when he was in training with Focolare, professionals and other educated persons were given the most menial tasks, such as working in the fields.) Simone was put to work in day care and in the laundry. The shepherd's wife interfered in the lives of Simone and Guy's children. She would, for example, pick the children's clothes without consulting their parents. Marital intimacy was disrupted because the shepherd's wife would visit them without knocking at the door. They were sometimes so hungry that Guy sneaked into the cold room to get some bread and honey.

Confusion about parental authority devalued the image of the parent. To whom was a child to look for direction—to the shepherd who was a head of a whole community or to their father? Guy and Simone's teenage son began to have problems.

The shepherdess met with Guy and put pressure on him to try to get Simone to be more spiritual. Guy arranged a meeting with the shepherd and suggested that he might be making some mistakes. Guy relates that the shepherd acknowledged no mistakes, because he was "anointed." From then on Simone and Guy stayed in the community but were not part of it. They left when they found a place to live. When their imminent departure became known, members rejected and shunned them. People crossed the street to get away from them. A leader prophesied that Simone and Guy, because they were leaving, would tear each other apart.

Simone and Guy left the French Bread of Life charismatic community around 1985. They say that the psychological wounds were terrible, and the scars remain and mark them to this day. Ten years later Guy's experiences in the community are still vivid. Reflecting back on the experience, Guy says he lost his identity and his faith was shaken.

Problems in American Communities

A number of American Catholic charismatic covenant communities have come to grief in the last fifteen years, lending credibility to the testimony of the authors of *les Naufragés*. The local Ordinaries of the Archdioceses of Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Newark, and St. Paul-Minneapolis, and the dioceses of Steubenville, Cleveland, and Lansing have had to address serious problems with local charismatic covenant communities.¹⁰ The media and/or

¹⁰ See January 10, 1991 letter from Bishop Albert H. Ottenweller, Bishop of Steubenville, to Coordinators of Servants of Christ the King and June 17, 1992 letter from the ad hoc Committee for Covenant Community Reform to all American Bishops heading dioceses signed by William Beatty et al. These letters are in private archives. See also: Allegations proven valid (1991); Allen (2000); Arnerich (1992); Boehm (1991); Bread of Life (1984); Callahan (1991); Clark (1992); Crumm (1992); Flaherty (1991); Giannamore (1991); Gillis (1997a, 1997b); Haford (1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1999); Jones (1997); Kiger (1994); Leifeld (1992a); Melnick (1991a); Nash (1991); A. Reimers (1986); M. Reimers (1992); Rieke (1991); Rodgers (1991b); Smith (1987a, 1987b); Szyszkiewicz (1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1992d);

some former members have called the communities cults. At least one Catholic bishop has used the word "cultlike" to describe a charismatic community (Haferd, 1985, B2). Under the title, "The Cult Next Door," *Baltimore Magazine* (Kiger, 1994) discussed the Lamb of God (LOG) Catholic charismatic covenant community in Baltimore, Maryland, which at its peak in the late 1980s numbered more than 250 families (p.36).

LOG had allied itself with an international coalition of Christian communities called Sword of the Spirit (SOS)¹¹ based in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Kiger, 1994, p. 37) where the leaders of SOS, Ralph Martin and Stephen Clark, had founded the 2000-member Word of God (WOG) charismatic community. A May-June 1987 26-page two-part article on Word of God (Smith, 1987b) in part described that community as a place where boys couldn't wash dishes or listen to rock music, even Christian rock. Girls were not to wear pants or mow the lawn (Smith, 1987b, p. 25). One former member of Baltimore's LOG, told me that while a member she once took out the trash wearing slacks, both no-nos for women. She said she felt guilty doing it and kept glancing furtively about to see if any LOG neighbors were looking out their windows.

Some observers and critics of Word of God's practices told reporter Craig Smith (Smith, 1987), "what began as a community focused on joyous, loosely structured prayer gatherings, evolved into a highly structured, religiously militant community with its own prescriptive culture and authoritarian control of members. Some charge that the community came to resemble a cult" (p. 25). A 9-page 1992 *Detroit Free Press* article (Crumm, 1992) reported that, beginning in 1974, WOG husbands had been told they had the responsibility to order their wives' and children's use of time. Married men were to draw up a weekly schedule for their wife to follow at home. Men were not to wash dishes, clean the house or change diapers. They were forbidden to coach their wives during childbirth. Husbands should direct conversations not leaving it to their wives. The doctrine of wifely submission "was the bedrock of the community's way of life for nearly two decades" (Crumm, 1992, p. 14). "Word of God wives were instructed never to deny sex to their husbands" (Kiger, 1994, p. 37).

The man who was founder and overall coordinator of LOG, Dave Nodar, was interviewed by *Baltimore* magazine (Kiger, 1994) which reported that in early 1983 Nodar spent some months in Ann Arbor, rising to become a member of SOS's leadership council with communities in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Virginia submitted to his authority. He admitted adopting many Ann Arbor teachings, using tapes and manuals from Michigan. When complaints about LOG's community practices began to surface both Archbishop William Borders and later Cardinal William Keeler, according to *Baltimore* magazine, examined LOG, launching inquiries, taking spoken and written testimony and then working out solutions. Archbishop Borders asked a diocesan priest who served in leadership in LOG to resign as liaison to the Charismatic Renewal. Cardinal Keeler invited LOG to apply for approved status in return for certain guarantees such as annual audits of LOG's finances and meeting the same conditions any Church approved group would meet. My conversations with former LOG members reveal there is nothing left of the former LOG community, although its founder seems to have a successful Catholic evangelistic ministry.

In 1991 Bishop Albert Ottenweller investigated the 350-member Servants of Christ the King

Turner (1991a, 1991b); Warner (1984); Wilson (1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c); Zibitosky (1991, 1992, 1992b).

¹¹ Msgr. James A. Boehm, editor of *The Steubenville Register*, characterized SOS as "a controversial non-denominational evangelical organization founded in 1982 in Ann Arbor, Mich., whose influence extends to about 50 charismatic communities it governs around the world" (Boehm, 1991, p. 1).

Catholic charismatic community (SOCK) in Steubenville, Ohio. The Bishop discovered that members of SOS had taken up residence in SOCK to form SOCK members (Boehm, 1991) and that there was misuse of confidential information in the community as well as an excessive emphasis on obedience and submission (Wilson, 1991, p. 7). The bishop brought the problems of abuse out into the open. He ordered SOCK to sever ties with SOS and promised help to any who desired it. He brought in Fr. James LeBar, Consultant on Cults for the Archdiocese of New York, and others he deemed knowledgeable about cult practices and recovery issues. Several years earlier in 1984 Auxiliary Bishop Gilbert Sheldon of Akron [Ohio] "recognized 'cult-like tendencies' in the local Bread of Life community" (Haferd, 1985c, p. B2), another community that was affiliated with the Ann Arbor based SOS organization (Flaherty, 1991).

Just south of Baltimore, Mother of God (MOG) Catholic charismatic covenant community in Gaithersburg, Maryland (Washington, D.C. Archdiocese) existed for more than twenty years without any kind of official Catholic approbation. There were usually five priests in residence for much of that time. The five priests hold doctorates in such areas as canon law, systematic theology, and Sacred Scripture. When in 1993 MOG community leaders requested official approval from the Washington, D.C. Archdiocese, Cardinal James Hickey granted a "tentative" three-year recognition as a private association of the faithful (Hickey, 1995, p.9) before any inquiry was conducted. At that time he "directed that steps be taken for an orderly rotation and change in leadership" (Hickey, 1995 p. 9).

More than a year later, when Cardinal Hickey learned that his directive regarding preparation for a change in leadership "was not made known widely to the community nor was its goal achieved," (Hickey, 1995, p. 7) and as complaints about community life began to surface, the Cardinal appointed a committee to assist MOG leaders with MOG's self-assessment in preparation for final approval. The committee consisted of Sr. Elizabeth McDonough, OP, JCD, a canon lawyer and Canonical Consultant to Cardinal Hickey, Appellate Tribunal Judge and Vice Chancellor of the Archdiocese; Fr. Walter Lawrence, pastor of a Maryland parish; Fr. Andrew Ciferni, Professor of Liturgy at the Washington Theological Union, and Dr. Edward Sheridan, a Georgetown University psychiatrist. Msgr. (later Bishop) William Lori assisted the committee. After hearing testimony from many MOG members, early in 1995 the Cardinal's "Ad Hoc MOG Committee" sent an agenda to the MOG Pastoral Board in preparation for an upcoming meeting. Entitled "Items of Concern for your Response at the Meetings on Feb 14 and 15," (Ad Hoc MOG Committee, 1995) five of the pages list some of the same kinds of findings that had emerged in BOLC, LOG, WOG, and SOCK communities plus others: "several MOG leaders direct multiple corporations related to the community; there are no articulated financial obligations from MOG to its members; there is evidence of obfuscation and evasiveness by MOG leaders in dealing with the Archdiocese, with their own members and with this Committee." Page six of that "Items of Concern" agenda listed "Ten Characteristics of a Cult" which MOG leaders were to study and comment on at an upcoming meeting.¹²

In the end, Cardinal Hickey asked MOG lay leaders to step down. He mandated financial accountability, elections, and the writing of statutes, which he would have to approve. The Archdiocese kept confidential the information it accumulated during the MOG assessment process.

The new interim leaders appointed by Cardinal Hickey conducted their own inquiry into MOG

¹² In private archives. This document as well as copies of all other papers from private archives of former or current members of various charismatic communities cited in this article are in the author's archives. "In private archives" shall hereafter indicate that the author and others possess the document in question.

practices and reported the findings back to MOG members. Those findings included: arranged marriages, pressure regarding the amount of tithing, pressure to work for low salaries, secrecy regarding finances and the structure of the Community corporation, alienation of young adults from their parents, violations of confidentiality, and "outrageous interference" in marriages.¹³

The nature of Cardinal Hickey's committee and its manner of acquiring information about MOG, a Catholic charismatic covenant community, could serve as a model for other dioceses. With the exception of an ad hoc luncheon during a meeting of American Bishops in 1991 (Beatty, 1992) until at least two years ago, and perhaps up to the present, American bishops do not seem to have pooled their knowledge of charismatic covenant community problems. In 1997, *National Catholic Reporter* asked American Bishop Sam Jacobs, Chair of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' ad hoc committee on the Charismatic Renewal, if "the bishops with troubled Catholic charismatic communities ever pooled their experiences, as the bishops with pedophile priests finally did to examine what goes wrong and why and what should be done." Jacobs replied, "Officially, no" (Jones, 1997, p. 10). *National Catholic Reporter* went on to ask Jacobs if his committee had ever produced a set of guidelines for bishops for the conduct of such communities and/or other lay-led organizations or was such a plan on his committee's agenda. Jacobs, who faxed his answers, having declined to be interviewed by phone, replied, "No - that is not [the committee's] role" (Jones, 1997, p. 10).

American Catholic hierarchy have differed in how they have dealt with controversial communities after a Church inquiry has gathered unfavorable information. Bishop Ottenweller, for example, publicly ripped up the community covenant (Flaherty, 1992, p. 2). Some hold Bishop Ottenweller in high regard, viewing him as a hero (Flaherty, 1992, p. 3). My conversations with former charismatic community members from nine American charismatic communities reveal that many feel no Church intervention has been ideal.

Cardinal Hickey's resolution of the MOG situation angered and alienated many. Naturally the long-time lay leaders Cardinal Hickey asked to resign could have been angered, but some rank and file members were appalled that the Cardinal allowed the MOG priest leaders to remain in place, encouraging members to go to them for pastoring, teaching, and spiritual direction (Hickey, 1995; Jones 1997). Many former MOG members also question the role the archdiocese played in settlements that were negotiated with the leaders they asked to step down. The former leaders who controlled the main community corporation agreed to resign in favor of new directors approved by them and Cardinal Hickey. In return the new directors of the corporation agreed in writing to indemnify the old directors against lawsuits by former MOG members; they agreed to buy an insurance policy to cover judgments in such lawsuits; and they agreed to seal the community's past financial records (Gillis 1997b, p. 29). In addition to the *Post* and *National Catholic Reporter* articles, events at MOG may be found discussed in messages posted for more than a year on a web site established by *The Washington Post* after the article on MOG appeared in April 1997.¹⁴

¹³ Presentation prepared and delivered by JoAnn M. Bosnick, Chair, Listening Process Sub-Committee, of the MOG Statutes Committee, to Mother of God members at a general community retreat, March 23, 1996. In private archives.

¹⁴ On their World Wide Web site, www.washingtonpost.com, beginning April 13, 1997, The Washington Post provided copies of MOG documents such as the "Information Gathering" document, and set up the site so readers could also explore related issues and post messages. For more than a year people posted messages relating to MOG and other American charismatic communities. Copies of posted messages, documents and related issues materials are in various private archives.

Word of God community in Ann Arbor split in October of 1990 when cofounder Ralph Martin acknowledged abuses and publicly repented to the community (Rieke, 1991). In 1986, Adrian Reimers, a former fourteen-year member of People of Praise (POP), an American Catholic charismatic covenant community, in South Bend, Indiana, wrote a very critical, long analysis of his covenant community entitled "Charismatic Covenant Community: A Failed Promise" (Reimers, 1986). People of Praise, one of the first American charismatic communities, whose two founding leaders became ordained Catholic deacons, is still in existence.

In November of 1985 members of New Jersey's Little Flower Catholic Church demonstrated against the SOS charismatic covenant community, People of Hope (POH), claiming that the community was "taking over Little Flower's parochial school and turning it into a separate sect" (Haferd, 1985, B1). On December 11, Bishop Dominic Marconi directed the People of Hope "to stop holding separate Masses and baptisms and to promise not to establish Little Flower school as their own separate institution" (Haferd, 1985, B2).

In the mid-1970s two prominent early figures in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement expressed their increasing reservations about the direction in which the movement was heading. William Storey, Associate Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University, and one of the significant early participants in the movement at Dusquesne, wrote a letter to his Bishop, Leo Pursley, Fort Wayne, Indiana, expressing those concerns. He copied the letter to Cardinal Suenens, other cardinals and bishops, and the editor of *New Covenant* magazine among others. This widely circulated letter warned that the Catholic Pentecostal Movement, "a movement of religious enthusiasm, needed "careful, responsible and vigorous criticism, and it needs it now" (Storey, 1975, p. 1). Storey warned about "the steady growth of para-clergy, its reckless employment of coercion in matters of conscience, and its reckless illuminist elitism" (p. 2).

Even earlier, in 1971, another Notre Dame associate professor, Josephine Massingberd Ford, herself a participant in charismatic prayer meetings, said, "I am beginning to be a little doubtful about organized communities" (Ford, 1971, p. 20). "History has shown, she wrote, "that charismatic movements unfortunately tend the 'way of all flesh,' towards sectarianism, exclusivism, and sometimes a self-righteous attitude towards not only sinners but also other Christians" (Ford, 1971, p. 17). In 1976 Dr. Ford (1976) argued that two types of Charismatic Renewal had emerged from unstructured beginnings. Type I was the covenant communities. Type II Catholic Pentecostal groups were those that tended "to be unstructured and free" and more "clerically and sacramentally oriented" (Ford, 1976, p. 67). With regard to Type I groups, Ford expressed concern about the practice of "disciplining" (shepherding), especially that linked Bob Mumford, the leader of an independent charismatic church in Fort Lauderdale. Some Catholic charismatic covenant community leaders had met with Mumford and adopted some of his practices. By 1989, however, some of the leaders of the shepherding/discipleship movement, including Bob Mumford, publicly asked for forgiveness for exercising authority in a way that led to "injury, hurt, and in some cases, disaster" (Digitale, 1990, p. 38). A year later, Catholic Ralph Martin, leader of the Word of God in Ann Arbor, had come to the same conclusion. He and other Word of God leaders "repented for fostering elitism, selective membership, secrecy, culture by fiat, social engineering, abusing pastoral authority, unhealthy models of marriage and family, the degradation of women, an enormous pressure to conform. . ." (Nash, 1991, p. 24).

In June 1992 Bishop Albert Ottenweller sent a letter to his fellow American bishops telling them that he had held a pastoral visitation of the Servants of Christ the King (SOCK). "Conducting the visitation I was appalled at the extent to which the lives of members were controlled by pastoral leaders" (Ottenweller, 1992). He told his brother bishops that SOCK had been told to drop its affiliation with Sword of the Spirit (SOS), do away with the

pastoral care system, and strengthen its relationship with the local Church. Accompanying the Bishop's letter was a letter from some leading American charismatic covenant community members. Calling themselves the "Ad-Hoc Committee for Covenant Community Reform" they told the bishops that: "Covenant communities are present in over 100 cities and in over fifty dioceses in the country with many smaller groups receiving formation by the larger community systems" (Beatty, 1992, p.1). Reminding the bishops that in the previous seven years major problems with covenant communities had had to be addressed in five American dioceses or archdioceses, they continued: "It may not be a question of *whether* problems will surface but *when* they will if there is a community in your diocese" (Beatty, 1992, p. 1). The first listed signer of the letter was William Beatty, who served for many years as the executive director of the National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Other signers were Charismatic Renewal movement leaders like Jack Brombach and Bert Ghezzi. These were people whose opinions had earned the right to be respected; they were not people the bishops had never heard of.

Enclosed with this letter to the American bishops were copies of articles from the *National Catholic Register*, which had analyzed problems in Catholic covenant communities (Arnerich, 1992; Clark, 1992; Community: The nature of authority, 1992; Leifeld, 1992a, 1992b; Rauch, 1992; Ryan, 1992; Szyszkiewicz, 1992b, 1992c, 1992d; Wilson, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c). The letter from the Ad-Hoc Committee for Covenant Community Reform referred to a luncheon that a long time friend of the Charismatic Renewal movement, Bishop Joseph McKinney, hosted at the previous annual meeting of the American bishops. At that time, eighteen bishops joined Bishop McKinney to discuss the covenant communities. The Charismatic Renewal leaders comprising the ad hoc Committee said in their letter that the enclosed *Register* articles would address questions raised at that luncheon meeting. The letter quotes some short paragraphs from the attached articles, one being:

Though 95 percent of POP's (People of Praise covenant community, South Bend, Indiana) 1,895 adult members in its 25 branches are Catholic, the community itself has no formal relationship with the Church. Critics argue that leaders use their ecumenical status as a shield against episcopal interference. (Wilson, 1992c, p. 1)

Bishop Ottenweller's letter invited his confreres to read the enclosed material. "It will give you some insights into covenant communities and the harm that can result from misguided shepherding" (Ottenweller, 1992). His letter, the Ad Hoc Committee letter, and enclosed articles were sent to all American bishops heading dioceses prior to a scheduled bishop's meeting at Notre Dame, South Bend. The signers of the Ad Hoc Committee letter expressed their purpose, which was "our attempt to draw attention to the potential and actual problems" [in covenant communities]. They promised to make available to the bishops, while they were in South Bend, the services of people knowledgeable about problems in covenant communities. So that this letter would reach every American Catholic diocese, it was sent to hundreds of American Bishops. William Beatty told me (Personal communication, October 12, 1999): "This was one of the best efforts to date to alert the bishops of a threat to their flocks, not to possible abuses, but to clear and present abuses." When asked what response they received from the hundreds of bishops, Beatty replied: "No response. There was no evidence of any individual or group episcopal action."

Reflections on the U.S. Scene

Many observers might have the impression that problems within Catholic charismatic communities have been clear-cut. There are definite similarities in the abuses that have emerged out of the American communities (see Bosnick, 1996; Boehm, 1991; Hickey, 1995). Nevertheless, one must keep in mind the probable disparity between the lived

culture of a group and its life as expressed on paper. For example, SOS leader Stephen Clark may say that he knows of no covenant community that arranges marriages (Clark, 1992). He is right insofar as such a practice is not likely to be written into a covenant community's written statutes. However, converging sources of information, including the Bosnick report (1996), my interviews, and journalistic investigations, reveal that arranged marriages were part of the culture of some American Catholic charismatic covenant communities. Heads and peers in these covenant communities exerted subtle and explicit pressure to influence a young person's choice of a spouse. "There were arranged marriages. Couples needed permission to date. There was pressure about whom to date and marry. The time couples spent with each other was controlled and phone calls limited. Some had very few (as little as one) dates alone before being married" (Bosnick, 1996, p. 5). Such findings underline Gordon Urquhart's insistence that the Church must examine the lived culture of a group and not simply the rules written on paper.

If researchers and Church authorities are to comprehend the phenomena of American charismatic communities, they must gain an understanding of the complexity of influences that are at work in the communities. For example, precisely at the time abuses were coming to light, some leaders of some such communities became involved in fundamentalist revival movements such as the Toronto Blessing (Hickey, 1995) and the Prophetic Movement (Clark, 1993; 1994). Baltimore's Lamb of God community leader Dave Nodar, and Ann Arbor's Word of God community pastor Ralph Martin became heavily involved in the Prophetic Movement, as is evident in their participation in a conference in 1990 in Baltimore (Clark, 1993). I observed similar complications as events unfolded at the time of Cardinal Hickey's assessment of life at MOG. The leaders of MOG at the time along with one of the MOG priests enthusiastically endorsed Toronto Blessing style prayer sessions. I am convinced that their endorsement of this initiative served to distract some MOG members who would otherwise have listened seriously to the Cardinal's negative findings. In the spring of 1995, some MOG members began participating in a second prayer meeting following the regular Sunday night meeting. Toronto style, the bodies of prone MOG members, who were "resting in the Spirit," were scattered across the floor of a darkened gym while hypnotic Christian music resonated in the background. Leaders had instructed the members that they might bark like dogs or experience laughter in the Spirit. In his address to MOG in September 1995 Cardinal Hickey demanded that "resting in the Spirit" as practiced at MOG, was to cease until further study (Hickey, 1995, p. 4). Some members found it confusing that Cardinal Hickey then appointed as a chaplain to the future reformed MOG the very priest who had championed the Toronto Blessing at MOG in the first place. Researchers and Church authorities must contend with the blaming of the "anti-cult movement" or twelve step programs either for problems within the charismatic communities or for adversely impacting the Church's oversight and inquiry processes. In response to abuses in SOCK, Bishop Ottenweller invited people with experience or expertise to disseminate information to members on the dynamics of totalist, abusive, or cultlike groups. Some people in Ann Arbor's Word of God community had followed a similar course of action. Patrick Kiger, in his article on the LOG community, credits Catholics knowledgeable about cult dynamics with prompting Baltimore's Archbishop Borders and, later, Cardinal Keeler to launch inquiries (Kiger, 1994).

However, *The Washington Post's* Justin Gillis, noted that such a course of action was absent at MOG. In his 17-page, two part *Post Magazine* article, Gillis commented that, while in other places "top anti-cult experts had been called in to help members rebuild their lives" (Gillis, 1997b, p. 31), this had not been the case with MOG in the Washington archdiocese. The lack of involvement by such experts might have been due to a 13-page paper (with a cover letter and attachment) that some MOG priests and professionals prepared and delivered to Cardinal Hickey's ad hoc committee in November of 1994. The cover letter admits of "very objective data of our mistakes, and shortcomings, and even our sins."

However, it credits an "anti-cult movement" with "negatively affecting some dimensions of the Archdiocesan Review of our [MOG] community" (F. Martin et al, 1994). The submission suggests that groups of people who meet to discuss negative Catholic charismatic covenant community experiences are practicing a form of deprogramming advocated by the "anti-cult movement" (p.12). The document blames the "anti-cult movement" for creating a "climate of suspicion" at SOCK, LOG, and MOG that caused "**division of families**" (bold in the original, p.13). To the contrary, subsequent history at MOG indicates that the probable reason for such "division of families" was due to some family members remaining loyal to former charismatic community leaders while not accepting the Church's condemnation of abusive practices. Other family members, by contrast, accepted the Church's call for reform (Gillis 1997b, p.30).

Former members of SOCK, POH and LOG have told me that they found Twelve-Step groups of various kinds helpful in working towards recovery from hurtful experiences in Catholic charismatic communities. On the other hand, the leader of LOG partly blames problems in his community on members who joined groups such as Adult Children of Alcoholics and other Twelve-Step programs (Kiger, 1994, p. 53).

Researchers and Church authorities must be knowledgeable about canon law (of the Catholic Church) and consult canon lawyers in Church inquiries from initial investigation to final resolution. In part, this is because communities will use canon lawyers to plead their case. For instance, a priest who is a canon lawyer served as a member of the governing body in the former MOG community. Moreover, the MOG leadership hired an additional canon lawyer to advise them in their presentation of MOG practices to the ad hoc committee of the Washington Archdiocese.

Reflections on the French Scene

Having surveyed the breakdown of some charismatic communities in America, I return to the situation in France. In their introduction the compilers of *Les Naufragés* say that they realize the authors of the stories will be under suspicion and accused of trying to settle a score. Nevertheless, these compilers insist that all the authors concur that the contents of the book represent only the tip of the iceberg. Much more merits exposure. They refer to problems with charismatic communities in America and highlight the admissions by and apologies of Ralph Martin. With tongue in cheek and allusions to French feelings of superiority over Americans, *Les Naufragés* challenges French charismatics and the French Church to do what some Americans have done, namely, to address the serious problems in charismatic communities.

Les Naufragés suffers from weaknesses in presentation. Lack of organization of the material along with disclaimers is distracting. The absence of dates reflects imprecision. One wonders in what year many of the episodes took place. Nevertheless, the strength of *Les Naufragés* rests in the personal character that shines through this mixture of stories, reflections, and information. In this work, one hears the voices of French Catholics who believe they have been victimized. They have much to say. Given the authors' apprehensions, *Les Naufragés* is a product of great courage. It provides first-hand representation of the negative effects of membership in some Catholic charismatic communities in France.

In November, 1990, the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome formally established the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships as a private association of the Christian faithful. This officially approved association includes communities in New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Australia, East and West Malaysia, as well as Emmanuel in France (Csordas, 1997; Montague, 1991).

Beyond the Threshold: Opus Dei

Background

Spanish priest, Msgr. José María Escrivá de Balaguer, founded Opus Dei [God's Work] in 1928. Opus Dei sees its purpose as enabling Catholic lay people to live an intense Catholic Christian life in the world. Opus Dei has rapidly increased in numbers, with members studying and living according to Escrivá's writings, primarily his 1939 book *Camino*, which was translated into English as *The Way* (1985). In 1950 Opus Dei was the first Catholic group to receive the official designation, "secular institute," a status that differentiates it from religious orders and congregations. In 1982 Pope John Paul II granted Opus Dei the status of "personal prelature," which means that it has the status of a sort of floating diocese, a church jurisdiction without any boundaries. Opus Dei is the only group with that designation in the Church.

In 1992, Pope John Paul beatified Opus Dei founder Msgr. Escrivá only fifteen years after his death, a move surrounded by much controversy and discussed by *Newsweek* senior writer Kenneth Woodward in his book *Making Saints* (Woodward, 1996). Beatification is the second of three steps towards a person's being declared a saint.

In 1997 the Belgian government issued a 700-page report on sects. According to a news article in *The Tablet* (Report on sect angers Bishops, 1997) this report, much to the consternation of the Catholic hierarchy, lists Opus Dei along with the Japanese Aum Supreme Truth cult, the Solar Temple, and Scientology. Some critics have called Opus Dei the "Holy Mafia" (Lernoux, 1989 p. 317) or a cult.¹⁵

María del Carmen Tapia was born in Spain in 1925. She joined Opus Dei in 1948. *Beyond the Threshold* (Tapia, 1997), the story of her life in Opus Dei, is the English edition of a book that has been a best seller in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Latin America. Tapia says, "I have used the thread of my life as a young woman who joined an institution, became a fanatic, and was brutally disillusioned" (p. xii). Tapia was compelled to resign and left Opus Dei in 1966. She had served as a major superior of the woman's branch in Venezuela and before that had been a secretary to the founder, Msgr. Escrivá, having almost daily contact with him for six years at Opus Dei headquarters in Rome.

Some might wonder if a person who left Opus Dei so many years ago could have anything useful to say about the current state of the organization. Tapia believes that her story reveals the inner nature of Opus Dei. In her preface she makes a profound point that must be kept in mind as people ponder how the new movements can be studied, and perhaps checked, reformed, and better overseen by the Church. She writes: "The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset distinguishes between the defects of political systems due to abuses and those due to uses as the result of the normal functioning of the system. That distinction may help us understand that the problems of Opus Dei stem from its normal functioning. My testimony attempts to portray part of its normal functioning" (p. xiii).

Opus Dei conducts schools for young people, which Tapia characterizes as the springboards for future recruitment. In the US, according to Jesuit Father James Martin (1995), there are five Opus Dei high schools: The Montrose School (girls) in Boston, The Willows (girls) and

¹⁵ Referring to Opus Dei an Irish journalist, Carol Coulter wrote: "The suspicion must remain that the Catholic Church has its own cult, protected up to now by the highest levels in the Church itself" (Coulter, 1984), quoted in Walsh, 1992, p. 174.

Northridge Prep (boys) in Chicago, The Heights (boys) in Potomac, Maryland, and Oak Crest (girls) in Washington, D.C., an area where six years ago a *Washington Post* article (Niebuhr, 1993) reported that about 10 percent of Opus Dei's then 3,000 American members lived. James Martin also listed 64 Opus Dei centers in the U.S., many located near large college campuses (Martin, 1995).

Tapia's Story

Early on, Tapia says she learned that when Opus Dei engages in good works, it is to the benefit of the organization: "visits to the poor which Opus Dei recommends to girls attending its schools are always manipulated . . . into an occasion to bind the girls closer to Opus Dei centers, rather than exhibit real interest in the poor and their suffering" (p. 26). Tapia was successfully recruited and wound up making a lifetime commitment without being given anything to read that dealt with what would be expected of her: "I consider totally immoral Opus Dei recruitment policies . . . Even now Opus Dei's approved Constitutions as a personal prelature are not made available . . . after reading over these documents, candidates should be given time to reflect" (p. 28).

Tapia calls the process of her formation over several years, not formation but "indoctrination" (p. 30). She says people became "robots in the hands of the organization" (p. 30). "Our vocation in Opus Dei started with lying to our parents" (p. 30). She was told not to discuss her relationship with Opus Dei with her parents.¹⁶

Regarding how she was trained to relate to her family, Tapia writes: "We obviously never did anything without an ulterior motive. Our sole contact with our families [which was very infrequent] was to request something or other: from a ticket to an overcoat, a dress or money. We were told in Opus Dei that we always had to make our parents give us things because that way they would be united in the Work. Also we were advised that when visiting our families we were to take something from the house always: from an ashtray to a porcelain vase. What is easy to see is that our families were not given the slightest consideration but were used and manipulated" (p. 99). Tapia says that nowadays she has heard some families with children in Opus Dei say that if they give things to their children, Opus Dei esteems them more highly.

Msgr. Escrivá was referred to as "the Father." Tapia says she was trained to think of pleasing the Father. "To please the Father pleases God, and not the reverse" (p. 100). Members had to write the Father once a month. She says that the cult to the Founder was ingrained in the members. Part of Tapia's disillusionment years later was to find that there was no way Escrivá could have read all those monthly letters that she and others had poured their hearts into.

In 1951 Tapia says she was given the task of recruiting a group of girls. By that time Tapia says she was a fanatic. She feels that fanatics have a kind of magnetism. She says there was a file for each girl with details about her life and personality. Tapia realizes now that what the girls said to her in trust and confidence she reported to a superior. "Today, I understand that in these confidences the souls of other persons were pawed over" (p. 96).

"Whatever Opus Dei ordered me to do I did" (p.97). "Simply put, in Opus Dei, people are

¹⁶ In this regard it is interesting to read the literature produced or distributed by ODAN, the Opus Dei Awareness Network, in Massachusetts. The mother who started ODAN had seen unwelcome changes in her daughter, whom, unknown to the mother, Opus Dei was recruiting. The daughter eventually left Opus Dei after a family intervention. The story is included in the ODAN information packet. ODAN P.O. Box 4333, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

made childish, not more mature" (p. 97). Tapia had frequent meetings with a directress where she was expected to be frank in discussing her personal life. Tapia would prepare for these meetings by writing things down in her weekly planner "manufactured by one of the many companies headed by Opus Dei people and which in the last analysis belong to Opus Dei" (p.95).

There are various ways to belong to Opus Dei, as with most of the Catholic movements. There are roles for married couples, called supernumeraries, and for celibates, called numeraries. People who donate money to Opus Dei, and pray for members, are cooperators. Tapia says cooperators are "essentially economic assets" (p.52). Tapia became a numerary. In 1952 she was assigned to Rome as a personal secretary to the Father. As she was leaving for the station, she says that she was called aside, instructed to lift up her skirt by an Opus Dei female leader, who attached a pouch to Tapia's waist. Tapia was told not to ask any questions; she was not told the contents of the pouch; she was told not to touch it or open it. She was instructed not to remove it, and not to talk about it, even with the Opus Dei servant who was accompanying her to Rome. Tapia was told to hand the pouch over personally to Don Alvaro del Portillo when she reached Rome. (Portillo was to succeed Escrivá when the latter died.)

Tapia says that she was warned to be careful at the French and Italian borders and told that if customs wanted to do a body search, she should refuse unless there were female officers in uniform, which is required by international law. Italian customs passed two suitcases but held back Tapia's trunk unless she paid a fee. Having no foreign currency, and having been instructed by her Opus Dei superiors to arrive in Rome with the trunk, Tapia remembered the pouch and opened it to see if it contained any money. It contained "thousands and thousands of American dollars" (p.106). Tapia took fifty dollars out and paid the fee. She reflects, "When I think back today and realize that I had crossed the boundaries of three countries with that package of money, I am horrified that Opus Dei dared utilize its members, exposing them to violations of international law. How could any police officer believe that I did not know that I carried foreign currency?" (p. 106).

In Rome Escrivá assigned Tapia and another woman the task of caring for correspondence with the women who headed up women's branches in various countries. It was here that Tapia discovered that Escrivá did not read the monthly letters sent to him by all Opus Dei members. In earlier days letters had been read to him but as the number of members increased, Escrivá designated people to read the letters: ". . .saying that the Father read the letters from the members was a lie that they were resolved to maintain. Monsignor Escrivá and Alvaro del Portillo knew that as did all of us who had been in Rome as numeraries in the central government, including me" (p. 118). Later as a major superior Tapia would repeat the lie to others. Tapia also thought it strange that upon arrival in Rome numeraries had to hand over their passports, which they did not see again until it was time to renew them or to leave Rome.

Opus Dei houses kept a diary recording daily events. Tapia was put in charge of the diary in the Rome house, which she kept for a number of years. This diary had great significance because it recorded events in the daily life of the Father, the founder. The Church examines such written materials after a person's death as part of the process of considering a person for Catholic sainthood. When Escrivá showed anger, Tapia was instructed to record: "Today the Father was displeased because we did not put enough love of God in such and such a task" (p.120). It was here that Tapia says she witnessed Escrivá's bad temper. Those she saw bearing the brunt of his shouting and screams included an architect, the kitchen staff (because the Father did not like kitchen odors), and the directress of the house (because, for example, a servant left a dust cloth behind). Tapia says there was an Opus Dei saying that those who receive the Father's scolding were blessed.

On the occasion of the death of King George VI of England someone commented in Escrivá's presence that Princess Elizabeth would become Queen. Tapia depicts the Father's reaction. He "violently" rose from his chair, "shouting at the top of his lungs. . . she is the devil! The devil! Don't talk to me again about her" (p. 125). He left the room slamming the door. Tapia says that she was told not to write anything about the incident in the house diary.

Tapia records a terrible scolding she endured at Escrivá's hands. During her journey to Rome, her train began to leave the station while she was being detained by Italian customs. Tapia says she ran to reach the stairs on one of the last cars. A man reached down and helped her up the stairs. After she sat down the man tried to strike up a conversation and handed her some Italian magazines. Tapia states that she courteously distanced herself and pretended to fall asleep. The man later tracked her down at the Opus Dei center and offered to show her around Rome. Despite the fact that she had given the man no encouragement nor had she given him her address, Escrivá shouted at her, saying that she had scandalized the Opus Dei servant who had been sent on the trip to Rome with her. He accused her of behaving worse than an animal. He punished her by making it known to everyone that he would not speak to her for two months. Reflecting back on this event, Tapia writes: "I was really crushed . . . I confess my astonishment at the capacity for suffering that a person endures when he or she follows a leader blindly" (p. 140).

In hindsight Tapia says that she sees the sectarian [cultlike] character that is the essence of Opus Dei. She relates that out of blindness and fanaticism nothing and nobody in her life had any importance except the house, the Father, and the directress of the house. She states that everything revolved around Escrivá, whom they saw several times a day. She says she and others were overwhelmed with different types of physical work. They had no music, could not listen to the radio, and for relaxation were permitted only a half-hour get-together with the servants. The few times they went out to make purchases, Tapia says it was as if they were in their own world, passing next to other people but not mixing with them.

Tapia says that cleaning is always important in every Opus Dei house. The cleaning in the Rome house was murder. In the mornings the male numeraries left their rooms and the female numeraries and servants made up the rooms. The servants did the bathrooms and Tapia and other numeraries made about sixty beds, many of which were three-tiered bunk beds. Then they cleaned the space where the female numeraries lived. There were also big cleaning projects, such as putting red wax on floors, tiles, and stairs and then making the tiles shine by buffing with their feet or on their knees. Some cleaning projects were extraordinary. She describes, for example, having to clean a retreat house by removing drops of paint and cement with razor blades discarded by male numeraries.

When the Father had important guests to lunch, Tapia, because she came from a wealthy and socially prominent family, helped with the table, preparing the centerpiece and advising on matters of etiquette, particularly in relation to consulates and embassies. She says she felt then that great confidence had been placed in her. When she left Opus Dei, however, she realized that she was just being used. "Opus Dei exploits all its members. The Father's opinion and keeping the Father happy mattered more than God" (p. 128).

Tapia was finally assigned to Venezuela as directress of the women's section. She left Rome in September 1956. According to Tapia, Opus Dei is obsessed with secrecy and the safekeeping of documents. As directress of the Venezuelan region she received orders from headquarters in Rome to have a secure place to store personal records and wills, Msgr. Escrivá's instructions, and other internal documents. Next to the secret storage place was a bottle of gasoline with which to burn the papers in case of emergency. Because she was a

superior, Tapia was sent a hand-delivered codebook from Rome. It was used to decipher reports.

All members of Opus Dei make wills, Tapia says. Local laws were followed, but to the extent possible, all assets were bequeathed to Opus Dei. Tapia says that when a member leaves or is expelled, the will is not returned. Hence, one of the first things she and other ex-members did upon leaving Opus Dei was to draw up a new will.

Tapia supervised the work of the woman's branch in Venezuela for about ten years, leaving in October 1965 when summoned back to Rome. In Venezuela Tapia encouraged female vocations with success. The main source of income was contributions, but as was expected, she sent checks regularly to Rome, about \$10,000 a year, which was more money than she kept to live on.

Escrivá had chosen his successors. Since the second "Father" was to be Fr. Alvaro del Portillo upon Escrivá's death, Tapia was instructed to make out the checks for Rome to "Alvaro del Portillo, For the Works of Religion" (p. 191). Tapia and others had been told they could not give alms, but that the superiors in Rome did so. She says that when she sent the checks from Venezuela to Rome she "was absolutely convinced that the funds were for vast charitable endeavors that Opus Dei would conduct from Rome" (p.191). It wasn't until after leaving Opus Dei that she found out that the Banco per le Opere di Religione (Bank for the Works of Religion) was a financial institution. "I was shocked . . . The amounts that arrive in Rome are quite out of proportion to the two or three social projects that Opus Dei has begun in Central America in the last few years; each country where there are such projects is responsible for financing them . . . Perhaps some will consider me naive, if at my age and at this late date, I still dare ask whether the church knows all this. How much money does Opus Dei receive in Rome and where does it go?" (p. 192).

Tapia says that in stating its goals Opus Dei proclaims that it should do apostolate [work] among all social classes, especially among intellectuals. But she says "I would note that rather than among intellectuals who cultivate the humanities, who are not usually rich, Opus Dei concentrates its apostolate on technocrats, that is with intellectuals from the sciences, banking, and the law; in a word, with the groups who control the money and power in a country. Opus Dei women do apostolate with the wives of influential men" (p. 194).

Escrivá's instructions were that Opus Dei women superiors were to have no dealings with Catholic Church hierarchy except for the cardinal and the apostolic nuncio (the Pope's representative in a country). Tapia says that etiquette demanded they visit these Church officials at Easter, Christmas, and their saints' day. As a regional directress Tapia had a special, impressive dress she wore for the occasions. Opus Dei houses had servants (Tapia says they are now called auxiliaries), and Escrivá's instructions were that conversations with the nuncio and the cardinal were not to be occasions for serious exchanges but, instead, they were to "tell pleasant stories about our servants" (p. 233). On one official visit the Pope's representative asked how many people they had recruited that year. Tapia spontaneously answered the question. Because her statement was witnessed by another Opus Dei member and recorded in the report she had to send to Rome, Escrivá learned of the incident. He was very displeased and told Tapia that she had been "very indiscreet with the nuncio, because one should never give any kind of explanations about the Work [Opus] to the church hierarchy" (p. 233).

Tapia says that in Opus Dei everyone informs on everyone else. Her book gives examples in which she informed on others, who were then punished. She confesses that when she assumed her post in Venezuela she sent a letter to Rome giving her impressions of the woman she replaced. Tapia complained of the woman's "bad spirit," accusing her of spoiling

and babying the first Venezuelan vocation [recruit]. Coming off her fanatical years in Rome, Tapia says she must have further complained that she found the spirit of unity being lived imperfectly. She admits that the former Venezuelan leader she replaced was "savagely scolded" (p. 181).

Tapia says that Opus Dei also uses informers in its recruitment of young people. For example, informers in student residences typically don't identify themselves as such. They keep the local council informed of the activities and attitudes of students who have good potential as recruits.

In the fall of 1965 Tapia came to sense that all was not right and that something was going on behind her back. Perhaps the two others in positions of authority in Venezuela did not like her approach to instructions coming from Rome, she thought. For example, Tapia had received a directive that all Opus Dei numeraries were to have a monthly outing in the countryside. She did not interpret the directive literally due to Venezuela's jungle terrain. Instead, she decided that numeraries under her purview could go to a private beach. When Tapia arrived in Caracas, few of the Opus Dei women knew how to drive so she told all the numerary women to get their driver's licenses. She allowed them to watch the news on television.

On October 11 a note arrived instructing her to go to Rome immediately. "The Father wants you to rest for a few days" (p. 235). She was told she would be given a roundtrip ticket and cautioned not to say farewell to her friends as she would be coming right back.

Arriving in Rome after an almost ten year absence, Tapia saw the Father briefly, but was stuck in her room with nothing to do for four days. When she asked for something to occupy her time she was told to catalogue books. Weeks went by. Tapia says she received absurd corrections, for example, that she had acquired a Venezuelan accent that was noticeable. She knew they watched her. Her anxiety rose at her strange treatment. She found the atmosphere in the headquarters to be like a police state, much changed from when she had lived there before. After about three weeks Msgr. Escrivá's maid told her that she was never going back to Venezuela. When Tapia tried to get clarification from the central directress, she was told not to pay attention to a servant.

Sometime in November Tapia was summoned to a meeting with the Father. Present were the two priests who were to succeed Escrivá, Don Alvaro Portillo and Javier Echevarría. Two other women in central authority were also present. At that meeting, Tapia says Escrivá told her that she had been brought to Rome under false pretenses because he was unsure how she would react when she was told she was to leave Venezuela for good. Tapia says she told Escrivá that that would be hard. He told her that was pride and he would pray for her.

Tapia says that she was kept a virtual prisoner for months. At one point she says that a physician "forced" (p. 247) her to swallow some pills against her will. The picture on the front of the book jacket shows a formidable metal door. Tapia says that absolutely nobody in Opus Dei woman's headquarters in Rome can just open a door and go out. She says the security is like that of a medieval fortress. To exit one must ring a bell for someone to come and unlock the door. From the middle of October until March 1966 Tapia says, "I was held completely deprived of any outside contact, with the absolute prohibition to go out for any reason or receive or make phone calls, or to write or receive letters . . . I was a prisoner" (p. 251). She lost twenty pounds and her hair turned completely white.

A Venezuelan Opus Dei member then in Rome helped Tapia set up a secret outside mailbox, which enabled her to communicate some with the outside world. She was found out,

however, and interrogations followed. Her belongings were searched, but she would not give up the number to her post office box and threw the key out through her barred window. After each interrogation Tapia noticed things kept disappearing from her room; her overnight bag, her academic records, family pictures. Escrivá accused her of having a bad spirit. Finally Escrivá told her to put a request for release from Opus Dei in writing or he would see that she was publicly dishonored. She says that Escrivá shouted insults at her, and that in his final words to her he called her a whore and a sow. Tapia asked for her release in writing and returned to her family in Spain.

Tapia accuses Opus Dei of making personal attacks on its critics to divert attention from substantive issues. At the time of the first Spanish and Portuguese editions of her book she says that Opus Dei branded her a liar through its vicars in the countries where Opus Dei is established. Tapia replied in the *Expresso* of Lisbon, September 25, 1993. She now works at the office of the Education Abroad Program of the University of California in Santa Barbara.

Comment

Tapia's book is valuable because she knew the founder of Opus Dei intimately for six years and was in the movement for 18 years. Because the book contains so many details, many of the events it describes could have been remembered or interpreted in a biased way. One cannot judge Opus Dei on the basis of this one testimony. Nevertheless, so many details are so compelling that Tapia's story should be considered along with other reports^{3/4}positive and negative^{3/4}concerning Opus Dei. Tapia should not be dismissed out of hand as just another "atrocious tale."

Tapia's book, however, is not a good first choice for someone interested in a critical appraisal of Opus Dei, for it presumes at least some small familiarity with the organization. One of the most informative critiques of Opus Dei is that of Lernoux (1989), who devoted twenty-two pages to Opus Dei in *People of God: The Struggle for World Catholicism*. Lernoux was a reporter who covered Latin America for decades. Her work appeared in *Harper's*, *The Nation*, and *National Catholic Reporter*. The author of three books, and a practicing Catholic, Lernoux claimed that Opus Dei "practices a form of thought control. It also displays the characteristics of a cult, including worship of the founder" (p. 302). Ten years ago Lernoux wrote that "Opus Dei boasts that in various countries it influences 487 universities and high schools, 52 radio and television stations, 694 publications, 38 news and publicity agencies, and 12 film and distribution companies" (p. 304). She said that many members of Opus Dei were devout people who were pushed to succeed in the secular world, but were treated like children in religious matters. Members receive instruction on every aspect of their lives, according to Lernoux, by means of weekly confession (to be made only to an Opus Dei priest), and weekly heart-to-heart talks known as confidences. She quotes priest-author Andrew Greely, who has said that Opus Dei is a "devious antidemocratic, reactionary, semi-fascist institution, desperately hungry for absolute power in the church. It ought to be forced either to come out in the open or be suppressed" (p. 320). Lernoux interviewed many former Opus Dei members, including Tapia, and her writing supports much of what Tapia says in her book.

Another work lending credibility to Tapia's story is British author Michael Walsh's *Opus Dei, An Investigation into the Secret Society Struggling for Power within the Roman Catholic Church* (Walsh, 1992). Among other topics, Walsh includes some accounts of departures from Opus Dei, including Tapia's story. Walsh concludes his investigative book with the observation that similarities between Opus Dei and some of the NRMs is striking.

It is not hard to make revealing comparisons between organizations such as

the Unification Church—the Moonies—and Opus. However, such comparisons do not always work: Opus has throughout its life sought, and eventually received the approbation of the Holy See. On the face of it, the notion that Opus might be classed as a new religious movement or sect operating within Roman Catholicism would seem paradoxical and highly unlikely. Paradoxical or not, the question has to be addressed: is Opus Dei a reputable part of Roman Catholicism or is it a sect at odds with the Church which gave it birth? (Walsh, 1992, pp. 173-174)

Robert Hutchison, a former financial writer for the Toronto *Financial Post*, also mentions Tapia, supporting her account in his book *Their Kingdom Come, Inside the Secret World of Opus Dei* (Hutchison, 1997). Hutchison names another woman, who was also allegedly held under house arrest at the Rome Opus Dei headquarters. He speaks of street-level windows being barred, which he says is prudent in Rome, but he says that some upper-story windows are barred as well.

Beyond the Threshold was reviewed in *The New York Times Book Review* (Steinfels, 1997) in *Book World of The Washington Post* (Baumann 1997) and elsewhere. The *Times* review notes that Tapia is now in her seventies and that the 1992 publication of her book in Spain was part of the controversy surrounding Escrivá's beatification that year. The reviewer draws attention to a book on Opus Dei by Spanish sociologist Joan Estruch, *Saints and Schemers* (Estruch, 1995). The *Post* reviewer wrote that Tapia's story had all the makings of a first-rate thriller, yet he found it to be dull. He believes readers will conclude from Tapia's book that Opus Dei is not what it piously claims to be, but he faults the book for its constant barrage of unfamiliar names and rehash of the minutiae of Tapia's life.

For this reviewer the minutiae and the naming of names seem almost characteristic of long, negative, oral or written ex-member accounts. The informants seem driven not to leave anything out. Perhaps they expect that other former members will recognize the names or familiar patterns in the minutiae and will say, "Yes, that is how it was." In addition, this may be part of an author's effort to gain credibility. By naming names the former member shows a willingness to stand behind the allegations, unafraid of being challenged. Reviewer Bowie mentions Urquhart's naming of names in her review of *The Pope's Armada* calling it "unusually blunt" (Bowie, 1996, p. 106). The *Post* reviewer concluded: "Tapia has a disturbing story to tell, one of potentially serious concern for the Roman Catholic Church, where Opus Dei has been favored greatly by the current pope. But because she has failed to tell her story well, her heartfelt warnings are not likely to reach those who most need to hear them" (Baumann, 1997, p. 11).

Nevertheless, Tapia has told her story well enough. It must have taken great inner strength for María del Carmen Tapia to write this story, to relive the memories, and to know that the organization to which she had given so many years of her life would discredit her, while others would dismiss her story as merely a tale told by a disgruntled former member. It saddens me to think about the many former members who Tapia says are keeping silent because they still have children in Opus Dei, because they fear reprisal, or because they made a promise of silence to Opus Dei before they left and fear they will go to hell if they break their silence. One hopes that Tapia's forthrightness and decision to speak out will inspire others to come forward and tell us their stories.

Analysis

University of Michigan ethnographer Ruth Behar writes: "there are risks in exposing oneself in an academy that continues to feel ambivalent about observers who forsake the mantle of omniscience" (Behar, 1996, p. 12) but she notes that increasingly scholars are willing to

take such risks. "What bothers critics is the insertion of personal stories into what we have been taught to think of as the analysis of impersonal social facts" (Behar, 1996, p. 12). Behar's thoughts have empowered me as a beginning ethnographer and in my studies in this NRM/cult field. Although I was never a live-in member, I did have an associate relationship with an American Catholic charismatic covenant community, Mother of God, for more than twenty years. In fact, in 1968 I initiated the prayer meeting that evolved over time into Mother of God community in Maryland (Jones, 1997; Connolly, 1971). Hence, I approach this subject matter with certain heartfelt convictions plus concern about my own capacity to remain objective in light of these feelings. Fortunately, I have discovered that passion is more the norm than the exception in NRM/cult studies. It is apparent that researchers in both "camps" care deeply about the issues. Richardson (1998), for example, has written that he is happy to have been able to stand up for the important values of freedom of religion and association. Zablocki (1997, 1998b) is concerned about the phenomena of abuse to which the concept "brainwashing" points, not the term itself. Introvigne says, "As social scientists, we know that there is no such thing as an absolutely objective, value-free observation or narrative" (Introvigne, 1998, p. 19). Consequently, I make no apologies for caring about this and related issues. Thus, I do not think the authors of the three books discussed above should be condemned for also caring passionately about NRM/cult issues. The controversy concerning new religious movements has to do with harm—harm that groups inflict on individuals or harm that society inflicts on groups of individuals trying to exercise their freedom of religion. Indeed, a lack of concern about the subject is probably more suspect than the presence of concern.

My interest in the NRM/cult area stems from my attempts to answer questions related to my experience in the Charismatic Renewal movement and with the intentional communities that arose out of it. Priest members of the Mother of God community, who had lived in the community for around two decades, held doctorates in scripture, systematic theology, and canon law. What dynamic prevented them from mentioning to the local ordinary or bishop that they saw problems in the community? One of those priests, an Oxford University theologian, told a reporter, "In some ways, I feel I've been had" (Gillis, 1997a, p. 14). What could have fooled such an educated and sincere man? Why did successful MOG businessmen never ask where their tithe money was going (over \$100,000 in one case I know of)? What caused members of many Catholic charismatic covenant communities and associates like myself to trust untrained "household heads" to care for their teenage and young adult children?

In the last four and a half years I have visited with, corresponded with, spent hours on the phone with, and sometimes interviewed face-to-face more than fifty former members of nine current or disbanded American Catholic charismatic covenant communities in six states: Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey and Maryland. In 1995 I visited two locations of the Chemin Neuf Catholic charismatic community in France, two Catholic charismatic communities in England, and two branches of the community I was associated with in Ireland and England. I have read popular and academic articles and books about NRMs, cults, and Catholic religious orders. I bring to this study a firm conviction about the importance of intentional communities, the significance of the worldwide Charismatic Renewal movement, a graduate degree in history, a book on the Catholic charismatic movement and saints (Tydings, 1977), and some knowledge of Catholic Church history. In 1975 I presented a paper in Rome on charismatic and Marian spirituality at the XIV International Marian Congress, at the request of Cardinal Leon Joseph Suenens, former Primate of Belgium. In 1980 I was one of four invited Observer/Visitors who joined forty-eight participants in the first World Council of Churches Consultation on the Significance of the Charismatic Renewal for the Churches, Bossey, Geneva, Switzerland, March 8-13 (Bittlinger, 1981).

I am not comfortable with the term "brainwashing" and lean more towards Enroth's (1997) characterization of whatever it is as "more than friendly persuasion." With Fr. John Saliba (1992) I believe that "the issue of whether the practices of the NRMs are detrimental to one's psychological well-being must be settled by psychiatrists [and, I would add, psychologists] and not by theologians and evangelizers" (p. 32). With Joseph Davis (1993) I hold the view that persuasion techniques are not morally neutral. Therefore, the criticisms discussed in this essay should not be construed simplistically as "brainwashing vs. free will" or "cult vs. legitimate religious organization." At heart, this issue revolves around the ethics of how people are persuaded or otherwise induced to change their religious views or practices in a major way and persist in that change. The issue does not focus on the acceptability or unacceptability of particular groups. It focuses on an ethical evaluation of techniques and practices that they may use, often with the best of intentions.

The three books discussed above pose important questions that won't go away and that Catholics will have to face sooner or later. How effective is the Church's oversight of sanctioned organizations, including but not limited to Focolare, Opus Dei, Neocatechumenate, the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships, and Communion and Liberation? Are "churches" developing within the Catholic Church? Are there Catholic cults within the Church? Are spiritual movements like Focolare or Opus Dei similar to traditional religious orders or are they different? Should married couples and families live like monks and nuns? Cardinals like Hume in England (Hume, 1981) and Martini in Italy (Urquhart, 1999a) corrected and placed restrictions on certain international Catholic movements. Bishop Mervyn Alexander of the Catholic diocese of Clifton, England, after considering the findings of a Panel of Enquiry assessing the activities of NC in his diocese, on January 28, 1997 transferred three parish priests and suppressed 10 Neocatechumenal Communities from three parishes (Gormally, 1997). Do most local bishops around the world feel free to intervene in the life of a group encouraged or approved by Rome? These and other questions abound. In the following sections I will comment on some of these questions.

How do the Catholic movements discussed in the above three books respond to complaints and unfavorable criticism?

My preliminary review of the available literature in English relating to the Catholic movements under consideration reveals that the movements in question have responded or have been said to respond to criticism in various ways. I was able to examine some lengthy responses supportive of three Catholic movements: the Gormally response to the Clifton Report concerning Neocatechumenate (Gormally, 1997), Peter Corbishley's (1997) comment on the Clifton Inquiry, Gordon Read's (1997) article supporting NC, Opus Dei's response to Garvey's *Parents' Guide* (Office of Communications, Prelature of Opus Dei, 1991), Bohlin's (1991) critique of Garvey, and Fr. George Montague's (1991) reflections on problems in Catholic charismatic communities.

The movements or members of the movements have responded to criticisms or complaints as follows:

1. Attack the integrity of the critic, sometimes through character assassination that may imply sexual misconduct or a mental illness (Walsh, 1992; Hutchison, 1997; Woodward, 1996; Benigni, 1998).
2. Threaten a lawsuit (Steinfels, 1997).
3. Remind critics that the organization has official Catholic Church approval, thereby implying that one shouldn't criticize what is approved by the Holy Father (McAllister, 1997; Garvey, 1989).
4. Say that the criticism comes from a disgruntled former member (Office of Communication,

- Prelature of Opus Dei, 1991).
5. Say that the criticism comes from disgruntled parents who selfishly don't want to give their child to God (Riding, 1989; Farrell, 1991).
 6. Accuse the critic of not being informed about the group (Garvey, 1989).
 7. Say that the action or activity being questioned or criticized was perpetrated by an overzealous member and does not represent official movement policy (Myers 1995; Garvey, 1989; Gormally, 1997).
 8. Maintain that criticism shows that the group is on the right track because Satan opposes what is good (Riding, 1989).
 9. Use positive testimonies from members in order to distract attention from the criticism (McAllister, 1997; Bowie, 1996).
 10. If the critic's family members are movement members, have them respond to critic (Farrell, 1992).
 11. Complain that the editor should have submitted the charges or criticisms to the movement before publication (Garvey, 1989).
 12. Say that the criticisms come from those who have an anti-Catholic mentality (Benigni, 1998; Myers, 1995).
 13. Be silent; don't dignify criticisms with a response (Garvey, 1989.).
 14. Be silent, but with an explanation. Examples: Declaring that "resorting to the law" or "media confrontations" are "options that are unattractive to those whose stated aim in life is to spread the Christian gospel of mutual love" (Bowie, 1996, p. 107). "A newspaper article is not the proper place to discuss religious differences" (Gillis, 1997a, p. 15).
 15. Point out that the problems are common mistakes made by all Church communities in their youth or at some time in their life (Montague 1991); such problems are "childhood illnesses" (Urquhart, 1999a, p. 438).
 16. Remind us that the early Christians had problems too (Montague 1991).
 17. Suggest that internal problems can be due to God's testing the groups and the founders (Montague, 1991).
 18. Say that the Devil is the source of criticism (Kamm, 1984).
 19. Criticize the methods of inquiry used to gather unfavorable evidence (Gormally, 1997; Corbishley, 1997).

Criticisms leveled against Opus Dei are "calumnies" which stem from "the Devil," said Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo y Diez de Sollano when he was interviewed while serving as head of Opus Dei (Kamm, 1984). Opus Dei members view such attacks as evidence it is doing right. They contend, for example, that the Franciscans would be attacked if they had lots of new vocations (Riding, 1989). Sally McAllister responded to a *Tablet* article written by Urquhart and critical of Focolare with an article that provided readers with positive testimony about her years in Focolare (McAllister, 1997).

Catholic Scripture scholar Fr. George Montague attributes some of the problems being exposed in Catholic charismatic covenant communities to actions of God. "If the history of religious orders gives any clue, it is that God tests the communities and the founders he inspires. Sometimes this is through internal problems, sometimes through outward persecutions, sometimes through temporary misunderstandings even by church authorities" (Montague, 1991, p. 17). When Michael Farrell (1992) was researching an article on Opus Dei, the organization's Office of Communications (1991) provided Farrell with a response to James Garvey's (1989) very critical little booklet, *Parents' Guide to Opus Dei*, and a copy of a letter from James Garvey's daughter, Peggy. The letter said in part, "I don't think I can explain how they [her parents] are motivated to believe what they do about Opus Dei" (Farrell, 1992)¹⁷. A 1993 report in *The Washington Post* stated that scholars meeting to

¹⁷ The author obtained a copy of the letter cited by Farrell (Peggy Garvey to Rev. Jim Kelly, 2/15/91) from the Opus Dei Office of Communications in New York. Page numbers were not on the photocopy of Farrell article.

discuss theologically conservative Catholic groups stated that they had virtually no information on Opus Dei, and they attributed that to "the reluctance of Opus Dei to talk openly" (Niebuhr, 1993, p. a3).

Neocatechumenate. On September 11, 1999 I located some thoughtful English language responses to criticism of Neocatechumenate at <http://www.christusrex.org/www2/ncw/> (hereafter referred to as the Begnini Web site). I read articles defending NC against English Bishop Mervyn Alexander's 1997 declaration that NC was to be discontinued in his diocese. Apparently, that decision was based on a *Report*, produced by the Panel of Enquiry established by the Bishop, which the articles on this site criticize, but which *Report* the site did not provide. Unfortunately it was unavailable to me at this writing.

One of the best responses is a fifty-page paper by Peter Corbishley (1997), described by Luke Gormally, in another article on the site listed above, as a "social research specialist" (Gormally, (1997, p. 5). Corbishley brings up some interesting issues. He faults the Panel looking into NC in England's Clifton Diocese for not having guarded against being influenced by the media. "The accusations that the Neo-catechumenate was a sect or sect-like had appeared in local papers for a number of years before the enquiry. The enquiry was handling a hot potato. We shall show that they did not take adequate precautions against existing assumptions" (Introduction, p. 1). Corbishley does not fault the members of the Panel for bad faith, but he feels that they were influenced by national headlines such as that in a *Sunday Times* article (Catholics split by "Moonie" sect, 1989). For Corbishley, methodological errors in the *Report of the Clifton Enquiry* "underline the continuing need for the Catholic tradition to have a proper recourse to 'reason'" (p. 5). For Corbishley the Enquiry allowed the media to frame the issues. This, he feels, points to "the lack of an internal theological forum within the Church for addressing these issues" (p. 5). I would argue for an external theological forum as well.

Corbishley writes that the Clifton Panel was established to inquire into the presence of NC in parishes in the diocese of Clifton. But this led to an examination into NC's theology, which caused the Panel to transition into an examination of NC itself. Corbishley feels this was inevitable given the model they were using, which was that of identifying parish with Church. One wishes that Corbishley had turned some attention to whatever conclusions the Panel reached rather than simply fault the method of inquiry. Nevertheless, the article is not strident in tone and raises interesting issues.

Other noteworthy concerns are raised by Rev. Gordon F. Read in a *Newsletter* of the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1997), also to be found on the Benigni Web site. Read's article, entitled "The Canonical Status of Ecclesial Movements," says that the inquiry by the Bishop of Clifton into NC activity in three parishes in his diocese and the subsequent decree banning the movement raise a number of canonical questions. Read talks of the various kinds of approved groups within the Church: associations of Christ's faithful, institutes of consecrated life, and societies of the consecrated life. Their distinction is not in purpose but in the form of bond between members and their organization. Associations can be public or private. The role of competent authority is supervision. This may involve visitation, and even suppression. Read states: "The complex nature of associations, and specifically of ecclesial [Church] movements operating in a number of places leads to a complex relationship with authority" (Read, 1997, p. 3).

After dealing with various ways Catholic movements can relate to authority, Read concludes that associations and ecclesial movements have considerable autonomy and are freer than religious orders. "A delicate path has to be trod both by the leadership of such movements, and by the diocesan bishop, if the right to autonomy, and the bishop's overall role of pastor

are to be respected" (Read, 1997, p. 5).

Read also addresses the involvement of clerics and seminarians in Catholic movements and the related issue of the training and incardination [the receiving of permission to function as a priest] of members serving the movement. He says that the numbers should not be underestimated. In 1989, he says, NC had 200,000 members and 1500 seminarians. NC has established seminaries in Madrid, Warsaw, Bangalore, Newark, and elsewhere. At present their priests are secular but not diocesan [they are not priests who belong to a religious order, thereby being designated as secular, but they are not diocesan because they have not been trained in a diocesan seminary and ordained to serve in a parish]. They must be incardinated in a friendly diocese. This creates problems on both sides.

Read then lists these problems: "Why should a diocesan bishop assume responsibility for priests who will never serve in his diocese? If he insists, as a return for his support, that a period of service be given to the diocese, is he transgressing the legitimate autonomy of the movement? Does acceptance of the movement entail willingness to incardinate its members? What kind of relationship with the movement is open to clerics or seminarians who want to be diocesan priests, but find support in 'lay' membership of the movement? Can and should the diocesan bishop encourage, discourage, prohibit this" (p. 5)?

Read says that the Bishop's procedure for investigating claims was "even handed." He questions, however, the lack of canonical input or expertise on the part of the Panel. He finds that the Clifton Panel did not understand that the presence within a diocese of Ukrainian hierarchy or of special considerations to a Polish community or the Armed Forces does not undermine the unity of a diocese. Neither, he says, do religious communities working in a diocese but which "cannot be described as coming under the direct guidance of the Bishop" (p. 8).

Moreover, Read underlines a further point that he says the Clifton Report asserts, namely, that R.C.I.A. (the Church-approved Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is the "authentic" way of evangelization in the parish. This merits further study. Read finds that R.C.I.A. is appropriate for those who are unbaptized, but not for those already baptized.¹⁸

Read concludes that NC does not need Bishop Alexander's permission to operate in his diocese, nor does the Bishop have the power to order its absolute discontinuance. Read says that the Bishop can prohibit use of diocesan premises by NC and its promotion by the clergy. He can try to dissuade his people from involvement in the movement, but cannot prohibit membership.

The Benigni Website also provides a nineteen-page paper by Luke Gormally (1997) entitled: "Does the Report of the Enquiry into the Neocatechumenate in the Diocese of Clifton provide a reliable basis for pastoral decisions?" Gormally describes himself as a NC member for more than nineteen years, director of a national center for healthcare ethics, and author or editor of three books. He wrote the above-mentioned paper at the invitation of a Senior Team of NC catechists. Gormally says that he sent his paper to Cardinal Basil Hume, Great Britain's Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Luigi Barbarito, and Bishop Mervyn Alexander. He says that in writing to Bishop Alexander he expressed the hope that the paper might be of some service "to the whole of the Church in the diocese of Clifton" (Gormally, 1997, p. 1). The Chancellor of the Clifton diocese forwarded to Gormally a four-page response to his paper prepared by T.M. Millington, the Chairman of the Panel of Enquiry. While criticizing that

¹⁸ I raised a similar, related issue when I called for Catholic theologians to study the initiation and resulting Baptism in the Spirit found in the Charismatic Renewal movement (Tydings, 1977, pp. 235-250).

response to his paper, Gormally does not provide us with Millington's response nor does the web site do so.

I find this paper notable for the fact that at the outset, in the first line of his abstract, Gormally tells readers that the paper "examines not the substantive conclusions of the Clifton Enquiry but aspects of the constitution and conduct of the Enquiry" (Abstract, p.1). Again, in his conclusion Gormally states that it has not been the precise intention of his paper to contest the substantive conclusions of the Clifton Enquiry "however ill-founded they seem" (Conclusion, p. 1), or to argue for different conclusions. Still less, he says, is his paper intended to claim that NC communities in the Clifton diocese are "paragons of virtue, uniformly conducive to deepening the bonds of Christian unity within their parishes. Communities still on the way to conversion," he says, "are bound to fall short of such an ideal" (Conclusion, p. 1). One is left wondering if any NC supporter is going to deal with the substance of the report. Gormally lists norms he would expect an enquiry panel to follow including being "fair and consistent in evaluating phenomena which fall within their terms of reference" (Abstract, p.1). Gormally's paper concludes in the end that the Clifton *Report* failed to meet any of the norms. Along the way Gormally tells us that he "has never read anything so badly written, so pointlessly repetitive, so unprofessional in the handling of evidence" (Gormally, 1997, p. 3).

Opus Dei. Michael Farrell (1992) mentions two groups formed with the intention of countering Opus Dei influence, ODAN (Opus Dei Awareness Network) and Our Lady and St. Joseph in Search of the Lost Child. Farrell notes that in 1989 Joseph Garvey, a father of two daughters who belong to Opus Dei, brought out a small fifty-eight page booklet, *Parents' guide to Opus Dei*. Our Lady and St. Joseph in Search of the Lost Child, An Ad Hoc Alliance, published the booklet.

While discussing Garvey's booklet, Farrell mentions and includes quotes from two documents prepared by and provided to him by Opus Dei (Bohlin, 1991; Office of Communications, Prelature of Opus Dei Office, 1991). I obtained copies of both documents from Opus Dei's Office of Communications in October 1999 and considered them as I surveyed English-language responses by Catholic movements to unfavorable criticism.

In his *Parents' Guide* Garvey (1989) took the Vatican report, *Sects or New Religious Movements: Pastoral Challenge* (Vatican, 1986), and applied that report's list of characteristics of harmful groups to Opus Dei, some think successfully. James LeBar, a priest described on the back of his book, *Cults, Sects and the New Age* (LeBar, 1989), as "Consultant on Cults for the Archdiocese of New York," on the first page of Garvey's booklet (an unnumbered page), commends Garvey "for a job well done." LeBar also says, "I completely agree that strong arm tactics, manipulation and control are used in Opus Dei." There is another quote from Corazon Aquino, President of the Philippines: "I am sure that your booklet will help erase a lot of gray areas in the minds of many parents and guardians about the organization and practices of this particular religious movement. All the best."

However, I would suspect that the four Vatican offices who cooperated on the Report, the Secretariat for Non-Christians, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, and the Pontifical Council for Culture, would never have imagined that the negative criteria in their Report would be used to examine an organization fully approved by the Church or that it would be seen as an "anticult manifesto" (Saliba, 1992).¹⁹

I would say that Garvey's (1989) *Parents' Guide* is what it is: a booklet produced by people

¹⁹ For a discussion of interpretations of the Vatican report (Vatican, 1986) see Saliba (1992).

who believe Opus Dei is harmful, to inform and warn parents whose children may have been or might be recruited by Opus Dei. It does not purport to be a scholarly article, although there are some footnotes. Among the issues discussed in *Parent's Guide* is Garvey's perception that Opus Dei conceals basic operating principles, terming this "discretion" (p. 5). Tapia made the same point, that Opus Dei's Constitutions at the time she was writing at least, were still in Latin and not available for candidates or new recruits to read (Tapia, 1997). It is obvious that Garvey feels that in his search for information about Opus, his questions were met with platitudes and thought-stopping cliches, some of the same ones that I listed above. Garvey backs up many of his criticisms of Opus Dei with quotations from former members.

Especially striking are quotations from Escrivá's *The Way* juxtaposed with questions, which appear on the back cover of the *Parents' Guide to Opus Dei*. For example, the first reads: "Maxim 399 of 'The Way': 'If, to save an earthly life, it is praiseworthy to use force to keep a man from committing suicide, are we not allowed to use the same coercion³/₄holy coercion³/₄in order to save the Lives of so many who are stupidly bent on killing their souls?'" "Question: Is it Opus Dei policy that 'holy coercion' can be used in pursuit of potential members? Roman Catholic Canon Law 219 clearly prohibits *any* coercion in choosing or remaining in any state of life."

This and similar quotes were taken from a letter in *The New Oxford Review*, by Michael di Sales (1984). The last page of the Appendix to the official Opus Dei response (Office of Communications, Prelature of Opus Dei, 1991) to Garvey's booklet faults Garvey for choosing "not to include Opus Dei's responses to each of these questions printed in a subsequent edition of *New Oxford Review*" (Duncan, 1991, p. 9). This response denies the existence of a quoted Opus Dei directive (which supposedly says, "When God enters the picture, parents' rights cease" - p. 6) in di Sales's letter, notes that some parents enter Opus Dei after their children join, points out that most youths who participate in formative programs of Opus Dei "do not even consider the possibility of a vocation to this Church institution" (p. 7), and cites statistics indicating that only 16% of Opus Dei members were under 20 years old, while 58% were over 25. The response to di Sales does not address the possibility that some of Garvey's concerns may apply to some members of Opus Dei, even if only a small minority.

The official Opus Dei response to Garvey was unimpressive. I found it disheartening to read this from the first page of the official response: "Most readers, even without knowing much about Opus Dei, will readily perceive the biased (sic) and unbalanced character of this attack on a respected, fully authorized institution of the Roman Catholic Church. Accordingly, they will dismiss it as unworthy of belief" (Opus Dei Office of Communication, Prelature of Opus Dei, 1991, p. 1). Then we are told that Garvey's depiction of Opus is based on "distortions, misquotations, and serious misrepresentations of fact." The very next paragraph begins, "How could such accusations come to be made? The phenomenon of some parents having a difficulty accepting the vocation of their grown sons and daughters is not new in the Church" (p. 1). Although this is a true statement, it ignores the fundamental question: Are some families and members, however small a minority, indeed treated badly by Opus Dei? If so, then an organization that stresses the "call to holiness" should bend over backwards to make sure that it is not hurting people, to make amends when/if it does, and to institute changes that will guard against such abuses in the future. It seems rather unchristian to imply that family pain is merely a necessary and unavoidable price that must be paid for a religious organization to grow³/₄analogous to the notion that one can't succeed in business without stepping on some innocent people.

The official Opus Dei response to the *Parents' Guide* does not effectively address, in my opinion, Garvey's assertion on page 28, that Opus Dei spokesmen use their approval by the

Church to "stymie legitimate inquiry." Garvey is clearly not disputing that Opus Dei is fully approved by the Church, nor is he dismissing the weight of Church approval. What Garvey is criticizing is Opus Dei members or spokespeople who resort to the phrase "the Pope approves," using that phrase as a thought-stopping cliché "in place of an answer to a critical inquiry" (p. 30). Garvey reminds readers that the Pope "also 'approves' of charismatics, the Jesuits, the Franciscans, and a huge variety of groups whose intentions and ideals are stated to be Catholic. That does not shut out the need for critical inquiry about them" (p. 30). This it seems to me is a legitimate issue to be considered. Obviously, Garvey feels that Opus Dei is misusing the fact of its approval to shut down debate or deflect criticism. The official response seems to dismiss this criticism by reaffirming its official approval by the Church. This defense is analogous to a physician asserting that a malpractice claim must be false because he is licensed by the state.

The official response also attacks some of Garvey's sources of information. It notes that Garvey uses some quotes from Michael Walsh. We are told, as though it would impugn his credibility, that Walsh is an ex-priest and a former Jesuit whose book (*The Secret World of Opus Dei* Walsh, 1992) is a compilation of "libelous falsehoods" (p. 6). Bohlin (1991), to his credit, informs us that O'Connor (1991) wrote a detailed reply to Walsh, which presumably addresses substantive issues in some depth. (I have not been able to obtain a copy of this book yet.)

Bohlin remarks that Walsh's book, "published in England [in 1989], is full of outrageous lies and ridiculous slanders. After review, the United States publisher decided against publishing it" (p. 6). However, Walsh's book, originally published in England by Grafton Books, appeared in a U.S. edition with Harper, San Francisco, 1992.

The response then moves from Walsh to John Roche. The response says: "Perhaps the most extensive source for the authors is a person named John Roche. This man's allegations are spread throughout 'Parents' Guide' and he is listed (p. 39) as a source for unpublished material,' including supposed quotations from *Cronica*, Opus Dei's informational publication for members of the Prelature. In the past, this author Roche has published unbalanced and libelous allegations about Opus Dei "(p. 6). Calling Roche "author Roche" and "a person named John Roche" would lead a reader to think that Opus Dei does not know John Roche. Dr. Roche is associated with Linacre College, Oxford. He joined Opus Dei in Galway at age 22 and was a member of Opus Dei from 1959 until 1973 (Hutchison, 1997). In October 1985 Roche's extensively documented and very critical assessment of Opus Dei's recruiting philosophy and techniques appeared in a major Catholic publication in England, *The Clergy Review* (Roche, 1985).

The official response lists several pages of what it calls facts and explanations. A detailed examination of each would exceed the task of this paper but I will comment on just the first two "facts" enumerated. "Opus Dei never knowingly withholds information from anyone who has a right to it. This is the Prelature's policy and practice" (p. 7). That dictum on paper looks good. The same dictum was followed in the Catholic charismatic community with which I was associated. But when some members asked where their tithe money was going, they were treated as though they had no right to know. In reality, the leaders at the top decide who constitutes the "anyone" who has a right to the information, so in some ways the dictum on paper is meaningless. This is one of the most common criticisms of Opus Dei, namely, that its practices are inconsistent with its stated aims. The criticism cannot be answered, therefore, merely by restating the aims.

The second listed "fact" is: "Contrary to what 'Parents' Guide' alleges on p. 42, all activities and centers of Opus Dei are clearly labeled (sic) as such" (p. 7). My recent review of English-language literature relating to Opus Dei reveals that in 1995 the Opus Dei men's

residence near Notre Dame in South Bend was not labeled as connected with Opus Dei. "The men's house on Notre Dame Avenue has a sign that reads 'Windmoor,' but nothing that indicates that it is an Opus Dei center. The name has no significance to Opus Dei or Christianity in general" (Myers, 1995, p. 8). Perhaps this is the sole exception to Opus Dei's claim; perhaps not.

Very unique and creative is Garvey's use of the Vatican report (Vatican 1986), and Opus Dei fairly criticize Garvey for not telling readers that the Vatican did not intend to apply its criteria to Church-approved groups. Nevertheless, however accurately or inaccurately Garvey applies this measuring stick to Opus Dei, the characteristics listed in the Vatican report could perhaps serve as a useful tool, which Church hierarchy, scholars, parents, potential recruits, and others might apply to any seemingly closed or controversial group or movement within the Church, as well as outside it.

Interestingly, Bohlin writes: "Mr. Garvey bases his analysis and condemnation of Opus Dei as a cult on selections taken from the Vatican document "Sects or New Religious Movements: A Pastoral Challenge" (Bohlin, 1991, p. 4). In fact, nowhere does Garvey call Opus Dei a cult (using the word in its pejorative sense). Indeed, Garvey states: "we are not - repeat *not* - here characterizing Opus Dei as a sect or cult. We leave that evaluation to competent Church authorities" (p. 25). It is not lost on the reader, however, that Garvey hopes the Church will reevaluate Opus Dei soon, coming to the conclusion that Opus Dei is engaged in harmful practices such as coercion of religious vocations.

Bohlin's *Analysis* is not only better written than the official Opus Dei response, it has better content and leads one to hope for more well-reasoned responses from Opus Dei in the future. For example, as I have done with Tanquary, Garrigou-Lagrange, and Colin below, Bohlin, claiming that Garvey selected certain writings of Escrivá on obedience for shock value and ignored others, argues his case by going to traditional Catholic spiritual sources to show that one can find similar quotations "given traditional Catholic understanding of the virtue of obedience" (p. 7):

Mr. Garvey's selective quotations on obedience from *The Way* by Msgr. Escrivá are calculated to shock the reader. This is not a difficult thing to do, given traditional Catholic understanding of the virtue of obedience. For example, listen to a few lines from *The Imitation of Christ*: "Learn to obey, you who are but dust!...bow down under the foot of every man! Learn to break your own will, to submit to all subjection! Be zealous against yourself!" Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, (Milwaukee, Bruce: 1940), p. 111. No one speaks more powerfully about obedience than St. Theresa of Avila: "Such great importance does the Lord attach to this submissiveness . . .that if we practice it, now entirely annihilating our desires, now winning only after a thousand battles . . .we shall come, by means of this painful exercise, to resign ourselves entirely to doing what we are commanded." Msgr. Wm. J. Doheny, C.S.C., ed. *Selected Writings of St. Teresa of Avila* (Wm. J. Doheny: 1950), pp. 87-88. (Bohlin, 1991, p. 7)

Bohlin points out that in a homily in 1961 Escrivá used the Virgin Mary as a model. He quotes Escrivá: "In Mary we don't find the slightest trace of the attitude of the foolish virgins, who obey, but thoughtlessly. Our Lady listens attentively to what God wants, ponders what she doesn't fully understand and asks about what she doesn't know" (Escrivá, 1985, p.7). Fair enough. However, one wonders if Escrivá's thinking on obedience evolved. His 1939 book, *The Way*, which Garvey cites, reflects traditional Catholic views on the practice of obedience, while the 1961 homily that Bohlin cites reflects a less traditional view. One wonders further if the typical Opus Dei member or recruit learns about Escrivá's views

on obedience from *The Way*, which is widely available in many languages, rather than the more moderate homily, which is less available. In the end, what matters most is how obedience is experienced and expressed in the lived culture of Opus Dei.

Bohlin (1991) asks some interesting questions on the first page of his *Analysis*, expecting, I would imagine, answers like "No way." "Could a cult have a Vatican-approved institution of higher education in Rome granting doctoral degrees in ecclesiastical studies as Opus Dei has?" People like Tapia would answer "yes" and people like Garvey would answer "maybe." "If it is truly a dangerous cult, why was it established by the Roman Pontiff as the Church's first personal prelature in 1982?" Why indeed some ask! "How could it be that the founder of such an organization is about to be beatified in the coming months in Rome?" (Escrivá was indeed beatified in 1992.) Perhaps some people might respond with "No way." But others, such as Tapia and Woodward (1996) might express amazement that the Church would demonstrate so little discernment.

Covenant Communities. Fr. George Montague (1991) tells readers that it is not his purpose to accuse, defend, or explain "what has been happening in some of the covenant communities recently" (p. 15). He says he doesn't have access to the documentation that would enable him to make a fair judgment, and he doesn't want to judge on the basis of information offered to the public by "the sensation-seeking media" (p. 15). He then proceeds to offer reflections on the phenomena in the light of New Testament churches and subsequent church history. Some of his thoughts have already been mentioned above: communities have always run into problems; the Charismatic Renewal "is being purified" (p. 17).

In New Testament times, says Montague, Greek-speaking Christian Hellenists complained that Aramaic-speaking members of the Church discriminated against Greek-speaking widows (Acts 6:1-7). Montague reminds us that some of St. Benedict's early monks tried to poison him, and he mentions the less well-known fact that the founder of the Marianists, Venerable William Joseph Chaminade, spent his last years boarded up in a room by his early followers. Only the cat, according to Montague, had "a small door to come and go" (p.16). However, the fact that New Testament churches sometimes abused their members or that subsequently some members of Catholic religious orders suffered abuse or inflicted it on others, doesn't justify abuse, whether perpetrated 2,000 years ago or today. The Church is a living Church. Its dignity is sullied when its defenders use instances of past abuses to defend current abuses. A historical perspective may incline us to become more forgiving toward current abuses, but it shouldn't cause us to become complacent about them.

What about press coverage of problems in the movements?

Criticism of the media is common and may range from disdain to condescension to regret. Montague (1991) maligned the media that exposed problems in Catholic charismatic communities. When Justin Gillis (1997a), reporter for *The Washington Post*, asked one of the former long-time leaders of the Mother of God Catholic charismatic covenant community to comment on the findings of his two-year investigation, that leader said: "A newspaper article is not the proper place in which to air the religious differences which led to the division of the Mother of God community. Nor is it the place to comment on baseless allegations" (Gillis, 1997, Part 1, p. 15). Even Cardinal James Hickey of Washington, D.C., who had asked that leader to step down and relinquish his post as coordinator of the MOG community, later appeared to regret the *Post* article. On December 19, 1998 he told the remaining members of the MOG community that some former MOG community members "are disaffected not only with the community but with the Church itself. Some still harbor misapprehensions, many of them generated by the unfortunate article in *The Washington Post Magazine*" (Hickey, 1999).

Contrary to the Cardinal's statement, some former MOG members tell me that they trace the beginnings of disaffection from the Church not to the *Post* article, but to something else. They remind me that for years many MOG members wrote without pay for the MOG devotional magazine, which, according to *National Catholic Reporter*, "was generating \$2 million to \$3 million a year" (Jones, 1997, p. 8), unbeknownst to most of the MOG-member writers. When Cardinal Hickey asked the MOG lay leaders to step down, people loyal to those leaders "succeeded in separating that magazine from the Mother of God community, and they retain control of it to this day" (Gillis, 1997b, p. 29). Cardinal Hickey then did not renew the magazine's imprimatur as an official Catholic publication (Jones, 1997, p. 8). All the MOG priest writers resigned in solidarity with Cardinal Hickey. That publication, the former MOG community's "prime cash engine" (Gillis, 1997b, p. 29), was moved out of Cardinal Hickey's jurisdiction into the Baltimore archdiocese. Later, the new publisher and editor received the privilege of attending the private Mass of Pope John Paul II and had their photo taken with the Pope while presenting him with Polish and English editions of the magazine. That photo has been used by the publication in their promotional efforts (See "A Blessing from the Pope" at: <http://www.wau.org/current/popeblessing.html>—accessed 12/09/98). Although not the only reason, I am told that this seeming papal blessing, coming as it did on the heels of Cardinal Hickey's apparent disapproval, was what disillusioned these former members, not the *Post* article, with which some former MOG priests courageously cooperated.

The media certainly has its defects. Nevertheless, many former members of charismatic covenant communities thank God for the press coverage that brought their plight out into the open. Feeling dismissed by their Church, they tell me that the press brought them their only comfort.

How has the Catholic Church responded to criticisms of these movements by the media and accounts of harm from former members? What kinds of interventions are possible for Catholic authorities?

If one only had the three books reviewed here one might conclude that the response of the Church is inadequate or nonexistent. Certainly, Tapia and Urquhart are not satisfied. If the lack of response were only disappointing it would be one thing. However, *Les Naufragés*, the postings on *The Washington Post* website, and my contacts with former members of charismatic communities and other movements reveal that the Catholics who leave these groups often feel betrayed, not just by the leaders of the movements, but by their Church. This adds to their suffering and feeling of disorientation. It helps to explain why some former members of Catholic movements leave the Church.

I know of several noteworthy cases in which complaints of former members were taken seriously enough to prompt Church action: Bishop Alexander in England (Neocatechumenate), Bishop Ottenweller in Steubenville (charismatic covenant community), Cardinal Hume in England (Opus Dei), Cardinal Keeler in Baltimore (charismatic covenant community), and Cardinal Hickey in Washington, D.C. (charismatic covenant community). Such investigations have to deal with the following questions:

1. How should the Church gather information concerning the culture of a particular Catholic community or movement that generates controversy?
2. What corrective actions are available to Church authorities and what factors should they consider in making a decision about intervening? Should there be reform from the outside, as Cardinal Keeler attempted with LOG (Lamb of God) in Baltimore? Should the community or movement be suppressed, as English Bishop Alexander decided recently with NC (Neocatechumenate) communities in his diocese (and as occurred several hundred years

ago with the Jesuits—more on that issue later). If it looks like reform is beginning in a community at a grass-roots level, should internal reform be allowed the freedom to proceed, at least for a time? This is a strategy the Church followed at one time regarding needed reform of the Franciscans and Carmelites (see below) and an option rejected by Cardinal Hickey in relation to MOG.

The case of MOG demonstrates that more than one corrective strategy can proceed at the same time and that these strategies can sometimes conflict. On two occasions in 1995 Cardinal Hickey shut down efforts at grass roots reform by MOG members. The Cardinal's committee kept its information confidential, which displeased some MOG members, who wanted to find out how extensive the community problems were and to inform the MOG membership. While the Cardinal's committee was conducting its investigation, these concerned MOG members successfully negotiated with the MOG leadership for the creation of a grass-roots apparatus, "listening teams." These teams would hear complaints from members. Cardinal's Hickey's spokesperson, Bishop William Lori, prohibited that reform effort from proceeding and announced that there were to be no new structures. When I later asked him why he had instituted this prohibition, Bishop Lori told me that MOG was like a train going down the track and Cardinal Hickey had to get on somewhere.

A few months later there was another grass-roots attempt at reform. The MOG statutes committee voted (the first time any MOG members had ever voted on anything) to hold an Open Forum Day in September 1995. MOG members and former members were invited to attend a daylong meeting where people with grievances against the community would be heard. So many people wanted to speak that the committee decided that only three minutes could be allocated for each speaker. The MOG leadership was against the planned day. Only two days before the Forum Day was to occur, Cardinal Hickey preempted the Open Forum by requesting that the Day be postponed because he was planning to address the community a week later. An outside mental health professional had already been hired, hundreds of letters had gone out to members and former members, people had engaged babysitters, but in obedience to the Cardinal's request, the Open Forum was postponed. After Cardinal Hickey's visit and address, the Cardinal's new appointed leaders did not reschedule the Day. Six months after the Cardinal's address they did set up listening teams, which resulted in the Bosnick report (Bosnick, 1996). By that time, however, the grass-roots momentum was lost.

Researchers and Church hierarchy should study the contemporary interventions that have already taken place. However, they should also study the archives of religious orders and congregations that have reformed—from the inside as well as with outside Church assistance. Some useful (Wittberg, 1994; Hostie, 1983) studies have already been conducted, but much more work remains. The Church has an immensely rich history. Scholarly study of reforms within Church organizations will undoubtedly broaden and deepen contemporary perspectives on how communities function (Zablocki, 1980a, 1980b; Kanter, 1972, 1973).

A news item from *The Catholic Review* underlines the need for research:

Dean Hoge, a leading U.S. sociologist of religion, said Oct. 13 that the U.S. Catholic Church is well behind other religious bodies in research on itself. "The Catholic world is less researched. There is less attention, less money, less energy devoted to organizational and social science research among Catholics than among any other religious group I know," he told a gathering convened by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, known as CARA. Past and present CARA staff, board members, supporters and research colleagues met at Georgetown University, where CARA is based, to

celebrate the center's 35th anniversary. (Catholics behind on social research, 1999, p. 8)

Have former members of the Catholic movements mentioned above, or other concerned individuals, organized any outreach to counter what they perceive to be the dangers of the movements?

As noted earlier, in 1992 Farrell mentioned two groups founded for the express purpose of countering what they regard as the negative influence of Opus Dei. ODAN (Opus Dei Awareness Network) may be contacted at ODAN@odan.org. The other group, Our Lady and St. Joseph in Search of the Lost Child, has branches in France, England, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. Its booklet lists only this address: Sicut Dixit Press, 305 Madison Avenue, Suite 1146, New York, NY 10165.

PASCH (Parishioners Against a Secret Church) is "a group of concerned parishioners who have experienced the promises and problems of some of the unhealthy, secretive influences in the community of the parish, especially found in a movement in the Roman Catholic Church known as the Neo-catechumenate (also known as Neocatechumenate, Neocatechumenal Way, The Way, the NCW, or simply the N-C." This description, as well as other information may be accessed at the following Web site: http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Ronald_Haynes/about.htm. PASCH began in the Catholic diocese of Clifton and is based in Bristol, England.

How can Catholics engage in criticism of an organization sanctioned by the Church?

Vatican recognition of a community, movement, or organization does not belong to the category of infallible or *ex cathedra* pronouncements, which deal with faith and morals.²⁰ The approval carries weight but does not prohibit Catholics in good faith from bringing concerns about approved groups to the attention of the responsible Church authority, nor does it prohibit discussion of such concerns with others. The Pope declared the founder of Opus Dei as Blessed, the last step but one to canonization. That too does not close debate on any Opus Dei shortcomings. The Society of Jesus, otherwise known as the Jesuits, was founded by a canonized Saint, Ignatius Loyola. Many early Jesuits were declared Saints also: Francis Xavier, Francis Borgia, Robert Bellarmine, Aloysius Gonzaga, and others. The Society of Jesus was canonically established in 1540 by a papal bull of Pope Paul III. Over the years the Jesuits were much praised and much criticized. In 1773, more than 200 years after the Vatican approved the Jesuits, Pope Clement XIV suppressed them. In 1814 they were again approved and reestablished by Pope Pius VII (Livingstone, 1997, p. 871).²¹ Thus, groups that receive Vatican approval can have it revoked.

Indeed, threatened revocation is sometimes used to spur reform of a group. A contemporary example of this can be found in Cardinal Hickey's September 23, 1995 address to MOG. The Cardinal said that he would continue his recognition of MOG as a private

²⁰ For a discussion of infallibility see Granfield (1987).

²¹ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Livingstone, 1997) tells us that in 1773 Pope Clement XIV gave way to the demands of France, Spain, Portugal, and many of the Italian states, and issued the brief 'Dominus ac Redemptor' suppressing the Society [of Jesus]. Pius VII formally restored the Society in the bull "Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum." The suppression did not mean as some might think that the Jesuits were completely extinguished. For example, Jesuits were allowed to teach in Austria and Germany. The Jesuit mission to Maryland having begun in 1634 continued unaffected.

association of the faithful pending implementation of the changes he had mandated. If his directives had not been carried out in adequate fashion by April 1996, he would withdraw his recognition (Hickey, 1995, p. 9).

Aren't some of the controversial practices customs that obtained for hundreds of years in traditional religious orders of men and women?

The answer is "yes, but." The tendency to encourage loyalty to the movement rather than to individuals may cause problems. Urquhart, for example, said that friendships in Focolare were discouraged as groups were constantly reshuffled. Tapia reported that "in Opus Dei, constant changes uproot individuals, making them lose friendships and attachments and converting them into interchangeable parts at the total disposition of the institution" (Tapia, 1997, p. 75). Nevertheless, some classic Catholic books on spiritual theology warn of the dangers of "particular friendships" (Garrigou-Lagrange, 1951, Vol.1, p. 336). A balanced respect for interpersonal bonds and the need for discerning detachment may be very difficult to establish and maintain. So it should not be surprising that some of the new movements have problems in this area.

Some penitential practices are roundly criticized. Opus Dei, for example, is criticized for encouraging some members to wear a cilice (a spiked chain) around the thigh for a stated period of time. Opus Dei is also rebuked for its practice of "taking the discipline," which consists of striking oneself with a rope whip (Walsh, 1991, pp. 110-112; Tapia, 1997, p. 34). However, some classic Catholic texts on spiritual theology have advocated such practices. St. Paul states: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection" (1Cor, IX, 27). Tanqueray (1930), after recommending that one can mortify the flesh by not lounging when sitting or leaning when kneeling, writes: "There are other positive means of mortification which penitent souls inspired by generosity delight to employ in order to subdue their bodies...The more customary ones are small iron bracelets clasped to the arms, chains worn about the loins, hair shirts, or a few strokes of the discipline" (Tanqueray, 1930, section 774, p. 374).

Urquhart says that during his training in Italy he was isolated from the world. Such isolation, however, frequently characterized the postulancy and novitiate periods in the training of candidates for Catholic religious orders. In fact, in the past members of some Catholic religious orders had their mail read and censored by a superior before it was delivered (Quinnan, 1994).²²

The question then is not whether these and other controversial practices have their roots in Catholic history, for they do, but whether they are appropriate for today's world. With regard to Opus Dei's penitential practices, Walsh (1992) says: "with the increasing understanding of the unhealthy psychology of these basically masochistic acts, they have quietly been dropped from the customary behavior of other religious orders" (p. 111). Have these religious orders become worldly or psychologically healthier? Over the centuries the Catholic Church, despite its deep respect for tradition, has abandoned many practices. Nobody, for example, idealizes extreme practices such as those exemplified by the Stylites

²² In his study of elderly male religious, and referring to the Catholic male religious lifestyle prior to the reforms of Vatican II, Edward Quinnan writes: "At the period in which these men entered [religious life] (1924-1951) the monastic influence predominated, in distinction to the lifestyle of a parish priest. Therefore a rigid boundary existed between those entering religious life and the rest of society. All letters had to pass through the hands of the novice master, the religious superior in charge of the novitiate, or through a delegated censor. . . .The structure of the early years of religious formation effectively built a wall between the individuals and the outside" (Quinnan, 1994, pp. 147-148). Karen Armstrong in her memoir in writing of her first months of formation in the convent as a postulant, says that she was taught: "Postulants and novices are meant to be kept secluded from the world so that you have a chance to develop a deep, personal relationship with God" (Armstrong, 1981, 1994 p. 88).

of the fifth to tenth centuries. The Stylites were solitary individuals who lived on pillars (Livingstone, 1997). Perhaps what is needed is an open debate about whether these controversial practices are indeed appropriate for today and, if so, whether increased monitoring by Church authorities is called for. Such a debate should examine psychological, as well as theological and historical, aspects of these practices.

What can the history of Catholic religious communal living teach us about contemporary "lay" or "new" Catholic movements and their relationship with the Church?

The 2,000-year history of Catholic communal movements is varied, to say the least. Early Christians called each other brothers and sisters, shared goods, and took care of each other and consecrated virgins and widows, who sometimes lived in these communities during the Roman persecutions. About the time of the Edict of Milan (313) some men and women took to the Egyptian desert. Some were hermits (people who lived solitary lives because of religious motives); some were cenobites (persons who lived in communities because of religious motives). Christian communities began to form alongside the rest of the Church, so to speak. The monastic period followed the desert period. Then came the mendicant or begging orders, such as the followers of St. Francis of Assisi. Several hundred years later came the apostolic orders, such as the Jesuits and the Ursulines. The period from 1800 to the present is considered to be the age of the Catholic teaching congregations (Cada, Fitz, Foley, Giardine, & Lichtenberg, 1979; Hostie 1983).

Sociologist and vowed religious, Sister of Charity Patricia Wittberg (1994), says that during at least some time periods members of a religion are not equally desirous of striving for ultimate values. The result is "heroic," or "virtuoso," religiosity and mass religiosity.

The Catholic Church has long had a dual system of virtuoso and mass spirituality. For example, the popular Saint Francis of Sales (1567-1622) was a bishop who served the Catholics of his diocese (Geneva, Switzerland) as a great preacher and a loving shepherd. However, for those women called to what was seen as a more heroic form of Catholic Christian life than parish life, he founded the Visitation Order, also known as the Visitandines (Livingstone, 1997). This religious order of sisters still exists; indeed, it conducts the Georgetown Visitation, a private school in Washington, D.C.

Wittberg (1994) remarks that Catholic religious orders "are the largest and most widespread representation of the communal religious lifestyle ever to exist in the United States or elsewhere. At their peak in 1965, Roman Catholic religious communities in this country included 181,421 women and 38,478 men" (p. 2). (The figure for men of course does not include secular or parish priests.). "This was over sixty times the highest membership ever achieved by the nineteenth-century Shakers, and almost twice as large as current estimates of the Old Order Amish" (Wittberg, 1994, p. 3). Wittberg highlights the surprising fact that there are scores of books on the Shakers and the Amish, but few studies analyze the communitarian aspects of Catholic religious orders, despite its long and diverse history. Until recently, Wittberg says, even historians ignored Catholic religious communities.

Wittberg's work deals mainly with the rise and decline of religious orders. She notes that the internal cycles of Catholic religious communities conform fairly accurately to the dynamics of other communal groups (Kanter, 1972, 1973; Zablocki, 1980a, 1980b). She draws attention to the need for commitment mechanisms to maintain member loyalty in an intentional community and "the tendency of these mechanisms to usurp the group's original ideological vision" (Wittberg, 1994, p. 4). She speaks of the need for maintaining communal practices so members can gather for "periodic reconstruction of their interpretive frames" (p. 193). When collective self-investment wanes, she warns, communities become

associations and communes become cooperatives.

Clearly, Wittberg's work and related research can provide conceptual tools with which to understand better the controversies raised by contemporary Catholic movements. But the movements need to be studied much more than they have. In particular, the rich history of Catholic communal expressions—religious orders, congregations, and institutes—should be examined closely in order to increase understanding of how the new Catholic movements can harm and help individuals and society. A historical study of Catholic communal endeavors and movements may also teach us a great deal about how such movements can reform themselves. Although one might think of reform in terms of the Church hierarchy intervening from the outside, Hostie (1983)²³ found that, at least for the mendicant orders such as the Franciscans, every reform began from within the established orders.

Every reform that occurred in the mendicant orders began from within the established orders. For a fact, this renewal was initiated by the grass roots members themselves; no official mandate ordered it. Recall, if you will, outstanding reformers of the sixteenth century: Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, both Carmelites, and Peter of Alcantara, a Franciscan. They brought about extremely fruitful reforms within their respective orders. (Hostie, 1983, p. 125)

In passing it might be interesting to note that when St John of the Cross (1542-1591) was effecting reform in the Carmelites, the group of priests resisting reform imprisoned him for months under inhumane conditions (Livingstone, 1997).

The historical perspective that so permeates the Catholic Church may enable scholars to step outside our contemporary assumptions and examine communal groups from different vantage points. Perhaps such study will result in an integrative perspective that relates Catholic traditions of heroic religiosity to contemporary standards of the ethics of social influence, to our evaluations of that which "is more than friendly persuasion." Despite its 2000-year experience with religious communal groups, the Catholic Church (as well as the rest of us) may not understand the relationship of heroic religiosity and the ethics of social influence as well as it (we) should.

What about the obedience required in the Catholic movements?

Wittberg (1991) defines an intentional community as "a group of persons living together on a more or less permanent basis, who voluntarily surrender control over some choices which are normally considered private for the sake of establishing a whole new way of life" (p. 11). Many of the new Catholic movements and established religious orders are intentional communities, all of which must deal with the conflict between authority and individual autonomy (cf. Zablocki, 1995 [reprinted in this issue of CSJ]).

Wittberg (1994) comments on the disjunction between religious obedience and professional

²³ In 1972 *Vie et Mort des Ordres Religieux* by Fr. Raymond Hostie appeared in Europe. Hostie's landmark study treats Catholic religious communities from the 4th century to the then present. Fr. Hostie restricted his study to male religious communities. In an interview in 1977 Hostie said: "As I examined the situation of religious in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I found out that there were about 276 orders/congregations of male religious that had been in existence for one hundred years or more and some 2,000 congregations of women religious. I decided then to do an exact study of all the institutes of male religious, not because the women's institutes were not important, but because I was faced with a question of logistics and records" (Hostie, 1983, p. iii). In 1983 CARA, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in Washington, D.C. brought out a limited edition of Fr. Hostie's study entitled: *The Life and Death of Religious Orders: A Psycho-sociological Approach*.

autonomy that American Catholic religious sisters have experienced in recent times. She says that the dependence and docility expected in the convent contrasts with the autonomy adults experience in ministry settings. "The administrator of a large teaching hospital not only ran the institution effectively but dealt with her peers in the field and with civic officials. The college president oversaw governance, finances and curricula. The scholarly anthropologist conducted field research with grant funding . . . All these women then returned to the convent, where they had to ask permission to stay up past 9 p.m." (Wittberg, 1994, p. 242).

Wittberg says that by the 1950s psychologically trained religious were beginning to question the healthiness of the vow of obedience. Keeping this in mind, one might examine the authority structure of the Catholic movements mentioned above and question whether what might be called a "caretaker-type" communal arrangement (Langone, 1989) is appropriate for psychologically healthy adults. How much regulation of the day-to-day behavior of community/movement members does the leadership of the Catholic Church consider pastorally desirable? What accountability mechanisms does the Catholic Church use to prevent abuses of vows of obedience? Can vows of obedience be modified or supplemented by other practices or exercises in ways that enable members of religious orders or communities to cultivate humility while working in our fast-paced, technological world?

My examination of the controversies elicited by new Catholic movements suggests that the Church has not addressed these issues adequately. Those concerned about some Catholic movements and communities question whether the "surrender" in these groups is really voluntary. "Techniques of persuasion not based on argumentation that is backed up by reasons, which the one being persuaded can consider, cannot be considered moral" writes Joseph Davis (1993, p. 76). And, as Tapia and Urquhart make clear, the morality of persuasion must be evaluated on the basis of behavior, not written rules or guidelines in a constitution or other document.

Why haven't more accounts by former members of contemporary Catholic movements been published?

Michael Walsh remarked humorously in the first chapter of his very critical book on Opus Dei (Walsh, 1992) that when Catholic friends learned that he was engaged in studying and writing about Opus Dei, they suggested he increase his life insurance! He then says, joking aside, that he has been astonished at the range and reach of Opus Dei. In the article reviewing Tapia's book, the *New York Times* book reviewer mentions Opus Dei's "predilection for threatening libel suits against those who write about it or publish articles about it" (Steinfels, 1997, p. 24).

Personal attacks can supplement legal threats. Tapia's chapter called "reprisals" details how Opus Dei attacked her when she began to speak up. Urquhart's chapter entitled "No Exit" describes how the three Catholic movements he examines treat defection. He says it is "vital that ex-members should be discredited and that horror stories should circulate" (Urquhart, 1999a, p. 373). The fear and insecurity manifested in the way they tell their stories, and the threats they record, suggests a similar experience among the former members of the French charismatic communities. Moreover, because the leaders of these movements and communities know intimate details of former members' lives (e.g., whether they had an abortion, whether they were ever unfaithful to their wife, or whether they ever had an alcohol problem), former members will often keep silent. Former members have told me on many occasions that they fear that leaders of the community they would like to criticize might disclose personal details of which they are ashamed.

Rules that ostensibly require confidentiality appear to be frequently disregarded. *Les*

Naufra-gés attests to the violation of confidentiality in several places. The two leaders of the English branch of the Mother of God Catholic charismatic community sent an open letter in 1995 to all the young adults in the American community. They said that they had come to the conclusion that the community itself was run by a system of slander and they now saw and regretted that they had been part of it. "We scoffed and mocked (Ps 1:1), judged and categorized. We allowed ourselves to be deluded that such practices were a necessary part of pastoring" (Conway & Burnford, 1995).

Some former members of Catholic charismatic communities have told me that they keep quiet because they still have children in the group. They fear that they will be shunned and lose all contact with their children. Other former members keep silent in order to protect their hard-won vocational achievements. The *Washington Post* reporter who investigated the Mother of God community for more than two years hoped that at least one of the eight doctors who had given up medicine while in the community would speak for the record (personal communication with J. Gillis, August 24, 1999). None of the physicians he contacted would do so. They had left the United States to return home and were in the process of being recertified and retrained to practice medicine again. They did not wish to go public with their Catholic community experience as they felt it might hinder their chance to practice medicine again.

Others I have talked with don't want to communicate publicly about their experience because they believe that it is psychologically healthier for them to "move on" and not dwell on what happened. Indeed, many exit counselors and therapists encourage their clients to focus on getting their lives in order, rather than speaking up publicly (Langone, 1993).

The three books reviewed here demonstrate that many former members of Catholic movements do not speak out because of the threat of eternal damnation, the fear of losing one's soul. This same fear may also keep in the movements many who might otherwise prefer to leave. Such threats are not unknown in the history of Catholic religious orders. In a section of his book subtitled, "Stability at Any Price," Fr. Hostie discusses this issue. He talks about a culture in some religious communities that puts subtle restraints on a young man who might want to leave before he makes his final commitment to the group. Hostie says this pressure can be put on long-term members as well.

Certain restraints following upon the young man's entrance into religious life were effective in that they were subtle. The shame attached to the fact that a scholastic changed his mind even before his final profession constituted such an obstacle that the young religious, and sometimes even the older members, remained in the institute out of constraint or fear. The insinuations of cowardice, betrayal or infidelity were transmitted all too easily. Threats of an unhappy life, of divine vengeance or eternal damnation were brandished by many a superior and director. These accusations and threats were found printed in black and white in many devotional books and manuals (Hostie, 1983, p. 223).

Perhaps one of the manuals Fr. Hostie refers to is that of Fr. Louis Colin, *The Practice of the Rule* (Colin, 1959). Making a case that failure to follow community rules or indifference to them may place the member of a Catholic community in danger of losing his calling [his "vocation"] to be a member of the group, Fr. Colin writes:

The loss of his vocation caused by indifference in the observance of the rule [rules] naturally puts religious in a most critical situation. Placed by his own fault outside the order of Providence [God's will], deprived of the choicest graces, tortured by remorse, cast off like wreckage into the corruption of the world, the faithless soul will reach heaven only with difficulty. And even if he

is saved, he will be constantly exposed to the gravest dangers throughout his life. Irregularity, faithlessness, damnation. This is a trilogy that can be found more than once in the writings of St. Alphonsus: In a general letter to his institute [the Redemptorists], he asks whether the brothers do not realize that many former members are now living outside the congregation. He does not know how they ended, he admits, but of this one thing he is sure: their life will always be unhappy; they will live and die tortured by the thought that they have been unfaithful to their rules. They left the order [the community] to find a happier life, but they will never have any rest; for they will realize that they have abandoned God to follow their own whims and fancies. If they try to pray, they will have a hard time of it, because prayer will only remind them that they have betrayed themselves and left God behind. (Colin, 1959, p. 82)

Of course, former members may also hesitate to speak up when they discover that some scholars view their deconversion narratives as "atrocious tales" (Bromley, Shupe, & Ventimiglia, 1979), as attempts to avoid responsibility for having joined the group in the first place. Even were there some elements of self-exoneration in a deconversion narrative, the tainted motives would not invalidate the criticisms. Those who make this argument rely on a crude form of *ad hominem* attack. A woman assaulted while walking through a park at night might bear some responsibility for imprudence, but she is certainly no more responsible for the physical assault on her than is the former group member responsible for the psychological assault on him or her. This *ad hominem* attack becomes even more untenable when applied to second-generation community members who leave. Children who grew up in a movement or community their parents joined didn't choose to walk through the park at night in the first place. They were born there.

How valid are criticisms of the recruiting practices of some Catholic movements?

Some of the criticism in the books reviewed here concern the youth of prospective recruits or the fact that potential candidates are proselytized in schools or student residences run by Catholic lay movements or communities. Tapia's description of how Opus Dei recruits in schools and student residences (pp. 215-219) is echoed by Dr. John Roche (1985) in his long, detailed article, "Winning Recruits in Opus Dei: A Personal Experience," and by former member Peter Malinowski in Michael Farrell's *National Catholic Reporter* article (Farrell, 1992). Although we can only guess at the extent of dubious recruiting practices today, the recruitment of the young, especially through the use of schools, is not new to the history of Roman Catholic communal expressions.

Here is researcher Fr. Hostie on the subject:

An increase in numbers, however spectacular, remains a quantitative measure. Is it capable of informing us about the quality of the growth? There is no simple answer to such a question. Members of religious institutes and their defenders generally cite an increase as a peremptory argument in favor of the religious life. Their detractors reply that juvenile recruitment and the subsequent control of these young people brought about the increase by force.

It cannot be denied that certain practices and attitudes not very praiseworthy, to be sure, contributed to maintaining a climate of stability. The systematic search for recruits during the last years of elementary school by Fathers and Brothers certainly enlarged the personnel of the preparatory schools and minor seminaries. After three or four years of study, these young

students of sixteen or seventeen years of age were channeled into the novitiate (Hostie, 1983, pp. 222-223).

Hostie states that many founders who had difficulty beginning a group "had recourse to such schools without hiding their prime motive" (Hostie, 1983, p. 223). He tells us that several groups owe their most outstanding growth to such practices. He also notes that other Catholic institutes or communal endeavors "were either not aware of such practices or deliberately repudiated them" (Hostie, 1983, p. 223).

How many Catholic movements are there and do they all generate controversy?

Given the organizational culture of the Catholic Church, one might expect to find an international Catholic directory that would list approved Catholic movements and maybe even give membership counts for each movement. In all of my research, I have not been able to find such a directory. Moreover, one must take with a grain of salt membership figures put out by the movements themselves. Hostie (1983), who ended his study of religious orders with the year 1960, says, that "certain groups, Opus Dei, for example, evidence great discretion with regard to their total membership" (p. 222).

A 1998 newspaper account (Pope sees spirit most alive in burgeoning lay groups, 1998, p. 18) of a Pentecost celebration of the Catholic movements' in Rome reports that 56 movements were represented, not including Opus Dei. Hence, one can conclude that there are at least 57 Catholic movements, although, as noted above, Opus prefers to be considered a prelature, not a movement. Some of the Catholic movements that I am familiar with are associations or third orders. They are not structured with the headship/submission or shepherding/discipleship system that has characterized Catholic charismatic communities and some form of which might be said to characterize the four movements discussed by the books reviewed here. Father James LeBar (1989) warns about a few other small "Catholic" groups. Consequently, it seems reasonable to infer that many new Catholic groups and movements operate without generating controversy.

Are charismatic communities and charismatic prayer groups the same?

Unfortunately, the Charismatic Renewal movement and the charismatic covenant communities that emerged from that movement have often been lumped together and called "Charismatic Renewal." The Charismatic Renewal movement has always been much larger than the charismatic covenant communities. Many healthy charismatic prayer groups abound. Sometimes calling themselves communities, these prayer groups are often parish-based, usually loosely structured, and more like associations than intentional communities. Criticism of all or some Catholic charismatic covenant communities, then, should not be viewed as impugning the whole worldwide Charismatic Renewal movement.

What factors should researchers consider in evaluating the utility of former-member accounts concerning the nature of the group they belonged to?

While gathering information about the culture of a particular group, its beliefs, and practices, and how members experienced reality, one has to keep certain things in mind. The Catholic movements mentioned in this essay, as with many other controversial groups, have layers or levels of membership. There may even be levels of membership unknown to most members. That was certainly true of Mother of God. Those on the margins, those never in leadership, those far from the center or the top will have far less accurate knowledge of the functioning of the community or movement and will most probably never have experienced abuse of any kind. My observations suggest that many former members who were on the outer layers of membership of the American Catholic charismatic

communities only report favorably on their experience and even question why their local Catholic hierarchy got involved.

The mixed ex-member reports resulting from the existence of layers of membership become even more varied and complex when one recognizes that different people will respond differently to the same environmental stimuli and, as a consequence, will report differently on those stimuli. A person who grew up in a home in which opinions and emotions were expressed forcefully and loudly, for example, might perceive a particular interaction as mildly persuasive, while a person who is unassertive or unaccustomed to emotional pushing and shoving might view this same interaction as coercive and abusive.

Personality and background differences among the members may also influence how leaders behave toward them. Leaders, for example, may tend to be more directive or controlling with unassertive persons simply because the latter's diffidence makes it easier for the leaders to get away with domineering behavior. Such a personality difference doesn't necessarily justify the leader's behavior, but it may, along with the factors mentioned above, help explain how different people can honestly, and to a large extent accurately, paint very different pictures of the same leader. A person's character traits cannot be described adequately outside of a social context.

Individual differences in personality and reciprocal influences between members and leaders create a complex picture that prevents researchers from determining the truth by simply polling current and/or former members (which doesn't mean that group surveys aren't useful; they are merely limited). This complexity also demands that researchers pay attention to all perspectives, not only to those that support the researchers' preexisting biases. So-called "atrocious tales" should not be dismissed as pure distortion or fabrication, although they may sometimes be that. Neither should positive reports be dismissed as mere "parroting of a party line" or "brainwashing," although they may sometimes be that as well. We must look deeply into each individual case and thoroughly examine enough individual cases from a variety of levels within the group to arrive at a reasonably balanced picture of the complexity of the group environment and the idiosyncratic responses of its members and former members.

Have Church hierarchy or movement leaders acknowledged specific abuses in contemporary Catholic lay movements or communities?

In December of 1990, after wielding worldwide influence on the Charismatic Renewal movement and hundreds of intentional communities, some leaders of the Word of God Catholic charismatic covenant community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, including Catholic televangelist Ralph Martin, admitted that they had shunned people and abused authority (Nash, 1991). One of the top leaders of Word of God community women, Barbara Morgan, told community members that she repented for "teaching authoritatively the community policy on subordination and obedience...It caused women to lose confidence and strength and I want to repent for betraying women by teaching it" (Crumm, 1992, p.16). An internal WOG investigation suggested that at least 20% of WOG female members were seeking help from counselors or support groups "and many others who wanted counseling had been forbidden by their husbands to seek it" (Crumm, 1992, p. 16). Ralph Martin revealed that the pain of WOG community members was so great that they had sought counseling all over Washtenaw County. "It wasn't like anyone set out to be abusive, but with good motivation, abusive things ended up being done," he said (Rieke, 1991, p. 13).

Before a gathering of about 1000 community members, WOG leader Ken Wilson said that the group's training gave "a flavor that was against companionship and romance in marriage...a negative attitude towards emotions...a disdainful attitude towards feelings"

(Rieke, 1991, p. 14).

Journalist Nash said that the first instance of abuse of authority "occurred in 1971, when the WOG publicly shunned the first of six people who challenged community leadership" (Nash, 1991, p. 27). In February 1991 before a gathering of about 700 members, WOG leaders asked the forgiveness of a woman whose "sins" they had discussed in public twenty years before. This woman, later diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, had been the object of frequent casting out of spirits or "exorcisms." They repented for "exposing her life, her circumstances, publicly, that amounted to a form of slander of her" (Nash, 1991, p. 28). Ralph Martin's brother-in-law, WOG coordinator Randall Cirner, repented for "attempting to coerce her not to attend one of the local churches in town...A large number of community members attended that church and we did not want her to be there with them. We also repent to [name of the woman] for asking the whole community to avoid her and to have nothing to do with her during those years that she was here" (Nash, 1991, p. 28).

It is commendable that some top leaders of WOG asked forgiveness for abusing community members. Too few Catholic charismatic covenant community overall leaders have accepted responsibility in public or accepted responsibility at all when abuses have surfaced as they did at MOG, LOG, and elsewhere.

In 1991 Bishop Albert Ottenweller of Steubenville said in a diocesan statement released on June 21 that Servants of Christ the King charismatic community, a community whose members had been formed by people from the Sword of the Spirit (SOS) organization in Ann Arbor, needed to correct "significant abuses of authority and religious formation" (Abuses but strong faith found in Steubenville group practices, 1991, p. 1). Bishop Ottenweller reported that "allegations of wrongdoing" within SOCK "have been proved valid" (Boehm 1991, p. 1). The results of a canonical visitation had revealed various abuses including the shunning of members who "failed" or left Servants. If they had children, "their children were avoided at school by other children who had once been their friends" (Boehm 1991, p. 1).

Steubenville's Bishop Ottenweller shredded a copy of the covenant while some members of SOCK applauded. The Bishop said that the tearing of the covenant agreement was a sign that he was absolving SOCK members of any promises or commitments they had made, and a sign "that you're going to be free in your mind, in your heart, your feelings, and your spirit" (Flaherty, 1991, p. 2).

The above-mentioned instances of abuse are not atrocity tales; they are atrocity facts. One can only imagine how those little Steubenville children felt when their friends began to shun them, or how those who did the shunning felt. What was life like for the woman WOG shunned in 1971? What would it have been like for her to go into a store in Ann Arbor and have people turn their backs, or cross a street to avoid her? What is life like for her now? What is life like now for the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of children who were born into WOG and SOCK Catholic charismatic covenant community life? Some of these young people have known nothing but community life for more than twenty years. Apologies and the tearing of covenants, although appropriate gestures, do not erase the scars of abuse, nor can they instantly free the minds, hearts, feelings, and spirits of former community members.

Walled In, Robert Connor's (1979) memoir of growing up in a twentieth century American Catholic fringe group and trying to adjust to "normal" life afterwards sheds light on what people coming out of WOG or SOCK must cope with. Connor grew up with thirty-eight other children during the 50s and 60s inside a "Catholic" community, Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Still River, a part of Harvard, Massachusetts. Fr. Leonard Feeney and a

married woman, Catherine Goddard Clarke, founded this community. A charismatic writer and speaker, Feeney was dismissed by the Jesuits in 1949 and was excommunicated in 1953 for preaching without nuance that there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church and for his refusal to obey Boston's Cardinal Cushing.²⁴ "We were a part of an outcast and unofficial Roman Catholic religious community...Almost a hundred strong in the late 1940s and early 1950s, we were the true believers who refused to give in to the prevailing liberalism of the day. Catholics and many non-Catholics knew our cause as the Boston Heresy Case" (Connor, 1979, p. 2).

Born into the community, Connor did not choose to leave until he was twenty-one. He began his memoir at age twenty-seven. Connor tells of being raised with "little or no knowledge of the 'corrupt world' outside" (Connor, 1979, p. 2). "After a few years, although we knew who our parents were, we attached no special significance to the relationship. We were in fact taught not to. Children of the same parents were not any closer because of that blood relationship. But that did not seem odd to us, for no one was supposed to be close to anyone else; all children were forbidden to have what was termed a 'particular friendship'" (pp. 1-2).

In addition to detailing community life and describing his years of adjusting to life outside the community, Connor tracks the progress of some of the other thirty-eight children. At the time he was writing, five women and one man were still in the order. Drug and alcohol problems plagued some who left. Others had problems with authority. One had a breakdown. Connor, who graduated from MIT and earned a masters degree in electrical engineering at Stanford, noted that he and other people raised in the group found relationships with the opposite sex to be "nerve-racking and even frightening" (Connor, 1979, p. 3). While growing up the "little sisters" and "little brothers" had been kept separate, sleeping on separate floors, having separate activities. "We children were the by-products of a religious fanaticism that had run rampant, and that in doing so had seriously hurt many people" (p. 3). Connor expressed the hope that his memoir "may save someone else from the effects of similarly misguided 'goodness'" (p. 3).

How useful are visits by Church hierarchy as a way to assess a community's health and culture?

Urquhart stresses that merely reading statutes or constitutions will not enable Church authorities to understand and oversee a Catholic movement or community. A group's culture is not something to be found on paper. Moreover, Tapia reminds us that a group can sometimes actively attempt to influence people so that they won't see the disparity between what is written and what is practiced. She says that "the Roman Catholic Church . . . needs to understand Opus Dei from the inside, not from visits that have been carefully prepared by Opus Dei superiors" (Tapia, 1997, p. 4). Kent and Krebs (1998) refer to this as "impression management." They say that controversial religions can use academics to acquire positive press coverage. They cite the case of a study done on a group in Great Britain where there were allegations of child sexual abuse. The group contacted a scholar who made a positive assessment and published the results. The group now uses that study as part of its public relations package. The study in question had chapters based on researchers' visits to various group homes where they observed activities, interviewed members, and examined literature.

²⁴ The letter from the Holy Office concerning Fr. Leonard Feeney, Vatican, August 8, 1949, may be accessed at: <http://www.petersnet.net/research/retrieve.cfm?recnum=1467>.

Subsequently, say Kent and Krebs (1998), some former members reported that the homes the researchers visited were known inside the group as "media homes." Handpicked individuals rehearsed how to portray themselves and the group to media and scholars. Prior to visits from outsiders there were special preparations, such as moving out extra children and moving beds out of overcrowded bedrooms. The organization produced booklets about anticipated questions and spokespersons learned how to give appropriate answers. Any literature that might have seemed controversial was destroyed.

The Mother of God Catholic charismatic community prepared in a similar way for a meeting with the archdiocesan assessment committee. Leaders handpicked members, provided them with advance questions, and worked with them on scripting answers that members were to parrot back to the Bishop and others on the committee (Jones, 1997).

Thus, when Church representatives visit houses of Catholic movements and communities, the representatives should be keenly aware of the possibility of impression management. Perhaps researchers could help Church authorities develop strategies that will get behind the impression management. Such strategies should be part of a broader mandate of monitoring and accountability.

Do Focolare, Neocatechumenate, Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation and the French charismatic communities discussed in *Les Naufragés* deserve to be called cults?

Given the definitional confusion discussed at the beginning of this paper, the answer to this question depends upon how one defines "cult." Using Zablocki's relatively neutral definition ("an ideological organization held together by charismatic relationships and demanding total commitment"—Zablocki, 1997), one might be inclined to call these organizations "cults." Using more restrictive definitions that view cults as exploitatively manipulative (e.g., Langone, 1993), one might be inclined to withhold judgment until more scientific data are available. Using traditional notions of the terms (e.g., Schönborn, 1997), one would conclude that these groups are not cults or sects.

Anecdotal evidence, such as described in the books reviewed here, suggests that cultic relationships (what the Vatican report [Vatican, 1986] called "sectarian mentalities and attitudes") develop in these groups, although such relationships may not characterize or define the groups. As noted earlier, individual differences in personality and reciprocal influences between members and leaders create a complex picture that is not easily studied empirically. That is why this essay's fundamental conclusion is that this subject needs to be studied much more than it has.

Given the pain of their personal experiences, the authors of the three books discussed above would probably say that these groups are indeed characterized, not merely tainted, by an atmosphere of exploitative manipulation. They may be right. But they may also be wrong.

Do their reports represent some overdetermined crusade that deforms truth? Some of the Church investigations of certain groups and public confessions of certain leaders clearly support the contention that abuse occurs and in some cases may be rampant. Nevertheless, an informed and empirically accurate picture can only arise over time, with the completion of scholarly research and Church inquiries that take into account the methodological complexities discussed above.

If these reports do fairly reflect the culture of these groups, then as time passes, even if scholars and the Church continue to ignore the subject, more people will be abused and more will speak up, despite the disincentives against doing so. Eventually, even skeptics will

begin to listen. As noted earlier, Beit-Hallahmi reminds us, "ever since the Jonestown tragedy, statements by ex-members turned out to be more accurate than those of apologists and NRM researchers" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1997, p. 5). Speaking about Opus Dei, Jesuit Father James Martin (1995) quotes *Newsweek's* Kenneth Woodward: "The bishops have been pastorally irresponsible in not paying more attention to the claims of parents who feel their children have been seduced into joining something that is not good for their spiritual health. . . . That's not to say everybody, but there's enough of this sort of thing that it really bears investigation. And just as they owe an obligation in the very difficult case of someone who claims to have been molested by a priest— protecting the priest and the victim as equal members of the church—I think they have to pay pastoral attention to these people regardless of what kind of canonical status the organization has" (Martin, 1995, p. 27).

Notes

1. Bunson, Matthew (Ed.). *2000 Catholic Almanac*. (1999). Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, p. 345. The *Almanac* lists 9,005,254,000 as the global Catholic population, an obvious typo as the world population is listed at 5,820,254,000. The correct figure is 1,005,254,000, confirmed by a communication between Rev. John Dillon, Ph.D. and Matthew Bunson, Feb. 7, 2000 (personal communication with Rev. John Dillon, Ph.D., February 10, 2000).
2. Older than Focolare, NC, C&L, and Charismatic Renewal, Opus Dei eschews the term "movement" when speaking of itself and instead prefers the designation "Personal Prelature," a Church status it has enjoyed since 1982. Some writers call Opus Dei an "old movement" (Urquhart, 1999a) or an "NRM" (Walsh, 1995). NRM scholar Father John Saliba calls Opus Dei a "conservative movement" (Saliba, 1994), as does journalist Riding (1989). The Media Relations department of Opus Dei's Office of Communications sent me a letter (dated October 15, 1999) that included this sentence: "For your research you should recognize that Opus Dei is not a 'movement,' but rather a personal prelature. A personal prelature, unlike a movement, is a part of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church." The letter then referred me to *The Canonical Path of Opus Dei*, available from Midwest Theological Forum in Chicago.
3. See Cardinal Francis Arinze (1991). Available also as Appendix IX in Gesy (1993). Cardinal Arinze heads the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Of interest is Saliba's commentary on Arinze (Saliba, 1994).
4. This version of the document omits three sections, one of which is the bibliography. The complete document may be found as Appendix IX in LeBar (1989). For other versions see the first footnote in Saliba (1992).
5. See Aronoff, Lynn, & Malinowski (in press) for a methodological critique of research that addresses this question.
6. This situation, although perhaps confusing to the average Catholic, is not unexpected. Catholic priests have varieties of callings within their Church. Some are more pastoral, dealing directly with the faithful and their concerns; some priests serve as scholars giving advice to the Church. See my discussion of von Hugel's construct (Tydings, 1977). Fr. James LeBar has been a cult consultant to the Archdiocese of New York and is author of a popular book (LeBar, 1989). Fr. Walter Debold of Seton Hall University has taught world religions and has appeared on New Jersey television as a cult expert. Fr. Debold has counseled many former members of American Catholic charismatic covenant communities as well as others from high demand, high control groups. Fr. Lawrence Gesy, a priest of the

archdiocese of Baltimore, produced a popular book (Gesy, 1993). Fr. James Saliba is a Jesuit priest and NRM scholar who has an interest in Catholic dialogue with new religions and fringe religious movements (NRMs). His writings include Saliba (1992) and Saliba (1993). Fr. Saliba is unsympathetic to the anticult movement.

7. Referring to his former nineteen-year membership in an American charismatic covenant community, one priest has said: "we gave everything that was going on at the community legitimacy. That's the greatest evil the priests performed in the community." Father Thomas Weinandy, O.F.M., Cap. in Gillis (1997).
8. See the statement of Christopher West in Gillis (1997a, p. 14).
9. The period of diocesan seminary formation for a college graduate is ordinarily about four years.
10. See January 10, 1991 letter from Bishop Albert H. Ottenweller, Bishop of Steubenville, to Coordinators of Servants of Christ the King and June 17, 1992 letter from the ad hoc Committee for Covenant Community Reform to all American Bishops heading dioceses signed by William Beatty et al. These letters are in private archives. See also: Allegations proven valid (1991); Allen (2000); Arnerich (1992); Boehm (1991); Bread of Life (1984); Callahan (1991); Clark (1992); Crumm (1992); Flaherty (1991); Giannamore (1991); Gillis (1997a, 1997b); Haferd (1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1999); Jones (1997); Kiger (1994); Leifeld (1992a); Melnick (1991a); Nash (1991); A. Reimers (1986); M. Reimers (1992); Rieke (1991); Rodgers (1991b); Smith (1987a, 1987b); Szyszkiewicz (1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1992d); Turner (1991a, 1991b); Warner (1984); Wilson (1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c); Zibritosky (1991, 1992, 1992b).
11. Msgr. James A. Boehm, editor of *The Steubenville Register*, characterized SOS as "a controversial non-denominational evangelical organization founded in 1982 in Ann Arbor, Mich., whose influence extends to about 50 charismatic communities it governs around the world" (Boehm, 1991, p. 1).
12. In private archives. This document as well as copies of all other papers from private archives of former or current members of various charismatic communities cited in this article are in the author's archives. "In private archives" shall hereafter indicate that the author and others possess the document in question.
13. Presentation prepared and delivered by JoAnn M. Bosnick, Chair, Listening Process Sub-Committee, of the MOG Statutes Committee, to Mother of God members at a general community retreat, March 23, 1996. In private archives.
14. On their World Wide Web site, www.washingtonpost.com, beginning April 13, 1997, The Washington Post provided copies of MOG documents such as the "Information Gathering" document, and set up the site so readers could also explore related issues and post messages. For more than a year people posted messages relating to MOG and other American charismatic communities. Copies of posted messages, documents and related issues materials are in various private archives.
15. Referring to Opus Dei an Irish journalist, Carol Coulter wrote: "The suspicion must remain that the Catholic Church has its own cult, protected up to now by the highest levels in the Church itself" (Coulter, 1984), quoted in Walsh, 1992, p. 174.
16. In this regard it is interesting to read the literature produced or distributed by ODAN, the Opus Dei Awareness Network, in Massachusetts. The mother who started ODAN had seen

unwelcome changes in her daughter, whom, unknown to the mother, Opus Dei was recruiting. The daughter eventually left Opus Dei after a family intervention. The story is included in the ODAN information packet. ODAN P.O. Box 4333, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

17. The author obtained a copy of the letter cited by Farrell (Peggy Garvey to Rev. Jim Kelly, 2/15/91) from the Opus Dei Office of Communications in New York. Page numbers were not on the photocopy of Farrell article.
18. I raised a similar, related issue when I called for Catholic theologians to study the initiation and resulting Baptism in the Spirit found in the Charismatic Renewal movement (Tydings, 1977, pp. 235-250).
19. For a discussion of interpretations of the Vatican report (Vatican, 1986) see Saliba (1992).
20. For a discussion of infallibility see Granfield (1987).
21. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Livingstone, 1997) tells us that in 1773 Pope Clement XIV gave way to the demands of France, Spain, Portugal, and many of the Italian states, and issued the brief 'Dominus ac Redemptor' suppressing the Society [of Jesus]. Pius VII formally restored the Society in the bull "Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum." The suppression did not mean as some might think that the Jesuits were completely extinguished. For example, Jesuits were allowed to teach in Austria and Germany. The Jesuit mission to Maryland having begun in 1634 continued unaffected.
22. In his study of elderly male religious, and referring to the Catholic male religious lifestyle prior to the reforms of Vatican II, Edward Quinnan writes: "At the period in which these men entered [religious life] (1924-1951) the monastic influence predominated, in distinction to the lifestyle of a parish priest. Therefore a rigid boundary existed between those entering religious life and the rest of society. All letters had to pass through the hands of the novice master, the religious superior in charge of the novitiate, or through a delegated censor. . . .The structure of the early years of religious formation effectively built a wall between the individuals and the outside" (Quinnan, 1994, pp. 147-148). Karen Armstrong in her memoir in writing of her first months of formation in the convent as a postulant, says that she was taught: "Postulants and novices are meant to be kept secluded from the world so that you have a chance to develop a deep, personal relationship with God" (Armstrong, 1981, 1994 p. 88).
23. In 1972 *Vie et Mort des Ordres Religieux* by Fr. Raymond Hostie appeared in Europe. Hostie's landmark study treats Catholic religious communities from the 4th century to the then present. Fr. Hostie restricted his study to male religious communities. In an interview in 1977 Hostie said: "As I examined the situation of religious in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I found out that there were about 276 orders/congregations of male religious that had been in existence for one hundred years or more and some 2,000 congregations of women religious. I decided then to do an exact study of all the institutes of male religious, not because the women's institutes were not important, but because I was faced with a question of logistics and records" (Hostie, 1983, p. iii). In 1983 CARA, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate in Washington, D.C. brought out a limited edition of Fr. Hostie's study entitled: *The Life and Death of Religious Orders: A Psycho-sociological Approach*.
24. The letter from the Holy Office concerning Fr. Leonard Feeney, Vatican, August 8, 1949, may be accessed at: <http://www.petersnet.net/research/retrieve.cfm?recnum=1467>.

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About the Author

Judith Church Tydings, M.A. obtained her graduate degree in History from St. John's University in 1959. From 1974 to 1980 she served as the only American laywoman on the US National Advisory Committee for the National Service Committee for Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In 1978-79 she was listed in Vol. 22 of *American Catholic Who's Who*. In 1988 she was included in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. In 1977 she published *Gathering A People: Catholic Saints in Charismatic Perspective*. She formerly had an associate affiliation with Mother of God Catholic charismatic community in Maryland and is now in a doctoral program in American Studies at the University of Maryland.