

“No Man is an Island... Entire of itself...”

(John Donne)



The human need to be part of a group is far stronger than logic. Most people will sacrifice logic for social acceptance.

Cults

Our Need to Belong

Our Need to Believe

October 20, 2007

7:00 p.m.

- How much are humans willing to sacrifice to be socially accepted?
- What are the characteristics of a cult, and how is it different from a religious group?
- What is it that makes people stay in cult groups and sometimes be willing even to die for their group?
- How is “brainwashing” (mind control) possible?

One definition of a Mind-Control group is:

A religious group that engages in extreme spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional manipulation of its members in order to control closely their beliefs, thoughts, emotions and behavior

The critical word here is “*extreme*.”

For the first half of our evening, we’ll discuss this human need to belong.

Then, after our break, we’ll discuss our need to believe and our search for “truth.”

- What makes a person accept another’s interpretation of the truth?
- How does one become “a leader” and another “a follower?”
- Again, why is this need to join a group so strong?
- What are our groups?

(On the following page, I’ve included some reminders of famous “killer” cults.)



Charles Manson and his "family"



Jim Jones



Heaven's Gate



Branch Davidians



Shoko Asahara



The Order of the Solar Temple



Paul Schaffer was the leader of the cult Colonia Dignidad