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# From sect to cult to sect: the Christian Catholic Church in Zion

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**Iowa State University, 1990**

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From sect to cult to sect:  
The Christian Catholic Church in Zion

by

Warren Jay Beaman

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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~~For~~ the Graduate College

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1990

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

## Statement of Purpose

Recent revelations about the abuses of power, legal improprieties, and apparent cynicism among television evangelists in America have focused some attention on the tendency in certain portions of the religious community to create or follow charismatic leaders. Names like Jim Bakker, Jimmy Swaggert, and Oral Roberts have become well known. The tendency is to dismiss such movements as merely the religion of the poor, to assume the poor are more gullible, and conclude that this is religion of the gullible. Often, by the time the news media becomes aware of such a movement and its charismatic leader, the leader is promoting some rather unorthodox behavior or beliefs. It is not uncommon to dismiss the leader as well, at this late stage, with some reference to mental or emotional imbalance. For example, Jim Bakker was reported to have lain on the floor in the fetal position and to have hallucinated that reporters were wild animals. Psychotherapists were interviewed and a psychopathic interpretation was given. But all of this overlooks the roots of the movement and the development of the leader.

While some of these movements may be long on promise and short on delivery, they usually engender more scorn than legal intervention. Most would not be considered high on a list of priority criminal problems. Of course they do bring to mind more sinister examples like Jim Jones and the group he led to the South American jungle utopia, where they died in a mass suicide pact. Much of the media analysis of Jim Jones focused on how people could be so gullible to follow someone so obviously perverse. But while obvious evil by such a name may be attractive to some, most evil is not obvious, and most who followed Jim Jones apparently found an unusually attractive and gifted leader with a vision of a new world.

For some time, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the Unification Church, has been attracting a large and committed international following. He has recently emerged from imprisonment for so-called tax evasion, to begin building a multi-billion dollar automobile factory in China. Some predict this automobile factory to be his economic Waterloo, but his previous successes make predicting his downfall difficult. His access to gifted people and large finances is certainly impressive. In addition he is also reported to have recently declared himself the Messiah.

These recent examples highlight the importance of a charismatic leader who is central to innovative and energetic religious groups in our day. But this leadership needs greater analysis within the social scientific community.

Recent research on religious groups has tended to focus on the nature of sectarian and cultic groups. But analysis of cult groups has failed to recognize the central importance of the cult leader to cult development.

This study analyzes definitional issues related to cult development. It is an ethnographic case study of the founding of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion and the building of Zion, IL, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Both the church and the city were living trademarks of John Alexander Dowie, their charismatic leader. Conversely, Dowie was shaped through interaction with his followers. This story parallels many contemporary religious leaders and illustrates a little understood phenomenon, the development of the cult leader. Anyone who hears the final chapter of Dowie's life story could easily dismiss him as a cynical autocratic leader. Some would also find a psychopathic interpretation. But like many other leaders, Dowie is not so easily dismissed. To his followers, he gave something so dramatically transforming

that he could tell them to sell everything and follow him to an open field and build a city, and they saw Zion. To contemporary religious persons, who dichotomize religion from the rest of life, such apparently unquestioning obedience to their leader is incomprehensible. However, in the case of Dowie, leadership developed through a process of individual and group interactions that gave followers an uncanny confidence in their leader, whom they referred to as Elijah.

#### Methodology

This study deals almost exclusively with historical documents and data. The only major exception to this is several visits made by the author to Zion, IL. On those visits, several interviews were made with first-generation descendants of some of the earliest residents. However, there are only a small number of early descendants left in Zion today. Unfortunately, these descendants had no first-hand recollection of the time period being studied, 1893 to 1905.

Three major sources of compiled history about Zion were first consulted. Phillip Cook, a former Zion resident wrote a Ph.D. dissertation on Zion as a late nineteenth century utopian community (1965). Gordon Lindsay (1980), a

pentecostal evangelist, born in Zion, wrote a history of Dowie's healing ministry and building of Zion. This history gave the "official" religious perspective of those who stayed in Zion. He also describes Dowie as a sincere and simple preacher, who later suffered a nervous breakdown due to overwork. In 1930, Arthur Newcomb, who had been Dowie's newspaper editor during the years of building Zion and during Dowie's greatest innovations, wrote a novel about Dowie and the founding of Zion. The novel described the broad outline of the story. In 1903, John Hazley, published an article, "The Genesis of a Modern Prophet," in the American Journal of Sociology, which was a brief chronology of Dowie's life until 1901. Since none of these sources provided enough detail, either historically, or in the words of the original actors, original documents were used for most of the work in this study.

Edna Sheldrake (1912) published a series of personal letters written by Dowie from 1872 to 1888. Sheldrake remained loyal to Dowie until his death. She even disputed obvious historical evidence at points where these painted Dowie in an unfavorable light. Before Dowie died, he gave her a letter press containing copies of the letters that she published after his death. These letters were a treasure trove of detail into the personal emotional experience of

Dowie. They also provided the basis for testing the psychopathology model of cult formation. In addition they provided needed details and counterpoints to the public documentation in Dowie's magazine, Leaves of Healing, which was published from 1893 to 1905.

Leaves of Healing for the entire period were copied and retained by the author for the duration of this study. These approximately 17,000 pages of bound volumes (cited as L 1 through L 18, for volume 1 through volume 18), published testimonials of people who were healed during Dowie's ministry. Sermons, details of the religious organization, baptism lists, advertisements for the group's industries, and details of the founding of Zion, IL, were also included. These were perused while I was looking for historical details and testimonials of healings. The healings were put in a traditional database to be used for later studies on the social construction of a healing movement.

While the author searched for healing data, other historical data of interest was continually encountered. A memory resident information base for the PC computer, Tornado, was used to construct stacks of note cards accessible by key words (any word on the card). In this way, a diverse array of historical details, noteworthy quotes and conversations, and "research long shots" could be recorded without preconstructing the logic of what was



recorded. Later after going through all eighteen volumes in this way, the "hunches" about historical material could be followed by computer searches of the note cards using key words.

Then, the author gathered each conceptual category into stacks of cards. A card was as large or small as the information required. Each card could be duplicated in numerous stacks if it contained information germane to each category. Unlike mechanically sorting or alphabetizing handwritten note cards, this allowed for arranging the historical data in a number of different ways, since the cards could be copied into more than one stack. When necessary, the original magazine was consulted for the specific details about information recorded on the card.

The one limitation of the program, Tornado, was that card stacks were limited to 500 cards and 53,000 bytes in one stack. This meant that each stack had to be searched separately; one could not do a global search of all cards. Ultimately, there were approximately 35 stacks of note cards and approximately 15,000 note cards, including other documents such as newspapers indexed in this way.

Newspapers also proved to be a valuable resource. From about 1900 to 1905, Dowie subscribed to several newspaper clipping services that collected newspaper clippings about

Dowie and Zion from newspapers around the country. In addition Dowie's magazine asked followers of the movement to send in any newspaper articles they encountered about the movement. These were all pasted into Scrapbook volumes by Zion employees. Thirteen of these volumes (all that were available), a total of over 2,000 pages of newspaper clippings were photocopied from the Zion Historical Society Archives, in Shiloh House, Zion, IL. Most pages contained five to ten clippings from a diverse array of newspapers. Each clipping was indexed for key words and historical details on computer note cards.

In any given period, when redundancy was too extreme, later clippings that proved redundant were not indexed. When the original newspaper citation was legible, a traditional citation was used. When this was not possible, the particular volume and page of the clipping were cited (for example, Scrapbook 1:128). The original numbering system of the volumes had been lost years ago; therefore the author attempted to place the volumes in sequence and give them a number. Most of the volumes did not have page numbers and the photocopy pages were not in original order, so the author also numbered the photocopied pages.

Numerous other documents, the 1910 Federal Census for Zion, a list of those staying in Dowie's Healing Home in

Chicago for 1900, baptismal lists from the Leaves of Healing magazines, two funeral lists for Zion through 1960 were computerized in a traditional database format. In all, 41,000 records of individuals and demographic data were compiled in this way. Most of these data will not be used in present study, but awaits further analysis.

#### Biographical Sketch of John Alexander Dowie

In 1847, John Alexander Dowie was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. When he was thirteen years old, he moved to live with his uncle in Adelaide, Australia. At the age of twenty-one, Dowie returned and studied at Edinburgh University for two years. However, his theological education was interrupted in 1869 because of family debts. He returned to Australia and was ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1872. He ministered for less than one year in a rural parish in South Australia. Then he moved to suburban Sydney, where he worked in pastorates in Manley Beach and Newtown, until 1878, when he became an independent evangelist. By 1884, he began to gather a movement of those who believed in divine healing. After 1885, he traveled extensively throughout Southern Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania.

In 1888, he left Australia to establish residency in San Francisco, and spent over two years traveling the West Coast. In 1891, he moved his headquarters to Chicago. In 1893, at the Chicago Exposition, Dowie attracted large crowds and a great deal of media attention with a small converted machine shed where he held frequent healing meetings. He soon opened one of several healing homes, or hotels, where guests paid to rent rooms. At these hotels, guests were prayed for and attended services. The Chicago medical establishment opposed Dowie and he was arrested over 100 times in 1895 for running a hospital without a license. In 1895, while Dowie enjoyed the communitarian experience of the cluster of buildings in Chicago, he decided to build a Christian city, Zion. He immediately began selling stocks in Zion Land and Investment Corporation.

In 1896, he founded his own church, the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, in Chicago. In 1903, he renamed it the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church which reflected his Apostolic authority. By 1905, he had baptized over twenty thousand members. After 1894, he steadily published the Leaves of Healing magazine, which had a circulation of around seventy thousand by 1903. In late 1901, Dowie and his followers built Zion, IL, forty miles north of Chicago.

Zion grew rapidly to about 6,000 persons in only a few years. It was a religious utopia with economically cooperative institutions. In Zion, Dowie was the sole owner of land which he held in trust for God and the people. Residents would buy stocks in Zion industries and lease the property on which they built their houses. Each lease lasted for 1,100 years, which was enough time to get through the 1,000 year millennium that was to be initiated soon.

In 1901, shortly after founding Zion, the character of Dowie's leadership changed. He was declared Elijah the Restorer, the prophet of the last days, whose goal was to prepare the world for Christ's return. His followers initially gave him unswerving allegiance. He did not hesitate to make exacting ethical and financial demands. After founding Zion, Dowie became increasingly controversial and the larger society interpreted the movement as deviant. However, outsiders were intrigued by the industrial and economical cooperation in Zion. Zion had the only American lace factory with a large contingent of Nottingham lacemakers and the latest machinery. Numerous smaller factories, stores, and enterprises were a constant hum of activity and growth in Zion.

In 1903, Dowie decided to "invade" New York, primarily to publicly challenge influential religious leaders who had

written articles in the press interpreting Dowie's movement as cult-like. Dowie travelled to New York and rented Madison Square Garden for one month and then Carnegie Hall for a shorter period. With a host of over three thousand of his most committed followers, he travelled to New York in eight trains. It was a crusade. Although all travellers had to pay their own way, the trip was only one in a series of financial blunders on Dowie's part. Not only was Madison Square Garden expensive, but his followers had been pushed to the limits of their resources in building Zion, and New York offered few converts and less money to Dowie.

After returning to Zion, Dowie's followers discovered Zion in bankruptcy court and receivership. Zion industries had not yet made a consistent profit. Unfortunately, profits had not been put back into the industries. Instead profits financed religious expansion and Dowie's extravagance. Despite the lack of profit, money from new investors paid handsome dividends to Zion's old investors. After bankruptcy, followers were required to sacrifice, work harder, and trust their leader. At this same time, Dowie embarked with a large staff on a luxurious around-the-world trip. While Dowie travelled, Zion ran short of food and other essential supplies.

In 1905, Dowie decided to open a large plantation of over one million acres in the Caribbean coast of Northern Mexico called Zion Plantations. He began to sell plantation stocks immediately. He and his wife constantly traveled to the Caribbean and Mexico for investment and health concerns. However, Zion was in economic trouble, despite Dowie's denials. Often the factories were idle, workers were paid in coupons which became so worthless that even Zion stores began to refuse to honor them. Wages were withheld. Dividends went unpaid. Numerous followers, with large investments in Zion, were impoverished.

In 1905, Dowie had a stroke of paralysis and traveled south to recuperate and work out the details of the Mexico purchase. He also left Zion to disguise the seriousness of his disability. When he returned to Zion in early 1906, the city was wrested from him by his top leaders and given by the courts to his followers. Dowie was deposed from leadership, excommunicated, and charged with heresy. He was warned that should he persist in challenging his loss of status, he would be tried in criminal court for his financial violations. By this time, he had overdrafted his personal account at the Zion Bank by six hundred thousand dollars. Dowie, disabled and virtually alone, spent his last two years in his home in Zion: only a few faithful remained with him. He died in 1907.

Zion became a divided city and host of numerous sectarian and cult groups. The young pentecostal movement, beginning in 1905, picked up many of the most talented leaders from Zion and easily incorporated into its movement much of the ethos of Dowie's healing movement. The Christian Catholic Church maintained the largest share of the Zion population until the 1940s. At that time, the Christian Catholic Church sold most of its land and industries in Zion, as well as the Zion Bank.

Dowie's significance to religion in America is often unappreciated (Wacker, 1985). A historian of modern faith healers, David E. Harrell, calls Dowie "the father of healing revivalism in America" (1975:2). Wacker (1985:497) notes Zion's significance as either the second largest utopian community, larger than the Shaker's Union Village, OH, or the second largest self-contained colony, a distant second to the Latter Day Saints in Utah. Wacker also notes that Zion figures prominently in the genesis of the early twentieth-century pentecostal movement, although for ideological reasons, usually little or no credit is given to Dowie.

Today, Zion retains a strong religious and utopian heritage, which is physically centered on impressive and thriving Christian Catholic Church property. However,



religion in Zion is pluralistic. Zion's population is presently around seventeen thousand persons.

### Cults and Cult Leaders

This study is an ethnographic analysis of John Alexander Dowie's religious movement, its growth from 1893 in Chicago, and its later move to Zion, IL in 1901. This study tests recent definitions and theories about cult religious movements and their development.

Chapter Two reviews definitional issues surrounding the terminology of cult and sect, specifically cults. Recent theoretical work of Stark and Bainbridge (1985) is pivotal to this discussion of cult definitions. A modified definition, based on Stark and Bainbridge's definition, is developed and improved by focusing on the cult leader who is crucial to the development of the cult.

Chapter Three uses Dowie's social movement as a test case for definitional issues about cults. Dowie's movement is analyzed as a sect that became a cult and returned to sectarian status. This is contrary to the origin of the cult suggested by Stark and Bainbridge (1985). Given the importance of a leader in cult development, the development of a sect with a charismatic leader may also lead to the development of a cult.

The second half of this study is a test of three theories of cult development summarized by Stark and Bainbridge (1985) that are briefly introduced in Chapter Four. The subculture-evolution model of cult development receives minimal treatment in this study. Since the Dowie movement was leader-centered, a theory such as the subculture-evolution model that focuses away from the leader, is inadequate. However, this theory is correct in its analysis of the dynamics of novel ideation development in a movement that separates itself from the larger society. Thus the subculture-evolution model receives its brief, and only treatment, in Chapter Four where all three theories are introduced.

The psychopathology theory is critiqued and tested in Chapter Five. Some elements of the Dowie movement conform to the psychopathology interpretation; however two major flaws exist with interpreting Dowie in this model. First, the psychopathology theory predicts early mental illness, whereas if Dowie was ever mentally ill, it was late in the movement. Second, careful examination of the evidence suggests that the painful experiences that psychopathology theory predicts lead to mental illness, did not lead Dowie to schizophrenia. He was quite lucid during this time. Some of the psychopathology literature is flawed with unexamined ethnocentric assumptions and post-hoc reasoning.

Chapter Six tests the entrepreneurial model of cult development (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985). This economic theory depicts exactly what happened in Dowie's movement. The theory focuses on the cult leader as an entrepreneur in two ways. First, the leader is an innovator of ideas and practices who borrows heavily from the surrounding culture. Second, the leader is a promoter who fosters powerful exchange relationships in a religious context. The theory suffers from reductionist economic assumptions about religion and the profit motive. However, many cult leaders, including Dowie, show uncanny entrepreneurial skills and develop lucrative exchange systems. What exchange theory fails to answer is the demise of the Dowie enterprise. Exchange theory accurately predicts that the economic demise leads to the demise of the cult religious movement, but it fails to adequately answer why the clever entrepreneur ultimately fails so miserably in business.

Chapter Seven develops a symbolic interactionist perspective on the founding of the Dowie movement. The chapter begins with some of the most serious drawbacks to the three previous theories in explaining the Dowie movement. Symbolic interaction theory is useful in describing the process whereby an attractive and sympathetic leader is transformed by his or her admirers into a figure

larger than life. Consequently, the result is a repulsive leader, unrecognized by some of those most responsible for his or her success.

This symbolic interaction perspective better describes how early attractiveness, rather than mental illness, leads to the later cult leadership. This perspective also explains how the early business acumen is transformed into later tragic business errors.

In contrast to the psychopathology theory, symbolic interaction predicts early success and late "deviance" by the leader. A brief analysis of the early attractiveness of the leader gives a more reasonable explanation of the phenomenal growth of the movement. This contrasts with psychopathology theory that unreasonably suggests a schizophrenic leader attracts a massive following.

This study reviews divergent cult definitions suggesting agreement where possible. Further studies may find this analysis of a sect-to-cult-to-sect model helpful in analyzing groups that do not follow the sect-to-denomination cycle proposed by Niebuhr (1929) or the secular origins of cults proposed by Stark and Bainbridge (1985). Finally, the symbolic interaction perspective of cult development presented in this study illuminates a process whereby an attractive leader becomes a cult leader as a normal process of his or her own success.

## CHAPTER II: CULT AND SECT LITERATURE

In this chapter, various definitional issues involved in the categorization of religious social movements will be discussed. Chapter III analyzes the religious movement started by John Alexander Dowie, founder of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion. The movement is best understood as being first a sect, and then a cult and finally, a sect. First, the appropriateness of the cult model for Dowie's movement will be tested. Next a brief description of the dynamics leading to the reformulation of the movement into a sect will be presented.

## Defining the Cult and Sect

Before analyzing the movement created around John Alexander Dowie, it is necessary to discuss the literature of cults to see if the label cult applies.

Stark and Bainbridge

This analysis draws heavily on the recent work of Stark and Bainbridge (1985:25-26) who distinguish between a cult and sect as to the origin and the substance of each. The sect originates in an established religion that is central to both the culture and region. The sect is a revitalization or revival of an earlier form of this mainstream cultural religion. The cult is contrasted for

its origin that is independent of established religious groupings. The cult is a new religion.

The sect is schismatic: it divides an established group. The cult begins a new group. As to the substance of each religious movement, the sect develops old lines of religious belief and practice, while the cult strikes a new course. If the sect seems innovative, this is only apparent. Recently, the established religious group has forgotten its roots, now revitalized in the sect. In this sense, the sect is either reactionary or regressive; neither term is used by Stark and Bainbridge. The cult is an innovative religious movement. The cult is not reactionary or regressive, it is creative.

Stark and Bainbridge build their theory of cult and sect development on H. Richard Niebuhr's earlier typology of church and sect (Niebuhr, 1929). Niebuhr popularized the work of Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch, who developed an ideal type of the church and the sect. Since Niebuhr could find no good examples of a church in America, he applied this category to established denominations in the United States. While Niebuhr is critiqued for offering a theory that is too vague and unspecified to stand up to empirical investigation, a central core of Niebuhr's work is retained. Benton Johnson captured this essential core of theory in his

definition of churches and sects, "A church is a religious group that accepts the social environment in which it exists. A sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists" (Stark, 1985:23). The key to understanding the sect is its relation to the society in which it is located. The sect is a deviant religious group distinguished by its state of high tension with its surrounding society. However, this in itself is not a fundamental distinction with cults. The cult is also a deviant religious group in high tension with its society.

While Stark and Bainbridge never make the relative deviance of cults and sects completely clear, they provide material in their analysis to distinguish the cult as the more deviant of the two groupings. One problem is that even though the cult category, in theory, may be the more deviant of the two, some sects by their very choice of specific items of deviance will be defined by their host society as more deviant than some cults. For example, a cult's innovative ideas may be less offensive presently for historic and accidental reasons than some sects. However, generally speaking, there is a possible distinction between the two groups in terms of social location. Stark and Bainbridge suggest that,

Sects are breeds of a common species. Sects are deviant religious movements that remain within a non-deviant religious tradition.... Cults are a different species.... Cults are deviant religious

movements within a deviant religious tradition.  
(1985:26)

While Stark and Bainbridge have moved the discussion of the definitions of sect and cult forward, there is still a great deal of variability in definitions. The careful delineation of cult and sect is only recent. C. Eric Lincoln (1983) suggests that although cults have long been a part of western religious culture, there was little scholarly interest in cults until the media focused attention on the exotic black religious movements found in post World War I urban ghettos. It was not until after World War II that the proliferation of such groups in America led to scholarly attempts to categorize the cult.

Howard Becker gave attention to cult phenomenon as early as 1932 in his Systematic Sociology. Yet even as late as 1970 Yinger, following Bryan Wilson, wondered about the usefulness of the term cult (1970:279; Chalfant et al., 1987:92). Yinger, stopping short of complete rejection of the term, devoted only two pages in his large volume on sociology of religion to the analysis of the cult. Lincoln notes the confused state of definition regarding cults.

There is far from unanimous agreement on precisely what a cult is, and why, and the tendency to make the term a catch-all for whatever is not a "church" or derived from a "church", is quite general-- with a predictable confusion as a consequence.... Unfortunately, our scholarship has not matched the pace of our spiritual inventiveness, and the science of the sociology of



religion finds itself sharing the predicament of conventional understanding. Both suffer from want of precise definitions of the religious modalities encountered in contemporary experience (Lincoln, 1983:6,4,5).

Yinger uses the concept of cult to refer to movements that result from "alienation from [the] traditional religious system as well as of alienation from society. When this occurs new or syncretist religious movements often appear" (1970:279). Yinger identified five characteristics of the cult; 1) small size, 2) mysticism, 3) lack of structure, 4) charismatic leadership, and 5) a greater break with prevailing culture than a sect. Nelson (1968) countered that cults need not be small and that in time cults may become a more permanent social organization. Yinger apparently concurred (1970:280).

#### Keith Roberts

Perhaps the best treatment of cult definitions is by Keith Roberts (1990), who sees three different definitions of cult being used today. The first is equivalent to Yinger's use of the term charismatic sect with the following characteristics; 1) highly-committed members, 2) lack of bureaucratic structure, 3) charismatic leadership, 4) esoteric ideas, and 5) a more deviant and developmental phase on the way to becoming a sect and later a denomination (Roberts, 1990:195).

The second definition originated when Howard Becker applied the term cult to Ernst Troeltsch's earlier category of mysticism. Despite the present use of term cult applied to groups with a non-Christian origin, the category of mysticism for Troeltsch was a variant Christian grouping. The mystic originated in the Christian tradition, however much the variant Christian group's new inspiration led them to innovate (Troeltsch, 1981). Troeltsch's focus on the direct religious experience of the mystics paved the way for analysis of cults experiencing new revelations and the radical individualism or lack of social organization of such groups (1981:730, 743, 800).

In Meredith McGuire's use of this second definition of cult, it is apparent how divergent this definition is from that used by Stark and Bainbridge. For McGuire, the cult is characterized by 1) loose social organization, 2) privatized faith, 3) eclecticism, and 4) tolerance of other group's truth claims (1987:117,121). McGuire's list of cult examples are the most mystical and tolerant of a larger group categorized as cults by Stark and Bainbridge (1985:121).

McGuire's (1987) definition of cult is built on Troeltsch's (1981) residual category of mysticism. For Troeltsch, what was not a church or sect was mysticism.

However, since mysticism was present in both church and sect, it could not be a separate type of organization (McGuire, 1987:116). In connection with the category of mysticism, McGuire noted,

Troeltsch (1960:381) forecast that modern society would be increasingly characterized by his third type of religious association: "idealistic mysticism" or "spiritual religion" (see Garrett, 1975). This is essentially a radical religious individualism. It lays no emphasis upon the relations between believers; any association among them is based upon a "parallelism of spontaneous religious personalities." Such groups are indifferent to sacraments, dogmas, ethical norms, and organization. Mysticism tends to resist control by authorities and is thus a threat to organized religious forms. Nevertheless, because it tends to be uninterested in changing the church or the world, it does not have the social impact of sect-type groups. (1987:116)

Unfortunately, this individualistic requirement and disinterest in changing society rule out groups from the cult category, such as Jim Jones' People's Temple, which was very much collectivist and focused on social change. In fact, contrary to Stark and Bainbridge (1985), McGuire (1987:120) classifies "new religious groups such as the Children of God, Unification Church, Synanon, and People's Temple," as sect-like rather than as cults. Perhaps a better use for individualism and mysticism, which McGuire defines as cult, is the subcategories of client cult and audience cults as used by Stark and Bainbridge. Client cults have no group organization, except as each individual

is personally reliant on the cult leader as a patient or client (Stark and Bainbridge, 1987:208-233). The audience cult has no group organization except for periodic lectures or individually similar experiences of listening to the same radio program sponsored by the cult leader.

But there is something worthwhile in the mysticism category for a definition of cults. Mysticism is important in defining a cult since it is the spiritual vision or mystical insight often resident in the charismatic leader that is so easily set adrift from written revelation or structured religious authority and tradition. If this understanding of mysticism is emphasized, one can see the parallel with the new revelations that set a cult apart in the definitions of Roberts (1990) and Lincoln (1983). When McGuire's "privatized faith" becomes the unique vision of a charismatic leader and is then transmitted to a group of followers, it becomes a new revelation. This is the foundation of religious innovation so important in Stark and Bainbridge's cult definition (1985).

The third definition of cult given in Robert's analysis is Stark and Bainbridge's definition; where a cult is a religious group making "a radical break with existing religious traditions" (Roberts, 1990:196). Stark and Bainbridge give more narrow definitions of groups they call

audience cults and client cults; both of which are nearer to the mysticism definition used by McGuire (1987).

Roberts adopts this third definition from Stark and Bainbridge, and gives helpful clarification and additions. Roberts' analysis of cults adds the following; 1) the cult adds new revelation, 2) where sect and cult are difficult to distinguish, new revelation and the central charismatic leader are good signs of a cult, and 3) societal hostility may lead a sect to become a cult after it makes a radical separation from society (1990:198-199). This last summary is most helpful in analyzing the movement begun by John Alexander Dowie.

The definition of cult given by Stark and Bainbridge, and modified by Roberts, has the added advantage of being similar to that used by nonsociologists. Walter Martin, cult researcher, wrote from within a religious tradition, and combined his own definition with that given by historian Charles Braden:

Dr. Braden states..., "A cult as I define it, is any religious group which differs significantly in some one or more respects as to belief and practice, from those religious groups which are regarded as the normative expressions of religion in our total culture." I might add to this that a cult might also be defined as a group of people gathered about a specific person or person's interpretation of the Bible. (1965:11)

Martin added an emphasis on charismatic leadership to a definition which was initially very similar to Stark and Bainbridge's definition. Roberts also emphasizes charismatic leadership. This is a needed corrective to a serious oversight in Stark and Bainbridge's analysis. In their attempt to make their definition parsimonious, and since charismatic leadership does not necessarily signal cult status, Stark and Bainbridge have chosen to neglect this important element of the cult phenomenon. Instead, they focus on two variables, the genesis or origin of a cult, and the tension with society experienced by a cult.

#### The Genesis Variable

How does one distinguish that a group is within or outside of a particular religious tradition? For Stark and Bainbridge, the answer can be found in the genesis of the movement. A cult starts from an innovative, and therefore culturally deviant, subcultural position. The cult begins with obviously different beliefs and practices from the predominant religion of the host culture. The sect, in contrast, begins within the mainstream cultural tradition, taking several steps backward.

This distinction sounds simple, and although Stark and Bainbridge focus their attention on social change and religion, it is social change that makes the definitional

matters so complex. For instance, what if the revitalization movement, the new sect, only takes one step backward, as in the case of the American Holiness Movement, to a Wesleyan theology? Was the Holiness Movement still a sect when it later adopted a central theme of sanctification as a second work of grace, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and notably, divine healing? Or more extreme, when the pentecostalists in the early twentieth century made speaking in tongues, healing, and millenarian belief central to their practice and took their cues, at least in part, from the earliest Christian community, were they a sect or cult?

Robbins' (1988:17) exhaustive overview of recent research on new religious movements, or NRMs, uses the term NRM as synonymous with cult, even if the cult is the more "controversial and stigmatized aspect of NRMs." What Robbins' overview illustrates is that there is still little overall agreement among researchers as to what is and what is not a cult and how the cult is to be distinguished from the sect. Robbins (1988:159) refers to this as a boundary problem. Stark and Bainbridge sidestep the fact that another group of researchers define the cult in such a way that many of the groups labeled as cults by Stark and Bainbridge are defined as sects by others (Robbins:154-5; Cambell, 1977, 1978; Jackson and Jobling, 1968; McGuire, 1987; Wallis, 1977). Throughout Robbins' overview of

research on NRMs, pentecostals are lumped together with cult groups by various researchers (1988:139,145), despite the revitalization roots of pentecostalism. Sometimes evangelical and fundamentalist groups are studied as NRMs constituting a 'cultic milieu' (1988:4-5).

The "genesis" variable which Stark and Bainbridge (1985) focus on as dichotomous, revitalization or innovation does not divide into discrete categories. A revitalization taking one step backward, for example, the religion of fifty years previous, and a revitalization taking a seventeen century leap backwards may differ greatly. Members of the host society may not be able to distinguish innovation from revitalization in the latter case.

This study suggests that in the case of John Alexander Dowie's Christian Catholic Church, the host society began to completely reject the movement that they classified as a cult that is similar to Christian Science and Mormonism. Any connection between Dowie's practices and early Christianity was apparently missed by most Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century. They saw Dowie's movement as innovative, not a revival. Of course, Dowie was not without objective innovation.

Consequently, the genesis of a religious movement, whether innovative with cults or revivalistic with sects, is



not always decisive in determining cult or sect status. In fact, Stark and Bainbridge admit that the genesis of the one may be in the other. They cite Jim Jones' People's Temple as an example of a sect evolving into a cult (1985:186-7). While Niebuhr (1929) suggested the typical pattern was a movement from sect to denomination, Stark and Bainbridge suggest that one alternative pattern is the movement from sect to cult.

Nonreligious groups can evolve into religious cults; so it is not surprising that cults also can arise from religious sects--extreme religious groups that accept the standard religious tradition of the society, unlike cults that are revolutionary breaks with the culture of past churches. An infamous example is the Peoples Temple of Jim Jones, which destroyed itself in the jungles of Guyana. This group began as an emotionally extreme but culturally traditional Christian sect, then evolved into a cult as Jones progressively became a prophet with an ever more radical vision (1985:186-7).

Nelson also saw the potential for transformation from sect to cult and back to sect (Roberts, 1990:200).

It is still unclear how to distinguish at which point the beliefs and activities of a sect would be considered innovative enough to be classified a cult. Stark and Bainbridge suggest that "Only when the degree of innovation is extreme shall we speak of a cult" (1985:173). This advice is slippery. They are more helpful when they suggest an innovative group, a cult, may still retain many of the features of the mainstream religion like a sect.

Accordingly, "regardless of how much of the common religious culture it retains--the cult adds to that culture a new revelation or insight justifying the claim that it is different, new, 'more advanced'" (1985:25-26). This qualification provides further complexity in definition. A movement may appear in many features to be a sect because of similarities to the mainstream religious culture, but with some new revelation, it fits the cult category. Despite models to the contrary, the cult and sect, in some cases, may be more alike than different. When the genesis of a cult is in a sect, then the genesis variable is of little help in distinguishing the two.

#### The Tension Variable

Religious groups are never completely static. However, some are more static than others. Niebuhr (1929) suggested that the sect is by its very nature unstable and tends to be transformed, in time, into a denomination that is more stable. Stark and Bainbridge characterize this movement as a movement from a state of high tension to a state of low tension with the surrounding society. This tension can be measured on three vectors; difference, antagonism, and separation (Stark, 1985:51-67). If this is correct and cults are generally more deviant than sects, then levels of difference, antagonism, and separation may be greatest for cult groups.

The genesis of the cult outside the mainstream cultural and religious tradition suggests that the cult is more deviant. Generally, when tension with society is the key variable being measured, while there is some overlap, the cult category will be further to the deviance side of a scale of church, sect, and cult. The cult category will be considered most deviant. Yinger considered cults to be in higher tension with society than sects (1970:279). While Stark and Bainbridge do not make this clear, some of their examples suggest such a distinction. The example of Jim Jones and the People's Temple suggests that the group became more deviant after Jim Jones was considered a prophet and the group felt constrained to leave the host society for a jungle enclave. Stark and Bainbridge interpret this group's change from sect to cult as signaling greater tension with society (1985:279).

Another example from Stark and Bainbridge's work is that of the Jesus People. Stark and Bainbridge list the Jesus People as a cult.

The Jesus People, or Jesus freaks, sufficiently novel to be called cults rather than sects, flourished during the late 1960s and very early 1970s. (1985:199)

In fact, on most vectors of belief, the Jesus People were quite orthodox in their Christianity. Was it for their apparent disregard of organized middle-class American

Christianity and the high tension this engendered that Stark and Bainbridge classify them as a cult? But who can deny that these young people received their Christianity in the very churches they came to reject? Many of them may have followed Stark and Bainbridge's model of moving out of mainstream religion altogether, becoming secularized, and then converting to something else--in this case a counter-cultural Christianity. However, to suggest this was a new religion gives credence to one of the points of this study, that radical revitalization may well lead to being considered by the host society as a cult.

Thus, while cults and sects may generally have different genesis, a sect may become novel enough to be considered a cult through continued social change. That novelty may have precedent in an earlier version of the same culture's predominant religion. While Stark and Bainbridge consider both cults and sects to be in a state of high tension with society, and their genesis to be the decisive factor in distinguishing the two, apparently high tension may be enough in some cases to distinguish a sect from a cult, i.e., the Jesus People.

#### The Leadership Variable and Separation Variable

Two other variables, not developed by Stark and Bainbridge, figure more centrally in other treatments of cults in the literature (Lincoln, 1983).

The Charismatic Leader      The charismatic leader owes its first theoretical development to Max Weber (1947; 1963). Although Stark and Bainbridge fail to note the importance of the leadership style in defining a cult, they do assume the importance of leadership. When they distinguish Jim Jones' People's Temple moving from a sect to a cult, they base their interpretation on the basis of Jones' emergent leadership style. In their words, the group "then evolved into a cult as Jones progressively became a prophet with an ever more radical vision" (1985:187). Roberts' summary cult definition gives attention to the charismatic leader as important to the cult phenomenon (1990:197-198).

Ironically, though Stark and Bainbridge fail to develop charismatic leadership as a distinguishing element of the cult, two of the three theories they use to explain the genesis of a cult directly address the leader as central. The psychopathology model of cult development and the entrepreneur model of cult development both focus on what is clearly a charismatic leader and the importance of such a person in cult development (1985:171-188). Stark and Bainbridge are correct that charismatic leadership is not necessary to cult development, however many--perhaps most cults would not be born without such a leader.

C. Eric Lincoln (1983) has developed the two variables, charismatic leadership style and separation from the larger society, in his treatment of the more narrow topic, the cosmocentric cult. Lincoln describes how a group follows a charismatic leader out of society to an increasingly narrow and unique world view. Lincoln identifies this process as the "cult syndrome," which in varying degrees is also found in conventional churches, but is most clearly seen in the "cosmocentric cult," of which Jim Jones' People's Temple is the most infamous example. Lincoln states,

The cosmocentric cult (is) so designated because of its characteristic struggle to isolate itself from the real world which may be perceived as hostile or corrupt, or which may provide little or no prospect for self-fulfillment or meaning in life. It creates instead its own private cosmos molded nearer to the shared vision of its true believers as determined by the leader. In the cosmocentric cult, the agent-savior or leader-father reveals a set of values or aspirations which are very likely to be foreign to those which proved unavailable in the real world, but which seem eminently attainable to the corporate body of believers in the new reality of the cult. The cults led by Father Divine, Daddy Grace, Elijah Muhammad and Jim Jones are typical of this configuration. (1983:6-7)

Lincoln gives the following elements that distinguish such a leader; 1) deep sensitivity in role taking of followers' needs, 2) unique gifts such as esoteric knowledge which gives power, 3) authoritarian leadership, separation from followers because of special giftedness, 4) fearlessness, 5) extreme dualism between good and evil

corresponding to the group and outsiders, 6) conflict with the world, 7) intolerance of criticism, 8) special revelations or prophecy, and 8) being above some of the moral constraints of the followers (1983:9-10).

Separation        The leader initiates the process of isolating the cult from the larger society. This is a geographical separation and a separation in time. Separation is enhanced by business in cult activities and little opportunity to meet the larger world. Often meetings with the larger world are in the presence of other cult members, and thus encapsulated. Lincoln suggests the goal of this isolation is "the maintenance of a private cosmos capable of avoiding most unapproved contact with the outside world, or so filtering such contact as to render it innocuous to the interests of the cult" (1983:11). Lincoln shows how the isolation creates a "closed cosmos" where identity and reality are completely reconstructed for the leader and the followers.

### Synthesis

Given the variety of treatments of cult definitions, the temptation is to give up on cult and sect typologies altogether (Goode, 1967). But, there are enough similarities among the cult definitions to glean a valuable

TABLE 1. Typology of Cult Definitions

Process	Troeltsch (1981) Becker (1932)	Yinger (1970)	Lincoln (1983)	McGuire (1987)	S B (
Charismatic Leader		Charismatic Leader	Charismatic Leader		
Reject Traditional Organization & Belief		Lack Structure		Loose Social Organization	
Innovative Ideas Free Ideas	Mysticism	Mysticism Syncretism	New Revelation	Privatized Faith	
Societal Reaction Mutual Rejection		Greater Break With Society Than Sect	Conflict Separation Isolation	Eclectic Tolerance Negative Tension	





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Lincoln  
(1983)

McGuire  
(1987)

Stark &  
Bainbridge  
(1985)

Roberts  
(1990)

---

Charismatic  
Leader

Charismatic  
Leader

Loose Social  
Organization

Deviant  
Tradition

New  
Revelation

Privatized  
Faith

Innovative

New  
Revelation

Eclectic  
Tolerance

Eclectic  
Entrepreneur -

k Conflict  
Separation  
Isolation

Negative  
Tension

High  
Tension

Societal  
Hostility

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synthesis. Almost all of this synthesis is found in Roberts' (1990) definition. This can be illustrated with a diagram the various central features of some of the main cult definitions. Table 1 compares seven definitions of a cult.

By looking at the main features of the cult definitions used by major theorists, one can also see the process of development of the cult. The charismatic leader is sensitive and powerful in capturing symbols of belief and life. This innovative person breaks out of traditional bounds in western society by going beyond the Bible or the authority of the organized "church." The leader and group are then free to pursue innovative forms of religious experience. These may be completely innovative, but are likely borrowed bits and pieces reconfigured in a new form. When the innovative group is cut free from tradition, that tradition acts back upon them in a state of high tension. Tension may lead the cult group to completely separate from the host society, where isolation would allow the construction of a separate world view and greater extremism.

#### Cult or Sect: Who Cares?

After reviewing the variety of treatments of cult and sect in the sociology literature, one is struck by the

variety and continuing disagreement among definitions, even if there are some major agreements. But some might ask a further question, such as why we bother with cult and sect definitions at all. Aren't these simply pejorative terms whereby we reject outsiders to the religious mainstream? In one sense, the answer is yes. But any recognition of the relationship of the variety of religious expressions to the larger society should be cognizant of just such relationships of high tension. And when it is clear that some groups are in a relationship of high tension with society, sociologists analyze such groups as deviant religion. This should not be interpreted as an approval of mainstream religion, tacit or otherwise. Rather it should be an accurate assessment of the relationship of these groups to the mainstream.

Furthermore, within the group of religions in high tension with society, there does appear to be some distinction that can be made, as Stark and Bainbridge (1985) maintain, between those that are more revitalization movements and those that are most innovative. As this chapter has made clear, the distinction is neither simple nor categorical. If a revitalization movement carries out its agenda too creatively there will often be innovation. And if a group is innovative enough, regardless of the

origin of that innovation, the host society views the innovative group as a new religious movement. For good or ill, the term in vogue to describe a new religious movement is the cult. If we can keep from using the terminology of "cult" in a pejorative manner or as an excuse to persecute or dismiss cult group members, we have gained the intellectual integrity to recognize that cult religion is new or different to a large degree from the mainstream societal religion.

## CHAPTER III: FROM SECT TO CULT TO SECT

This chapter assesses the movement established by John Alexander Dowie. Dowie's movement was a sectarian movement that became a cult for a short while, and then with the rejection of the leader, the movement reverted to sectarian status.

The Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists, two American religious groups born in the nineteenth century, were initially considered cults. These two groups are examples of the fluidity of the cult status of a group in relation to a host society over a period of time.

While most other Christian groups still define the Mormons as a cult, the Mormons have moderated some of their practices considered deviant, most notably, polygamy. They have moderated the role of a charismatic prophet, even if they still hold to the teaching of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. Today it is much less socially deviant to be a Mormon.

The Seventh Day Adventists have moved nearer the religious mainstream than the Mormons. Recently they have moderated both their unusual beliefs about prophecy as well as the importance of their early prophetess, Ellen G. White. Today, most Christian groups would classify the Seventh Day Adventists as a sect or sect-like group. As a result, the

Seventh Day Adventists rank lower on measures of innovative ideas and cultic leadership.

Stark and Bainbridge classify the Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists as sect groups today (1985:139). These two groups provide examples of how a group's classification by society, as well as its objective relationship to the religious cultural environment can change. This study chronicles the genesis of the social movement surrounding John Alexander Dowie as first a sect and then a cult and finally a sect.

#### The Deviant Character of Dowie's Religious Movement

This chapter establishes a time line of deviance followed by Dowie and this group. The tension with society, engendered through the quantity and substance of deviance, grew to complete rejection of the group by its larger society. This extreme high tension and the separation of the group to build and live in Zion, IL, combined with Dowie's leadership style to provide the making of a cult. This is also apparently what some of Dowie's most influential leaders concluded when they removed him from office as their leader. They had not intended to become a cult. While this chapter will not provide an adequate forum to tell the story of this movement in detail, there will be



selective points where digression will be necessary to build a case for the relative fit between the model and the historical data.

### Deviance Indicators

Dowie founded a religious movement that was highly deviant on a number of vectors. Table 2 is a summary list of characteristics that were indications to the larger society that Dowie's movement was deviant. Classification of these items as deviant is not intended to be a judgement about relative merit, but a recognition that these items placed the Dowie movement in a countercultural position. These indicators provide illustration of the high tension with society engendered by the Dowie movement.

In order to develop the nature and extent of these deviance measures and the relative importance in defining the movement as a sect or a cult, a historical time line or chronology of deviance will be created. This will allow the establishment of these deviance items as a fair assessment of the movement and a measurement of the relative deviance of the movement over time, and assess the group's sect or cult status in terms of tension with society.

By following these indicators of tension with society, the movement from a sect in tension with society to a cult at a much higher tension with society can be seen.

TABLE 2. Deviance Indicators

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1. Radical Temperance	1878
2. Divine Healing	1886
3. Diet and Alternative Health	1894
4. Pacifism	1901
5. Communalism	1895, 1901
6. Women in Ministry	1901
7. Interracial Marriage	1903
8. British Israelism	1898
9. Millenarianism	1900
10. Restoration of the Wicked	1899
11. Dowie as Prophet and Apostle	1901
12. Polygamy	1904

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Certainly the building of Zion, IL and the separation this implied would lead to a greater likelihood of countercultural development. The rapid succession of innovative ideas and practices immediately after this time illustrates this fact. After Dowie was declared Elijah in 1901, he participated more directly in creating and promoting dramatic innovations. Ultimately even his followers were alarmed at the rate and degree of innovation.

Temperance Dowie claimed to have signed a temperance pledge at age six (Sheldrake, 1912:13). While Dowie was still a Congregational pastor in Australia, he distinguished himself as a temperance preacher (Sheldrake, 1912:22-23,35,56,100,259). This deviance was a part of the process that led to the development of a sect group and does not make Dowie's initial sect unique among sects of that day. At the end of the nineteenth century, the more sect-like groups in Anglo-Protestant nations were often involved in the prohibition issue.

Dowie became disenchanted with temperance as a focal point for a movement when he was defeated in a bid for office on the prohibition issue in Australia (Sheldrake, 1912:258,268-272). He attributed this defeat to the amount of money spent by the liquor lobby and the disorganization of the temperance movement. He began to search for other ways of centering his ministry. When Dowie pastored his independent church in Melbourne, his street preaching of temperance led to a thirty-four day jail term in 1885. When Dowie emerged from jail he was more radical in his beliefs (Sheldrake, 1912:322-325).

Divine Healing Dowie was certainly not the only preacher who practiced divine healing in his day. He was a part of a larger phenomenon that was concerned with

religious healing at the end of the nineteenth century (Cunningham, 1974). He was influenced by concerns over holiness and the work of the Holy Spirit, which was characteristic of the late nineteenth century holiness movement in America. Some of the revivalistic leaders in America, such as D. L. Moody and Reuben Archer Torrey had greatly impressed Dowie (Sheldrake, 1912:83, 124). As early as 1874, Dowie adopted terminology of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was characteristic of the holiness movement in the United States (Sheldrake, 1912:38). It would have been uncharacteristic for Dowie to name his sources too generously, but it appears he was influenced by sources associated with the holiness movement, among others (Sheldrake, 1912:58, 346). The holiness movement had been transformed into a healing movement during the period from 1872 to 1892, the period of Dowie's early ministry (Cunningham, 1974).

As early as 1874, Dowie prayed for a friend who was terminally ill. He bordered on belief in divine healing and questioned why people could not also trust Christ as healer. Although an epidemic in his community near Sydney, Australia, in 1876 was not the occasion for his belief in healing (Sheldrake, 1912:96), Dowie claimed an epidemic in 1877-1878 was the starting point for his ministry of healing

(Sheldrake, 1912:314). It was not until 1884 that he began to center his ministry on divine healing, which was after his move to Melbourne (Sheldrake, 1912:314). By 1886, Dowie was traveling around Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania establishing groups that promoted healing belief (Sheldrake, 1912:237).

Established Protestant religion found this activity novel. Dowie was surprised that a Methodist leader in New York, Dr. Buckley, would write about modern faith healing as cultic or novel activity. Buckley lumped healers like Dowie together with such "obvious" cults as Christian Science and Mesmerism. Dowie responded that faith healing was not novel, but in reality it was the old time religion (Sheldrake, 1912:337-339). The line between sect and cult was beginning to become blurred. In 1887, Dowie established the Divine Healing Association, and in 1888 he published the first Leaves of Healing Magazines (Sheldrake, 1912:336). In 1888, Dowie and his family sailed to San Francisco and preached divine healing on the West Coast for several years (Sheldrake, 1912:336). In 1894, he opened the first divine healing home in Chicago. This was followed by others and in 1897 two large hotels in downtown Chicago were purchased. These healing homes provided a place for people to come and hear Dowie's teaching, and when needed, prayers could be

offered by Dowie for healing. These healing hotels were the headquarters of Dowie's movement until he built Zion, IL in 1901.

Dietary Restrictions and Health Laws Dowie's emphasis on dietary restrictions was closely related to the work of divine healing and grew out of temperance concerns. Of course, this emphasis was not unique at the end of the nineteenth century, but it did move Dowie closer to groups labelled cultic by the mainstream, such as the Mormons and the millenarian Seventh Day Adventists. Both groups focused health consciousness on lifestyle and dietary concerns, motivated by a religious center.

In fact, health concerns had been connected to religious activity much earlier in the nineteenth century by a forward looking reformer, Sylvester Graham (Nissenbaum, 1980). Graham's central concern with dietary reform, is sometimes overshadowed by Graham's preoccupation with sexual deviance (Comfort, 1967). Hammond sees Graham as the first health reformer to bring together religious and scientific concerns (Hammond, 1987).

It is difficult to determine Graham's influence on Dowie. Graham's influence in moving the temperance issue from one of morality to one of health within a religious framework, could have provided the kind of intellectual

basis for Dowie's understanding of temperance, dietary restrictions, and health (see Nissenbaum, 1980).

Dowie's health reform included a rejection of doctors, surgeries, and the attendant medications. For Dowie, the reform was minimal, moving from restricting alcohol to most patent medications based largely on alcohol. In Dowie's extensive reading on temperance, he was introduced to larger but current debates on other dietary restrictions. He may have borrowed from physicians like W. T. Vail, who questioned the view that God was the author of disease. This contention became a cornerstone of Dowie's teaching on healing and matched Dowie's religious dualism (see Albanese, 1986:489). Vail also rejected most medications:

If we eat poisons, and drink poisons, and breathe poisons, and medicate with poisons, God will have to remodel the order of his universe or we must have disease; there can be no help for us.... Let us therefore abandon Satan's system of poisoning. (Albanese, 1986:489)

Besides alcohol, medications, and tobacco, Dowie restricted his followers from certain foods. Dowie's chief food prohibition was pork. This restriction derived from dietary reformers, but Dowie tied it most tenuously to the New Testament. Jesus cast demonic spirits out of a man and into a herd of swine (Mark 4:11). Dowie connected the miraculous restoration of an apparently insane man to a general curse on swine. By using Old Testament dietary

restrictions, Dowie also restricted eating oysters and shellfish.

The progression of this teaching by Dowie is almost exclusively after coming to America, and belies the American influence. There is one hint in Dowie's early ministry that he was against patent medicines, but even this was against false advertising claims of patent medicines (Sheldrake, 1912:103). In 1894, in Chicago, Dowie summarized a Christian tract he received from a reader, written by W. A. Redding, critiquing established medicine from a variety of popular health reform sources. Dowie would later build almost this whole critique into his own.

Dowie's open rejection of the biomedical institution engendered open hostility. It was a point of high tension with the larger society that led to persecution, especially from the medical establishment. In 1895, Dowie was arrested over 100 times for operating healing homes, under an ordinance for practicing medicine without a license. Dowie saw this as wholly instigated by the Chicago medical establishment. Significantly, 1895 was the year Dowie decided to build Zion, probably at least in part to find freedom to practice divine healing without interference. He published an article titled, "Doctors and Devils against Divine Healing Homes" (L 1:590, 596-602). In March 1896,



Dowie preached a sermon, "Doctors, Drugs, and Devils," that was later published as a tract that made his deviance to the medical community complete (L 2:387-395). His followers were never again allowed the use of conventional medical attention. In February 1898, two years after the founding of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, Dowie preached against eating pork and oysters (L 4:708,919).

Pacifism Dowie had seen peacemaking as a part of the Christian teaching as early as 1878 (Sheldrake, 1912:194); however it was not until 1901 that he became an outspoken pacifist (Beaman, 1989:38-51). While it would be inaccurate to underplay the Biblical and social concerns which motivated Dowie to a pacifist position, the specific occasion for Dowie's public and vocal pacifism was his desire to capture for his movement two very ardent pacifists. A part of his success in winning them to his movement was his explicit public adoption of radical pacifism.

In 1901, Dowie visited Catherine and Arthur Sydney Booth-Clibborn in Europe. They were key leaders of the Salvation Army in Europe. Kate was the daughter of the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth (Beaman, 1989:42). Arthur-Sydney Booth-Clibborn was a former Quaker and had written a pacifist book, Blood Against Blood, in

opposition to the Boer War in South Africa. Dowie appealed to them in a public sermon in 1902 to come out of the Salvation Army. Percy Clibborn, a brother and Salvation Army leader, had already been brought into the movement. Dowie used as his text a passage from Zechariah, "Not by an Army;"

Elder Clibborn, did you ever hear a sermon preached on this text in a Salvation Army Corps, in which it was translated properly?

Elder Clibborn-- "No Sir."

General Overseer-- But I will give it to you properly.... Oh Brother William Booth...the time has come for your army to disappear. (L 11:331)

Dowie was successful in recruiting the Booth-Clibborns away from the Salvation Army to become his European missionaries. He was thereafter an ardent and vocal pacifist.

Communalism Separatism or isolation is both a component and a cause of cult religion. As early as 1895, Dowie decided to found a communal settlement for the faithful (L 1:479,503,534-5). Long before Dowie had decided on the location for Zion, forty miles north of Chicago, his followers invested in Zion Land and Investment Association. In the summer of 1901, their stocks were traded for land and investments in Zion industries when Zion was founded. Dowie purchased 6,500 acres of farm land which was platted as the model city. This city offered a graphic representation of

the dualism between good and evil that Dowie taught his followers.

When I took this land for God I vowed, before God, that I should keep it clean to the utmost extent of my power and I shall. We never invited the Devil here, nor his children to be citizens of Zion. This place was established for God's children, and shall be kept for God. Do not make any mistake. Satan had to be cast out of heaven; for no sin can dwell there.... What makes Zion City what it is? The high standard is the only thing that makes Zion City worth living in. A drunkard cannot live here; a thief...a liar...an adulterer...a blasphemer...a covetous..., they will all have to get out. (L 13:340)

While elements of communitarian living were available in the hotels that Dowie and his followers occupied in Chicago, it appears that one of the reasons Dowie wished to build Zion was to develop a greater degree of direct control over the socialization of his followers. This closely parallels Lincoln's analysis of the cosmocentric cult and the creation of a group's new world view.

In fact, Dowie structured greater social control into the very legal construction of Zion. The main mechanism of his control was through his follower's investments, especially the property where each follower lived. Dowie founded Zion with a unique property lease system. Followers could not buy a building lot, but would lease a lot for the period of 1100 years, through the expected term of the coming millennium. This lease stipulated absolute obedience

to Dowie and his teachings regarding diet, health, and behavior. A violation of the lease was legal grounds for removal from Zion (Scrapbook 8:128; WS Courier, Mar. 9, 1905). For example, a follower who had built a house in Zion would have strong motivation to follow Dowie's leadership, because of the consequences of violation. Consequently, the building of Zion and the separation of the center of the movement to Zion contributed greatly to Dowie's social control over his followers.

The community had a strong element of economic cooperation. All of Dowie's followers invested in Zion stocks and industries. These ventures had liberal rates of interest and promised high dividends. And these investments were guaranteed by God and his prophet Dowie. By the end of 1903, Zion had been placed in bankruptcy by a few creditors who had not been paid on time. Although this first bankruptcy was probably unfair, it was a sign of Dowie's mishandling of the finances of Zion, and a foreboding of disaster (L 14:196). Dowie had been warned by his top advisors that his constant overdrafting of the Zion bank, for personal use, was criminal. His overdrafts amounted to over \$600,000 when he was removed from office in 1905 (L 18:460). The fact that he was not prosecuted in criminal court for his criminal conduct is a testament to the high

devotion his followers gave to him even after they refused to follow him. This also raises the possibility of legal complicity of some of his leaders.

Zion grew initially, by Dowie's estimates, growing to 6,000 people in its first year (L 11:323, 751). By 1903, when Zion was two years old, estimates of the population vary from 7,000 to 10,000 people (Chattanooga, TN News, Feb. 3, 1903 New York Press, Feb. 16, 1903; Chicago American, Jan. 15, 1903 Des Moines, IA Capitol, Jan. 15, 1903). In 1905, the population of Zion was 5,387 persons (L 18:447). The population dropped to 4,830 in the 1910 Federal Census, after the movement had fallen into disarray.

Women in Ministry Although Dowie's wife had been ordained as an elder in his church for several years, the issue of women in ministry came to the forefront during Dowie's work to convert the Booth-Clibborns. Kate Booth-Clibborn, an ordained leader in the Salvation Army, was vocal in her belief in ordination of women. Dowie made a public appeal to the Booth-Clibborns and his followers for gender equality at the same time he initially spoke out on pacifism. Dowie invited Kate Booth-Clibborn to participate in leading a worship service as a speaker, and Dowie read from Matthew 5:

The Revised Version says, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God." He paused when he read this and explained that he did not like the use of the word "sons" as well as

the word "children." He favored giving woman an equal place in the ministry with man. (L 11:600)

Women never experienced full gender equality in his movement, and were not included in his central cabinet. However, they did hold a number of key leadership positions in the movement. This was due to Dowie's readiness to reward volunteerism and diligence. Women had full voting rights in local Zion elections (Scrapbook 5:23). But voting rights in Zion assumed that Dowie declared who to vote for and the community voted in unison. In addition it was a woman who initially researched the theological "errors" of Dowie and led the revolt to remove Dowie from office (Waukegan, IL Gazette, Jan. 11, 1905 Chicago American, Jan. 15, 1905).

Interracial Marriage Dowie was especially outspoken in 1903 concerning interracial marriage. For years, Dowie had been incensed by race injustice and many of the people he prayed for to be healed were racial and ethnic minorities. A number of his followers were African Americans. In 1903, at Gladstone Dowie's graduation from the University of Chicago Law School, John Temple Graves was the speaker. Graves advocated racial separation and expatriation of blacks to avert racial strife. Dowie was so angry that he changed the topic for his weekly lecture in the Chicago Auditorium, to "The Right of the Ethiopians in

America; Zion's Solution of the Problem of the Races" (Chicago Inter Ocean, Sept. 5, 1903). Dowie advocated interracial marriage on the grounds that Moses had done so in marrying an Ethiopian woman (Racine, WS Times, Sept. 20, 1903 L 12:685; L 13:686-696). He called for equal education for blacks (Scrapbook 9:533), and prayed for national forgiveness for the sin of racism (L 11:122). Apparently some of Dowie's followers agreed, since some of the marriages in Zion City were interracial (United States Census Bureau, 1910 Federal Census). Interracial marriage produced a state of high tension with the larger racist society.

British Israelism      British Israelism or Anglo Israelism in its variant forms is a belief that the British, and derivatively the Americans, are a part of the ten tribes of Israel who were lost to the Old Testament experience of Babylonian Captivity. This belief holds that prophecies of the continued success of Israel's lost tribes will be fulfilled, since these people migrated to Europe (Clark:1974). "The Theory traces to John Sadler Rights of the Kingdom (1649), but in its modern form it dates from John Wilson's book, Our Israelitish Origin, (1840)" (Clark, 1974:156). The first apparent record of Dowie teaching British Israelism was in August 1898 (L 4:860). He taught

directly from John Wilson's work, but his teaching was veiled in vague references to the trading character of the British, without explicit statements that modern Britain is Israel. However, in 1899 Dowie made explicit his belief in the Israelite origins of Britain (L 5:914). Dowie made a contrived connection between the etymology of the name of the Israelite tribe of Dan, the Danube River, and the Danish People. He suggested that the Anglo Saxons are "Isaac's Sons," since Isaac's sons sounded like Saxon (L 7:111,726). He connected this origin with a promise of blessing to Israel. Then he suggested that Britain and America were the present day people of promised blessing, and that blessing was both spiritual and economical (L 9:232). Dowie used this connection between his own native Scottish ancestry and Israelite heritage. In reference to Edinburgh, Scotland, Dowie stated,

Scottish Highlanders are Israelites. John Stuart Blackie, who founded the Gaelic Chair in my own native city university, where I also studied, declared that his conviction was that Gaelic was essentially Hebrew. (L 10:261)

This teaching appealed to Dowie's followers who were appreciative of late nineteenth-century literalization of prophecy popularized and legitimized by such notables as Dwight L. Moody and Reuben A. Torry. Although Moody and Torry did not hold to British Israelism, Dowie followed



their careers early in his ministry and held them in deepest admiration (Sheldrake, 1912:86). However, late in his ministry he condemned them both for their differences with him (L 6:640). Prophecy became real when Dowie claimed to be the modern day Elijah, foretold in "Biblical" prophecy. Dowie was a true, albeit Scottish, Israelite as was the ancient Elijah (L 12:654,754). He looked forward to the day when the British and American flags would fly over the city of Jerusalem (L 13:171).

There was also a great deal of similarity between British Israelism and the Mormon view of how the new world was populated by ancient Israelites. Both views fit well the late nineteenth century American belief in manifest destiny.

Millenarianism Dowie was not especially deviant in holding to a premillennial view of the second coming of Christ. This view focused on the prophesied events immediately preceding the second coming of Christ. Such a view had become quite popular at the turn of the century. Dowie was unique among millenarians in directly applying the Biblical prophecies to Zion, IL, which he founded in 1901. Dowie told followers that Christ would come soon and they would be taken out of the world before the judgment, and then return to live in Zion, IL (L 11:657).

Zion was to hold a cosmic and transcendent significance beyond the second coming of Christ. He would read scriptures applying to Mt. Zion and Jerusalem, typically used in liturgy and worship, but Dowie interpreted these references to represent Zion, IL. When Dowie led the liturgy, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord," he convinced his followers to sell their possessions and move to Zion, IL (L 9:7-8). The dawning of the age to come had begun in Zion, IL.

The land lease on the lots in Zion was issued for a period of 1,100 years because Dowie believed that Christ would return within the next 100 years and the millennium, or 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth would begin at that time. He claimed that after he died he would return with Christ to Earth, and would come first to Zion, IL (Milwaukee Free Press, Dec. 26, 1903).

For two weeks each July, Dowie held a camp meeting in Zion, IL for the whole movement. The meetings were called by the Jewish feast name, Feast of Tabernacles. If attendance was low at the meetings, Dowie quoted Old Testament passages directly applied to Zion, IL as Jerusalem, stating,

Strange as it may seem to many who have not considered this matter, the coming up to Jerusalem in the time of the millennial reign of Christ our king will be the test of their loyalty to him. Failure to come up to this feast will entail a

most dreadful punishment, for it is written:  
 "Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to  
 keep the feast of Tabernacles." (L 11:285)

Restoration of the Wicked In time, Dowie came to believe and preach the complete restoration of the wicked. The first evidence of this belief is in September 1899 in Chicago. He believed that Christ's love would ultimately conquer punishment in hell, and those suffering would ultimately be brought to restoration in heaven (L 7:558). He hoped he would be one of those allowed to go to hell for the purpose of preaching Christ's forgiveness to those imprisoned there; ultimately allowing him to be the means of their escape (L 7:558). Of course, hell was still a painful incentive to conversion and social control, even if it was only a short term threat (L 7:558).

Centrality of Dowie as Prophet, Apostle, and Ruler  
 Dowie did not start out as a prophet in any unique sense, but the most controversial and unique deviance for which he was known at the end of his ministry was his role as Elijah the restorer.

The Elijah Declaration As early as 1895, Dowie preached a sermon on John the Baptist, in which he digressed on the name "John, which I also bear" (L 2:203). This in itself, was not so unusual for a religious person, nor was the comparison of Dowie's life experiences and those of the

Biblical John the Baptist. However, only in retrospect does this comparison seem unusual.

Dowie exhibited authoritarian strains before he was declared Elijah. As early as 1899, one of Dowie's leading followers, Rev. Eugene Brooks approvingly observed, "Dowie used to persuade, now he commands" (L 5:582).

The actual Elijah declaration identified John Alexander Dowie as the modern-day prophet Elijah, the forerunner of the second coming of Christ in the spirit and power of Elijah, as John the Baptist had been in an earlier time. This declaration was a delicate matter to introduce. The declaration was constructed by Dowie in close interaction with his closest leaders in 1901.

In the Elijah declaration, one sees the Weberian notion of charismatic leadership as a result of a leader's ability to capture the symbols, meanings, and hopes of a group of people (Weber, 1947; 1963). In the Elijah declaration, Dowie invested his own personage with cosmic significance, and connected his status as the prophet Elijah with the soon expected return of Christ. If Biblical texts had taken on intense present meaning in the application of Zion texts to Zion, IL, the Biblical personage of Elijah had come to life in this modern day "British" Israelite prophet Elijah, the restorer of God's kingdom.

How was this new status conferred on Dowie to be legitimated? If the followers did not give credibility to this personage, the new declaration risked loss of face and diminished authority for Dowie. If followers did accept this declaration, the result would be a significant increase in Dowie's ability to embody leadership for the movement.

It is unclear if Dowie originated the Elijah declaration or whether he simply took advantage of a great opportunity when others accorded him such a status. In Dowie's version of events, the new teaching was discovered by a great Biblical teacher, Rev. George Owen Barnes, an evangelist in Florida (L 9:196). Barnes made the connection between the "messenger of the covenant," prophesied in Malachi (3:1), an appellation Dowie had previous to this time used for himself, and the personage of Elijah. Dowie claimed he had never met Barnes, however Barnes soon joined the movement in Zion (L 9:196).

Dowie initially claimed that he was quite angry with Barnes for saying that he was Elijah, but Dowie later came to see that it was true (L 14:50;L 11:209). Shortly thereafter, all of the leaders in Zion wholeheartedly accepted this Biblical interpretation (L 14:50;L 11:209).

However, not everyone was so easily convinced. The famous evangelists Dwight L. Moody, and Reuben Torrey,

vehemently disagreed with this application of Biblical prophecy to Dowie and incurred Dowie's prophetic curses (L 6:644, 640). Torry criticized Dowie's use of the Malachi prophecy, since, ironically, the prophecy applied to Christ and not John the Baptist (L 6:644, 640). Some followers could not agree with the Elijah declaration and soon stopped following Dowie (L 9:196f). Of course, this self-selecting process would assure that the group remaining in Zion would be, at least openly, more affirming of the Elijah declaration, and thus the community would function to ensure agreement on a more narrow world view.

Other followers rushed to testify how they had received revelations from God that Dowie was Elijah, or that they had believed this for years before the public announcement (L 8:434). In this case, followers claimed subjective experiences which confirmed for the individual that Dowie was Elijah. The most common confirmations were testimonials to the miraculous. The ancient Elijah had special signs that attended his prophetic gifts, notably the ability to pray for rain and to stop rain. Numerous testimonials described how Dowie prayed for rain or for stopping rain when it was time to plant, and "Elijah's" prayer was effective (L 9:421,430,521; L 11:239,308,340,608,736,778;L 14:91,92,125). Dowie's closest associate, Rev. John G.

Speicher, summarized the meaning of Dowie's prayers for rain, "God has again wonderfully shown to his people that the voice of his prophet must be heard and obeyed in these last times, and has proved to the world that this is indeed Elijah who is to come" (Chicago American, July 4, 1904). Thousands of photographs of Dowie at prayer were sold to followers. These photographs were advertised as "full of spiritual power" (L 7:706).

In the Elijah declaration and its subjective legitimations, there was an immediacy to the prophetic or divine revelation. Dowie appreciated charismatic gifts when they seemed to confirm his authority, but he also recognized in the charismatic prophetic gifts the potential for competing leaders. When Rev. George Barnes gave the interpretation of Dowie as Elijah, or when a New York preacher left his church to follow Dowie, based on a dream, Dowie received these as external confirmations (Chicago Inter Ocean, Oct. 10, 1902). Dowie published a letter of Irving Ward, who claimed to be a New York lawyer. The letter told of a vision that Ward had confirming the Elijah declaration,

There appeared to me a vision of a grand old man who said, "I am Elisha upon whom Elijah cast his mantle. Know ye that Elijah has returned to Earth and will soon be made known to the world. Prepare thyself for his coming and go to him. Testify to these sayings." And I asked where the prophet should appear. Elisha answered, "Look for the

star in the west, and ye shall find him in that great city by the lake which God has purified.... He is the man who was known in the world as John Alexander Dowie, who dwelleth in Zion." (L 9:326)

Dowie sent Ward train fare to Chicago before discovering that Ward was a reporter attempting to get an insider's view of Zion (L 9:442). Dowie saw the immediate potential for rival visions and revelations and made a requirement that all "revelations must be submitted in writing," so that he could judge their merit (L 9:326). However, Dowie also saw the potential for convincing others through visions.

In 1905, he contradicted his earlier statements about being angered when he first heard that Barnard thought that he was Elijah. In 1905, he told how in an Australian prison in 1885, he had been visited by the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. Each in turn told him he was the messenger of the covenant. "How do I know that I am Elijah?" he asked, "Because Gabriel told me!" (L 17:503-505). Dowie's writings were also being lauded by his followers almost on a par with the scriptures. P. N. Nichols claimed that the Leaves of Healing were inspired writings (L 9:536). Others called the Leaves of Healing the key to the scriptures. One testimonial regarded the Leaves of Healing, as "a worthy companion to the Word of God" (L 12:3). Another reader gave



thanks for "the true Word of God that was sent out here by Leaves of Healing" (L 12:3). The editorial title above this letter suggested the reader "Recognizes Leaves of Healing as the True Word of God" (L 12:3).

The Elijah declaration produced a high level of tension with society. The Elijah declaration was the point at which many moderate skeptics in the larger society became outright disbelievers concerning Dowie. When Dowie's father could not agree to the Elijah declaration, Dowie denied his paternal relationship. This happened after his father had spent some time in Zion, and had been publicly declared Dowie's father on numerous occasions. The physical similarity between the father and son was striking (photographs in Zion Archives, Zion, IL). After their falling out, Dowie claimed that he had recently discovered that his real father was a British Army officer (West Chester, PA News, Oct. 27, 1903 Marquette, MI Journal, Oct. 28, 1903 Chicago Post, Oct. 25, 1903). Consequently, Dowie dropped his last name and, with few exceptions, signed his name John Alexander (L 16:65,102,163, 197,229,297, 299,335,369).

If Dowie had allowed time for followers to believe in the Elijah declaration, eventually he would demand complete obedience, especially of the most committed followers. In

1902, Dowie recruited thousands of the most committed followers and called them the Restoration Host. They were required to take the Restoration Host vow,

I vow in the name of God...that I will be a faithful member of Zion Restoration Host...I recognize John Alexander Dowie, General Overseer of the Christian Catholic Church...in his threefold prophetic office, as messenger of the covenant, the prophet foretold by Moses, and Elijah the restorer. I promise, to the fullest extent of all my powers, to obey all rightful orders issued by him directly or by his properly appointed officers, and to proceed to any part of the world, wherever he shall direct...that all family ties and all relations to all human government shall be held subordinate to this vow. (L 11:748)

If any followers took the vow lightly, they soon learned the meaning of commitment. Dowie commanded them to go with him on a month-long "crusade" to New York City in 1903. Each individual was to pay his or her own expenses for travel, lodging, food, and literature. Over three thousand followers made the trip. Dowie warned any who dragged their feet that such inattention to his commands would result in illness, injury or death.

Elijah the Restorer's command to go to New York must be obeyed. If you cannot spare the money for God, may the good Lord take you out of Zion quickly. I tell you frankly that I do not have any use for you. (L 13:82)

When this group returned, weary after a month in New York City, they found Zion in bankruptcy. Yet, five thousand of the faithful gathered in Shiloh Tabernacle in

Zion to affirm complete allegiance to Dowie (Chicago Inter Ocean, Dec. 10, 1903). According to the newspapers, a few hundred discouraged and disbelieving followers left Dowie and Zion (Scrapbook 8:128-129).

The First Apostle When Dowie declared himself the First Apostle of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in 1904, some of his followers were shocked (Newcomb, 1930:336). When the prophetic gift is cut loose from other authority, the prophet is free to innovate. Although Dowie's followers had some input in the Elijah declaration, they found themselves helpless to stop further innovation. The prophetic authority in Dowie was self-authenticating, since it was subjective. Once followers agreed to the Elijah declaration, Dowie demanded a relationship of authority and subservience. In 1896, when Dowie founded the Christian Catholic Church, he noted that in time it would be ruled by twelve apostles. He noted, at that time, he could never be an apostle (Newcomb, 1912:336).

In 1904, when Dowie proclaimed that he was now the First Apostle of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, it was by self-appointment. There was little that his followers could do to question it. His authority was now self-generating (L 15:792). He also claimed that he was the high priest on earth of a revived ancient theocratic priesthood created after the order of Melchizadek (L

15:792,794,798). Soon he would hear confessions, but few of them were voluntary. Followers were expected to tell Dowie if any in Zion were hiding sin or rebellion. Not to tell was an act of rebellion (Chicago News, Nov. 29, 1904). Those accused of sin were sent for by Dowie and they were expected to confess to him (Milwaukee Free Press, Sept. 14, 1904).

The implicit nature of the authority created in the Elijah declaration made external checks on Dowie's growing authoritarianism almost impossible. Anyone who now questioned Dowie's authority was questioning God and was removed from Zion and the church. The disposal of their property was at an economic loss (Chicago American, Dec. 2, 1902 Scrapbook 8:128-9). It would take an external authority to intervene and undermine Dowie's authority. But the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom and the seclusion of Zion made that intervention unlikely.

Polygamy The final deviance to be treated in this survey of Dowie's beliefs and practices is polygamy. However, the evidence for polygamy is problematic. The evidence is taken from those who removed Dowie from leadership under court order while he was out of Zion. The cynical scenario is that Dowie's closest associates used the issue of polygamy, proven in the Mormon case to win public

sympathy against a movement, as a sure way to win court support as well as follower support against Dowie. On the other hand, the possibility also remains that Dowie did intend to begin practicing polygamy in Mexico.

When Dowie's leaders went to court to have him removed from office and to have the Zion properties given to the followers, they charged Dowie with believing in polygamy (L 18:466). They also charged him with gross financial indiscretions (L 18:460). Although the evidence of financial wrongdoing cited in the Leaves of Healing magazine is clear, the evidence for polygamous teaching is indirect and secondary. A number of the highest leaders suggested that while Dowie "had seemed to teach monogamy in public and in his papers, for over two years he had been teaching something quite contrary in private" (L 18:451).

Arthur Newcomb (1930), Dowie's magazine editor, later wrote a novel which made it clear that Dowie had conversed with a number of leaders about his polygamous beliefs. Newcomb also suggested that Dowie was having a large contingent of young ladies from Zion sequestered and educated for marriage to him, while simultaneously making arrangements to divorce his wife Jane on grounds of apostolic exception (1930:280-283; L 18:451). Newcomb also charged that one reason why Dowie was opening a huge

plantation in Mexico was to practice polygamy (1930:337-338). Much of this is unavailable to historical investigation since it consisted of private conversations.

The charges of polygamy in the Leaves of Healing magazine were a curious construction. These charges were titled "Leading up to Polygamous Teaching: Extracts from Leaves of Healing showing Trend of John Alexander Dowie's Mind on Marriage and Allied Subjects" (L 18:466). This list of quotations from past issues of Leaves of Healing did not plainly teach the practice of polygamy for Dowie or Zion, although they did show that Dowie was beginning to innovate his religious views. There was, however, only one subheading for the whole series of quotations in the article containing the allegations, and it was simply "References to Mormon Teaching." The whole page of small quotations did confirm that Dowie had begun to agree with Mormon theology about God.

In fact, it appears that Dowie was getting ready to teach polygamy. For years, Dowie had been compared with Mormons, and some had suggested polygamy, but Dowie consistently maintained monogamy was the only Christian option and that Mormonism and polygamy were both wrong (L 6:397;L 9:369;L 9:214;L 13:662). However, he did concede that Mormon founder, Joseph Smith, did have some "excellent provisions in the Word of Wisdom" (L 13:662).

In later years, Dowie had shown an increased willingness to interfere with marital bonds where these were an impediment to religion. The vow required of the Restoration Hosts, a majority of those living in Zion, required that they place Dowie's rule above obligations to state or family. Dowie began to disallow numerous marriages in Zion, and severely limit who could marry (L 15:52). This contributed to later charges that he was saving the best young women for himself (Newcomb, 1930:280-283).

Dowie had changed his views on polygamy to the extent of allowing polygamists who converted to Christianity in China or Africa to continue their marital vows (L 18:466). While this may have proved to be damning evidence in Dowie's context, it is commonplace missiology today. Dowie was also correct, in his views that Jewish patriarchs were unapologetic polygamists, polygamy was not uncommon in Biblical sources, and that polygamy was not prohibited in the seventh commandment against adultery (L 18:466).

Dowie's changes in this regard were complex. On the one hand, the changes may have been related to his existential quest for immortality. His marriage had been obviously unsatisfactory since the beginning (Sheldrake). His two daughters had died, and his son remained unmarried. Ironically, Dowie has no descendants. Dowie was ashamed

when he spoke with a top Mormon leader in Salt Lake City. The Mormon leader commented on his own numerous progeny as a result of polygamy (Newcomb, 1930:37).

On the other hand, the change may also have been a result of Dowie's beliefs about the immediacy of the kingdom of God on earth, specifically in Zion. Much of Dowie's previous work with temperance and healing had shown concern for what he termed the sins of the father's being visited on the children (L 15:624-628). From his earliest temperance days, Dowie was concerned with youth who had not been given a fair chance in life because of early disease, poor nutrition, or alcoholic parents (Sheldrake, 1912:55).

One must remember that Dowie believed that God was giving practical answers to social questions in Zion. If Dowie was adopting polygamous views it is difficult to tell when he envisioned these views being put into concrete practice. Would the immediate return of Jesus bring about the millennium and result in a kind of celestial marriage replacing the present condition? It appears this is what Dowie thought. Speaking of the human body glorified, he stated, "that will make us glorified fathers and glorified mothers in the Millennium, when we come back with the Christ to reign and rule on this earth" (L 15:811).



Contrary to teaching polygamy, the evidence suggests that Dowie was beginning to teach sinless generation and celestial marriage, but only in the millennium, even if moments away. The larger unanswered question was if an unrestrained Dowie would have initiated the millennium by decree (L 16:175). If Dowie planned on teaching polygamy, as his critics maintained, then it appears he also planned on initiating the millennium as a concrete reality. If on the other hand, Dowie had not begun openly teaching polygamy, he taught a type of celestial marriage, which paralleled Mormon teaching.

Evidence of Dowie's Mormon theology was more compelling. On a number of occasions, for a year previous, Dowie had taught that God the Father had a human body with human parts and passions. He also appeared to teach that God had physically reproduced with the Virgin Mary to bring forth the Son of God. When Dowie was speaking on Jesus as the "only-begotten of the Father," Dowie asked,

Who begot Him?

People-- "The Father."

First Apostle-- Why don't you say it with boldness-- "The Father!"

The Father is a Father, and we know of no form which the Father assumes except the one like our own; for He made us in His own likeness.

He is then, the great and glorious Primitive Man?

Of course He is!

Not, however, like puny mortals!...

Yes, it was the Father who begot that Child in the Virgin's womb!

It was God! No other! The God who has the Parts and Pure Passions of a Man, in a Great and Glorious way of which we know little or nothing.

But we shall know more; for, if we become the Temples of God, not only in spirit, but in soul and body, then the Divine Seed will become a Divine Power, until all our being is Restored by God.

I am so thankful that I have not a ghost for a Father! (L 16:346;L 17:503)

While it is not clear if Dowie was fairly represented as an intending polygamist, he had moved to Mormon theology about God. His closest associates may have realized that polygamy was far more repugnant in the American cultural context. They may have highlighted polygamy in order to assure winning in court and to sway the movement away from its leader.

In retrospect, the question remains, why did almost none of these leaders resign from leadership at the first signs of this polygamy when Dowie told them in private. Why did they not go public then? It appears there are two possible answers and both seem convincing. The first is that they were deeply invested in Zion and feared losing their financial investments. The second is that they truly believed Dowie to be God's anointed leader and gave him the benefit of the doubt for as long as they could. Both legitimations were given by Newcomb in his retrospective interpretation, Dowie: Anointed of the Lord (1930).

In comparing the relative nature of the deviance in the Elijah declaration and polygamy, the Elijah declaration was self-authenticating. Once agreed to, the followers had given up their rights to self-governing. Thereafter Dowie appointed himself as the First apostle. This could not be directly undermined since it was self-authenticating. Polygamy was external evidence of deviance that pointed to cult status, allowed rejection of Dowie, and assured followers a sympathetic ear from the courts.

#### Analysis and Summary

John Alexander Dowie had sectarian tendencies from his earliest days as a Congregational minister in Australia. His decision to form an independent church in Australia in 1878 was the clear beginning of the sect movement. In this, he was clearly working for revitalization of what he considered an unfaithful church.

The point at which the movement became a cult was less clear. Temperance, pacifism, communalism, restoration of the wicked, and women in ministry did not necessarily distinguish his movement from sect status. The movement could be classified as a cult, by 1901, based on innovation and leadership style with the Elijah declaration and for its separatism in creating Zion. But as early as 1886, when

Dowie centered his ministry on divine healing, his work was classified as a cult by such notable cult authorities as Dr. Buckley in New York, and was classified together with Christian Science and Mesmerism. Dowie disagreed with this analysis, and continually stated that healing was not novel, but a restoration of primitive Christianity. However, even in his most novel views about God, he believed his work to be one of restoration.

By 1905, Dowie's closest leaders were convinced that he had become a cult leader, because of his leadership style and his apparent Mormon beliefs. In 1905, when the movement decided to remove Dowie from leadership, the cult became a sect once again.

## CHAPTER IV: MODELS OF CULT FORMATION

The next three chapters test three cult development theories used by Stark and Bainbridge (1985). Chapter Eight clarifies the remaining weaknesses of these three theories of cult development and presents a symbolic interactionist perspective as an alternative and supplemental theory. Stark and Bainbridge (1985) suggest that the three theories are not mutually exclusive. All three may explain some differing aspects of the development of a cult.

But the three theories presented by Stark and Bainbridge are different from each other. The psychopathology model and the entrepreneur model of cult development are both different from the subculture-evolution model. Subculture-evolution theory focuses on the group and its creative processes, while the psychopathology and entrepreneur models both focus on the development of the cult leader.

The two theories which focus on the cult leader also differ from each other. The psychopathology model creates a special model to explain religious innovation. This model suggests that most cultural innovation generally originates in normal individuals, whereas religious innovation originates in the psychopathology of the cult founder. The second theory to address the cult leader, the

entrepreneurial model, characterizes the cult founder as a creative and innovative promoter. Furthermore, the psychopathology suggests mental underperformance while the entrepreneur suggests optimum mental performance.

The third theory presented by Stark and Bainbridge (1985), the subcultural-evolution model, does not address the cult leader. Rather this theory describes a process of group goal blockage followed by separation from society to pursue the group's unique goals. After the group separates from society, its members are isolated from outside influences and group members reinforce each other's narrowing world view.

#### Subcultural-evolution Model

Because the subcultural-evolution model neglects the centrality of the cult founder, this model is less useful in the present study of the Dowie movement. However, the subcultural-evolution model is consistent with the symbolic interaction model presented in this study. Both theories describe how internal group reality construction takes place. Both the subcultural-evolution model and the symbolic interaction model are consistent in describing how the isolation of the group allows the group to construct a new field of perception. Both models see this isolation

leading to innovation. Where the two theories differ is over the centrality of the cult leader. Therefore, the symbolic interaction theory of cult development is consistent with the psychopathology and entrepreneur models of cult development in addressing the centrality of the cult leader in cult formation.

A future study where cults are catalogued as to whether or not they were founded by a powerful charismatic leader might be useful. In this way, the usefulness of a model that does not address the cult founder could be tested.

According to Stark and Bainbridge, "the subculture-evolution model emphasizes group interaction processes" (1985:183). Unlike the two previous models, which emphasize the role of the leader in cult formation, this model emphasizes how a group without an authoritative leader can produce a novel religious culture (1985:183). Several of the key components of this theory are summarized in the following text. These groups emerge either out of occult or secular settings. Failure to achieve certain rewards and continued group interaction lead the group to an unusual level of closeness with each other (1985:183). Through continued interaction, and the neglect of outside interaction, the group becomes isolated or encapsulated (1985:183). Freed from outside moderating forces the group

produces a novel religious culture (1985:183). This theory is the religious counterpart to Albert Cohen's (1955) model of juvenile delinquency production. As such, this theory owes obvious debts to symbolic interaction theory.

In explaining Dowie's movement, the theory is not helpful in the suggestion of occult or secular origins. Dowie's group began in sectarian, independent Christian beliefs. Dowie's group did not begin as a result of failed collective rewards. However, a large part of his followers failed to experience good health before joining his movement. But it was not this failure that led to the healing movement, per se, but people were attracted to the movement through the claims of healing that the movement made.

Where the subcultural-evolution theory is most useful in explaining the Dowie movement is the emphasis on how group isolation and encapsulation lead to a more narrow and unique world-view. In Chapter III, a chronology was constructed of the most significantly "deviant" religious innovations of the Dowie movement. Certainly, the most extreme innovations, and those that came to characterize the group as a cult for a time, were those that developed after the 1901 founding of Zion and social isolation of the group.



Yet, this theory emphasizes the role of the group creating innovation and overlooks the central leader who is involved in the generation of innovation. As such, subculture-evolution is limited in explaining the Dowie movement, and other cults that are leader centered. This study addresses that oversight in developing a fourth theory, based on symbolic interaction theory, that gives credence to the centrality of the leader in cult formation.

The subcultural-evolution model, which fails to address the central cult leader, will not receive further treatment in this study. The psychopathology and entrepreneur models of cult leadership development each warrant a chapter to test their usefulness.

## CHAPTER V: THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY MODEL

Stark and Bainbridge (1985:173-177) develop three models of cult formation. The first, the psychopathology model, will be analyzed and tested in this chapter. The first half of this chapter provides a literature review of the psychopathology model. The second half of the chapter tests the psychopathology model by tracing a chronology of the major crises in the early career of Dowie. The psychopathology model of cult formation suggests that the cult is born when the ideas engendered by an individual experiencing mental illness become attractive to a larger social group.

## Medicalization of Deviance

The model is based on the Freudian view that all religion is either neurotically or psychotically induced (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985:174). If this sounds reductionist, and it is, Stark and Bainbridge are quick to salvage the model by pointing out that "the model does not assume that cultic ideas are necessarily wrong or insane." One must remember that sane ideas can come from "insane" people. Of course, such a model must deal with the inevitable criticism that most mental patients are the last people to found a social movement (1985:175), even if it is a religious social movement.

In order to build a historical case for this model, Stark and Bainbridge cite three examples of apparent mental illness among cult founders: the hysteria of Mary Baker Eddy who founded Christian Science; the apparent manic depressive states of Oneida founder, John Humphrey Noyes; and the apparent paranoia of L. Ron Hubbard, who founded Scientology (1985:175). The authors admit that the social constructs of mental illness and "deviant" religion are often so similar that evidence of mental illness taken from the biographical details of a cult founder approach tautology (1985:175).

Indeed, the whole model suffers from this dilemma. Labeling theory has maintained that mental illness is a socially constructed deviance category, that is especially difficult to diagnose, but which has ample post-hoc evidence once the diagnosis is assumed to be mental illness (Rosenhan, 1973). Goffman (1971) argued that numerous cases of mental illness are reasonable responses to insane social structures or insane social relations, so that mental illness might often be understood as a reasonable adjustment to an unreasonable situation. Stark and Bainbridge note that Lemert argued for a connection between social exclusion and paranoia (1985:175). Ironically, this confirms what paranoid individuals have maintained all along.

Conrad and Schneider (1980) have argued that during the 1970s American society regularly persecuted cult members, using the mental health professions to legitimate the mental illness definition of cult members in ways that violated their civil liberties (Conrad and Schneider, 1980).

Literature from the medicalization of deviance suggests that with the rise of scientific and technological biomedicine as a powerful social institution, competing deviance definitions and their corresponding institutional arrangements have been challenged (Conrad and Schneider, 1980). In the case of religion, this has meant that sometimes novel religious alternatives come under the social control of the medical institution and consequent medicalization of deviance.

Social scientific studies since Freud have been tempted to dismiss novel religious phenomenon and ideas as mental aberrations, and, in post-hoc fashion, find the mental illness giving rise to the new religion. When social scientists do this, they share with the medical community the biological reductionism of medicalizing deviance.

Thus, the scientific tautology corresponds to the political ideology, because various institutional arrangements and definitions have given power to some at the expense of others. At the very least, our analysis of cult

founders should exhibit restraint or suffer the inevitable bad science of ethnocentric labeling.

Stark and Bainbridge

While Stark and Bainbridge did not originate the psychopathology model of cult formation, they noted the wide social science popularity. They gave it the following summary:

1. Cults are novel cultural responses to personal and societal crises.
2. New cults are invented by individuals suffering from certain forms of mental illness.
3. These individuals typically achieve their novel visions during psychotic episodes.
4. During such an episode, the individual invents a new package of compensators to meet his own needs.
5. The individual's illness commits him to his new vision, either because his hallucinations appear to demonstrate its truth or because compelling needs demand immediate satisfaction.
6. After the episode, the individual will be most likely to succeed in forming a cult around his vision if the society contains many other persons suffering from problems similar to those originally faced by the cult founder, to whose solution, therefore, they are likely to respond.
7. Therefore, such cults most often succeed during times of societal crisis, when large numbers of persons suffer from similar unresolved problems.

8. If the cult does succeed in attracting many followers, the individual founder may achieve at least a partial cure of his illness because the self-generated compensators are legitimated by other persons and because the founder now receives true rewards from his followers. (1985:173-4)

The most simplistic of the psychopathology theories is straightforward biological reductionism. Innovation is a result of a physiological pathology, either injury, drugs, or high fevers (Stark and Bainbridge:175). While the examples from drug taking may be most compelling, one must admit that many people who decide to take drugs have already made decisions about norms and deviance that may make innovation redundant.

The formal definition makes clear, in fact, that this model is an example of paternalistic science described by Evelyn Fox Keller (1983; 1985). This science shows skill at manipulation and control but little empathy for the "object" of study. Using an analogy, one could ask if this model of innovation would explain other kinds of innovation and invention, besides religious: if not, why not? Why do social scientists find a need to explain the invention of "new religious ideas" but not new technology. Have similar pathology models been developed to explain the entire cooptation of physical science to military innovation? In fact, most inventiveness is not attributed to mental

illness. The sociology of religion could benefit from a bit of sober reflection on whether models like the psychopathology model are merely an ethnocentric reduction of one world view by another. C. Eric Lincoln's lament is worth remembering,

Unfortunately, our scholarship has not matched the pace of our spiritual inventiveness, and the science of the sociology of religion finds itself sharing the predicament of conventional understanding. (1983:4)

In the psychopathology model, the conventional understanding is the need to "explain" a religious innovation as "deviance." While sociology is interested in novel and unusual social behavior, Hirschi (1969) has maintained the quandary is often whether to explain why one group deviates or to explain why the other group does not. Do social scientists feel a need to explain why old religions maintain some continuity, or can that simply be taken for granted? Is mainstream cultural religion assumed to be normal? Apparently what needs explanation as problematic is innovative religion.

However, it is true that innovative religion is also often correlated with innovative cultural practices, and some of these are objectively damaging. One example is Jim Jones' People's Temple where a thousand people either committed suicide or were murdered (Lincoln:1). Some other

behaviors such as the practice of polygamy are at least culturally offensive, and others, such as refusal to seek medical aid for children are incomprehensible given our culture's biomedical understanding of health and illness. But sociologists must ask themselves if such "deviant" behavior requires different explanations just because it takes place in the context of a religious group. Are sociologists pleased with a biomedical model, the medicalization of deviance, when they analyze suicide and murder outside of a religious setting? Do sociologists accept a biological reductionism of polygamous behavior or alternative health care?

The psychopathology model seeks first and foremost to answer not why the followers of Jim Jones died, but what led Jim Jones to found a group that he would later lead to death. The model does not seek to answer, first of all, why some early Mormons practiced polygamy, but why did Joseph Smith have certain visions that he shared with others that led them to practice polygamy. The model seeks to explain, first of all, the founder and the origin of the founder's "deviant" or innovative ideas.

But one should not miss point number six of Stark and Bainbridge's summary of the psychopathology model, which suggests that the followers of such a cult movement can be



explained in a manner similar to the leader. How does the leader get a following? The followers apparently have a similar psychopathology and are attracted to the leader's resolution of that psychopathology, together with the psychosis that such a resolution may represent.

Stark and Bainbridge admit that two early proponents of the psychopathology theory are much more "subtle" or apparently less biologically reductionist. Both studies were written by anthropologists. Anthony Wallace wrote about revitalization movements and Julian Silverman wrote about shamanism. Since both of these early proponents were more sensitive to the phenomenon being studied, the cult leader, both are reviewed here. Both studies are worthwhile in the theoretical perspective they provide for studying the cult movement developed by John Alexander Dowie at the beginning of the twentieth century in America. Both of these studies characterize the leader as beginning to innovate in response to severe personal or social crises.

Wallace: Prophets of Cultural Revitalization

Anthony Wallace reviewed numerous cultural revitalization movements, many of them religious, and found them to be almost uniformly the result of one or more hallucinatory visions by a single individual. Usually the prophet has had a visit from the supernatural (1956:270). Wallace summarizes the prophet's visionary experiences:

These dreams express:

1. the dreamer's wish for a satisfying parental figure (the supernatural, guardian-spirit content),
2. world destruction fantasies (the apocalyptic, millennial content),
3. feelings of guilt and anxiety (the moral content), and
4. longings for establishment of an ideal state of stable and satisfying human and supernatural relations (the restitution fantasy or Utopian content). (1956:271)

These dreams or visions mark a transition from an old life to a new way of life and begin a period of intense missionary activity where the prophet feels an almost "messianic obligation" to tell others about the new way of seeing reality (1956:271).

Wallace likens these sudden personality changes to "psychotic breaks, spontaneous remissions, narcosynthesis, ... brainwashing," and shock treatments (1956:271). The vision is usually preceded by physical stress or exhaustion, and leads to physiologically induced vision or trance. In a similar way,

conversion, shamanism, and the guardian-spirit vision...all involve persons who are faced with the opportunity (if not necessity) of assuming a new cultural role and of abandoning an earlier role in order to reduce stress which they will not be able to resolve if they stand pat. A precipitating factor in many cases is some sort of severe physical stress, such as illness, starvation, sleeplessness, or fatigue. (1956:271)

The vision is followed by potent and apparently useful changes in overall experience of life for the prophet,

a remission of old and chronic physical complaints, a more active and purposeful way of life, greater confidence in interpersonal relations, the dropping of deep-seated habits like alcoholism.... The individual is often able to assume a new role requiring increased or differently phrased emotional independence. (1956:272)

While this view is still a version of biological reductionism, this view also recognizes social-psychological dimensions related to the onset of stress and exhaustion. While Wallace sees the religious innovation as a fiction, it is at least a useful fiction for resolving some role-related stress. Wallace distinguishes between the prophet and the chronic schizophrenic with religious paranoia, both initially having a type of mental illness.

Chronic schizophrenics with religious paranoia tend to believe that they are God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the Great Earth Mother or some other supernatural being. Successful prophets, on the other hand, usually do not believe that they are the supernatural, only that they have communicated with him.... Prophets do not lose their sense of personal identity but psychotics tend to become the object of their spiritual longing. (1956:272)

What leads to this differential outcome? In Western society, the biomedical model of deviance is applied when a prophet's evangelistic enterprise becomes inconvenient or embarrassing to a role partner such as a "spouse, relatives, employer, warden...he is thereupon certified as insane and

hospitalized" (1956:273). The frustrated prophet may lose confidence in their link to the community, now broken, and "become[s] the guardian spirit" (1956:273). So it is the interaction between the personal or social crises and the societal response that determines whether a person becomes a prophet or chronic schizophrenic.

Silverman: Shamans and Acute Schizophrenia

Julian Silverman (1967) analyzes the process of becoming a shaman as a specific subset of acute schizophrenia and a psychological adjustment to specific environmental events and structures. Silverman builds on the work of Wallace. The specific type of schizophrenia that Silverman believes applies is a reactive rather than process schizophrenia, with a nonparanoid rather than paranoid outcome (1967:69). The reactive schizophrenia applies to the,

"person (who)...becomes schizophrenic -- as one episode in his career among others -- for situational reasons and more or less abruptly"  
(Sullivan in Silverman, 1967)

Silverman sees the process of becoming a shaman or "healed madman" as unfolding in five stages (1967:23-29).

1. Damaged self-esteem as a result of some "situation which evokes "intense fear, psychological impotence, failure, and guilt" (1967:24). This phase is analyzed by

Devereaux (Silverman, 1967:25) in ways that are quite similar to Robert Merton's (1968) anomie and strain theory of deviance production. The person perceives him/herself to be in an intolerable bind between a cultural prescription and a structured or personal inability to perform that prescription (Silverman, 1967:188-189). The sudden world view reorganization is a therapeutic attempt to "make sense of a highly anxiety-provoking environment" (1967:23-29). The effectiveness of the "therapy" however, is dependent on the cultural support for the personality reorganization process (1967:23-29; Wallace, 1956).

2. "Preoccupation; Isolation; Estrangement" (Silverman, 1967:23-29). In this stage the person becomes unusually preoccupied with the difficulties of the situation and the intensity of emotions. This preoccupation interrupts normal "communication and social interaction" (1967:26), as well as normal patterns of eating, sleeping, and daily routines (1967:26). The result is a kind of autohypnotic state and perceptual fixation, seen "in the pathological staring of schizophrenics and novice shamans" (1967:26)

3. "Narrowing of Attention; Self-Initiated Sensory Deprivation" (Silverman, 1967:26). Analysis of this stage is built upon laboratory research by Piaget and others on "persons who fixate on stimulus patterns," who progressively

lose accuracy in perception and the ability to focus on their outer environment (1967:27). This extreme narrowing of focus of selective perception, is accomplished by a "marked withdrawal from ordinary kinds of activities." As a result, "a marked reduction in meaningful sensory (i.e., perceptual) input" (1967:27) leads to a condition where the person becomes confused over the "boundaries between wakefulness and dreaming sleep, between fantasy and reality, between self and nonself" (1967:27). A number of laboratory subjects under such conditions hallucinated with "delusions centering around themes of destruction" (1967:27). Under such sensory deprivation, "the old perceptual and conceptual reality -- will begin to break down...and one will soon be sure of only one thing -- that events, people, and places are not what they seem" (1967:27).

4. A flood of archaic images now invade the person's field of perception (Silverman, 1967:28). As a result of a severely damaged self, a therapeutic break with that damaging reality takes place. But such a break is also a break with other external stimuli as well. The person experiences two disjunctive realities, the damaged self-image, and a more euphoric grand self image. This discrepancy and the emotions it engenders leads to a perceptual break with external stimuli. Silverman notes,

What follows then is the eruption into the field of attention of a flood of archaic imagery and attendant lower order referential processes such as occur in dreams or reverie.... Ideas surge through with peculiar vividness as though from an outside source. The fact that they are entirely different from anything previously experienced lends support to the assumption that they have come from the realm of the supernatural.... Ideas of world catastrophe, of cosmic importance, and of mission abound. (1967:28)

5. "Cognitive Reorganization" (1967:29). The degree to which the shaman will garner a following depends upon this person's flexibility in role-taking behavior towards those around them. To the degree that this healer can now identify with the experiences of those around him/her, at the same time as communicate something of the new inner world experience, the healer will gain a following (1967:28).

Wallace and Silverman make the assumption that all "deviant" visionary perceptions apparently emanate from this kind of fictitious altering of reality as a therapeutic adjustment to extreme defacement of self. Certainly there is cross-cultural, laboratory, drug, and illness evidence to suggest that given certain stresses, perceptive behavior can be faulty. One cannot say whether all prophetic visions share this etiology; the evidence precludes absolute generalizations. Certainly the phenomenon of religion in its variety of forms assumes otherwise. The almost

universal religious assumptions of the reality of such phenomenon, such as those seen by visionaries, should not be simply ignored or prematurely reduced to biochemical phenomenon.

In a more recent literature review of shamanism, Harvey (1979:241-251) notes that there are four divergent views among scholars of shamanism.

1. The shaman is a pathological personality;
2. The shaman is a "healed madman";
3. The shaman may be either a pathological or normal personality;
4. The shaman is a normal or even a super-normal personality capable of reformulating and thus of providing clients with a new synthesis of world views.

The four points of view are not mutually exclusive; one can imagine a point of view that holds all four to be true in turn about a particular shaman. The first view is the most biologically reductionist, while the other views are more sympathetic to the shaman. Views two and four both hold that the shaman may be a positively extraordinary person in empathy to clients and creativity regarding ideas.



### Major Crises Events

This portion of the chapter looks at historical documents surrounding the ministry of John Alexander Dowie and the crises events that may fit the psychopathology model of cult development.

#### Early Ministry Crises

John Alexander Dowie began his ministry as a Congregational pastor in South Australia. He was plagued with setbacks from the beginning. He received two years of theological education at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, beginning in 1868. He was forced to prematurely leave the university due to his father's indebtedness. This was unfortunate because Dowie had a promising scholastic aptitude (Sheldrake, 1912:14). In addition, Dowie was required to take some of this debt himself.

He was ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1872 in South Australia and pastored a six-point rural parish called Alma. Alma was unbearably rural to him, the services were extremely small with little hope of increase, the people had little appreciation for his gifts and education, and the pay was deplorable (Sheldrake, 1912:15-24). As a result, his debts increased (Sheldrake, 1912:19, 21). He was initially hopeful, but soon grew very unhappy there. He

exhibited signs of anxiety, loneliness, depression, and sorrow (Sheldrake, 1912:19-22). In one of the letters to his parents he wrote, "Never have I felt more keenly, in all my life, anything like the anxious, sharp sorrow that I have during these past few days" (Sheldrake, 1912:19).

These difficulties were compounded by his constant involvement in temperance activities, which alienated him from many of his Congregational members. His isolation, loneliness, and a sense that he was being opposed in the center of his ministry, fueled a slight, if realistic, sense of paranoia. He wrote to his parents, "I fear there is something like open opposition impending, on account of the too searching character of my preaching" (Sheldrake, 1912:19). He feared some "wicked attempt by an unfaithful majority in the church" (Sheldrake, 1912:20). He felt alone in his integrity (Sheldrake, 1912:19). After only eight months, he resigned Alma to go to Manly Beach, in Sydney, New South Wales (Sheldrake, 1912:24).

On the whole, Manly Beach was at least suburban and the growth of the congregation led to Dowie's popularity with his congregation and other ministers (Sheldrake, 1912:30). Still, his temperance work and moral strictness led to conflict and personal suffering (Sheldrake, 1912:28). Even here he was sick, lonely, and generally dissatisfied with

Australia (Sheldrake, 1912:29,33,39). He compared himself to the ancient prophet Elijah, who was also alone in his integrity (Sheldrake, 1912:33).

### Early Marriage Crisis

In late 1873, he began working with the Newtown congregation near Sydney, where he moved by 1875. Dowie considered the large Newtown congregation an important congregation to the denomination and a sign of his success in Manley Beach (Sheldrake, 1912:84). In 1874, Dowie realized the social necessity of a wife (Sheldrake, 1912:64). Shortly thereafter, he fell in love with his first cousin, in whose home he had lived as a teenager when he first arrived in Australia (Sheldrake, 1912:69). Her name was Jane Dowie.

When she and her father both found the idea of cousin marriage untenable, Dowie became depressed, lonely, and ill (Sheldrake, 1912:70,). However, in time he won her heart and overcame her father's initial refusal (Sheldrake, 1912:72). They were married in 1876 (Sheldrake, 1912:94). Aside from the first few months of happiness in marriage, it was less than a year before their marriage was in crises (Sheldrake, 1912:98,107).

In 1877, Jane left for over a month to live with her parents. She was ill. Both the separation and illness

proved to be accurate barometers of marital problems for the rest of their married life (Sheldrake, 1912:107,126,128). The crisis was precipitated by an apparent bankruptcy (Sheldrake, 1912:107). Dowie's university and family debts, his poor ministerial pay, his penchant for buying large quantities of books, and the new furniture for his home prohibited him from paying his creditors (Sheldrake, 1912:130-131). Their furniture was repossessed and they were removed from their home (Sheldrake, 1912:116,126-129). Jane was hurt, angry, ill, and confused when she left for her father's home. Her father counselled her not to return to her husband (Sheldrake, 1912:107,128-9). Dowie's father-in-law told Dowie to let his wife handle the finances and accused him of incompetence (Sheldrake, 1912:128-9).

The situation also strained Dowie's relationship with his church (Sheldrake, 1912:118,120). His marriage was supposed to be a ministerial asset (Sheldrake, 1912:64), however, marital and financial problems caused his congregation to question Dowie's ministry. Dowie was understandably an emotional wreck during this time. He complained of deep distress, grief, loneliness, sleeplessness, and depression (Sheldrake, 1912:129,141-143). He experienced deep shame and loss of face (Sheldrake, 1912:129), and contemplated suicide (Sheldrake, 1912:141).

At times he felt hopeless, as if his whole life had been a series of setbacks and everyone was against him (Sheldrake, 1912:141). He compared himself to the Biblical Job (Sheldrake, 1912:135). He related a dream that he had to his wife. He dreamed that she had been devoured by a lion and that Dowie had almost saved her when a serpent attacked him (Sheldrake, 1912:171). Although dreams experienced during a time of crises would seem to support the psychopathology model, this dream hardly seems like the flood of archaic images that Silverman (1967) describes.

#### Independent Ministry

It was in 1878, during this crisis that Dowie decided to leave the Congregational denomination and become an independent minister (Sheldrake, 1912:120,184,209). Dowie characterized the Congregationalists as unappreciative of his gifts and lukewarm (Sheldrake, 1912:209, 217). He wanted greater ministerial freedom and a chance to minister to the poor in Sydney. Still it was the financial crisis, or his inability to make a living, that most greatly influenced his decision to strike out on his own (Sheldrake, 1912:116-120,209).

His wife now decided to return and Dowie felt again secure in her love and his brighter prospects (Sheldrake, 1912:161-162). The initial phase of the crisis appeared to

be over. If leaving his denomination was his first step toward religious innovation, he was still far from being a cult leader. He had many of the stresses and setbacks associated with the onset of schizophrenia in the literature, specifically Wallace (1956) and Silverman (1967), and as painful as the ordeal must have been, he still exhibited no signs of schizophrenia. His move to independent ministry seemed like a decision based on the realistic appraisal of the situation in which he found himself.

#### Second Marriage Crisis

Jane was back, but the crises were not over. Dowie rented large halls in Sydney and preached revival-style meetings. He initially drew large crowds and moderate income (Sheldrake, 1912:206). Many members of his Newtown congregation attended these meetings and contributed financially (Sheldrake, 1912:242). However, financial support soon dropped off and despite a short period of sustained support, his old debts and present expenses forced him to close the Sydney meetings (Sheldrake, 1912:218, 235-238).

By now he had borrowed heavily from his father-in-law and was asking financial assistance from his father: both were humiliating prospects (Sheldrake, 1912:235-238). As

late as 1880, he was still trying to purchase or build his own large tabernacle in Sydney. He invested money, apparently his father's or father-in-law's money, in what turned out to be a confidence fraud and lost it all (Sheldrake, 1912:290-300). Consequently, he became anxious and ill (Sheldrake, 1912:297).

Again, Jane became ill and left to live with her father. This time she took two children with her and stayed for thirteen months (Sheldrake, 1912:278-313). In 1882, Dowie left Sydney and began meetings in Melbourne (Chronology from Zion Historical Society). His poverty was appalling. On a number of occasions he was without food for days, his lodgings minimal (Sheldrake, 1912:307-310). Dowie was often sick with coughing, headaches, sleeplessness, and general weakness (Sheldrake, 1912:307-309,294-299).

Little detail is available from this time until 1884 when he began to show some success in Melbourne. He was able to build a substantial tabernacle, and apparently made a good living, and was together again with his family (Sheldrake, 1912:325). While he had begun to believe in divine healing as early as 1876 in Sydney, in 1884 he began to promote healing as the center of his ministry (Sheldrake, 1912:325). His troubles returned. Dowie was still very much the temperance preacher. His Melbourne tabernacle was

bombed and he was put in jail in 1885 for violating an ordinance against street preaching (Sheldrake, 1912:325,322). In 1884 his daughter, Jeannie, died in convulsions, despite his prayers (Sheldrake, 1912:318-320).

### Visions and Gifts

The 1880s was a difficult time for Dowie. During this time he had some visionary experiences that left an apparently profound effect on him. Dowie later recounted how that in jail in 1884, he experienced visits from the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary, both told him that he was the "messenger of the covenant," in fulfillment of Biblical prophecy with a mission to prepare the world for the coming of Christ (L 17:503-504). It was not until 1901 that he publicly took the title of Elijah the Restorer, but he claimed he received that message from Gabriel and the Virgin Mary in 1884. In 1886, he wrote a letter to his wife reminding her of the appearance of bright light in his room during the night; a light he interpreted as the Glory of God (Sheldrake, 1912:332). He immediately embarked on a evangelistic tour of Southern Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania (Sheldrake, 1912:332).

He also began to experience new "gifts" at this time. Healing became a focal point of his ministry, and through his travels healing groups were organized in all places he



visited, which resulted in a social movement replacing a single congregation (Sheldrake, 1912:332). In 1886, he wrote to his wife Jane, who was again away and sick, that he was experiencing new gifts on his evangelistic tour (Sheldrake, 1912:332-4).

Do come home again not later than Wednesday week -- I cannot do without you any longer. It is all so strange; I can see as spirits -- God's "ministering spirits" do. Four times in two days, I was able to penetrate into the deepest, most secret thoughts of four separate men; and that after a night of strange unveiling of my own nature by the Word and Spirit of God. I have not had an average of more than four hours' sleep out of every twenty-four; but I am not only well, but look it, and feel stronger in every way than during any former period of my life. It is a fresh baptism of "power from on High;" and I am sure it is given me for witness and for service. I am so firm, cool, calm; but so changed in feeling. Wave after wave of Holy Power has come upon me, and it remains. All else seems trivial compared to this. Christ is unspeakably dearer, clearer, and nearer to me in all things.  
(Sheldrake, 1912:333-334)

As late as 1873, Dowie dismissed the cult of spiritism as "foolish and un-Christian," for its notion of "angelic ministrations" (Sheldrake, 1912:40). Still, in 1877, he was uncomfortable with the idea of speaking for God in a way that made others dependent (Sheldrake, 1912:169-170). With these new visionary experiences in 1884 and 1886, Dowie's ministry was taking a decided turn.

Dowie established the variety of groups he visited as the International Divine Healing Association, a name that

held for the next decade until the founding of the Christian Catholic Church in Chicago in 1896. In 1888, Dowie and his family left Australia permanently, and began a ministry headquartered for some time in San Francisco. By 1891, he centered his ministry in Chicago, an area where he would remain until his death in 1907.

#### Analysis and Perspective

The personal letters of Dowie published by Sheldrake (1912) provided nearly all of the evidence for the above analysis of the first half of his ministerial career and ended with his travel to America, in 1888. None of the later publications, mostly magazines, portray a sense of the personal and inner life of Dowie. However, Dowie's greatest innovations came later than this period, especially with the founding of Zion, IL, north of Chicago, in 1901. Only then, did Dowie publicly proclaim himself Elijah the Restorer, the First Apostle, and embark on a number of novel ideas that earned him cult status in the larger society.

Only the "new experiences" of 1884 to 1886 appear to fit the psychopathology model of cult development given by Stark and Bainbridge (1985:173-174; Wallace, 1956; Silverman, 1967). For years, Dowie experienced extreme deprivations, poverty, setbacks, marital crises, illness,

and loss of face; all of which could have led to the kind of schizophrenic experiences given in the model. His moderate description of bright lights or of being able to see into the thoughts of others does not parallel the flood of archaic images of death and destruction so common in the schizophrenic or shamanistic experience.

One important fact to remember is that his moderate spiritual experiences occurred in the middle of a career in which he had already devoted over twelve years to a particularly costly ministry. Dowie exhibited a religious devotion that apparently preceded these new experiences by decades. It was not the new experiences that gave him a religious mission. He already had that. It was not the new experience that gave him a following, he already had that, although the following did grow much larger.

The most unusual of his visionary experiences was the appearance of the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary; however this is somewhat suspect. Each purportedly told Dowie that he was Elijah the Restorer (L 17:503-4), although Dowie never reported this experience until 1905, twenty-one years later.

In 1901, Dowie feigned anger at Rev. Barnes who wrote to him and said that he believed Dowie was the "Messenger of the Covenant," or Elijah (L 14:50;L 11:209). Dowie's response to Barnes is surprising because of Dowie's claim of

early visits with Biblical messengers who proclaimed Dowie as Elijah. The visions of Gabriel and the Virgin Mary seem suspect. The visions appear to be a construction of the last days of Dowie's ministry in 1905, after his cult status was firmly established by other factors.

If this experience is discounted, which seems warranted by the record, then the new experiences of 1884 and 1886 seem quite moderate, and do not confirm the schizophrenic interpretation. Only by retrospective interpretation can Dowie be seen as cultic, shamanistic, or schizophrenic during these 1884 to 1886 new experiences. Only by imputing his later "deviance" in retrospect to these early experiences do they seem so unusual.

In fact, he was only one of a number of itinerant healing evangelists in his day (Cunningham, 1974). Notably the new experiences did not give him any messages that were different than what he had been preaching about for several years previous, especially healing and temperance (Sheldrake, 1912:332- 333). Only if the schizophrenic or shamanistic initiation is so varied, as in this case, to be a moderate religious euphoria, does the model fit. But in fact, the model seems to suggest an extreme personality change, which did not seem to happen with Dowie until at least twelve years later in his ministry in Chicago.

At several points, a researcher is tempted to adopt the psychopathology model. First, Dowie was extremely colorful. His character and personality did not resonate conventional religion. He was given to public displays of anger and open conflict with religious, institutional, and political leaders.

Second, Dowie was socially radical. This was coupled with a very serious side to his personality. At times, he could have been accused of losing perspective or losing a sense of proportion. His letters reveal extreme emotional shifts during a variety of stressful experiences.

Third, Dowie did experience a number of serious deprivations and crises consistent with the conditions set out in the psychopathology model. His experiences of poverty, educational and occupational setbacks, family disruption, homelessness, and imprisonment were all potential producers of schizophrenia.

Fourth, Dowie did report visionary experiences, some of which could be interpreted within the psychopathology model. His visions of visits from the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary were two experiences which invited the psychopathology interpretation.

However, colorful and even conflictual characters are not unusual among leaders of energetic social groups.

Creative leaders are often accused of being narrow and intolerant of others who do not share their views. Often what is perceived by a follower of such a radical leader as single-minded commitment is perceived by outsiders and enemies as fanaticism and narrowness. While the psychopathology model predicts crises that precipitate psychopathic episodes which in turn result in visions, Dowie's most important visions are suspect. Finally, Dowie's greatest innovations are not found in the time frame suggested by the psychopathology model.

The psychopathology model predicts early deviance immediately following crises experiences. In fact, Dowie's most creative innovations were at least twelve years following these crises events. Dowie had already introduced some important innovations previous to some of his major crises events. One could argue that some of his early innovations were productive of crises in his occupation and family. The innovations led to the crises. In summary, Dowie was innovative from the beginning of his ministry, before the major crises events. He had already established himself as a charismatic leader by the time of his supposed visionary experiences. But his greatest innovations were quite late in his ministry, after separating his group from the larger society and forming Zion, IL.

This is more consistent with the predictions of the subcultural-evolution model of cult development. The interaction processes following group isolation lead to group innovations. But the subcultural-evolution model neglects the role of the charismatic leader in the development of innovation. The next chapter analyzes Dowie as an innovative leader, the religious entrepreneur.

## CHAPTER VI: THE ENTREPRENEUR MODEL OF CULT FORMATION

Stark and Bainbridge's entrepreneur model of cult formation has a marked advantage over the psychopathology model. The entrepreneur model uses one theory to explain general cultural and religious innovation. The psychopathology model fails to explain why the theorist never expects great cultural and technological innovation from a psychopathic personality, but expects psychopathology to lead to innovative religion. Thus the entrepreneur model is more parsimonious in allowing one theory to explain innovation.

Stark and Bainbridge present the entrepreneur model of cult development as a way of showing that a new religious movement exhibits the fundamental human exchange systems of any social group or movement. In this, there is no clear distinctiveness between cults and other religious groups. Both groups build schools, colleges, retirement homes, and other institutions for their followers. What makes cults unique is that they either repackage or create new rewards. These rewards can be specifically religious, such as new religious ideas, or they can be social and economical rewards couched in religious terminology (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985:178-179).



This theory participates in the economic reductionism of exchange theory. Stark and Bainbridge state that,

these entrepreneurs, like those in other businesses, are motivated by the desire for profit, which they can gain by exchanging compensators for rewards.

James Randi sees all of the faith healers as simple frauds (1975). Randi's work clearly uncovers many faith healers' crass slight of hand for profit (1987). Unfortunately, Randi reduces all religious phenomenon of this type to the level of profit-motivated fraud. Stark and Bainbridge believe profit motivation is to be assumed, however it need not be fraudulent. Like other business persons, the cult leaders may be motivated by a sincere belief that their "product" is worthwhile of exchange for profit (1985:180-181).

One could divide entrepreneurship into two distinct qualities, innovation and promotion. Stark and Bainbridge do not distinguish the elements of entrepreneurship in this way, but their analysis invites this distinction. First, they suggest that many new religious groups promote new ideas and products for profit. Second, they suggest that the innovativeness is largely one of borrowing from other successful new religious groups, the cultural materials that they repackage for sale to recruits. Thus cults tend to follow certain family groupings, with family resemblance to

each other when one has borrowed heavily from the others. In this way, many cult leaders show innovation by a clever eclecticism (1985:179-182). It should also be noted that the entrepreneur model focuses on the importance of the cult leader as the innovator who creates the following through successful promotion.

#### Dowie as Entrepreneur

The three theories of cult development are not mutually exclusive and may all be useful in explaining the same cult group in formation (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985:173). However, in the case of John Alexander Dowie's religious movement, the entrepreneur model is most easily verified. This chapter will briefly analyze the innovations and the promotion of those innovations under the rubric of the entrepreneur model.

#### The Promoter

In the early days of his religious movement, Dowie never charged his followers for anything, but lived off of their tithes and free will offerings. Since his followers were grateful for their healing and the new teaching they were receiving they undoubtedly showed this in their gifts. However, in Chicago in 1894, Dowie decided that his followers who traveled some distance to visit him, or those

needing to stay some time for teaching about healing, needed a place to stay to receive teaching and healing.

He initially founded three divine healing homes with a total capacity of about one hundred guests and thirty staff (L 1:278). In 1894, the average guest would pay over ten dollars per week for double occupancy lodging. Many came with families and paid for each member of the family. In an average week, Dowie's enterprise of healing homes was receiving eleven hundred dollars in fees for lodging (L 1:282). Dowie was clear that he would not charge anyone for receiving his healing prayers and teaching, which they could receive in his tabernacle, without paying for lodging (L 1:282).

In the first eighteen months, Dowie received eight thousand guests in his healing homes (L 3:87). At that time his whole enterprise was receiving about four thousand dollars per week from healing homes and various tabernacles in Chicago (L 3:295). In 1895, Dowie was continuously persecuted by the medical authorities in Chicago for operating his healing homes (L 1:275-315).

In response to the Chicago persecution, he made plans to build a Christian city, which like his homes, would provide a clean environment, free from unbelief, drugs, doctors, unhealthy food, alcohol and tobacco, and bad moral

influences. In 1895, Dowie founded the Zion Land and Investment Association, selling stocks in a soon-to-be designated city site near Chicago (L 1:479,503,534-5, 536-7,555,560).

Even if it was legitimate, it looked a great deal like a land scheme and the Chicago newspapers interpreted this as a promotion (L 1:556). The newspapers figured that land would probably be resold to investors at ten lots per acre, each lot costing from five hundred to a thousand dollars (L 1:556), probably a minimum of one thousand percent profit. Dowie disputed this amount and suggested that these lots would sell from between two hundred and fifty to four hundred dollars a lot (L 1:556). This would still provide a phenomenal opportunity for profit. The newspapers criticized him for holding all the paper instead of establishing a board of trustees (L 1:556). Dowie appointed an advisory board, that placed all the control of the money in his hands for his wise disposal (L 1:556).

The appeal to followers to invest in the future Zion City was based on moral and economic motives. The same investment could do both.

It is an excellent opportunity for doing good, and getting a good result to the investment, helping an excellent class of Christian working people of moderate means to settle in ZION and to purchase homes (L 1:555).

Dowie chose a site south of Chicago for Zion, but his initial success at promotion led to unwelcome land speculation, and Dowie was unable to purchase the land (L 3). His plan to build Zion was stalled until 1900 while he established his church, the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, and built up his economic base.

In 1896, he abandoned his smaller healing homes and purchased a large hotel, located on the corner of Twelfth and Michigan Streets in Chicago, designated Zion healing home. This hotel often accommodated over 200 guests (L 2:447-450). A second hotel, purchased in early 1900 had 150 guest rooms, as well as numerous large rooms to be used for Zion College (L 8:739).

In March 1899, Zion Bank was opened in the hotel building on Twelfth and Michigan Streets. Shares were sold and deposits taken from any members who would invest (L 5:344). By this time there were over fifteen thousand members in Dowie's Christian Catholic Church, and deposits were substantial. Zion Publishing House originally located in a nearby building and later in the first hotel building. Zion Publishing House published the Leaves of Healing magazine and sold numerous tracts, pamphlets, books, and bound volumes of past issues to followers (L 5:340-1).

In 1899, the Leaves of Healing were selling around twenty thousand subscriptions. These institutions, Zion Publishing House, Zion Healing Home, Zion Bank, Zion College, and Zion Land and Investment Association all provided income to the movement. All were under Dowie's direct personal financial direction.

In an all night New Years Eve meeting, Dowie announced that he had secretly purchased the rights to six thousand five hundred acres, forty miles north of Chicago, for Zion City. Dowie declared that Zion would be more than a clean city; it would usher in the age of God's rule upon earth, and of health and prosperity for its citizens.

Shareholders could exchange shares for land in 1901 (L 6:321-331). Zion City would be the staging ground for future industries. In July 1900, Dowie arranged for the purchase of a Nottingham lace factory, which would be moved complete with skilled English lacemakers to Zion, IL (L 7:424). This would be the only major lace factory in the United States and promised to be competitive with English imports at the height of the Gilded Age in America. This purchase involved the marriage of Dowie's sister-in-law, Mary Dowie, to a Nottingham lace manufacturer, Samuel Stevenson. Immediately four hundred thousand dollars of lace stock was offered to Dowie's followers (L 7:424).

The investment promised unheard of dividends; six percent the first year, seven percent the second year, increasing incrementally to twelve percent the seventh year (L 7:425). With Zion Land and Investment Association, the lace industry, and the Zion Bank, Dowie was immediately dealing with vastly larger sums of income than he had ever before encountered.

Zion was now a large business enterprise. Critics viewed him as an entrepreneurial religious leader. Dowie was not embarrassed with this criticism.

Some folks talk about business as if it were opposed to Christianity. Did not Jesus say, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Did He not make a business of religion? If a man does not make a business of religion, he does not do much in the way of serving God...."

Some ministers complain, "Dr. Dowie makes a business of Zion."

I will make a business...of helping God's people cooperate, so that the profits of their industry shall not be taken away by designing men, but that they shall have the profit themselves. (Amen). That is a good business, is it not? (L 7:332)

Zion city offered a graphic representation of the dualism between good and evil that Dowie taught his followers.

When I took this land for God I vowed, before God, that I should keep it clean to the utmost extent of my power and I shall. We never invited the Devil here, nor his children to be citizens of Zion. This place was established for God's children, and shall be kept for God. Do not make any mistake. Satan had to be cast out of heaven;

for no sin can dwell there.... What makes Zion City what it is? The high standard is the only thing that makes Zion City worth living in. A drunkard cannot live here; a thief...a liar...an adulterer...a blasphemer...a covetous.... They will all have to get out. (L 13:340)

While elements of communitarian living were available in the hotels that Dowie and his followers occupied in Chicago, it appears that one of the reasons Dowie wished to build Zion was to develop a greater degree of direct control over the socialization and behavior of his followers. Dowie structured greater social and economical control into the very legal construction of Zion.

The main mechanism of his control was through his follower's investments, especially the property where each follower lived. Dowie founded Zion with a unique property lease system. Followers could not buy a building lot, but would lease a lot for the period of 1100 years through the expected term of the coming millennium. This lease stipulated absolute obedience to Dowie and his teachings regarding diet, health, and behavior. A violation of the lease provided legal grounds for removal from Zion (Scrapbook 8:128; WS Courier, Mar. 9, 1905). Consequently, a follower who had built a house in Zion would have strong motivation to follow Dowie's leadership, given the consequences of violation. So the building of Zion, and the separation of the center of the movement to Zion,



contributed greatly to Dowie's social control over his followers.

The call for voluntary cooperation in Zion investments was soon enlarged to a command to sell everything, to move, and invest everything in Zion. Followers were warned that failure to tithe of their income and to invest everything in Zion was disobedience to God and would result in financial ruin, physical sickness, and death (L 8:68: Chicago Inter Ocean, Feb. 20, 1905).

Zion initially boomed, growing to 6,000 people in its first year, by Dowie's estimates (L 11:323, 751). Estimates of the population in 1903, when Zion was two years old, vary from 7,000 to 10,000 people (Chattanooga, TN News, Feb. 3, 1903; New York Press, Feb. 16, 1903 Chicago American, Jan. 15, 1903; Des Moines, IA Capitol, Jan. 15, 1903). In 1905, the population of Zion was 5,387 persons (L 18:447). The population was 4,830 in the 1910 Federal Census, after the movement had fallen into disarray.

Economic Feedback Effects      The founding of Zion created the need and opportunity for other enterprises. Some were to provide goods and services to Zion residents and others were industries for profit in providing services to the outside world. One of the foremost enterprises was the Zion General Stores. These stores encompassed two city

blocks of continuous stores with one inner walkway, which was similar to a mall (Scrapbook, 5:130-131). The Zion Stores included a grocery store, dry goods, tea and coffee and spice department, fresh food, creamery, meat market, harness shop, boot and shoe shop, clothing, millinery, hardware, furniture, piano and music, Bible and book store, stationary department, and mail order department (L 10:640,322,78-9;L 12:774; numerous early photographs of Zion Stores in Zion Historical Society Archives).

None were privately owned and all poured money into Zion's collective coffers with Dowie in control of the checkbook. Dowie did not allow competitors in Zion and the stores sent out sale wagons to neighboring communities.

It was a matter of religious commitment to the communitarian venture to shop exclusively in the stores, and these stores were generally well stocked with fine merchandise. Within the first six months of Zion's existence Zion stores had 3,000 customers each day (L 10:205). Given Zion's food restrictions, especially pork, these stores also produced numerous food substitutes, like beef bacon, pork free shortening, and various teas and coffees. In addition, many of these were in demand through mail order (L 13:9, 572). Within two years, when the population was around 5,000 persons, the Zion Stores did

\$60,000 in sales during July, with \$35,000 in the fresh food section (L 13:9, 572). Although the figure probably included some exaggerated expectations, the stores expected to do a business of over \$1,250,000 in 1903. Because of unexpected events, the stores were Dowie's greatest gold mine and unexpectedly surpassed the lace factory in income.

A number of other enterprises were immediately built and provided services for the booming community. These included a brick factory, candy factory, large lumber yard, planing mill, furniture factory and piano factory, feed store, livery stable, blacksmith shop, commercial laundry, large publishing factory, post office, two railroads and a depot, a freight shed, land office, administrative offices, and Zion Bank, schools, Zion College, and a five hundred patron capacity resort hotel and restaurant located a few blocks from Lake Michigan (L 10:205). All of these were directly controlled and legally held in Dowie's name in trust for God and Dowie's followers.

Zion initially provided boom town employment for nearly all who came to live there. The lace factory employed four-hundred employees; the candy factory one hundred employees; the printing factory one hundred fifty; the brick factory two hundred; the general stores three hundred; the hotel forty-five; sawmill thirty; and the land office twenty

persons (Chicago American, Dec. 2, 1903 Lena, IL Independent, May 14, 1903).

The five hundred person capacity hotel, Elijah Hospice, charged daily rates of \$1.50 to \$5.00. A smaller Edina Hospice charged \$4.00 to \$7.00 per week (Cincinnati Enquirer, Oct. 23, 1903). The hotel did a thriving business because followers came to Zion for teaching, healing, and prospective moves to Zion. During peak building times the lumber yards received as many as 126 rail cars of building materials in a few weeks time. Many large building projects were being built by private contractors that Dowie formed Zion Building and Manufacturing Association to control these private profits. This association absorbed the lumber company, power, plumbing, lighting, and heating associations, and immediately sold hundreds of thousands in stocks (L 12:393).

By late 1902, Zion had about 1,200 homes and over 5,000 people (L 12:102;L 11:100). Shiloh Tabernacle was the center of town where all 5,000 persons could worship at one time (L 12:102;L 11:100). Although Dowie only leased the property to his followers, in 1902, he received over one million dollars from leases on 520 of the 6,500 acres in Zion (L 12:360). By 1903, Dowie claimed to be spending 1.5 million dollars on Zion salaries in Zion and to be receiving

as much as 1.5 million dollars from the Zion General Stores (L 14:166). Tithes poured into the Zion headquarters at \$15,000 per week (Scrapbook, 3:184). Dowie believed he was justified in keeping five percent of all Zion income for himself and his family (Scrapbook, 3:184; Chicago Post, Oct. 30, 1903).

Financial Rewards for Followers      Why did large numbers of people follow Dowie to Zion? Without underplaying the importance of the larger religious beliefs that he taught, and the healing that many of them experienced, there were also a number of financial compensators that provided concrete reasons for people to follow Dowie into Zion. First, they were able to combine their deepest held religious beliefs with a systematic investment program. Not only would they be saved from investments in evil enterprises, but their investments would do some positive good in advancing God's rule on earth.

While Dowie attracted a number of large investors, many of his stocks sold for as little as twenty dollars in order to attract the small investor. These stocks could later be converted into a housing lot or industrial shares. The promised dividends were quite generous. For the first year these dividends were apparently paid, which added credibility to the whole enterprise.

Followers also received ample employment in Zion's various industrial and commercial enterprises. Dowie was criticized by his top advisers for paying his workers too well, at a time when he could not afford to do so. He also allowed them an eight-hour working day, holidays, and paid vacations (L 18:438). By paying his workers well, persuading them to invest in Zion investments, and getting them to shop exclusively in Zion General Stores, the movement profited on Zion's production and consumption of goods and services. People also felt good about the city they were building. They felt that it was a good investment as well as a righteous transformation of society. They were convinced that Zion was a city free of the evils that plagued the larger society, free from drunkenness, disease, and misery. The profane tasks of buying a house, performing one's job, and investing for the future, all became sacred duties with eternal significance. A mundane task became intensely meaningful.

Followers claimed two further economic advantages to following Dowie. First, they claimed that by following Dowie's teaching on tithing their income to the church that they were financially blessed by God. Testimonials were given of increased salaries, healings, and greater overall prosperity as a result of paying tithes to Dowie (L

8:333,349,423,518, 617,665,695,825;L 9:67,185,252,  
598,779-80,788;L 10:67,171, 189,243;L 11:96,239;L  
12:86-7,123,131,162,194,211,221, 387,444, 451,629;L 13:836).

A final economic advantage of following Dowie was the health and healing that saved families so much money. People no longer spent money on unhealthy habits like alcohol or tobacco, and they no longer paid for doctors and medicines. Mr. E suggested,

The Lord gives to me of His riches, and I return a tenth of it with a willing heart. When I used tobacco I was always hard up. I am much more prosperous since I have given up the filthy habit and began paying tithes. (L 12:86-7)

Mrs. S told how,

since giving up medicine and insurance, and paying tithes, I find money does not go so fast.... I have saved from my small wages money to put into Zion Bank and Zion Lace Industries. I have also given free-will offerings, while before I could scarcely meet expenses, and many times had to borrow money. (L 8:311)

Mr. I told of quitting tobacco, a habit on which he spent fifty cents per day for fifty years, and giving up morphine which cost him eight dollars per month (L 4;210). Mr. P. testified,

People say, you are giving Dowie all your money. I laugh at them. It used to cost me \$300 a year for doctor's bills. One sickness of my wife cost over \$100 and there was not an end of it. (L 12:86-7)

Clearly, large numbers of people believed that their lives had improved spiritually, in health, and in prosperity as a result of following Dowie. But the economic success was short lived.

The Downfall of Zion If exchange theory, and the derivative entrepreneur model, give an adequate perspective for understanding the rise of the Dowie movement, this also provides ample explanation of the demise of that movement. For all of Dowie's creativeness and entrepreneurial skill in packaging and promoting the project, he lacked the ability to see when he was out of control financially. Dowie had proved himself a financial success in large tabernacles in Chicago, hotels, publishing, and in founding a city. All of these enterprises and the large capital they generated were evidence to Dowie and his following of his uncanny financial ability.

An entrepreneur is a risk taker. Against the advise of his best financial advisors, Dowie made critical financial blunders that contributed to Zion's quick financial ruin. He also participated in a variety of unconscionable luxuries while his followers suffered painful deprivations. In 1903, Dowie embarked on a plan for major expansion. However, Zion was in a weak economic position. Zion lace industries was not yet profitable. Dowie's followers made massive



investments in building more than 1,000 houses, paying land leases, and building the infrastructure for a small city and related industries.

In response to criticism from a famous preacher in New York who branded Dowie as cultic, Dowie planned a public relations and recruiting crusade on New York. He took nearly all Zion residents to New York for a month and held daily meetings in Madison Square Garden and later in Carnegie Hall. Followers staged a massive house-to-house recruitment drive throughout New York City.

His followers had invested nearly all they had in Zion and were taxed to the limit to provide for the New York trip. Three thousand followers were bullied into going to New York because of a vow of obedience to Dowie. Each had to pay for their own transportation, board, and literature they would distribute in New York. Many followers were required to sell household possessions and clothing to contribute to the crusade (Chicago American, Oct. 4, 1903). The trip cost more than 300,000 dollars (Chicago American, Dec. 2, 1902).

Contrary to expectations, Dowie recruited almost no converts and no new cash proceeds from New York. The trip was a religious and financial failure. After returning to Zion, Dowie's followers discovered that Zion was in

bankruptcy court and in the hands of receivers (Chicago American, Dec. 2, 1902). Instead of staying at the helm of Zion, Dowie embarked on a four-month trip around the world in opulent style. Dowie's followers in Zion experienced the first of many times of deprivation. Zion creditors had not been paid. However the court allowed Dowie time to reorganize and pay off the most pressing claims and within a year Dowie was in full control of Zion again.

In the meantime, employees in Zion were paid in coupons or scrip, negotiable only at the Zion Stores (Chicago American, Dec. 2, 1902). The devastating feedback effect of this was that Zion stores would soon be out of funds for replenishing supplies. Followers also began paying tithes in coupons and depositing coupons in Zion Bank, exacerbating Dowie's problems (Chicago Post, Oct. 30, 1903). The court receiver intervened and stopped the use of coupons which left many employees without any income (Chicago Inter Ocean, Dec. 6, 1903). Zion's industries temporarily shut down for lack of supplies.

There was a run on Zion Bank and many depositors were unable to withdraw their money (Chicago Examiner, Dec. 1, 1903). Dowie commanded all followers to deposit everything they had in Zion Bank, and personally assured its solvency. When bank depositors requested information about solvency

they were answered, "Zion hath been founded by Jehovah" (Chicago American, Dec. 5, 1903). Dowie kept lists of followers who did not deposit and warned them he would expel them from Zion (Chicago Post, Oct. 30, 1903). Hundreds of his followers didn't wait to be expelled and left (Scrapbook, 8:128-9). In the winter of 1903, a number of followers were short of fuel and reduced to a meal a day (Omaha, NE News, Feb. 14, 1903).

While 1904 was a year of reprieve, and most of Dowie's followers loyally sacrificed more and worked harder, 1905 was a year of impending economic collapse and more bad decisions (Chicago American, Dec. 2, 1903). Even in 1904, employees were again paid in coupons, which were easily counterfeited at the local printing plant where they were printed (Waukegan, IL Gazette, May 2, 1905; Chicago American, April 30, 1905 Chicago News, Dec. 17, 1904).

When economic collapse was eminent in 1905, Dowie, enfeebled with a paralytic stroke, was traveling the Caribbean and Mexico. He was purchasing options on a million acres of land in Northern Mexico in order to found Zion Plantation (Waukegan, IL Gazette, Feb. 25, 1905). Dowie was a promoter and had shown some of his greatest financial success in selling land. He was desperate for needed capital and was going to place all of Zion

investments under a second mortgage. One of Dowie's chief financial advisors resigned in quiet protest (Chicago News, March 25, 1905).

At this time there was a popular revolt in Zion and the leaders of Zion resorted to the courts to take Zion away from Dowie and return it to his followers (L 18:437-67). Zion industries had never made a sustained profit, but dividends had been paid to investors on money from continued stock sales (L 18:437-67; Chicago American, Dec. 3, 1903). Charges of heresy and gross financial indiscretion were leveled against Dowie.

Now his followers learned that Dowie had overdrafted the Zion Bank on his personal account by more than \$600,000. They threatened criminal prosecution if he fought his removal (L 18:437-67; Chicago American, Dec. 3, 1903). The courts ruled against Dowie and gave Zion to the people. Dowie was defrocked and removed from membership in his own church (L 18:437-67). Zion was in the hands of receivers again for over five years, and the people suffered severe hardships as a result. But they no longer believed in their leader, Dowie (United States Census Bureau, 1910 Federal Census lists receivers in Zion; Chicago Examiner, Jan. 16, 1905; Scrapbook, 14:67).

The Entrepreneur and Religious Eclecticism

An entrepreneur is a promoter and an innovator. Stark and Bainbridge suggest that the entrepreneur innovates in religion by picking and choosing ideas and practices from numerous cult sources in the surrounding environment and recombining them (1985:181-2). Table 3, provides an abbreviated analysis of the similarity between a number of innovative ideas in Dowie's movement and other groups considered cultic in their day. Three groups are compared with Dowie's group, the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, and Christian Science. The Seventh Day Adventists are generally no longer classified as a cult group.

Obviously some of the unique beliefs are not necessarily associated with cultic groups and certainly some of these beliefs have recently been removed from societal disapproval. They are presented in this table because of their uniqueness at the turn of the century and their similarity to these three groups which were then considered cultic.

This summary suggests that Dowie was influenced by the Mormons and the Seventh Day Adventists. Early in his independent ministry, in 1878, Dowie made close friends with one he called Mormon Joe (Sheldrake, 1912:240). On at least one occasion he visited the leader of the Mormons in Salt

TABLE 3. Dowie And Three Nineteenth Century "Cult" Groups

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Innovation	Dowie	Mormons	7th Day	Christian Science
Millenarian	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
British Israel	Yes	Yes	No	No
Restorationism	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Communitarian	Yes	Yes	No	No
Theocratic	Yes	Yes	No	No
Dualism	Dualism	No	No	Monism
"Seventies"	Yes	Yes	No	No
Women Leaders	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Polygamy	Maybe	Yes	No	No
Pacifism	Yes	No	Yes	No
Prophet	Elijah	Smith	White	Eddy
Priest	Dowie	Aaronic	Sanctuary	No
Apostles	Dowie	Yes	No	No
Health	Diet	Diet	Diet	Diet
Faith Healing	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Doctors	No	Yes	Yes	No
God is Physical	Yes	Yes	No	No
Celestial Marriage	Yes	Yes	No	No

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Lake City (Newcomb, 1930:37-8,282). How Dowie was influenced by these groups is left to further historical investigation.

#### Analysis and Summary

This study of the development of the religious movement following John Alexander Dowie strongly supports the entrepreneur model of cult development. Dowie was an entrepreneur in marketing religious commodities, specifically lodging, housing, land and other goods in a godly city. Further, his followers believed that by following his teachings they prospered financially because God blessed them for obedience in tithing. Followers also testified that they saved all the money previously spent on doctors, medicine, hospitalization, and a variety of drug or alcohol related habits. Dowie's followers were obedient, committed, and gracious in their financial gifts to him. They also converted numerous assets into investments in the movement.

The demise of the movement, like its rapid growth paralleled the fortunes of a variety of Zion enterprises. Dowie made direct appeals in the name of God for his followers to practice sanctified self-interest and invest in God's enterprises. He taught them that obedience would lead

to prosperity and that financial ruin was a sign of God's disfavor. This was powerful incentive to invest in Zion. Given Dowie's ability to promote, the movement succeeded for a while. But the downside of this social theology was that Zion's bankruptcy undermined confidence in Dowie and the movement. All of this is consistent with the entrepreneur model.

What needs further explanation in the entrepreneur model is why such a clever entrepreneur as Dowie, with a track record of some great economic success in founding Zion, made such bad judgements resulting in bankruptcy. The answer is not necessarily a contradiction.

The same traits that made Dowie successful may have been those that proved his undoing. Certainly, risk-taking behavior was involved in the whole attempt to found Zion as a Christian city for profit. The same risk-taking behavior could have led to high leveraging and over-extending Dowie's reach. The result was bankruptcy.

But why did Dowie refuse to listen to his closest business advisors? Why had he gathered quality leaders around himself if he had no intention of listening to their advice? Dowie's financial failure, a religious entrepreneurial failure, is best explained by stepping back to explain a larger change in Dowie's leadership style. The



next chapter describes the change in Dowie from his early ministry to his later authoritarian leadership. This change can explain the economic mistakes that Dowie made toward the end of his career.

## CHAPTER VII: SYMBOLIC INTERACTION AND THE CULT LEADER

## A Brief Revisit to the Three Models

Reflection on the three models presented thus far:

1) the psychopathology model, 2) the entrepreneur model, and 3) the subculture-evolution model, leads to a number of observations.

1. Model 3 does not address leader-centered cult groups.
2. Model 1 predicts early deviance, mental illness, on the part of the leader, leading to early deviance, cult beliefs, on the part of the group. But the most deviant cult beliefs developed quite late in the Dowie movement, not early.
3. Model 1 suggests a social movement is founded by a schizophrenic, not making clear how such deviance is so attractive to a following, or how a disordered personality leads to an ordered social movement. Most schizophrenics are not attractive to others. In fact, while Dowie did experience some of the extreme deprivations that the model suggests lead to schizophrenia, he did not exhibit any clear signs of schizophrenia early in the movement.
4. Model 1 suffers from the drawback that it uses a completely different mode of explanation of religious inventiveness than to explain inventiveness of other types; religious inventiveness derives from mental illness.
5. Models 1 and 3 both suggest that some kind of deprivation or goal blockage leads to novel religious culture. The similarity to Anomie Theory should not be overlooked. But, in the Dowie movement, the time of extreme deprivation, and serious cultic innovation are separated by some seventeen years of only moderate and noncultic innovation. The deprivation is early, the innovation is late.

6. Model 1 cannot explain why the early attractiveness of Dowie is replaced by a repulsive and egotistical leader, which the movement finally is forced to remove from office.
7. Model 3 is helpful in showing the potent effects of isolation in limiting the moderating effects of the surrounding environment on innovation.
8. Model 2 cannot explain why a creative business entrepreneur, with such fine business advisers, could end by making such bumbling business errors and destroy his movement. How does the early effective entrepreneur become the late ineffective entrepreneur?

#### Theory 4: Symbolic Interaction and the Cult Leader

The new theory presented here, symbolic interaction and the process of cult leader development, answers the question of why the cultic innovations develop late in the movement rather than early. In addition, this theory addresses the questions of why Dowie's early entrepreneurial savvy developed into catastrophic business failures, and why a seemingly intelligent, attractive, and sympathetic leader becomes an egotistical megalomaniac. It describes a process of moving from a meaningful religious enterprise to the development of an out-of-control leader. The process so described should be useful, not only in describing the Dowie movement, but in describing many other cult and cult-like groups as well.

This theory has the advantage, contrary to psychopathology theory, of using an explanation of religious leadership formation that could just as easily explain political and business "charismatic" leadership that goes out of control. It does not require a new theory, that is antagonistic to religion, to explain innovation because such innovation is religious. The psychopathology and subculture-evolution models show parallels to anomie theory in their prediction of great deprivation leading to innovation. This new model, symbolic interaction, and the entrepreneur model, both have similarities to explanations of white collar deviance or white collar crime. In essence the symbolic interaction model is a theory, not of deprivation, but of success out of control. This theory confirms the truism, "you can't argue with success," and suggests that neither can people closest to it.

This theory also has the advantage of not presupposing some preexistent massive character flaw in the leader, preceding the cult movement, such as the mental illness of the psychopathology model or the calculating greediness of the entrepreneur model. This model can explain how fairly sympathetic characters can become disreputable. Therefore, it does not necessitate the post-hoc reasoning so often applied to "deviant religion." Such reasoning appears to

predict early deviance in the movement by examining the end result.

### The Social Self

Symbolic interactionists, following Cooley and Mead, have maintained that the self, and its resultant behavior, are products of constant interaction throughout life between the individual and the significant others surrounding that individual.

Robbins (1988:101) notes that several studies of cult leaders describe the leader's psychopathology as resulting from a rise to "absolute power and adoration [by] followers." The present study suggests Dowie followed this pattern. He was originally a sympathetic and attractive leader, but his success and power led to a change in his self perception that was both unrealistic and appalling.

Symbolic interaction perspective provides analytical tools for describing such a process. In order for social interaction to take place, each participant must be able to define the meaning of the situation (Thomas and Thomas, 1928; Mead, 1934). The various objects in the situation must also be given meaning. Among those meaning-laden objects in the situation are the various actors. Each must define his or her self and the various others in the situation (McCall and Simmons, 1982:34).

In order to define the persons in a given social situation, the individual must engage in role-taking. George Herbert Mead referred to this activity as taking the role of the other (1934). Role-taking involves reading behavioral cues, appearances, and actions from others to ascertain who the other is intending to be in the situation (McCall and Simmons, 1982:33-4).

Once the individual has role-taken in a given situation, the individual imputes a role to each other person in the situation (1982:33-4). Only when one has discovered the meanings attached to each of the others in the interaction can one be fully prepared to present a self to the others (1982:33-37; Goffman, 1959).

An interaction can range from two interactants (a dyad) to a multitude of interactants. From the vantage point of an individual, the interaction can be analyzed as involving the self (ego) and a variety of others. In order for the individual to present a realistic self, a believable self, to others, the others in turn must actively perceive the presented self to be real or believable. Altercasting is when others impute a given role to the individual. Others impute expectations about what sort of person the individual who makes a self presentation should be (Mead, 1934; McCall and Simmons, 1982:36). Weinstein and Deutschenberger (1963:454) define altercasting as,

projecting an identity, to be assumed by other(s) with whom one is in interaction, which is congruent with one's own goals. It is posited as a basic technique of interpersonal control.

Just as the presentation of the self to others must be active, so the activity of altercasting involves creative initiative on the part of others (Michener et al., 1986:274-5). In fact, altercasting can be viewed as a variable activity from the least intrusive, as in simple recognition, to the most intrusive as in manipulation (see, Weinstein and Deutschenberger, 1963).

When altercasting is most active, the self must be modified or the negotiations of a common definition of the situation will break down, and the interaction will result in misunderstanding, conflict, or discontinuance. Thus, in altercasting, the others actively shape the individual in the interaction. Shibutani summarizes Cooley's looking glass self,

that our idea of ourselves is a reflection of how we think others view us.... If a person is treated consistently with great deference, as would be the case with the daughter of a monarch, she comes to see herself as an important object. (1986:165)

The present study develops the process whereby Dowie's followers altercast him in a larger-than-life prophetic role when he presented himself to them as an evangelist-healer. In doing so, the followers presented themselves as helpless and dependent, the alters to a powerful and miracle-working

prophet. Dowie's presentation of the self as evangelist, was not a large enough role to encompass the success which Dowie had encountered. The altercasting by his followers demanded larger roles. Certainly, the temptation for Dowie was to become what his followers wanted, someone who provided for their healing, prosperity, and spiritual well-being.

Shibutani (1986:162,167; see Strauss, 1959:15-20) notes that the individual's name is a sign of continuity through time, although that same individual's self may change through various interactions with others. The name ties the changing self to one continuous person through time. A name change is a sign of a radical break in the self concept. Name changes of this sort are common in religious conversions. Dowie adopted various new titles and name changes. These include the Messenger of the Covenant, Elijah the Restorer, and the First Apostle. He also disavowed his last name, Dowie, in favor of the shorter, John Alexander. These were signs of radical breaks, transformations of the self.

Early Leadership: Sympathetic and Attractive Cooley (1902) believed that the most basic social human emotion, shame, allowed one to take the role of the other. When an individual experiences embarrassment, that individual sympathetically imagines how someone else views that



individual and how the other (alter) does not like what they see. The experiences of pride and shame are primary social processes because they tie the individual's activity to the meanings the individual attributes to those the individual is close to. Thus people allow the images they attribute to others to shape the self and to shape their behavior. This reshaped self and its resultant behavior act back upon the interaction. The others perceive the person in new ways and give behavioral cues about that perception.

A person who is quite sensitive to these interpersonal processes would also be a good role-taker. In an analysis of "the cosmocentric cult leader," C. Eric Lincoln shows how leaders such as Jim Jones and Father Divine had unusual abilities to empathize and role-take in interpersonal interaction with their followers.

The charismatic leader is typically a man of uncanny sensitivity. He has a near-clairvoyant ability to sense out, and give dramatic verbalization to the most private yearnings of his followers, sometimes before even they themselves are fully conscious of what it is they want or need to enhance their lives with accomplishment or meaning. (1983:7)

Dowie's early experiences of poverty, humiliation, and marital problems were all forms of deprivation and defacement. But rather than resulting in immediate religious visions, these experiences gave Dowie a greater degree of sympathy, the ability to read the interpersonal

cues in interaction with others, and a deeper understanding of others.

Dowie suggested that this was his experience in 1886, the very time his ministry began to show such growth.

I can see as spirits--God's "ministering spirits" do. Four times in two days, I was able to penetrate into the deepest, most secret thoughts of four separate men; and that after a night of strange unveiling of my own nature by the Word and Spirit of God. (Sheldrake, 1912:333)

No doubt a part of his early attractiveness was this unusual ability to converse, counsel, and pray with someone who was in deep struggle of the soul, and verbalize for that other person the "hidden" meaning of the variety of verbal and behavioral cues of the shared interaction. Those who came wanting to unburden their souls, unmasking brokenness and pretentiousness, finding hitherto evasive meaning, found a sensitive role-taker in Dowie. If they came seeking holiness and an end to their sins, his ability to ferret out their inner experiences both amazed and attracted followers.

Such an approach on the part of Dowie required a great deal of risk-taking as well. In his empathetic reading of behavioral and interactive cues, Dowie interpreted the meaning of the conversation. He then made judgements about the private life of the individual. These judgements were consistent with the cues he was reading in the conversation. Dowie must have seemed unusual to his followers in his ability to take such interactional risks.

Dowie recounted a counseling session he had with a distraught mother of a three year old boy. She asked Dowie to pray for the boy, who was continually torturing and killing small animals and pets with sadistic pleasure. The mother suggested to Dowie that she had no idea what was troubling the small child. Dowie began to confront her in measured stages, while watching for her response.

She said to me, "I don't know what to do. O my little boy is grievously afflicted: I feel sure he has a devil in him. Pray for him."

I said, "Madam, that is not the trouble at all. I am not going to pray for that little boy. I am going to investigate. How did that devil get into him?"

"Well," she said, "I am sure I do not know," and I looked at her, and I said, "Madam, I am sure you lie...the boy has a devil in him because you had a devil in you before he was born."

Then I arose, and said, "Now I am prepared to say good-by, unless you are prepared to go to the bottom of this thing."

"Well," she said, "I cannot say good-by, but I do want to go to the bottom, if I die. I see you know it." I said, "I think I do."

She sat down and I said to her, "Madam, tell me the whole thing."

"I do not know what you mean," she said fencin

I said, "Madam, what I mean is very simple, and I will put it to you in a few words. If I am wrong then the Holy Ghost has not led me, but as I look at you and hear the story of that child, I am convinced that it is so." (L 3:71)

Dowie did not continue the interview that day but left her to struggle with the unfinished interaction. Her demeanor upon her return gave him some cues as to how to respond. She might tell him what had to be told. She might not return and he had not yet taken the ultimate risk. If she did return, she must agree with his prodding that there was more to tell, and she must be there to tell. When she returned on another day he assumed his original interpretation of the situation was correct and after watching the mother and child in interaction for some time, including her method of trying to control the boy and his aberrant meanness, Dowie resumed the interview.

Then she said... "Oh help me, help me. Oh, pray for this child."

"No," I said, "I will not, we will continue our conversation. Now," I said, "be quick." She would not say a word. I said, "You must go." She would not go. "Then," I said, "I will say the word, and you will tell me if it is true, Madam. Before this child was born, you tried to murder him, and you failed."

She fell back on her chair almost fainting, and she said, "I did: God forgive me. I did. I tried three times to murder him, but I could not. I hated my own offspring, and I did not want him."  
(L 3:71)

Dowie must have lost some potential followers in such exchanges, but they would not be around to detract. However, when he was correct, however vague, it must have had the effect of creating potent belief in Dowie's power and insight.

In many ways, Dowie was ahead of his time. In an essay on "Tradition and the Traditions in Health/Medicine and Religion," Martin E. Marty shows that many of the late nineteenth-century religious healing groups such were positive forces for health (1982:19). Groups such as the Seventh Day Adventists and Mormons with dietary restrictions, and the Pentecostalists with healing prayers, anticipated today's emphasis on integration of religion and health. These religious healing groups have been a reprieve from the modern tendency to what Talcott Parsons termed, differentiation, or the "chopping up" of the various interwoven parts of life (Marty, 1982:19). Some of these groups have shown remarkably positive effects on the longevity of their members (1982:19; Jarvis, 1987). The researcher who dismisses a movement which differs with the mainstream culture on health and healing, may overlook many people who find concrete help in gaining health and wholeness. Dowie was attractive to his followers as a healer and a teacher of healthy living.

Dowie's followers were also attracted to his style of worship. Worship services were entertaining and enjoyable. Dowie combined the ceremony and tradition of the high church Episcopalians with stirring testimonials, healing services, and unusually entertaining preaching. Many people loved to

listen to Dowie preach. Sermons were laced with practical advice on how one should live. Dowie's innovative ideas, garnered from an avaricious appetite to read, were constantly packaged in novel ways, so that listeners were taken on an odyssey or discovery. In every meeting followers learned something new.

Dowie's sermons were humorous. Most sermons broke into dialogue with the audience, or with some imagined foe of Dowie's teaching. At just the right moment, Dowie would interject a sabre-sharp logic and wit, waiting long enough for the audience to burst into uproarious laughter. Celebration was holy fun.

Often such laughter was the result of Dowie's taunting his enemies. Preachers and doctors, the usual butt of these jokes, found both the style and substance offensive. Wacker notes,

One reporter rightly charged that Dowie's nightly attacks on journalists, politicians, Masons, Roman Catholics, denominational clergy, druggists and above all, medical doctors, made Billy Sunday's preaching seem "prim in comparison." (1985:499)

The following was typical of Dowie's style,

What! You doctors think that you can control the whole population from the cradle to the grave? We cannot be born without you, we cannot live without you, and we cannot die without you?... "Medical science"! Medical bosh! (Laughter.) Where is your science? The Homeopath says...like cures like. The Allopath says...the contrary cures contrary. The Osteopath says, "You are both fools." The psychopath says, "You are all three fools." ...and

I agree with them on that proposition. (Laughter and applause.) (Wacker, 1985:499)

But Dowie was not simply ill mannered or obnoxious. He was energetic in debates about reforming the social order. He championed temperance and related concerns. He was ahead of his time in his radical pacifism (Beaman, 1989:38-51). Wacker notes,

On other questions, such as municipal reform, gun control, public ownership of utilities, taxation of church property, free compulsory public education, and women's suffrage and economic rights, he consistently marched with the most progressive thinkers of the age. But in regard to race relations, he was far ahead of most of them. (1985:504)

Dowie was also initially caring, empathetic, and generous to those suffering from alcoholism, poverty, and disease. His early letters give testimony to his personal care given to alcoholics and their families, often providing food and other necessities (Sheldrake, 1912). Throughout his Chicago ministry Dowie organized groups to take blankets, clothing, and other necessities to the poor of the city (L 10:58). He organized homes for working "girls" in Chicago, so they would have a safe and wholesome environment. He opened homes for unwed mothers (L 5:368,913). He grieved over the poor health of many who came to his healing homes. His vision of Zion included citizens who prospered in cooperative ownership of

profitable industries, with safe working conditions, and good pay. In Zion, work conditions and pay were fair and dividends to investors were generous (L 18:438).

These examples portray a pastor and organizer who built a movement because he was capable and attractive in his person and work. People followed him because they were attracted to his vision of God's kingdom. As a pastor, he cared for people and organized them to improve their quality of life. To suggest that Dowie's early attractiveness was a result of mental illness is to mystify the obvious. People followed Dowie because he had positive character traits of a sympathetic and creative leader.

Blinded by Success Dowie was unprepared for his staggering success. As a young pastor in Australia, he was very self-critical of his many shortcomings (Sheldrake, 1912:89,92,96). He was even uncomfortable with the prophetic role expectations and paternalism which fostered dependency in others (Sheldrake, 1912:170). When Dowie's wife asked him for God's will, he claimed he was uncomfortable being the "interpreter for God," for his wife (Sheldrake, 1912:169). However, in his temperance work in Australia, he compared himself with John the Baptist who was also alone in his integrity (Sheldrake, 1912:223).



This study has already shown what a financial success Dowie was in transforming an independent church into a small industrial city. Dowie was followed by thousands who testified in his Leaves of Healing magazines that he had shown them the way to spiritual power, healing, and health.

Elijah the Restorer When a New York reporter asked Dowie how he came to know he was Elijah the Restorer, Dowie answered that he had come to this understanding over time; that it was an evolution (Columbus, OH Press, Oct. 16, 1903). When pressed for further details about how it felt when he realized he was Elijah, he refused to answer, saying only, "there are some experiences that are our own property" (Scrapbook, 5:19). Dowie claimed that an independent evangelist, Rev. George Owen Barnes, from Florida discovered that Dowie was the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy concerning John the Baptist or Elijah. Dowie later claimed he had been angry when Rev. Barnes told him of his insight about Elijah (L 14:50;L 11:209). But Dowie soon came to believe he was Elijah and this was unanimously confirmed by his top leaders (L 14;50;L 11:209). Two years earlier, Dowie had prepared his followers by preaching a sermon on John the Baptist, noting the similarity of his ministry to John the baptist, the name "John, which also I bear" (L 2:203).

When Dowie first announced that he was Elijah, he did so with apparent reservations. Rev. Barnes published an analysis of scripture and Dowie's ministry to show that Dowie was Elijah (L 7:215). Dowie admitted that he did not know before this that he was Elijah, but that the first John the Baptist was also unaware that he was the Elijah until God revealed it to him (L 6:430). Significantly at the beginning of the Elijah declaration, Dowie asked for voluntary concurrence with the Elijah declaration. But Dowie had already changed leadership style in essence from his early days as a pastor. Rev. Eugene Brooks congratulated this change, "Dowie used to persuade, now he commands" (L 5:582). With the Elijah declaration, Dowie encouraged,

Wherein any of our brethren or sisters in Christ...may differ from us, we would remind them that such differences are no justification, either on their part or upon ours, for any other than the kindest feelings." (L 7:198)

Other followers rushed to testify how they had received revelations from God that Dowie was Elijah, or that they had believed this for years before the public announcement (L 8:434). In this case appeals were made to subjective experiences which confirmed for the individual that Dowie was Elijah. The most common confirmations were signs of the miraculous. The ancient Elijah had special signs that

attended his prophetic gifts, notably the ability to pray for rain and to stop rain. Numerous followers testified that Dowie prayed for rain to begin or for rain to stop when it was time to plant, and "Elijah's" prayer was effective (L 9:421,430,521; L 11:239,308,340,608,736,778;L 14:91,92,125.) Dowie's closest associate, Rev. John G. Speicher, summarized the meaning of Dowie's prayers for rain, "God has again wonderfully shown to his people that the voice of his prophet must be heard and obeyed in these last times, and has proved to the world that this is indeed Elijah who is to come" (Chicago American, July 4, 1904). Thousands of photographs of Dowie at prayer were sold to followers. These photographs were advertised to "be full of spiritual power" (L 7:706).

Whereas the early Elijah proceeded cautiously, the later Elijah demanded allegiance. When a number of workers in Zion refused to believe in Dowie as Elijah they were all thrown out of Zion (Chicago Examiner, Sept. 24, 1903 Chicago American, Sept. 30, 1902). By the time Dowie became the First Apostle in 1904, he coerced followers to agree. When Dowie's father did not believe the Elijah declaration, Dowie denied his paternal tie and invented a new birth account (Chicago Chronicle, Oct. 26, 1903 Chicago Post, Oct. 25, 1903 Chicago Record Herald, Oct. 26, 1903). He seldom used

his last name "Dowie" any more, simply signing his name as John Alexander (L 16:65,102,163,197,229).

In 1902, Dowie recruited a following of thousands of those most committed to doing his work and called these the Restoration Host. They were required to take the Restoration Host vow,

I vow in the name of God...that I will be a faithful member of Zion Restoration Host...I recognize John Alexander Dowie, General overseer of the Christian Catholic Church...in his threefold prophetic office, as messenger of the covenant, the prophet foretold by Moses, and Elijah the restorer. I promise, to the fullest extent of all my powers, to obey all rightful orders issued by him directly or by his properly appointed officers, and to proceed to any part of the world, wherever he shall direct...that all family ties and all relations to all human government shall be held subordinate to this vow. (L 11:748)

If any followers took the vow lightly, they soon learned the meaning of commitment. Dowie commanded them to go with him on a month-long "crusade" to New York City in 1903. Each individual was to pay expenses for travel, lodging, food, and literature to be used. Over three thousand followers made the trip. Dowie warned any who dragged their feet that such inattention to his commands would result in illness, injury or death.

Elijah the Restorer's command to go to New York must be obeyed. If you cannot spare the money for God, may the good Lord take you out of Zion quickly. I tell you frankly that I do not have any use for you. (L 13:82)

First Apostle When Dowie founded the Christian Catholic Church in 1896, he claimed that it would some day have apostles, but he could never be an apostle because he did not have all of the spiritual gifts (Newcomb, 1930:336). In 1904, he preached numerous times on the need for an apostolic church. In September,

he appeared before them in a gorgeous silken robe of many colors, elaborately embroidered, with a mushroom-shaped satin miter, emblazoned with gold.

In making his declaration of apostleship he said: "Clothed by God with Apostolic and Prophetic Authority, I now have a right to speak as the Instructor of the Nations. In the name of the Coming King, I command Peace!" (Newcomb, 1930:336-7)

A number of his followers were so shocked that they left Zion (Waukegan, IL Gazette, Sept. 10, 1904). Dowie called for a referendum in Zion to affirm his apostleship. While it was intended to look like a decision, his leaders gave unanimous approval, but followers who hesitated were brought to a secret meeting where they were "harangued" by the leaders until they agreed (Chicago News, Sept. 25, 1904).

The vote was not initially unanimous, but before the meeting was out it was declared unanimous. Then Dowie explained that the twelve apostles could forgive sins and held the keys to heaven. (Chicago News, Sept. 25, 1904)

Some followers could not agree and considered this blasphemous (Chicago News, Sept. 25, 1904).

During this time, there were some instances that confused the demarcation between the sacred and the profane, between Deity and Dowie. When Dowie claimed apostleship, he assured his followers that this was the last promotion, but some apparently wondered. Yet, others wanted to be the first to affirm his new status.

Elder Tindall said, "It seems to me that you are not only an apostle, but more than an apostle." To this Dowie replied, "I could not claim to be more than an apostle, unless I claimed to be Christ; and that I never will. If I ever come to believe that, please put me in Kankakee, or please send me over to Ben MacDuhi, and put a nice guard around me, until I recover my senses. Do something in charity to keep me quiet, until I recover my senses. But do not let me ever be so forsaken of my God, and of good sense as to make any declaration about myself as the Christ, for then I must be God Almighty, and I know of no step between an apostle and the Christ in the church of God." (Chicago Journal, Sept 12, 1904)

Even this denial came in the form of the ultimate back-handed compliment. Dowie was uniquely one step removed from God.

Even when Dowie was known as Elijah, he was given unusual adulation. Elder Warzawiak, speaking in Carnegie Hall in New York, delivered an address on why he was a member of Zion in which he claimed that Dowie was infallible. He was immediately corrected by Elder Mason,

He is not infallible, though we are ready to do his bidding at all times. He is likely not without sin, but on all questions we take his view as the right one. (New York Tribune, Jan. 18, 1904).

This denial also confirmed Dowie's nearness to divinity.

Others were more effusive. Overseer Bracefield, speaking in Zion's Shiloh Tabernacle, told of the coming end of the age and a war in which Zion's army, led by the First Apostle, would "wipe from the earth all other nations and armies" (Chicago Record Herald, Sept. 26, 1904). If people were reminded of the prophecies of the second coming of Christ in The Apocalypse, so was Overseer Bracefield. Bracefield referred to a colored photograph of Dowie in apostolic robes and said, "Look at the face and mouth of our leader and you will see what a resemblance there is to Christ" (Chicago Record Herald, Sept. 26, 1904). In a cartoon from this same time drawn by Dowie's artist, Champe, Dowie was portrayed pointing to Christ who was knocking at the door to New York (L 13:656). It was an obvious copy of the famous painting of Christ knocking at the heart's door, by William Holman Hunt. However in Champe's version, Christ and Dowie have the same exact facial features and build. The resemblance was hardly accidental. Dowie himself claimed that after he died, he would return with Christ, who upon return to earth, would come first to Zion, IL (Milwaukee Free Press, Dec. 26, 1903).

### The Prophet's Social Self

Symbolic interaction theory, following Cooley and Mead, sees individuals continuously readjusting their own self-image as they read the behavioral cues of those around them. Those cues provide the individual with information about whether to feel shame or pride. The others become for the individual a looking glass in which the individual assessed the self that is being projected (Cooley, 1902). As the individual receives information about the self as others see it, the individual readjusts and reprojects a self that is in some accordance with the views of others. If others reflect back a defaced self, the individual will likely experience shame and readjust the self accordingly. If others reflect back an aggrandized self, the individual is likely to readjust the self and experience pride.

So much of the information that Dowie was receiving into his self-image from those around him reflected a person larger than life; a phenomenal conduit of God's healing power; one who can stop and start rain; a person who sees into other's hearts, one who has raised millions of dollars to be spent on God's work, one who has brought multiple thousands into the church, one who speaks with authority, and one who is unique. If Dowie originally saw himself as a humble pastor, eventually the evidence from those closest to



him contradicted that view. He was unlike other pastors in every way. He was a prophet of cosmic significance. He was the First Apostle of the restored church. He was almost deity. Could all of these good followers be wrong about him?

This symbolic interactionist interpretation of the rise of a prophet is consistent with the development of "larger than life" self-images in "self-made" entrepreneurs in the corporate world, or in entertainment. The same kind of adulation of those around them produces an unrealistic self-image of importance. This view is also consistent with what was found in analyzing Dowie as an entrepreneur. Why was the early Dowie such a successful entrepreneur, who in the end made unrealistic choices, and destroyed the enterprise he created almost overnight? Dowie received unrealistic information about his decision-making skills from his leaders for so long that when any of them differed with his ideas, those differences could easily be interpreted as aberrant. This is consistent with research on group-think.

Groupthink Janis' (1972) study, Victims of Groupthink, shows how a tightly knit group, surrounding a leader, projects a unified and positive, albeit unrealistic view, to the leader. Unfortunately, without countervailing information, the leader makes disastrous decisions (Janis, 1972).

Four conditions that increase the likelihood of groupthink,

1. a crisis,
2. a highly cohesive group,
3. insulation of group from outside judgement and criticism, and
4. a persuasive leader who promotes one solution over others, (Michener et al., 1986:422-3).

were all operant in the Dowie movement. The financial crises in Zion in 1903, initially known only by Dowie's closest leaders, took place in a highly cohesive group. Their cohesiveness was expressed in the establishment of Zion under the uniform direction of Dowie. Zion was built with the very intention of insulating the group from outside influences. Dowie was obviously a persuasive leader.

A number of symptoms of groupthink were also present in the leadership of the Dowie movement. The following symptoms applied,

1. an illusion of invulnerability, leading to excessive optimism and extreme risk taking,
2. unquestioned assumption of group's morality,
3. rationalizations and discounting countervailing evidence,
4. shared illusion of unanimity
5. pressure to quell any dissent.

A number of examples of rationalizations and discounting of countervailing evidence are available from the historical documents. Two related situations seem quite graphic in their illustration of this phenomenon. In the New York crusade of 1903 that was such a costly failure, and in the bankruptcy which followed, the leaders and followers in Zion made regular reinterpretations of events to show that Zion was successful in every way. A constant string of testimonials from the crusade participants who had travelled to New York were published to show the success of the trip (L 15:78,102,139,173,185,335).

But as glowing as these testimonials were, they did not change the reality that the New York trip was a major public relations defeat, and that Dowie made few converts during the month spent there. After the 1903 bankruptcy of Zion, the receivers had scarcely been removed in 1904 when Dowie was telling his followers that the bankruptcy was only an unfair attack by the enemy. In the meantime, Zion had been worth more than twenty-five million dollars, by Dowie's estimates (L 15:461). But cash flow problems were still acute, many people were being paid in coupons, and many were living in poverty. During this time, Dowie was successfully calling for further investments from his followers and planning further expansion, most notably into Mexico.

In a published confession of journalistic failure, Arthur Newcomb, editor of Leaves of Healing magazine, confessed that he had published a number of inaccuracies, exaggerations, and misrepresentations, which had misled most of the followers in the movement as to the gravity of the financial situation in Zion from 1903 to 1906.

Zeal for a good cause has warped my standard of truthfulness.... I have seen for over two years, many glaring inconsistencies in the life and teachings of John Alexander Dowie, and have nevertheless continued to hold him up as a prophet and apostle of God. This I did in all sincerity, holding that no man was perfect and that these departures from the path of strict righteousness were inconsiderable compared with the great work that God was doing through him... Other and more serious transgressions came to my notice, from time to time; but, so great was my confidence in the honesty of intent and purity of motive of my leader, that I spent many an agonizing hour searching my own heart to see whether it might not be evil in me that caused suspicions of him. (L 18:452)

In this case, the leader's inconsistencies were rationalized and discounted, if necessary through denial of one's perceptions. The cohesive group selectively perceives the situation in such a way as to rationalize away any countervailing information.

Dowie's followers were bound together in obedience to him through a number of mechanisms. They shared common investments. Dowie held absolute control over investments and property leases. They had promised Dowie absolute

obedience in the Restoration Host Vow. In public statements by leaders and followers alike that Dowie spoke uniquely for God, the movement had given up the right to dissent. Dowie had created a movement that stood absolutely for the morally righteous cause. The followers had committed everything to this cause. Any turning back or questioning was unbelief and sin. As Dowie was progressively given more and more authority, as the group was progressively isolated in Zion, and as Dowie came to believe his own unerring judgement, there was no longer any realistic dissent in Zion. Dowie was unable to hear any criticism that his leaders might offer, and they were too timid now to openly criticize Dowie.

Only two mitigating factors made it possible for the movement to remove Dowie from leadership in the end. The first was Dowie's strategic mistake of spending so much time away from the direct affairs of Zion in 1904 and 1905. Dowie was gone for several months at a time, and during these times, economic crises would be open to dissenting interpretations. It was in Dowie's absence that popular revolt grew in Zion. Dowie could have dispelled such rebellion either through active persuasion or coercion, if had he stayed in Zion.

However, this was not an option. Dowie's stroke of paralysis in 1905 reduced Dowie to a shadow of his former leadership capacity. The leader's incapacity would have been a problem in any leader-centered group, but was especially problematic in this movement that believed physical disability was a sign of sin or unbelief. Dowie's obvious physical disability undermined this theology of leadership. It was now possible for people to legitimately question his leadership. He could not stay in Zion, for it was obvious that he was disabled as a leader. The longer he stayed away, and continued to write letters to Zion of his speedy recovery, the more apparent it was that he was ill.

#### Analysis and Perspective

Ironically, the explanation of the Zion failure which Dowie's followers have come to believe, is closest to the psychopathology view. In 1905, Dowie's leaders and the movement as a whole resorted to the courts to remove Dowie from leadership, and to return Zion to the followers and investors (L 18:437-465). The leaders presented a retrospective interpretation of the events and cataloged the list of financial and doctrinal indiscretions. They were most scathing, however, in their rejection of Dowie because of his pride and extravagance which they found completely inconsistent with a humble servant of Christ (L 18:437-65).

When they searched for a reason, they hinted that it was partially because of Dowie's recent stroke of paralysis that he had become such a failure as a leader (L 18:437-65). Later Zion members referred to Dowie's "nervous breakdown" as a result of the stroke of paralysis (Interview, 1983, Gladys Richert; Interview 1983, Rev. Mintern, Christian Catholic Church, Zion, IL). The "nervous breakdown" view is closest to a version of the psychopathology model. This is reductionist in its view that cultic ideas are the result of mental illness, often with a medical cause. This is all the more ironic given Dowie's abhorrence for doctors and their ideas. Dowie's own movement finally interpreted him from a medical model.

But the psychopathology model is inadequate. Dowie did not become psychotic in the 1880s after extreme deprivations and defacements, nor in 1905 after his stroke. Nor did his most clear religious innovations take place at these times. His greatest innovations came at the time he founded Zion. He was at the height of his greatest success when he was receiving constant adulation from his closest leaders, from 1901 to 1904. He became something of an egomaniac at the zenith of his success.

Symbolic interaction theory suggests that continued adulation could lead to an inflated self-image. This view

could also answer the question of how an attractive early leader as Dowie could later become so repulsive. His followers showed honest appreciation and created a leader who was larger than life. They reflected a self-image back to Dowie which was grossly misleading.

Dowie's son, Gladstone Dowie, reflected upon his father's life, and said that "he believed that his father was sincere, but that he possessed 'a strange ability to be deceived'" (Lindsay, 1980:253).



## CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

This study has reviewed various recent literature on the definition of the cult. A modified cult definition based on the work of Stark and Bainbridge (1985) and modified by Roberts (1990) was chosen. Roberts maintained Stark and Bainbridge's distinction that a cult is identified by its extreme innovation. Roberts (1990:198-199) clarified that the cult adds new revelation, the cult is sometimes distinguished by a charismatic leader, and that societal hostility may lead a sect to become a cult after it makes a radical break from society.

The Dowie movement was first a sect, then a cult, and finally a sect again. This is not the traditional change from sect to denomination suggested by Niebuhr (1929), nor the suggested secular to cult origin suggested by Stark and Bainbridge (1985). It may, however, be a more common phenomenon than studies have thus far shown.

As Dowie discovered when he left the Congregationalists to form an independent ministry, a sectarian group is an ideal place to develop leadership skills. By leaving the Congregationalists he was allowed the freedom to develop some ideas he already held as a Congregational pastor. This gave him experience and confidence to innovate further. These experiences led to a change in his leadership style.

A part of that change was also a change in Dowie's self-conception. The experience of sectarian leadership confirmed the potency of his leadership in ways he had scarcely imagined. When Dowie introduced many of his innovations these no doubt led to a selecting out process. Many followers could not go along with such perceived radical departures and they left the movement. Those who remained were true believers. They were more likely to encourage and even push further innovation.

It was this group of highly committed followers that followed Dowie into Zion. In the separation to build and live in Zion, they began to create together a more narrow world view, constantly affirming each others' narrowing perceptive field. This is entirely consistent with the subcultural-evolution model developed by Stark and Bainbridge (1985) following Albert Cohen's (1955) earlier work on delinquency. Where the subcultural-evolution falls short is its inattention to the powerful leader that is central to the process of separation or isolation in the first place. Dowie created and promoted Zion, which made the isolation and resultant group interaction processes possible. These processes then led Dowie to much greater innovation.

This pattern of movement from sect to cult to sect deserves further reflection. If sociologists become attuned to this pattern they may find it operative in other religious settings and in business or political groups with a charismatic leadership style. It is a pattern that describes how a good leader with creative ideas is stifled in a more nominal faith setting that is becoming increasingly bureaucratic. The leader wishes to rekindle earlier visions of group life and religious experience. This is the making of a sect as described by Stark and Bainbridge. Early sectarian success leads both group and leader to be even more open to innovation. Further innovation leads to cult group status. This is confirmed by societal rejection of the group in testament to the extremely high tension with society.

Stark and Bainbridge (1985) have documented the extreme volatility of cult groups in their earliest stages. Most of these groups die young. Certainly many do not outlive their founder. It is possible that some groups never come to be known as cultic because of an early reversion to sectarian status.

Two things may lead the fledgling cult group back to sectarian group status. First of all difficult times, especially from a hostile or extremely competitive

environment may lead the group to make adjustments to that environment. Whether polygamy was inherent to the early Mormon world view or not, certainly the Mormons in Utah made an adjustment to a hostile environment in choosing to reject what had become a central feature of their high tension with society, dropping polygamy. If a group chooses to make an adjustment toward the mainstream society which moves them toward sectarian status, they may do this with or without the leader. In Dowie's case the second option was used.

The very nature of Dowie's emergent leadership style, Dowie's prophetic role, made compromise with the larger environment difficult if not impossible. Dowie may have planned to move out of that hostile environment and establish his view of the kingdom of God in Mexico. While he denied that this was his plan, it certainly had many of his closest leaders worried. The Mormons had earlier considered such a move. If Dowie had been able to move the center of the movement to Mexico, he may have succeeded in further innovations and maintained cult status for a while longer. His obvious physical disability after his stroke, and the portent of his death also concerned his leaders and investors. In a more recent example, Jim Jones' successful movement of his group to South America solidified his cult status for a time.

The route chosen by Dowie's followers illustrates the second possibility of movement to sectarian status in rejection of cult status. They threw out the cult leader. A sectarian group which becomes cultic may in time come to be repulsed by the very leader they have helped to create. When Dowie was thrown out of leadership it was by an overwhelming, almost unanimous, rejection of his leadership and personage. The group was capable of uncanny loyalty and powerful rejection of their leader, in short succession. The many innovations generated by the leader and the late rejection of the leader also provide a reminder that such groups do not have static leadership. One way the group resolves a variety of problems is through innovation. Another is by removing the leader if necessary.

The second half of this study tests three theories of cult formation; the psychopathology model, the entrepreneur model, and the subculture-evolution model. These theories are critiqued and a fourth theory is developed from the symbolic interaction perspective. The symbolic interaction perspective differs from the psychopathology model in suggesting that leadership skills, rather than mental illness, explain the development of the cult leader. In cases where the leadership is so valued by the followers that they confer almost divine status on the leader, that

leader will be tempted to agree with the follower's unrealistic adulation. As a result, the leader is apt to become unrestrained in egotism. Whereas the psychopathology model predicts early deviance on the part of the cult leader, the symbolic interaction model predicts leadership deviance much later in the movement. Whereas the psychopathology model predicts blocked goals or failure leads to cult leadership, the symbolic interaction model suggests that success leads to cult leadership. Whereas the psychopathology model is curiously applied to religious movements, termed cults, it is conspicuous in its avoidance of explaining other more general examples of cultural innovation. If new religions are a result of mental illness, might not most inventiveness be explained in similar fashion? The symbolic interaction perspective is useful in its parsimony. The same symbolic interaction perspective could explain religious cult leadership and certain charismatic political leaders or business leaders who innovate in ways that move them far from their roots.

Since symbolic interaction does not require a different answer to explain behavior that conforms and behavior that innovates, it forgoes the need to judge the cult as meritorious or blameworthy. The psychopathology model casts a note of implicit judgement on the cult for its founder's

mental illness. The symbolic interaction perspective is easier to square with the actual experience of many people who follow charismatic leaders. They follow such leaders because the leader is initially quite attractive and offers something that seems to be worthwhile. The leader is gifted. The psychopathology model must overcome the obvious drawback that most people who are deemed psychopathic by society have such interactional difficulties that they have trouble making connections with others, much less do they gain a following. The psychopathology model cannot explain why, in the Dowie case, the early attractiveness of Dowie was replaced by an almost complete repulsion by his group. The symbolic interaction perspective sees the one growing out of the other. The early attractiveness led to a high degree of adulation by the group, which in turn led to an unrealistic self-appraisal by Dowie. The Dowie who believed this adulation became egotistical and insensitive to those who had initially found him so attractive.

The entrepreneur model, tested in Chapter Six, suggests that the cult leader is a creative entrepreneur. The entrepreneur repackages a set of religious beliefs and practices garnered from other cult groups in the society. A brief comparison of Dowie with three late nineteenth century cult groups; Christian Science, Seventh-Day Adventists, and

the Mormons, shows a high degree of borrowing on the part of Dowie from these groups. The greatest overlap is with the Mormons. When Dowie's followers rejected his leadership they did so on grounds that he believed Mormon theology, pressing a claim that he was planning to practice polygamy.

The entrepreneur model also sees the cult leader as a promoter. Dowie is easily analyzed in this fashion, since by his own admission he was a Christian businessman. His claim to fame was the building of a small industrial city from the investments of his followers. The penchant for contemporary television evangelists to build religious utopias, which provide some profitable service to the faithful is noteworthy. Oral Roberts called his university, law school, medical center complex the City of Faith. Jim and Tammy Bakker revived campmeeting and Disneyland motifs in building Heritage Village. Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell have attempted to turn their television personality status into political power. Jimmy Swaggert sells millions of his Christian vocal albums to his followers. All of these have in common their rags to riches stories and a theology of faith prosperity teaching. Ironically it is the leader who lives out for the followers in graphic fashion the dream of Weber's Protestant ethic. It is the followers who make it possible.



What the entrepreneur model does not explain is why such astute business leaders end up making dramatic financial blunders. Why is Oral Roberts so overbuilt that he presides over a near empty sky-scraper medical center, and recently gave away his Law School to Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network University? Why did Jim Bakker promote a land scheme in Heritage Village and end in jail for fraud and tax evasion, with Heritage Village a ghost town resort? Why was Dowie so successful in promoting investment in Zion and attracting quality industrial enterprises, but bankrupted Zion in extravagance and petty face-saving? Dowie's best advisers counselled against several expensive errors that bankrupted Zion.

Of course the entrepreneur model could explain that all entrepreneurs are risk-takers and as such are subject to overstepping their bounds. But the symbolic interaction perspective is better for consistently showing that it was the followers' unrealistic adulation that led Dowie to believe he could do no wrong. He came to a point where he could no longer realistically self-assess or self criticize. His unrealistic invulnerability led Zion to financial ruin.

### Further Study

The definition of cult still needs a great deal of refinement, specifically by testing the definition against existing and historical cult groups. A clear criterion for distinguishing cult from sect needs to be developed. Innovative ideas alone do not provide a clear demarcation between cult and sect. If a sect group pushes its revitalization far enough, ideas and practices become innovative.

This study has suggested that the charismatic leader is important to cult formation. A future study, where cults are catalogued as to whether they were founded by a powerful charismatic leader would be helpful. In this way, the usefulness of a model such as the entrepreneur model that does not address the cult founder could be tested.

Charismatic leadership has the tendency to become innovative and can easily be cut loose from tradition, but charismatic leadership does not automatically develop into a cult. The same could be said for group isolation. Some groups isolate themselves in order to keep from changing or innovating. The Amish provide a good illustration of a group that has institutionalized its sectarian stance through isolation.

Isolation alone does not lead to extreme innovation. Stark and Bainbridge recognize this and suggest that isolation in combination with a group experience of serious blocked opportunities leads to innovation. In the case of Dowie's group of followers, there were no blocked group aspirations. In fact, the group and its leader were experiencing some real measure of success. A part of Dowie's experience of success was in the adulation he received from the group. Studies need to be done to isolate factors which explain the kind of adulation given to some leaders and not to others.

More study also needs to be given to the question of why followers wish to give up their autonomy to an autocratic leader. Rousseau noted the sad paradox that while people are born free, they are to be seen everywhere in chains. Thus far, this question has not typically been addressed as religious, but political. But in just such groups as the isolated cult group, one sees religion becoming political. The American Constitution reflected the Enlightenment's concern to limit autocratic power and an inherent mistrust for power. But some forms of religious expression, essentially religion of the charismatic leader, are built around an inherent trust and devotion to a powerful leader. This becomes more relevant when one

compares Dowie, the recent Moral Majority, and recent white supremacist cults in the United States. All three groups have used explicit theocratic language. Theocratic language, while emphasizing the rule of God in everyday political and social encounters, is most often linked to authoritarian leaders who claim to be the mouthpiece for God.

Ironically, the same American constitution that expresses an inherent fear of autocratic power, also provides freedom for religious groups which foster autocratic power. The Constitution reflects that freedom is best expressed where government is mistrusted and constrained. Perhaps the cult phenomenon, especially the leader-centered variety, is actually a reaction to freedom. Does democracy create a sense of normlessness or anomie for a certain portion of the population? Are these people drawn to a powerful leader? Do they create a leader if they find none? This question awaits further study.

Finally, cult studies need to be done with greater empathy for the groups and leaders under study. Theories like the psychopathology model need to be considered suspect from the beginning for their tendency to reductionism and their tendency to label out-groups as objectively deviant. There is an inherent ethnocentric bias in such studies. Max

Weber's verstehen and Evelyn Fox Keller's "feeling for the organism," are essential correctives to ethnocentric science.

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<u>Marquette, MI Journal</u>	1903
<u>Milwaukee Free Press</u>	1903-1904
<u>New York Tribune</u>	1904
<u>New York Press</u>	1903
<u>Omaha NE News</u>	1903
<u>Racine WS Times</u>	1903
<u>Waukegan, IL Gazette</u>	1904-1905
<u>West Chester, PA News</u>	1903
<u>WS Courier</u>	1905

## ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Scrapbook (Located in Zion Historical Society, Shiloh House, Zion IL.) Author's photocopied volumes are listed with volume numbers 1-13 and page numbers assigned by the author. The Scrapbooks contain newspaper articles collected by Dowie about himself and the movement. Scrapbook citation was used only when the original newspaper citation was not clear in the Scrapbook.