Module 2533: CULTURE AND SOCIALISATION  
Option A: Religion  
Unit One: Religious Institutions

Sociology Department, Greenhead College, Huddersfield

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**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Identify the key features of a church, denomination, sect and cult  
2. Explain the relationship of these institutions to society and to each other  
3. Assess classifications and explanations of New Religious Movements  
4. Explain the appeal of religion to 'spiritual shoppers' and by social profile including class, gender, ethnicity and age

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**Key Skills**

The activities in this study guide will give you the opportunity to develop the following key skills:

1. Communication: oral presentation, report-writing, discussion  
2. ILT: using the Internet, CD Roms, word-processing software  
3. Working With Others: paired work, group research, small group presentations  
4. Improving Own Learning: self-evaluation, target-setting

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Use this box for important information - personal targets, deadlines, assessment etc
Planning your work

The activities in this guide will help you to cover all the key ideas in this unit. You may not have to do them all. You will discuss activities with your teacher to determine which can be done as a class, in groups, or individually. You will also discuss how your work is to be presented and assessed.

Resources

The following resources are suggestions only. Your teacher may wish to add to or amend the list. You will find that particularly useful resources are indicated in the margin, e.g. R1 means use resource 1.

Books:
R1 Taylor et al Sociology In Focus
R2 Kirby et al Sociology in Perspective
R3 Haralambos and Holborn Sociology: Themes and Perspectives
R4 O'Donnell A New Introduction to Sociology
R5 Bird Investigating Religion
R6 Selfe and Starbuck Religion
R7 Fulcher and Scott Sociology pp.317-350

Internet
R8 Hewett School http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/curric/soc/religion/rindex.htm
R9 Sociology Site http://www.hartland64.freeserve.co.uk/socindex.htm
R10 Sociology Central http://www.freespace.virgin.net/chris.livesey/home.htm
R11 ATSS http://www.atss.ac.uk
R12 Sociosite http://www.pscw.uva.nl/sociosite/TOPICS/index.html
R13 Socioweb http://www.socioweb.com/~markbl/socioweb/
R14 http://www.cti.itc.virginia.edu/~jkh8x/soc257/profiles.htm
R15 http://www.newreligiousmovements.org
R16 The Guardian http://www.guardian.co.uk Click on ‘Archive’
R17 The Source http://www.statistics.gov.uk

Extracts
R18 The Sociology of the New Religions
R19 Th New Christian Right

CD Rom
R20 The Guardian and Observer
R21 Social Trends

Video
R22 Waco
ACTIVITY ONE: The problems of defining religious organisations

Sociologists use a range of terms to try to define and classify religious groups and organisations. The aim of this activity is to try to define these terms and to examine the usefulness and difficulties involved in applying definitions to different groups.

Task One
In pairs or small groups investigate the terms below and produce a definition of each:
- Church
- Denomination
- Sect
- Cult

Task Two
Make a copy of the table below and compile the details required in each box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE</th>
<th>CHURCH</th>
<th>DENOMINATION</th>
<th>SECT</th>
<th>CULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>National (or international); very large membership; inclusive</td>
<td>National (or international); large membership</td>
<td>Local (or national); exclusive</td>
<td>Local; exclusive; small membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life span</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to wider society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to other religious groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude to members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of membership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social background of members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples (4 of each type)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACTIVITY TWO: New Religious Movements
The term 'sect' and 'cult' have tended to be replaced by the term 'new religious movements' by sociologists. Roy Wallis attempts to identify key similarities between new religious movements (NRMs). He recognises three different types of NRM:
1. World rejecting
2. World accommodating
3. World affirming

Task One:
Your task in this activity is to use Wallis’s typology and analyse how it can be used to enhance your understanding of NRMs.

In groups of four investigate one of these types of NRM.

Stage One
The first stage of your investigation is to:
1. Find out what the key characteristics are of the type of NRM you are studying
2. Identify one or two NRMs which fall within your typology

Stage Two
You should now prepare a short presentation on the main beliefs and attitudes of your chosen NRM

Your presentation should cover the following themes:
- What does the NRM believe about God
- Is there any belief in a Messiah or judgement day
- Are members expected to live in a separate community
- What are the NRMs beliefs about the role of the family

You will need to produce:
1. A word-processed handout
2. A summary OHT
3. Material for a wall display on NRMs

Remember to be creative and a quality job is needed!
Task Two: Evaluating Wallis's Typology

Read pages 471-472 in R3.

Produce a spider diagram showing:
1. Beckford’s assessment of the usefulness of Wallis’s typology
2. Stark and Bainbridge’s:
   - Reasons for rejecting typologies of religious organisations
   - Criteria for comparing religious organisations
   - Distinction between sects and cults
   - Sub-division of cults

Extension Task:
Two other areas of recent research for sociologists of religion have been the ‘New Christian Right’ and what have become known as ‘religions of ethnic protest’, such as the Nation of Islam.

Investigate these two areas by producing an information leaflet outlining their main beliefs.
ACTIVITY THREE: Explanations for the growth and development of NRMs

Margin Notes

This activity will give you the chance to look at a range of explanations for:
1. the growth of NRMs
2. the development of NRMs once they have become established.

Task One:
The aim of this task is to help you think about why some individuals join NRMs.

Stage One
On your own, jot down as many reasons why you think an individual may join an NRM.

Stage Two
In pairs, compare your lists and choose the best four reasons from them.

Stage Three
Each pair should form a group of four with another pair, compare lists, and choose the best four reasons. Share these with the rest of the class.

Task Two:
Explanations for the growth of NRMs focus on the following concepts:
- Marginality
- Relative deprivation

Which of the reasons you developed in task one fit into the categories above?

Task Two:
In groups of four imagine that you are a team of sociologists working closely with an organisation which helps parents come to terms with their son/daughter’s involvement in a NRM.
R3, R6, R8, R15, R18
R22
Margin Notes

I feel confident in the following areas of this unit
I need to improve my understanding of the following areas of this unit
I am going to improve my understanding of these areas by doing the following

2. The internal ideology of the sect and wider Society
   • Development of world-rejecting sects
   • Development of world-accommodating sects
   • Development of world-affirming sects

You will need to produce:
   • A word-processed information leaflet
   • Materials for a wall display

ACTIVITY FOUR: Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel confident in the following areas of this unit</th>
<th>I need to improve my understanding of the following areas of this unit</th>
<th>I am going to improve my understanding of these areas by doing the following</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>
## KEY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Skill</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving own learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Option A: RELIGION
Unit One
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS