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lier, during the stand-off with agents of the federal government, cult leader David Koresh had released twenty-one children, ranging in age from five months to twelve years. These freed children have been carefully studied by Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., a research professor of child psychiatry at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. His background in studying traumatized children and adults prepared him well to observe and conceptualize what he and his colleagues found among the Branch Davidian children.

Physically, psychologically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally, these children demonstrated that their development was far from normal. For the first few weeks, they showed physical signs of the mental stress they were feeling. Even at rest, their hearts raced at about 120 beats a minute, 30 to 50 percent faster than normal. "These kids were terrorized," Dr. Perry said. Their terror grew out of having been taught by Koresh that everyone outside the cult was evil and likely to hurt or kill them. The assault on the compound reinforced that teaching. Research shows that traumatic experiences actually change the physiology of the brain, resulting in mental or emotional problems.

Free of the cult's structure, the children organized themselves in a manner similar to the life they knew in the compound. Boys and girls formed separate groups, each with a leader who spoke for and made decisions for the other children in the group. Many children drew pictures of Koresh as God; others made doodlings that said "David is God."

The children had been taught what Dr. Perry called "malignant stories" about life, and they had no concept of families and family relationships as do children raised in the broader world. They referred to Koresh as their father because couples in the cult were routinely broken up, families were split, and Koresh made himself the father figure for the entire cult. Most of the children thought of their parents merely as adult members of the cult and treated siblings as friends or acquaintances. When Dr. Perry asked children to draw pictures of their family, they drew pictures of ran-

not related to him. Some children lacked even a vague idea of family.

Not only were their views of family distorted or undeveloped, so were their own self-images. When asked to draw a "picture of yourself," most children could manage to draw only a small, primitive figure, often in a corner of a full sheet of paper. Most importantly, Dr. Perry and his team of child trauma specialists noted that the children found it nearly impossible to think or act independently. They did everything as a group, even simple tasks such as deciding whether to eat a plain peanut butter sandwich or one with jelly. The boys' group leader and the girls' group leader made such decisions for their respective groups.

These children were not mentally retarded, but they were limited by the cult environment in which they were reared. They could not recognize a quarter but were able to recite long quotations from biblical scripture. Some were fascinated with indoor toilets that flushed, devices they had never seen until leaving the cult compound. Likewise, indoor running water was new to them.

The children raised in the Branch Davidian cult knew only the distorted, violent world created by David Koresh and the illusion of the enemy world in which he cast all outsiders. Dr. Perry's report on his work emphasizes the human rights issue for children in cults who suffer in many ways—from distorted self-images and distorted, unreal ideas about the outside world to the traumas of the cult life that actually change their brain functions.

### Children of Other Cults

Each cult regards itself as above the laws of the land, as a sovereign state with its own superior rules, and in many cults, children are treated as though they were expendable. The cult leader may not want to "waste" money on children. Or the leader may rationalize the group's practices so that parents no longer heed the practices they once knew were good for children. Often cult parents are led to regard children as creatures similar to wild ponies, who must be "broken."



## Physical Abuse

Extremely strict and punitive behavioral controls are exercised over children in many cults. Severe beatings to "break the will, beat out the sin, overcome the demons" are accepted means of handling children. In some cults, exorcisms are performed on children to drive out evil spirits, devils, and such. These can be brutal, terrifying events.

Discipline can be meted out without regard; at times, lives are taken by the punishment.

- Five-year-old Luke Stice died of a broken neck in a survivalist cult in rural Nebraska. Reportedly, his neck was broken either during a regular "discipline session" or deliberately, to force Luke's father to return because he had fled the cult leaving behind Luke and two other children. Before Luke died, the leader had made him spend most of his time in undershorts and forced him to wallow naked in mud and snow.

- Twelve-year-old John Yarbough allegedly was beaten to death in a Michigan cult, the House of Judah. Before his death, when John had been beaten several days in a row and could not eat or walk, the leader tried to pick him up by the ears with pliers. Another boy reported that he was burned on the face for punishment; one testified that another boy had hot coals put in his mouth and on his hands.

Moreover, child sexual abuse is promoted in certain cults, either as a reflection of the leader's deviant desires and a way of satisfying his fantasies or with the leader rationalizing the abuse as a way to recruit new members. Child-to-child sex, adult-to-child sex, and incest are encouraged in some cults.

## Inadequate Schooling

Many cults limit contact with nonmembers, creating an invisible wall around the group. As part of this practice, a number of cults decry school and formal education, although others do allow the

children to go to outside schools. These children, however, are often ridiculed by their classmates because of their strange clothes or odd habits.

Some cultic groups have members earn money by ferrying cars across the country for people who don't want to make the drive themselves, and children are taken along on these drives. Such children do not have regular schooling or the chance to make normal acquaintances with other children in their apartment buildings or neighborhoods. Always on the road, they don't have playmates. Eventually, when a parent leaves the cult and takes the child out also, the child is usually behind in school and doesn't know how to fit into a normal environment.

## Poor Health Care

Births and deaths among cult members may not be legally registered. Prenatal and delivery care are scorned or prohibited, with infant mortality and maternal mortality rates reaching staggering proportions in some groups.

Health care is generally lacking in cults. Depending on the philosophy of the cult, personal health care, including that of the children, may be nonexistent, denigrated, or overtly prohibited. Children often do not receive proper immunization shots or regular checkups. Cult members lack such normal medical care as dental work and braces, glasses, and orthopedic care.

Children have also participated in drug use in cults that promote such behavior. There are instances of children using marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and amphetamines.

Inadequate diets are the standard in many cults. In some groups, odd, imbalanced diets are used as punishment or to keep costs down. In general, food may be poor or improper for children. Small children in nomadic cults like the Garbage Eaters are carted about the countryside. They eat the same food their parents scrounge from the trash found behind restaurants and supermarkets.



As a result, children in cults are nearly always hungry—both for food and for nurturing, tenderness, and normal caring from the adults around them.

### Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Children in most cults lead restricted, isolated lives. Some become part of the cult when their parents join, some are born into the cult while their parents are members. Children born before their parents joined the cult often are treated even less kindly than their siblings born within the cult: the latter are “blessed” while the ones born earlier are typically regarded as “satanic,” lesser beings, or unenlightened. Still other children, as was the case for a number of children in the Peoples Temple, come into a cult because they are unwittingly assigned by welfare departments to a cult group for “care.” They are often considered nobody’s children.

Even the offspring of those cult members who remain in the regular world and work at normal jobs suffer. The children have little time with their parents and often must attend countless adult meetings that interfere with the children’s sleep and playtime and prevent them from ordinary mingling with other children. In many cults, either by intention or because the adults are functioning on a frenzied cult-controlled schedule, children are sometimes kept awake as long as seventy-two hours on end.

Other kinds of emotional and psychological abuses prevail as well.

- In the Democratic Workers Party, a political cult, the three-year-old daughter of two of the members was denounced in front of adult members and expelled, prohibited from ever coming again to one of the cult’s buildings.

- In 1992, an Indiana judge ordered four children removed from their mother who was a member of the Church Universal and Triumphant. Among other reasons, the judge stated that the children’s health and educational needs weren’t being met, and that “a clear threat to the children’s emotional health has been demon-

strated regarding the children’s presence in underground shelter drills or visits, and in the imposition upon them of a fatalistic approach to life and a fear of the end of the world.” The three oldest children had been kept out of public school for one and a half years and spent much of their time each day “decreeing,” which the judge described as “intense, repetitive chanting of prescribed prayers of a self-hypnotic nature, for extended periods.”

- In a custody battle related to a nameless religious sect in Gwinnette County, Georgia, members testified that they sing to their children and offer encouragement during beatings with wooden rods or refrigerator hoses and insisted that they didn’t strike in anger. According to child welfare investigators, one girl said “the only way she knew her daddy loved her was because he whipped her. He would tell her he loved her while he was doing it.”

Children coming out of such environments are very puzzled about who they are and whether they are good or not good.

Children in cults also witness the abuse of others. They see bizarre and violent exorcisms and punishments meted out to their parents and other children and adults. In some groups, it becomes common knowledge that the leader can decree the murder of members who leave the group, including children. Some children who witness such brutality and harshness identify with those doing it and imitate it, while others become terrorized and docile to avoid such a fate befalling them.

A former member of Moon’s Unification Church wrote, “It was very difficult to draw most of the children out of the consuming melancholy which engulfed them.” It is surely an understatement to say that cult life is almost never pleasant for the children.

### Role of the Cult Leader

The abuse of the Branch Davidian children is shocking but in fact similar to the many accounts I have heard both from children raised in other cults and from parents who have left cults. The anecdotal evidence has been accumulating for years and coalesces



into the following: submit, surrender, and obey is the theme and yardstick of successful adaptation in the cult.

Since the structure of a cult is authoritarian, children are socialized to that world, not the mainstream democratic society. Children see their parents submit and surrender to the dictates of the leader. Their parents and others simply carry out orders, doing what the guru or leader says.

Parents in cults are like offspring of the leader and are expected to be his obedient children. This was evident in one case in which I testified concerning a ten-year-old boy who was held by four grown men over the arm of a sofa and hit with a large wooden paddle 140 times, with the group calling out the count. The boy's mother stood by and watched. The cult leader was in a nearby building directing the beating over the phone. The leader of a cult in the northeastern United States had all adults carry large wooden cooking ladles and strike any child who deviated from group rules until the child "surrendered."

A cult is a mirror of what is inside the cult leader. He has no restraints on him. He can make his fantasies and desires come alive in the world he creates around him. He can lead people to do his bidding. He can make the surrounding world really *his* world. What most cult leaders achieve is akin to the fantasies of a child at play, creating a world with toys and utensils. In that play world, the child feels omnipotent and creates a realm of his own for a few minutes or for a few hours. He moves the toy dolls about. They do his bidding. They speak his words back to him. He punishes them any way he wants. He is all-powerful and makes his fantasy come alive. When I see the sand tables and the collections of toys some child therapists have in their offices, I think that a cult leader must look about and place people in his created world much as the child creates on the sand table a world that reflects his or her desires and fantasies. The difference is that the cult leader has actual humans doing his bidding as he makes a world around him that springs from inside his own head.

The cult leader's idiosyncratic notions permeate the system he puts into operation. There is no feedback. No criticism is allowed. When he finally gets his followers to be sufficiently obedient, he can wield unlimited power and get his followers to carry out whatever acts he directs. He becomes the most powerful director one can imagine. Not merely a director of toys and actors, but a director of real lives in real acts based on his desires and fantasies. As the child moves toys about an imagined landscape, the cult leader moves, directs, chastises—even kills—those who disobey.

### Role of Cult Parents

Usually, cults do not respect the parental role. As I have described, parents are just intermediaries who see that the children obey the will of the leader. Even in many Bible-based cults, respect for parents is not extolled as might be expected. Rather, the leader positions himself as the gatekeeper between parents and their God.

Parents must get their children to submit to them and to the dictates of the leader in order to prove that they themselves are submitting to the leader, who becomes the sole person to be given high respect, obedience, veneration. There may be high-level functionaries in the cult who must also be obeyed, but they are really just tools of the leader also. Moreover, in many cultic groups, especially the Bible-based and psychotherapy cults, parents' dedication is measured by their willingness to abuse their children at the leader's request. Parents are taught that the leader is their only avenue to enlightenment, God, mental health, or political righteousness, and that unless their children submit to them, and they to the leader, they will be cut off from the promised result.

"We were taught that we must not be attached to our own children," wrote a mother describing her three years in the Unification Church. "We were also taught that these children came from satanic relationships and that although it was horrible to have 'attachments' to any other person, it was most terrible to be



'attached' to our own children." She describes "tremendous guilt for even considering the welfare of the children."

In some cults, parents who give even the slightest attention or thought to their children may well be verbally attacked and chastised in other ways for "spoiling their children." But as this same mother writes, "How could you spoil a child who was in a situation of almost total emotional deprivation, a child who never knew from one day to the next whether she would even see her mother, a child who was, with no apparent consistency and depending upon who was caring for her at the moment, disciplined either not at all or with great severity?"

Poignant tales about children in cults also come from grandparents. One grandmother visited her relatives in a life-style cult that now has offshoots around the world and that has been the subject of publicized reports of abuses and other cultlike behavior, such as separating children from their parents. While the grandmother was visiting, she asked her grandchild if there was a room where the children could read books and play. The child appeared not to know the answer and replied, "I must get a stupid one. Ask the stupid ones"—meaning the parents.

Another set of grandparents told me that David Koresh had taught the small children to refer to their parents as "dogs." The grandparents in both instances felt that the children did not grasp the extent of derision and bizarreness inherent in calling their parents stupid ones or dogs.

While parents may be in the same locale as their children, cult duties and meetings occupy so much of their time that they get little personal time with their own children. Moreover, anger and frustration is engendered in the parents by the cult leader's actions, but because they dare not express this anger toward him, when they do see their children they often act out their anger on their children instead.

When one parent leaves the cult and the other remains, the absent parent is called satanic or other derogatory names, and the child is discouraged from having any relationship with that parent.

When children do see their noncult parent, they may feel extremely uncomfortable and fear punishment or shunning upon returning to the cult environment. This also causes undue stress for children.

Because cult parents in essence turn over the custody of their children to a third party, so that the leader or the group becomes the actual custodian of the children, children in cults may also be assigned to live with adults other than their parents or may be sent to other states or other countries to cult-run facilities. Some cults openly proclaim that the family must be destroyed, that children must be reared by the group, with no particular ties to their parents. Often, children are taught to hate grandparents and other relatives not in the cult.

One example of this thinking was seen in the Sullivanians, a psychotherapy-political cult begun by Saul Newton, a longtime leftist who said he fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. He led members to believe that mothers unconsciously hated their children and that the nuclear family is the root of all evil. In the guise of eliminating these destructive forces, Newton allegedly took complete control of procreation within the group and selected pairs of followers to mate. Children were not to have special relationships with their parents, and adult Sullivanians were not to talk with their own parents.

The thought-reform milieu and totalist thinking found in cultic groups play a major role in influencing parents to stand by while their children and others are severely abused, sometimes even killed before their eyes. It appears that several factors enter into these situations.

There is an interplay between the ideology of the group and the authoritarian role of the leader that has a particular impact on parents' thinking and behavior. The authoritarian ideologue, through his control of the social system and social environment, is able to gain compliance and obedience from the parents. The shared ideology of the group is a set of emotionally charged convictions about mankind and its relationship to the world. Once



parents have made overt commitments to follow the ideology of a particular leader, then social psychology tells us that their open declaration solidifies and increases the likelihood that they will follow through on whatever behavior is expected of them. Certain behavior may be in total opposition to what they previously subscribed to—not to mention morally reprehensible. But like other cult members, cult parents assume pseudopersonalities, brought on by the cult's training and thought-reform processes. This alteration in the way they think allows them to perform as desired by their cult leader.

### What Children Learn in Cults

Children see no modeling of compassion, forgiveness, kindness, or warmth in cults. Since all members are expected to idolize the leader, so are the children. Children either identify with the leader's power and dominance or capitulate and become passive, dependent, obedient, and often emotionally subdued and flattened.

Children adopt the cult's right-wrong, good-bad, sinner-saint starkly polarized value system. They are taught that a divided world exists—"we" are inside; "they" are outside. We are right, they are wrong. We are good, they are bad. In this us-against-them world, children (like the rest of the members) are taught to feel paranoid about nonmembers and the outside society.

Cult children have no opportunity to observe the compromising, negotiating, and meeting on middle ground demonstrated in ordinary families. They do not see people resolving disputes or adjusting to the wants and desires of others, the trade-offs that are so central to learning how to play, work, and live in a family or in groups that have been socialized in democratic ways.

Cult children do not see adults having input in decision making or making ideas and plans together. Instead, they witness and are taught that critical, evaluative thinking; new ideas; and independent ideas get people in trouble. From this, they learn simply to obey.

In many cults, normal aggressiveness, liveliness, and assertiveness in children are labeled as sinful or as signs of demons, and often warrant severe punishment and suppression. Thus like the parents, children learn to be dependent on the leader and his system. As a result, anxious-dependent personality traits can be built into cult children's developing character.

### After the Cult

As cults vary in their demands, the help given to children coming out of cults must be tailored to fit the varying needs of each child. For example, acting out roles they learned from adults in their cult. Some children emerge flat, melancholic, and phobic, whereas those raised in militant, confrontational groups may be more defiant and assertive. They later appear to be small aggressive caricatures of the demeanor built into the group's culture by the leader.

Adults and older teenagers who join cults take with them a personality that is already developed. The cult pseudopersonality is imposed on an existing personality and some knowledge of how the world works. When these persons leave the cult, they can draw on both their former personality and their memories of precult days. They can begin to integrate their precult, cult, and postcult experiences. Unfortunately, children raised in cults don't have that earlier personality or knowledge of the world to build upon when they come out of the cult.

Compared to other children, many children raised in isolated cults emerge with restricted learning, fewer skills, and below-average socialization. Because cult children are told that the cult's people are chosen, elite, and superior, afterward it can be difficult for them to form opinions, express themselves, and sort out conflicts between cult beliefs and new postcult experiences. Certain cults teach racial, religious, or political intolerance, which the children bring with them into the outside world.

Thus children raised in some cults will have learned ideas and practices that the broader society may regard as bizarre, bigoted,



and antisocial, and casually expressing these ideas after leaving the cult can lead the child to be ostracized. This is particularly likely to be the case for children leaving cults that promote free sex or sexual contact between adults and children. For example, children who openly masturbate at school or when visiting other children because masturbation was an accepted practice in the cult become instant pariahs and are regarded as "monsters" by teachers and other parents.

Many cults teach children that lying to or deceiving nonmembers is the correct thing to do. The tenet that outsiders are lesser beings is the cults' justification for such actions. Children in cults also learn a kind of groupthink and a language, or jargon, that have to be unlearned upon leaving the group if the children are to speak with the rest of the world.

As we have seen, cult leaders establish spy networks so that the leader can claim he omnipotently knows all about everyone, reads minds, and perceives things that others cannot, when in fact the information is provided by members' tattling, reporting, and spying on one another. Children so taught in cults become school "rat finks" and talebearers when they carry out such reporting in the outside world.

Teenagers emerging from certain cults, especially those with extremely controlled environments, tend to act out: they sample sex, drugs, alcohol, fast cars, fast living, total rebellion, and rule breaking. They are often at high risk for sexual diseases, AIDS, and pregnancy, and are often preyed upon by delinquent and criminal youths.

Some teenagers have seen their parents put down so often that they absorb that attitude and continue to express it toward their parents when the family is no longer in the cult. These teenagers have identified with the cult leader's harsh attitudes toward others.

Many cults are anticareer and induce members to accept low-level jobs in order to keep members available to work for the leader. Higher education, or sometimes any education, is devalued. Afterward, it's difficult for teenagers to fathom what to do—Go to

school? Get a job? Get into an apprenticeship program? Personal talents, skills, and interests have probably never been recognized or developed.

## Children Are Survivors

In the past decade, we have seen more and more children coming out of cults. They either escaped on their own in their teen years or left with the rest of their families. These children are in great need of support and comfort, for they face extraordinary adjustment problems.

Initially it is helpful if the parents of these youngsters go to the schools, the pastors, and other available counseling facilities and help the professionals in those environments and agencies understand cults and the particular difficulties of children who were raised in a cult.

Because cult children are taught to dislike people who aren't in the group, it can be beneficial to help them reconnect with grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and other family members. This will lessen the impact of cult thinking and broaden their potential support network.

Because many cults have skeptical or negligent attitudes about health care and education, it is vital for children coming out of cults to get a thorough medical examination and an objective evaluation of their educational level.

Often these children will need instant instruction that some attitudes learned while in the cult just do not go over well in the outside world. Many children coming out of cults are ill-trained in the general social skills that other children learn in school and through their family and friends. These children's prejudices, biases, and tendencies toward severe judgmentalism ingrained by the cult's philosophy must be countered. Learning to cope and function within a diverse, egalitarian, democratic society will be a challenge for these youngsters. This is especially true for those born or raised in a cult, who have no life experience outside the cult and no



precult personality, values, or belief system. These children must be helped to shed their elitist views, their dogmatic and rigid thinking, and their self-blaming and hypercritical attitudes.

Although they face enormous tasks, and sometimes face them alone, children coming out of cults do survive, become healthy and happy, and lead productive lives, proving once again the resilience of the young. The story of "Ethel" is a case in point—and an inspiration to us all.

Ethel was raised in a West Coast life-style cult which her parents joined in the late 1960s after having lived in two hippie communes. They had met a woman who owned a huge spread of land with many small cottages on it and who had started a highly controlled communal living group that evolved into a cult. The woman recruited each person or couple herself from among those who had already adopted alternative life-styles. She sold them the idea that they could "return to the land" by coming to live communally on her property and, with her, creating a new order that supplanted the family and society as we know it.

The woman determined who would have children and when and directed child rearing, even though she had no children of her own and had never married. She convinced them, much as the Sullivanian group had convinced its members, that families, especially parents, were the root of all human suffering and that communal rearing would alleviate this evil. The followers broke contact with their families, and children raised in the group were permitted only the most infrequent and supervised contact with grandparents. Some grandparents never passed the leader's inspection and were not allowed to see the children anywhere but on the property.

Luckily, over the years, Ethel had been permitted some time with her paternal grandmother, who understood how

impossible it was to try to wean her son and his wife and child away from the cult leader and so was content to keep the tie with the granddaughter alive.

Anyone who went off the property, even briefly, was interrogated by the leader in front of the whole group, for there were to be no secrets among them. Even people who went on food-buying trips to town had to "share their experiences." Ethel said later that, somehow, she caught on early that whenever she had been off the property with her grandmother she should report what the leader wanted to hear, not what she and her grandmother really did and talked about. So she reported that the grandmother admired the leader and remarked what good care the group took of her son and his little family. Ethel never varied these positive reports and would also relate details of her grandmother's colds, the state of her headaches, and such trivia.

The few cult children that there were went to public schools in the area but were not to talk in detail to teachers or classmates about their lives. They were not permitted to visit other children or participate in after-school events. Someone from the cult would pick up the children and bring them home.

All through high school, Ethel hid from the cult that she had been befriended by a school advisor, with whom she spoke freely. The entire surrounding community knew about the cult and felt sorry for the children and members, but could do nothing to help, for they soon learned that the children got in trouble if asked to play or do other normal activities after school. Ethel said that without that one advisor and her grandmother, she would still be back on the land, subservient to the leader and docile like her parents.

Even now Ethel describes how hopeless she felt all her young life as she watched her parents always give in to the leader. In spite of preaching avant-garde ideas, the leader was



very old-fashioned in her practices: for example, girls were taught to be subservient to boys and men, and women had to be ultrafeminine and obedient, especially to the leader.

Ethel, a high-energy, athletic young woman with a high IQ, wanted to go to college, and she was the first child permitted to get an education beyond high school; however, the cult wouldn't pay anything toward Ethel's college education as it was against the "plan." The leader allowed Ethel to go only because she promised to return and because she asked her grandmother for help. With some money from her grandmother, Ethel began college and worked hard at jobs and school.

As soon as she got to college, though, she went to the counseling service and signed up for help. She knew she had to have someone help her make decisions because she had never made any herself other than deciding to hide her special relationships and knowing that she *had* to get out and go to college. She said she didn't know how to "think" about everyday life. She could think about books, do schoolwork, anything someone else directed, but never having had any role models for decision making, she felt desperate about her lack of knowledge about how to live on the outside.

I have had contact with Ethel episodically during the past two years. She is now twenty-two years old, just graduated from a state college, and is working far from the cult. She has found another counselor who helps her think through decisions and make specific plans about buying clothing and a car and about the concrete details of living an ordinary family would have taught her. She sees her parents only during specially arranged events, as the leader wants her back. Ethel wants to get her parents away from the group some day but cannot even hint at this idea with them now. Ethel's greatest concern is that her parents are hopelessly bound to the cult leader and will only be freed when the woman dies. She says, "They are even more ill equipped for life than I am now,"

and she plans never to return to them as long as they are "on the land."



Many children reared in cults are truly victims who are especially alone and without advocates. They may be living in the United States where daily comforts, education, and medical care are among the best in the world, but within the cult these benefits are rarely available to them. Those who are abused or neglected are even more hidden from the help of general society than the ordinary abused or neglected child because of the secrecy and tight boundaries many cults place on their members.

Compounding this isolation, cult children are usually not protected by their own parents, for the cult leader dominates and parents are powerless. The fates of both parents and children are determined by the whims and philosophy of the leader. I have not yet heard of any cult leader who has exuded care, warmth, and concern for the children in his group.

Despite such odds, children like Ethel leave cults and survive. They may have seen and lived through the worst, yet they carry on to be the best. Our responsibility is to give them support, love, and understanding.