Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ L&C Cult Research

Ms. Tozzi

Carefully examine the definition of cult. Next, for three organizations, prove whether or not the group is a cult. Use specific examples in your work.You may want to consider the following groups for subjects of your work: Scientologists, Heaven’s Gate, Branch Davidians, Peoples Temple Agricultural Project (Jonestown).

**What Makes It a Cult?**

The answer depends on how you define the word and to whom you are talking. For purposes of liberal religious examination, this is our working definition of a cult:

A religion or sect, generally considered to be extremist or false, under the guidance of an authoritarian, charismatic leader for whom members exhibit fixed, even religious, veneration.

1. Groups that meet this definition tend to have an escalating negative impact on the lives of followers. These groups exhibit many common characteristics:
2. One charismatic leader is the group's sole authority on truth; only this leader decides, or has the right to approve, all policies and practices.
3. Members are zealous, protective, and unquestioningly committed to the leader.
4. Members regard the leader's beliefs and practices as truth and law; the leader affirms and enforces this idea.
5. Questioning, doubt, and dissent are discouraged or punished.
6. The group's leadership dictates how members should think, act, and feel. Members require the leader's permission to change jobs, date, marry, or have children. The leader tells members where they can live and how to teach and discipline their children.
7. The group uses public humiliation or punishment, debilitating work, sleep deprivation, or other practices to create group-think and to suppress individualism and doubt.
8. Criticism or jokes about the leader or group are taken very seriously and likely punished.
9. The group is elitist, claiming special status for itself, its leaders, and its members.
10. The leader and members maintain theirs is the only path to truth and salvation.

Name Of Organization:

Evidence [Include the numbers from the criteria list.]:

Conclusion:

Sources: [at least 2]

Which source was the most helpful? Why?

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