

New Religious Movements: Wallis

World rejecting movements: similar to sects e.g. The Moonies.

They are critical of mainstream society and conflict with the State – they have their own rules and community, require total commitment, and expect their members to make major lifestyle changes. They are led by a charismatic individual who ‘manipulates’ members to believing in their teachings. It is extremely difficult to leave these movements.

World affirming movements: similar to cults, e.g. transcendental meditation.

They offer self-help and therapy to ‘unlock spiritual power within’. They search for a wide membership and do not expect a high-level of commitment.

World accommodating movements: similar to denominations, e.g. Pentecostalism.

They evolve from traditional religions and try to rediscover spiritual purity, that religions may have lost. Also, they allow people to maintain existing lifestyles and do not expect total commitment.

Weber argued that the growth of NRMs may be due to uncertainties in society where marginalisation is be a problem – ‘theodicy of deprivation’. Where individuals suffer from relative deprivation (Glock and Stark) or where social change and/or anomie has occurred. Certain factors, such as thesis, will have a greater appeal to some.

Some religious movements attract people who search for social change, e.g. some may turn away from the more traditional methods of religious practice as they may not be answering their questions nor relevant in a modern society.

Melton disagreed with the opinions above and argued that rapid growth in the USA in the 1950s was a period of stability and certainty. Therefore, there was not a search for alternative methods of religious activity.

New Age Movements: appeal to those who have turned away from traditional religions and wish to find salvation within themselves and a way of finding a sense of identity.

Often appealing to middle-class people with ‘expressive professions’ along with a more technical postmodern society, there is a diversity of choices within NAMs where individuals can ‘pick and mix’ from all kinds to create their own identity.

NAMs are similar to cults and **Wallis’** world-affirming movements as they are not linked to any formal organisation but sometimes linked to a culture, e.g. feng shui.

Heelas believes that NAMs are about ‘self-spirituality’ and the search for the inner self.

Bruce believes that there are three themes to NAMs: new science (that rejects claims of traditional science); new ecology (that is concerned with the environment); new psychology (that sees the self as sacred).

Regarding gender, NAMs seem to attract women more than men.

NAMs seem to attract members of the middle-classes rather than the working-classes.

**Don’t forget criticism
– this is important for the exam!**