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DOC NO	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
1	LETTER	TO ELIZABETH DOLE	3	8/12/1981	B6

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◆ THREE ◆

The Alamo Christian Foundation

GREG WILSON graduated from UCLA in 1970, became a musician, traveled widely, and played music in a group for about three years. "During that time I began to go on a kind of spiritual search, and it took me through some pretty strange experiences. I dabbled in Eastern philosophies and religions, but nothing satisfied me to any real degree. I was restless and never really had a home during that period of time. I had no close friends except for the people I played music with in the group.

"One time in Monterey I had an experience in which God rattled my cage, and I started reading the Bible for the first time in my life. Something in it really spoke to me more than anything else I had ever read. I embarked on a search to find someone who could show me a way of living — the way I thought Christ was telling me to live in the Bible. I left the musical group, and my search was getting desperate. I saw imperfection in the lives of everyone I met who claimed to be a Christian. I thought Christ was saying that there was a way to be perfect, and I wasn't finding anybody who was living that kind of life.

"I ended up in Santa Monica and started drinking to console myself, to drown my sorrows, because I sensed no direction at all in my life. I remember one morning walking around aimlessly near the Santa Monica pier where I encountered some young people passing out gospel tracts. I took one of their tracts and was really turned off by it. I read it over, and it just seemed like trash to me. And yet I was curious about the young

people who were so aggressively passing out the gospel tracts to anybody who would take them. Eventually a couple of them approached me and gave me a real hellfire and brimstone message that if I didn't get right with God, I would spend all eternity in hell. I remember their directness and the really powerful way they witnessed to me. They looked me in the eye and pulled out the heavy-duty fear Scriptures in the Bible. They had quite an impact on me, and then they told me that they had a service at a church in Saugus. They said that a bus would be leaving that evening for Saugus and that they would provide transportation back. About ten minutes later, as I was walking back to my house, I got witnessed to by several others in the group who gave me the same powerful, confident, bold treatment.

"Back at the house, I reread the tract I had been given and noticed that it was distributed by an organization called, The Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation. I felt the tract, which contained Tony's life story, was absurd. Yet I was so down on the life I was leading that I thought to myself, *Gosh, what am I going to do tonight?* It was Friday night, and I probably would sit around and play some music with the guy I was staying with, and end up getting drunk and wake up the next morning with no better prospects in sight. So I concluded, *You've got nothing to lose — you'll even get a free dinner there.* I didn't have much money at the time, so even that was pretty appealing.

"I was really turned off to churches up to that point in my life, and I hadn't attended church in a long time. I was curious to see what all these young kids were so fired up about, and so I decided at five that afternoon that I would go and check out the place. While on my way to the appointed place, I was really taken aback when this red, white, and blue bus pulled up. It had the word HEAVEN written across the front of it and TONY AND SUSAN ALAMO CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION on the side. I boarded it. It seemed funny at the time that no one really talked to me. Some people were reading; few were talking to each other."

AFTER THE long trip to Saugus, the bus brought Greg to what looked like an old, converted restaurant. The first thing that

struck him was that there was no nonsense going on: everyone seemed to have a sense of direction, and no one was sitting idle. Many people were sitting at tables reading their Bibles, and strange noises were coming from a nearby room. Greg later learned that this was the prayer room and that the people were speaking in tongues before the service started.

"When the service finally got started, it began with loud, gospel rock music. Being a musician, it really spoke to me. In fact, I can remember kind of thinking to myself at the time, *I wonder if the Lord is bringing me here because of my musical ability. Perhaps He still wants to use my musical talents, but He wants to use it now for His purposes instead of the way I had been using it in the past.*

"Following the music, a number of people went up to the front and gave their testimony. People told how they had been saved and brought to the house of the living God (the Alamo Foundation). At the end of the service, an altar call was given and they asked those who were unsaved to come forward and repeat the sinner's prayer. I remember feeling really convicted and really confused. One of the brothers came up to me and grabbed me by the wrist and said, 'Come on. You have to come up here and get saved. The Lord's calling you, and you'll never know if He will be calling you again. Right now is your time. Don't take a chance on God turning His back on you.' So I went up and fell on my knees and said a sinner's prayer of repentance.

"It was really an emotional experience. I can remember crying. I can remember a feeling of great relief, a feeling of catharsis. When I stood up, a group of three or four brothers was standing around me and one of them said: 'It's really wonderful now that you're saved, but that's not enough. Now that you're saved, God requires of you that you get baptized in the Holy Spirit.' We all went into the prayer room. . . .

"I sat down on a sofa, and about four or five of the brothers formed a half-circle around me, and we began to chant, 'Praise you, thank you, Jesus; praise you, Jesus; thank you, Jesus' over and over again. We did this for so long that I lost all track of time. I began to hallucinate; I didn't know where I was. Everyone was chanting in unison, and in a kind of rhythmic monoto-

nous tone. Pretty soon I knew that what was coming out of my mouth was not 'Thank you, Jesus; praise you, Jesus.' My tongue was thick and my mouth became dry, and at some point in time everybody thought I was speaking in other tongues. They were in a frenzy, praising God and shouting, 'Hallelujah!' I really didn't know what was happening. I was in a different state of mind than I had ever experienced before, and I certainly had had no prior exposure to what was called the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

"After we left the prayer room, there was never a moment when I was all by myself. There were at least three or four brothers around me all the time, asking me questions, telling me certain things, quoting Scripture, and saying, 'Now that God has saved you, and He has brought you into His house, He wants you to stay here. This is where He has called you in these end times.' When we sat down to dinner, the pressure was being put on me to make a clear decision as to whether I wanted to stay and walk with God or whether I wanted to turn my back on Him by leaving. I was told that since He had saved me from the horrible pit that I had been in, if I were to go back into the world I would run the risk of being turned over to a reprobate mind or turning into a homosexual or becoming insane. The group pressure was powerful. When one of them was at a loss for words, there was another ready with some kind of a Scripture, like, 'Abide in the calling wherein ye are called.' That verse was used to impress upon me the fact that God had called me to Foundation. That was where I was supposed to live, now that I was saved, and I was not supposed to go back into the world."

FOR TWO months prior to this experience, Greg had been searching for God. He had wanted to give his life to God. "I had given up my whole life of music, the group, playing clubs, making records. I was sincere in my desire to really want to live a life that was right, and to live a Christian life. So I said to myself, *Well, if this is true, if this is really where I have been called, sure, I want to live this new life.* I remembered that my car and all the rest of my belongings were still in Santa Monica. So I told them that I was going to go to Santa Monica and get my

car and my clothes and go down to Mission Viejo and see my parents and tell them what I'd decided to do. Then I would come back to the Foundation and move in."

But Greg's new friends rebuffed the idea: "What makes you think you are strong enough now to go back out there alone and be able to withstand the devil? He's really going to come at you now that you're saved. What makes you think that you're strong enough to withstand him out there?"

Greg reports, "I was also told that my parents would now be my worst enemies. They quoted Scripture verses about the division between father and son and mother and daughter. I stayed up that first night arguing with several of the brothers, until I finally collapsed out of exhaustion at two or three o'clock in the morning. I kept telling them, 'I'm not sixteen years old! All I want to do is go and pick up my car and my things, say hi to my parents and then I'll be right back here.' But they would keep quoting Scripture in response to everything I said: 'Look, this is the Word of God. You're not going to turn your back on God's Word, are you?'

"When I woke up the next morning, there were two or three brothers praying nearby with their Bibles open. I didn't feel like arguing any longer, so I finally agreed to allow three members of the Foundation to go with me to Santa Monica to pick up my car and my personal belongings. I told my former roommate that I had gotten saved and that I was moving into the Alamo Foundation. We returned to Saugus (without visiting my parents) and I still had a lot of doubts about my decision. I even remember thinking, 'Maybe I've been brought up here to shine some light into this weird place.' My doubts remained during the first week at the Foundation, but I was determined to see this thing through and to discover if God had really called me to this particular place, for whatever reason. I definitely wanted to do whatever He wanted me to do."

At the Foundation, new converts are called "baby Christians" and are placed under the constant, watchful eyes of "older brothers and sisters in the Lord." From these "older Christians" the new members learned that they must be "100 percent for God" and that if they leave the Foundation, they will lose their salvation. To follow God and be His disciples, the

new recruits are warned that they must forsake mother and father because "Jesus demands all — anything less is not enough."

Greg soon discovered that his parents were lumped with Satan. "They really kept pounding this thing about my parents: 'Now watch out, because your parents are going to come here and they're going to try to get you out of here. That's how the devil is going to attack you. We've seen it time and time again. That's how the devil really comes at young Christians.' I couldn't picture my parents ever making a demand on me like that. But sure enough, about a week after I had been up there, my parents came to visit me after learning from my sister where I was.

"After my parents arrived, I wasn't allowed to be alone with them. We were told that you were never allowed to be alone because that was unscriptural. Even Christ sent His disciples out in two's; He never allowed them to go out one by one, because the devil could pick them off if they were alone. I never really talked to my parents that night. Any questions they asked were fielded by one of the older brothers. . . .

"When they were talking to my parents, an incredible feeling was going through me: 'They're right. These people are absolutely right. I can see that my parents are trying to get me out of here. The devil is using my parents. I can really see it. It happened just like they said. They had been saying it this whole week and here it is.' My parents were astonished. I remember my father saying, 'You mean to tell me, you can't even come out with us and go have a cup of coffee with us down at Newhall? What is this?' And I was thinking to myself, Wow, they really are trying to get me out of here. That night was really the clincher for me. I really bought the whole program after that."

TONY AND Susan Alamo began preaching to the hippies on the Hollywood Boulevard in the late sixties. The details of their lives up to then are hazy. Susan claims to have had a dramatic Christian experience as a young child. Later she left a brief career in show business to return to full-time evangelism. She met Tony at a Bible class she was teaching, and they were soon

married. Tony was raised in a Jewish home and later emerged, according to his own claim, a successful Hollywood PR man and record promoter.

The Alamos assert that the Jesus movement began in Hollywood when they started handing out tracts and witnessing to youthful hippies and drug addicts. In 1970 the Alamos moved to the outskirts of Saugus, California, where they purchased a rambling old restaurant in Mint Canyon. Soon thereafter they acquired nearby acreage for dormitories. In the early days, the finances apparently were derived primarily from donations and a few small, local Foundation-operated businesses, including a gas station. Discarded food from bakeries and supermarkets provided the mainstay for meals.

The organization quickly grew to the point where hundreds of young converts crowded the nightly revival meetings and the overflowing dormitories. The Alamos' obvious success was also evidenced by a Cadillac Fleetwood with personalized license plates and a large house, situated on five prime acres and allegedly built with the "donated" labor of the Foundation faithful. An architectural student who had dropped out of college to join the Foundation assisted with the plans and supervised most of the construction. An ex-member of the Foundation reported that he had worked on the house twenty hours a day for over a month.

In 1975 the Alamo enterprise was expanded to include an additional church and several small businesses in the tiny town of Dyer, Arkansas. It was rumored that Tony and Susan had left California because of legal problems. This was denied by Tony, who claimed that the move had been made because of his wife's deteriorating health. He said she was suffering from terminal cancer. The day-to-day operation of the Saugus facility has been left to trusted lieutenants and spiritual "overseers." Foundation members are told to "contend" for Susie's healing. She is on a special diet and has reportedly lived seven years beyond her doctors' prediction. As one member put it, "The Lord has kept her. We are claiming her healing in the name of Jesus. Satan hates her and wishes to destroy her. She's so close to God; she's a powerhouse for Jesus. We're praying for Susie and the Lord to bind the devil."

It didn't take long for Greg to discover that the brothers and sisters at the Alamo Foundation pray a great deal. "We were taught to always be in prayer because the Bible teaches you to pray in season and out of season. We were taught to wake up in the morning praising and thanking God. One of the older brothers had awakened me in the morning by shaking me and saying, 'Wake up, Greg; praise you, Jesus; thank you, Jesus.' You are required to be on your feet within one minute praising and thanking God. You would have to wake up saying aloud, 'Praise you, Jesus; thank you, Jesus.' You were taught to repeat that phrase either in your mind or out loud as much as you could all day long.

"I soon became a real zealot. I was praying for four or five hours a day and would read the Bible every chance I had. I began to move out of the 'baby Christian' stage and was given new responsibilities and duties. Still, I was never allowed to be alone. There were times when I had doubts. But whenever that happened and I began to ask questions, there would be four or five brothers right there on the spot. They would literally form a circle around you, and if one of them couldn't answer a question, certainly one of the others would. They would go through their Bibles and point out how I was wrong. 'You're going against God. You are really running the risk of being turned over to a reprobate mind.' I conformed and eventually worked my way up to being an overseer.

"During the last five months of my stay at the Foundation, I was shipped out weekly to the fields around Bakersfield to do farm labor work. The experience of working in the fields was incredible. The living conditions were horrible. At one point, for about a month and a half we lived in a house near Shafter while we were picking fruit. It was a four-room house and anywhere from eighty to one hundred of us lived there all week long. It had hardwood floors, wooden walls with no insulation, no furniture, and no heating. This was in November and December in the San Joaquin Valley, where it gets cold and damp. . . .

"I can remember mice running over the floor and through the sleeping bags at night. I can remember sometimes feeling so pent up inside because when you're crowded like that, the

pressure inside you builds up so that you feel like screaming at the top of your lungs.

"We were led to believe that all these discomforts were the trials and tribulations that we were going through to make us strong. This was the Lord's chastening to get His people ready for the horrible time of tribulation that was coming upon the earth. We were told, 'Count it all joy — crucify the flesh.' That's when you started praying, 'Thank you, Jesus; praise you, Jesus. Oh, Lord, help me to be thankful for this.' And meanwhile you were just going out of your mind. It was just horrible.

"There were a lot of health problems at the Foundation in Saugus. People's teeth were literally rotting and falling out in some cases. We had a lot of intestinal troubles, probably because of the way in which the food was obtained. The Alamo Foundation had various grocery stores in the L.A. area from which they would get old produce and old dairy products, dated food that had been removed from the grocery shelves and disposed of. We'd spend hours in the kitchen trying to sort out the good from the bad, and a lot of the bad got through. Everyone experienced what we affectionately termed the RGB's (rot gut burps). Now I had lived in some pretty raunchy conditions while I traveled around as a musician, and never had I experienced anything like that. . . .

"When we were doing farm labor work, we worked just like madmen. The *braceros* were amazed and used to gawk at us while we were working. We wouldn't even stop for a drink of water because we were led to believe that every orange that we picked was another soul that was going to be saved through our ministry. That's why I lost so much weight (forty pounds), and all the other people did too. We worked like crazy and turned over all of our money to the Foundation. During the last three or four months I was there, I never even saw a paycheck. And we made good money. I guess I made about \$3,000 while working on the farms. We just turned it all over to the older brothers, and they in turn handed it over to Tony and Susan, I guess. There were hundreds of us working in the fields at that time, so they were taking in an awful lot of money. I can remember making well over \$200 picking olives. The girls worked too, pruning grapevines, tying vines. There were always jobs to do."

FEW PEOPLE, inside or outside the Foundation, have specific information regarding its finances. The Alamos are very guarded in their statements regarding membership and income. The Alamos stress that much of the income for their tax-exempt organization is derived from donations. A weekly thirty-minute telecast aired by a number of independent TV stations has been another source of funds in recent years.

Tony and Susan apparently do not attempt to hide their personal prosperity. Greg was very much aware of their affluent life style. "Every time I saw them, they were dressed to the teeth. Tony would have a leather jacket on, slacks and real expensive shoes and jewelry. Susan dresses like the queen — super-expensive dresses. Never did I see her without her hair completely done up. They drive brand new Lincoln Continentals. Not a new Chevrolet, or a new Ford — black Lincoln Continentals with ALAMO on the license plates."

Tony and Susan's followers don't seem to mind the dual standard of living — one for the leaders, and an entirely different one for the rank-and-file. Tony and Susan are their "spiritual parents," their "pastors in the Lord," who are due "double honor." Greg came to believe that the Alamos' affluence was God's reward for their long years of devoted service. "They had been in it for so long that they were not in danger of losing their souls to the temptations of the flesh. God was giving them their just deserts for hanging in there that long. We were told that if we were faithful, God would give us these things too. But for the present, we had to crucify our flesh."

Crucifying the flesh meant, among other things, a weekly shower after many days of arduous agricultural labor in the fields. "Once a week we would be brought back to Saugus for our Sunday service. If we were lucky, it was our one chance during the week to get a shower. We had one shower for about 200 males at what was called Saugus No. 2 on Sierra Highway. To get a shower you would wake yourself up at three or four o'clock in the morning. There was only cold water, never hot water. . . . To make matters worse, the toilets were always backed up. There were two toilets for those two hundred males: one sink, two toilets, and one shower.

"We would return from Bakersfield about ten at night and

would be told that we would be leaving at eight the next morning to go up to Tony and Susan's house to put on our suits for the TV show. After a night in the showers, we would board the buses at 8:00 A.M. and leave for Tony and Susan's house, where our suits were stored. We would again have to wait in a long line for the clothes to be distributed. We would stand outside in the cold December morning, some of us with wet heads from the showers, waiting until our names were called. You would grab your suit and then would have to wait in another long line to get into a separate building where we would change our clothes. That room only held about twelve people and there was no room to move around. Finally, after changing, we would go back and board the bus. The whole procedure would take perhaps an hour and a half. We felt like cattle — herded into one line and then herded into another line only to be crowded onto the buses for the ride to Hollywood where the TV shows were filmed. Four shows would be filmed in a single taping session. We would be there for as long as six hours, standing up the whole time. One time when we were singing, one of the brothers next to me just collapsed, passed out. A couple of us just held onto him because it was near the end of one of the singing segments and we didn't want to blow the tape. He had collapsed from exhaustion and the stifling heat of the studio. Before we started taping the next show he managed to go and sit down by himself some place.

"We were always told to smile a certain way during the TV show. Susan would come in beforehand and tell us what was expected. We had to be presentable — smiling, looking like all-American boys and girls, very rigid and stiff. We had to be a witness."

Some of the brothers and sisters who were featured on the TV programs comprised the inner circle or elite of the Alamo Foundation. There were about twenty-five or thirty guys and girls at the top. They would ride around in the Continentals and Cadillacs and were allowed to live near Tony's house. They sang on the TV shows and got to sit in the sound studio when the records were cut. Everyone else had to stand up on the hard wooden floors.

"It was just like a two-class system," Greg says. "There was

a real dividing line. The older brothers at the top and those aspiring to be leaders lived better and even looked a little different from the rest of us.

"Tony and Susan are totally removed from the rank-and-file membership. I never once talked to Susan, not even on the telephone. She never said hi to me; she never knew my name, I am sure. I only talked to Tony one time while I was there, and that was just a couple of days after I had arrived. He called me on the phone and asked me if I wanted to stay at the Foundation. He listed the rules, the dos and don'ts, and asked if I was willing to abide by those rules. He asked if I was willing to turn over my possessions to the group, and then he assigned me my older Christian. That's the only time I ever talked to Tony."

WHEN TONY and Susan appear before a church service at the Foundation, their reception is similar to that accorded a movie star, a leading political figure, or latter-day apostle. Prior to their entrance, there would be a sense of anticipation in the air. Some of the young people would whisper inquiringly, "Is Sue coming? Are they coming?" Frequently a phone call would be received informing the audience that the pastors would be forty-five minutes late.

Susan, a platinum blonde probably in her late fifties, is clearly the preacher of the pair. Her sermons are a strange admixture of the wrath of God and the rhetoric of Susan Alamo. She lashes out at the lukewarm churches and the "God is Love heresy" that they preach. All the churches are dead, but the Foundation is at the forefront of a revival that is sweeping America and will sweep the world. America is falling fast into the hands of communism. These are the last days, and Satan is attacking hard because he knows his time is short.

Susan Alamo has been elevated by her ardent admirers to a position approaching sainthood. As one ex-member put it, "Some of the kids there are former drug addicts. Now they are addicted to Sue." Greg states that members were told that Susan was healed of cancer several times and that it was only through the prayers of the people in the Foundation that she was kept alive. "You are constantly taught that the most impor-

tant prayer you can pray is to pray for Susie's healing. If you really want to chalk up points from God, you've got to pray for Susie to be healed. Every word that comes out of her mouth is 'directly from the throne of the living God.' It's like God speaking through her. What she says is almost equivalent to the Scriptures. In fact, they would play tapes of her messages while we were eating lunch out in the fields. It was considered similar to reading the Book of John or First Peter."

On the telecasts, Tony sings and Susan preaches. In a rambling and ungrammatical fashion, she reiterates the dramatic evidence of their successful ministry to the young people that no one else cared for, especially the churches. She reminds her audience, however, that their bold efforts for God and country meet increasing opposition. Satan is on the offensive and "trouble makers" are on the loose. Susan assures the TV audience that the "wild stories" about happenings at the Foundation are "filthy lies" spread by "outside agitators." As a result of their persecution, Tony and Susan cast themselves in the role of fighters for religious freedom. They predict a day when they will be placed behind prison bars for holding fast to the truth.

IF IN FACT Tony and Sue ever do find themselves in jail, it will not be the result of their preaching the gospel. Accusations of alleged mind control, deplorable living conditions, beatings, and slave labor have been leveled by parents, relatives, and other concerned citizens. In August 1974, the State Senate Select Committee on Children and Youth held a hearing on the activities of various cult groups active in California, including the Alamo Foundation. Testimony was given regarding the squalid living conditions at Saugus, the lack of proper medical attention, and the spiritual-psychological manipulation of the youthful converts. Susan Alamo's own daughter testified that she left the group after she could no longer countenance what was going on. She told about young people being told to get down on their knees and accept Jesus Christ, when in fact they were "accepting my mother." She described people living in converted "chicken coops" with no heat, no lights, and no

toilet. One day she simply told her mother, "I'm leaving! I want out; I can't take it any more. I can't look at little children being treated like little dogs." The daughter claims that her life has been threatened.

Greg encountered a rigid legalism at the Foundation. Members were encouraged to observe one another's behavior, and an elaborate reporting system was devised for those who strayed from the carefully demarcated path. Following is an example of a written report critical of one young woman's behavior:

**Sisters' Report
Judy Brown**

Judy Brown was sitting outside of the Saugus #8 kitchen by herself at 5:30 a.m. waiting for the van to take the Ontario sisters to work.

I told Judy B. twice to come inside and that it was a rule not to be outside the apartments at night.

Judy B. did not receive my advice either time but told me just to write her on report.

Confirmed by:
[date]

Reported by:
Witnessed by:

When he left the Foundation, Greg brought with him a list of some seventy-one "group offenses" which Foundation members were taught to avoid. Here is a representative sampling from that list of offenses:

Entering the kitchen without permission except during services.

Slide furniture over any floor.

Talking too loud after evening service in front of church.

To interrupt a group unnecessarily while they are reading.

For driver to refuse to drive without good excuse.

Bring vehicle back with less than ¼ tank of gas.

Let vehicle run out of gas.

Not get stamps when buying gas at other than Foundation gas station.

Step on flowers.

Hang clothes to dry on fireplace screens.

Enter tract room without permission.

Not be back at witnessing vehicle at designated time.

Not put yourself on wake-up 25 minutes before your baby Christian.

To leave a baby Christian unattended or not assign him to baby Christian watcher.

Late for choir or band practice without good excuse.

To be motionless one minute or more while in prayer room.

Not get up in five minutes.

One late wake-up past ten minutes or three late wake-ups under ten minutes.

Nod during services.

Not turn in donation cards filled out properly.

Damage tracts.

For the new recruits at the Foundation, there were three so-called "baby Christian offenses."

1. Refuse night watch without good excuse.
2. Sleep during service, night watch or prayer hour.
3. Pick up cigarette butts off street while witnessing.

Committing a group offense resulted in being placed in a special group for a period of time ranging from a couple of days, to a week, or even a month. "Being in a group is like K.P. in the army. You spent your whole time every day all day in the kitchen washing dishes, pulling K.P., sorting out all that horrible, rotten food and produce. The rest of the time you were with one of the older brothers praying and reading the Bible in a group. You get very little sleep while you are part of a group."

Relationships between the sexes are also carefully governed at the Foundation. Leaders reject the label "Christian commune" because of possible sexual connotations associated with that term.

Segregation along sexual lines at the Foundation is total. Men and women live not only separately but far apart. Contact of any sort is strictly forbidden. Lewd clothing, a judgment made by Tony's trained eye, is outlawed, as is talking to members of the opposite sex except at meal time, and then only with a female-male ratio of three to one. Marriage is permitted with the approval of the Alamos, but

only after a total separation of 90 days reserved for praying and fasting (*The Jesus People*, p. 63).

DESPITE THEIR incredible legalism, members of the Foundation believe it is possible to live without sin. Greg notes, "They say that you can sin, that there are people who maybe sin once in a while at the Alamo Foundation. But that's where grace comes in. God will cover those little teeny bloopers that you make — their term is 'blowing it.' But God has given you the power of the Holy Ghost, and if you are in the Spirit, He isn't going to allow you to sin. If you do sin, you are out of the Spirit and you better really watch out: the devil might gobble you up and you might end up in an institution someplace."

Anyone not part of the Foundation is considered to be outside the body of Christ. "That even includes other Christians. They really believe that they are the only group which has the truth. All other so-called 'Christian' groups have either backslidden or are deceived or are lukewarm. They will admit that there might be some Christians out in the world that are really walking with God, but they haven't met them yet. For the most part, all of the people that are not in the Alamo Foundation are possessed of the devil. They really believe that a large proportion are reprobates who literally have deliberately turned their backs on God. There is no hope for them. They are pawns of the devil." This attitude, it might be added, does not come across on the Alamo TV program. Born-again viewers are encouraged to write and give financial support to "this work of God."

Greg recalls one of those rare occasions when he talked with a couple of older brothers who had been allowed to go out as a witnessing team to the Pacific Northwest. "They came back with these stories saying that no one anywhere was really walking with God like the Alamo Foundation. We were the only ones. In fact, we were Joel's army — the army that was prophesied in the Old Testament to be raised up in the end times. We were told to be real warriors because God was going to use us to save the world. They actually believe that at some point in time God is going to call a lot of them to go to Jerusalem in order to witness to the Jews and save Israel.

"I recall Tony saying that we would become God's strong

'bulldogs.' I also remember Tony praying: 'Make us mudpie puppets for God.' 'Make us robots for God.' There were times when we prayed like robots. I remember praying one time for hours — all night long in fact — against the devil coming against us in the form of Baxter Ward [L.A. political figure]. Ward was investigating our church, and he represented the devil himself. We were screaming up and down the church for one whole night, praying against the devil, Baxter Ward."

Not everyone who came to the Foundation stayed. Greg observed a rather large turnover of people.

He recalls a particular incident that took place on a witnessing trip to Santa Monica. "One member of the witnessing team was a Mexican-American who happened to be an epileptic. He had stopped taking his medication, Bilantin, when he joined the Foundation because 'epilepsy was just an affliction of the devil.' And now that he was saved, God had healed him and he didn't need it any more. Well, he had a grand mal seizure on the bus on the freeway and had to be held down. He was thrashing all about and making a bloody mess. It was horrible! One guy finally got his belt off and put it in his mouth. Everybody was praying out loud, 'The blood of Jesus against you, Satan!' We believed that Satan was literally trying to get into his body.

"Finally things kind of subsided, but the man still had a dazed look. His eyes were big and dilated. We finally arrived in Santa Monica and were all told to get off the bus and go out and witness. Two of the older brothers were going to stay with the epileptic. So we took our pamphlets and went out to witness. When we returned, the story we were told was: 'Well, the devil just got into him and he refused to fight. He stopped praying, and the devil got ahold of him and he's gone.'

"To this day I don't know what actually happened to him. That's the only story we ever got. I don't know if they got rid of him or if he walked off by himself. There were other instances when individuals would be with you and then, during the night, they would simply vanish. The overseers would say, 'Well, he's left' or 'He's gone' or 'The devil got him.' I'm sure most just got up and left on their own. But I also think that some of them were dumped off in the desert at night. I know of one

such case for sure. How many others suffered a similar fate? How do you check on things like that?

"Some people would be embarrassed to even admit that they were part of a group like that. People who end up getting involved in a cult experience like this often find it difficult to talk about. Lots of times when I started to talk about it to people, I would just say, 'Forget it.' They think I'm totally crazy or some kind of lunatic. . . . I have had a hard time myself accepting the fact that it actually happened to me."

WHAT ABOUT the young people who give such glowing public testimonies — what accounts for their apparent satisfaction? Greg believes their behavior can best be explained in the context of strong group pressures and a kind of mind control. "Every day is such an ordeal — the work, the prayer, the reading. You just chomp at the bit for any opportunity to be the center of anything. The minute you get any opportunity to speak, why, that is your ultimate! To get up and give a testimony in church, to go down and witness on the street — you live for these moments. Just to be able to shine your light, to be able to have God use you. All that pent-up energy comes out and you feel a definite glow, because the rest of your life is so miserable — you are crucifying your flesh, shutting off your mind. The minute you get a chance to put that six hours of reading into practice, you say, 'Oh, thank God!' Also, the group peer pressure in that kind of a situation is really powerful. You know that everyone around you is expecting you to perform. God is expecting you to perform.

"Another scriptural admonition we received in this regard was to 'be deceivers yet true.' This means that if you are hurting inside, for example, when witnessing, that's the devil coming at you. God asks you to ignore the devil and to be a deceiver. Even though you hurt inside, God's telling you to be true because you are speaking the word of truth."

Another form of deception is used when visitors arrive at the Saugus property. According to Greg, visitors are shown only what the leaders want them to see. They are permitted to view the showcase living quarters of the Foundation upper crust. Rank-and-file members rarely saw the inside of those

apartments, as Greg relates. "There was one really nice house where about six of the older brothers lived. I was allowed to go there and to take a shower one time, and I mean it was a big deal. I walked in and it was a real house! Real shower! We were told that maybe sometime in the future, God had this in store for each and every one of us. This was the kind of thing that the visiting journalists are shown. They don't see Saugus No. 2. They don't get to see that house in Shafter. They are shown the sanctuary and they are served a meal. What they don't know is that we always sorted out separate food for Susan. There was also a separate pile for certain of the older brothers and sisters. They actually had their names on the piles of food. The remainder went to the rest of the people."

Although there are conflicting opinions on the topic, Greg strongly feels that the diet at the Foundation was inadequate and not well-balanced. Some of the members gained weight; others, like Greg, lost a lot. "In my opinion, all of us were in a state of semi-malnutrition. We ate a lot of pasta and white bread. Very rarely did we receive meat. Twice while I was there they killed two cows. When distributed among four or five hundred people, however, that amounted to just a little chunk of beef for each of us. We got a little piece of roast on our plates and thought, *Wow! The Lord is sending manna down from heaven.*"

Greg also reports that they were encouraged, on the authority of Scripture, to practice fasting. "I fasted one time for five days. It was in the winter. We were snowed in. It was a really good way to crucify my flesh. You go into a state where you feel like you don't even need food any more. After about the second day, you're not even hungry any more. You experienced a feeling of euphoria, a kind of floating around. Then you are really in a state of suggestibility."

Greg feels that the group's constant chanting or praying was actually a form of auto-suggestion. "I got real good at it. We were taught that our mind was of the devil, so that any time any kind of thought came in which conflicted with the group mind or contradicted the group mind, we were led to believe that the devil himself was putting words in our mind. The only way you could counteract that was to recognize the devil, and he would

flee. The way you made him flee was through prayer. You would say, 'Thank you, Jesus; praise you, Jesus,' and just get those thoughts out of there. If you do that long enough, it becomes a form of self-hypnosis. When you're chanting that way, you get that 'thousand-mile stare.' I think that is the real key to the kind of manipulation, the kind of power and control they have over people at the Foundation."

Besides inadequate food, Greg discusses another form of sensory deprivation: lack of sleep. "I thought I was really lucky if I could get four or five hours of sleep a night. We were awakened at all hours of the night. You never knew when you were going to be awakened: you might have to pray for something. For example, we were told, 'Susie's ill.' Everybody would get up and pray. They also had what were called 'night watchmen' at all of the buildings, posting watch all night long, at two-hour intervals. So you might be awakened to take the watch for two hours.

"If you were not awake within a minute and on your feet praising and thanking the Lord, you were reported. . . .

"I never experienced the feeling of rest or peace, because you didn't know when you might be awakened. You were in a constant state of anxiety, because it was possible that you might be awakened again in two or three hours to go pray for an hour.

"Likewise, our day-to-day activities might change without prior warning. For example, we might be told that we had to start picking apples tomorrow morning. 'Get up, Greg — praise you, Jesus; thank you, Jesus; praise you, Jesus — we've got to go! The bus is going to leave in fifteen minutes. Get your stuff. We're going down to Tehachapi. We're going to be picking apples this week.' You never knew where you would be going, what you would be doing. Also, if you did have a little spare time, you were told to 'redeem the time.' If you really wanted points with God, if you really wanted to be a bulldog for God, you had to redeem the time. That meant you had better start reading, or you had better start praying."

None of the faithful knew what Tony and Susan were doing with their spare time. They were securely ensconced in their beautiful home high on a hill. "It's like a fortress. Next to the mansion is a two-story structure called 'The Windmill,'

where several of the older brothers live. A watch is on duty constantly. The phone connects Tony's house to the Windmill. All the phones go through that line. The road to their house is constantly guarded. Members are not even allowed to walk past the front of their house. For example, if you are going there to put on your suit for the TV show, it would be a group offense just to walk in front of the house. You had to walk all the way down the side and around the back. You felt like a second-class citizen."

GREG'S PARENTS made one more trip to the Foundation after their initial visit. They returned with what Greg termed a "contrite spirit." There would be no more "hot-headed stuff" — they were going to be nice and sit through the service and see their son. But when they left, they said, "That's not even our son. We can't even talk to him. It's like a total vacuum." Mr. and Mrs. Wilson said they would never go back: they felt as if they had lost a son.

About a month or two after that last visit, Greg's parents were watching a talk show on TV which featured Ted Patrick talking about deprogramming and his experiences with the various cults. As they listened to Patrick talk about brainwashing, they concluded, "That's what's happened to Greg. Everything he is saying sounds just like Greg's situation. We've got to get in touch with this guy. He's the first person we have heard who has said anything that sheds light on what's happened to Greg."

Eventually Greg's parents made contact with Ted Patrick. The first thing he told them was, "You have to get him out of there." How? "You've got to kidnap him." After discussing the pros and cons, Greg's parents decided they would do it.

Greg relates the story in retrospect: "They planned it thoroughly with the help of some relatives of mine who were big guys, fortunately. They even went up there and cased the grounds and found different roads they were going to use. They took two different cars in order to make a car switch. They had the whole thing really down.

"It was Sunday, and I was sitting in my chair waiting for the service to start, reading the Bible. One of the brothers came

up to me and said, 'Your parents are here, Greg.' So I got up and met them just inside the front doors. While I was at the Foundation, I had been praying constantly for them. I wanted the Lord to bring them in out of darkness, release them from the bond of the devil. I wanted them to come to the Alamo Foundation, because Christ might be returning any day and I wanted my parents to be raptured along with me. When I saw them, I thought, 'God is answering my prayers. They've come up today, and I know they are going to see the light, finally. They're going to get saved today, and it's going to be wonderful!

"I heard my mom say something about my cousins being there with them. She said, 'They feel a little funny about coming in, because they haven't been invited. Maybe if you came out and invited them, they would come in and we could all sit through the service.' It was a group offense to go anywhere by yourself, and as a rule I would never have gone out that front door by myself. But that particular time I did.

"The timing was incredible. Tony and Susan were on their way to the church service with their entire band of six-to-eight bodyguards (Susan refers to them as 'her big boys'). You don't get near Tony without going through them. And they were all coming to the service.

"I went out through the front door of the church and walked to the car with my folks. I opened up the back door and reached in to shake hands with my cousin's husband. He grabbed me by the hand, and he yanked me inside the car while my dad pushed me from behind. I started pleading the blood of Jesus against them. 'Get thee hence, Satan!' They all looked like devils to me. I was fighting for my life. Then another relative leaped out of the bushes someplace and also jumped in the back seat with me. I was sandwiched between these two big brutes.

"My dad jumped into the passenger side on the front seat; my mom already had the engine going. We took off just as the brothers started to reach the car. By then, they were pouring out of the church. We tore off down the road, went about five hundred yards, and then pulled off the roadway on to a dirt area where the second car, which I recognized as my cousin's car, was waiting. They proceeded to drag me out of my dad's car and attempted to force me into the other car. I said, 'Man, you'll

never get me into that car!' I fought. I broke the window of the second car. Finally I was pushed into the car, and we roared off in another direction in order to confuse anyone who might be following us.

"I was taken to a private home in the Los Angeles area, where I knew an attempt would be made to deprogram me. Everyone at the Foundation was warned about Ted Patrick. We knew that the spirit of antichrist was working in Patrick. If there was a devil walking the face of the earth today, it was Ted Patrick. We were told that he and his associates were going around capturing Christians and making them deny the Lord.

"I had been reading my King James Version of the Bible out loud during the whole trip from Saugus. I was reading in the Book of Hebrews when we turned the corner and passed a synagogue. I remember thinking, *Oh dear Lord, I'm going to be delivered up to a synagogue!* I'll never forget that feeling. When we arrived at the house I asked, 'Am I going to see Ted Patrick pretty soon?' This was to be my hour of temptation. Hallelujah! I was rejoicing because the Lord was finding me worthy to go through this. I kept saying, 'Lord, I won't deny you. I don't care if they poke my eyes out with hot sticks or if they light a fire under my feet. I am not going to give in.' And of course, I was chanting during the entire time. I was really in high gear: 'Praise you, Jesus; thank you, Jesus.'

"There were a number of people in that house that night, and I can't really remember what we were talking about. When you are in a state of chanting like that, your mind automatically screens out any contradictory or challenging input. Whenever a question arose that I construed as an accusation against Tony and Susan, I couldn't allow that to come into my mind because that was the devil. So I would shut the thought out and chant 'Thank you, Jesus; praise you, Jesus.' 'Deprogramming' is really an attempt to ask probing questions, to find those challenging areas, and to make the person use his reasoning powers. So they challenged me on something, and I didn't want to use my reason, because to reason is to give the devil a chance. Your mind is the devil. You're not supposed to use your mind. The Scripture they quote in support of not using your reasoning is: 'Lean not unto your own understanding.' Instead of leaning on

our own understanding, we were taught to stick to Scripture memorized from the King James Version, or to give an answer based on something you had heard Susan say. To do otherwise was to give the devil an open door.

"As the evening progressed, the pressure began to mount up. People were trying to talk to me, and I was saying, 'Praise you, Jesus; thank you, Jesus.' I wasn't going to allow the devil in. I kept it up until finally, out of sheer exhaustion, I passed out on the sofa. I never became violent. I had resigned myself to being there, because I believed that somehow God was going to deliver me. I knew I couldn't force my way out of the place — there were too many people, and besides, I am not basically a violent person anyway.

"I slept well that night and had some delicious food the next day. They continued to talk to me and to challenge my thinking. I felt like I was fighting a battle, and I tried to dig my meat hooks in harder and harder. I said to myself, *Lord, I'm not going to do it.* And then I went to bed and was allowed to get a good night's sleep for the first time in over half a year.

"The next day I remembered one of the questions my dad had asked the previous night right before I went to sleep. He said something to the effect that all of us were there to seek the truth and God says, 'Come, let us reason together.' I remember my dad saying, 'I'm your father. I love you. We all want to live according to the precepts of Christ. We need to go back to the Golden Rule and do unto others as we would have them do unto us. If you had the opportunity to have the power and the resources and the money that Tony and Susan have at their disposal, would you use that money to go out and buy two brand new Lincoln Continentals and a Cadillac limousine? Would you dress the way they dress? Would you spend the money to build a beautiful home high on a hill in Saugus? Or do you think you would use that money to really share with the brothers and sisters? Would you work together with them as a unit, or would you be removed from the actual body?' I had a hard time answering that question. I wanted to defend the Alamos. In fact, I think I did say, 'God has showered them now with blessings because they went without for so long.' I didn't want to admit that my dad was right.

“When I woke up in the morning, we had a good breakfast. We were sitting around talking when all of a sudden, just like that, I snapped out of it. It was just like turning on a light bulb. It was that quick. I just knew I was free! It was such a relief! I can remember hugging my mom. My chest was just heaving.”

Today Greg attends an evangelical church and teaches public school in Southern California.

♦ FOUR ♦

The Love Family

DURING THE late summer of 1971 when the Jesus People revival was sweeping across the West Coast, Karen Taylor committed her life to Christ and went to live at a Christian ranch in California. One day she and a friend decided to hitchhike up the coast to Canada; her friend, a Canadian citizen, was planning to visit an old boyfriend in Vancouver. When they reached the Canadian border, Karen decided to return to Seattle for lack of funds.

“I told my friend I would go back to Seattle and find a Christian house and wait for her. . . . I met some folks who said that they had stayed with the Love Family the previous night, and they found them to be real nice people. So I decided to look up the Love Family in the Queen Anne Hill district of Seattle.

“When I first got there, I was impressed with these people who said they believed in Jesus Christ and read the Bible. They really had class and did things nicely, not like most of the Jesus People I had met who were really corny. The Love Family did things in style, and they were really self-assured. About an hour after I got there, I felt that this was the place I was to be.

“When I walked into the house, there were about five or six people sitting around in the living room talking. One of the elders talked to me, and he was really nice, really friendly and polite. He talked to me about Jesus Christ and about being one family based on love. Their life seemed very ordered. . . .

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR . . .

The Jesus People
(with Edward E. Ericson and C. Breckinridge Peters)

The Gay Church
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The Alamos:

Alamo

Religion Is Their Chief Business

By JACK SIRICA

The images on the television screen, if you watch Tony and Susan Alamo this morning on WTVF-TV, may remind you more of country music stars than soul-saving evangelists.

Tony and Susan — who pronounce their last name a-LAH-mo — have the look and dress of country music personalities. They claim among their friends some of Music City's best-known names. And Tony, who sings gospel music on their syndicated television show, has even cut a couple of albums of religious music.

BUT THE ALAMOS ARE preachers by profession ... not entertainers.

Religion is their chief business. As Susan puts it: "Spreading the word of Jesus Christ is why I live."

Their tax-free religious foundation, the Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation, collected \$1,029,000 last year, according to Internal Revenue Service records.

AND THE FOUNDATION, which is controversial as well as successful, is becoming more and more visible in Nashville.

Tony and Susan, through the foundation, operate the Alamo of Nashville clothing store at 325 Broadway. The store features country and western outfits, some of which cost in the thousands of dollars.

Visitors to Nashville who come to town via Interstates 24 and 49 are exposed to larger-than-life replicas of Tony and Susan, clad in country-western garb, waving at them from elevated billboards alongside the interstate. The billboards advertise the Alamo clothing store as the place "where the stars shop."

IN ADDITION, THE Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation recently purchased a stately \$125,000 residence on Tyne Boulevard at Lealand Lane, in a neighborhood where some of the city's most established citizens live.

A further indication of the Alamos' interest in Nashville is that they have been taping their weekly, syndicated, religious-oriented TV program at the Grand Ole Opry House. A spokesman for the Opry said they pay their bills promptly.

Their TV program is basically old-time religion, with Susan doing most of the sermonizing and Tony contributing a couple of gospel songs.

"THE SATANIC powers are here," Susan warned her viewers in a recent sermon. "Lucifer was power-crazy ... Today there is that desire for power ... Jesus is coming ... We are close to the end of time."

While Susan's words and Tony's songs are mostly in the fundamentalist vein, they are hardly your ordinary, run-of-the-mill ministers.

Their backgrounds set them apart from the average evangelists. For example:

- Both have been married three times. Their first two marriages ended in divorce.
- Both appear to have suffered from serious illnesses, but seem to be able to direct the activities of their foundation and carry on their ministry despite that. Susan has undergone treatment for cancer and, on television, invites anyone who doubts her to contact an Arkansas medical center. Tony has suffered from glaucoma and was receiving aid payments for blindness in 1969 from the state of California.

● Tony has a lengthy police record. He has been convicted twice, records show, once for receiving and concealing stolen

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Tony and Susan Alamo
In front of their clothing store

The Tennessean
SUNDAY Dec. 19, 1976

The Alamos: Religion Is Their Chief Business

Continued From Page One

property for which he served three months in jail, and once for mail fraud (\$500 fine and probation for a year).

• Tony lost a paternity suit in 1971, four years after his marriage to Susan. The mother in that case named her child Berold Lazar Hoffman II (Tony's real name is Bernie Lazar Hoffman). "Tony Alamo" is a name he assumed originally for show business reasons.

• Finally, the Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation is more than an ordinary charitable collection agency. The foundation has attracted hundreds of young persons since it was formed in 1969 in California. Many of these converts — a substantial number of whom are teenagers and young adults — have given up their other interests and pursuits to come and live at the foundation, to work and pray in the religious program devised by Tony and Susan.

• These young persons — some of whom are former drug addicts — live highly regimented lives and participate in religious orientation which Susan might describe as "giving everything up completely to God"; submitting completely to Jesus.

• These young persons live on properties owned by the foundation in California, Arkansas and here in Nashville, and many of them work in enterprises owned by the Christian Foundation.

• THERE IS a 160-acre spread at Saugus, Calif., which includes the site of what formerly was a motel-restaurant before Tony and Susan bought it.

• There is additional acreage owned by the foundation in the Alma and Dyer, Ark., area. At this location the foundation operates a clothing store, not unlike the one in Nashville, a country store, a fruit stand, a discount store and a large restaurant-nightclub. The "religious-oriented" nightclub has featured entertainment by such country music stars as Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, Bill Anderson, Marty Robbins and Buck Owens.

• The press in Arkansas

who come to live at the foundation. They appear well adjusted to their surroundings and well satisfied with the foundation's direction under Tony and Susan.

In the past, some of them have appeared on the Sunday television show and given testimonials to Tony and Susan, describing how they (the followers) gave up drugs when they accepted Christ, and how the foundation has helped them.

HOWEVER, there are other former foundation followers who have severely criticized the Alamos and their foundation. Some parents of the young men and women inside the foundation have protested that the Alamos have "brainwashed" foundation members. One woman sued the Alamos, charging she was beaten by foundation members during a visit to the Saugus property.

One of the severest critics of Tony and Susan is Susan's daughter by her second marriage, Mrs. Chris Mick, who now lives in California, where she says she is hiding from her mother.

Mrs. Mick, who once lived at the foundation's Saugus property, testified before a California legislative committee in 1974 that foundation followers sometimes were not allowed to visit a physician when they needed medical attention, were not allowed to question those in authority at the foundation, and were required to accept Susan's word in all things.

"MY MOTHER makes a fortune at this organization," Mrs. Mick testified. "An absolute, raving fortune."

In a telephone interview with this reporter in Nashville several weeks ago, Susan said she would not respond in detail to the charges her daughter made against her.

"That daughter has been a blessing in disguise," Susan said, when asked about the testimony Mrs. Mick gave before the legislative hearing. "She is a girl with a weight problem," Susan added, saying Mrs. Mick has experienced difficulties with "uppers and downers" while trying to control her

like "cults" and "brainwashing" and "hypnotism" in an effort to undermine her work, she says, adding: "They are after those who believe in law and order. They want you to believe that people who believe in this country and believe in Jesus Christ are freaks."

"We are going through a period of great tribulation," she warns. To Southerners, she adds: "You are spoon-fed by the press throughout the Bible belt."

As Tony and Susan have backgrounds different from that of most television preachers, so is their show unique. She is no Bible-thumping version of Elmer Gantry. Instead, she delivers her sermons in a soft-spoken, well-modulated voice. Her sermons almost sound like lectures.

SUSAN, IN her television shows, usually dresses in smartly-tailored pants suits — sometimes with a vest — accentuated by a tortleneck sweater. She frequently wears a cross on a chain around her neck.

Sometimes she has worn a long, flowing, white dress; and occasionally she has worn a suit with a skirt.

Her long blonde hair seems carefully coiffured and has the bleached-blonde sheen of a Dolly Parton wig (Dolly being a country music singer whom Susan speaks of as a personal friend).

ON CAMERA, Susan's fingers usually are ring-bedecked, her nails lacquered a metallic pink. Her face, expertly panned for TV, appears a healthy tan. Indeed, at first glimpse, she might be mistaken for a country music star.

Tony, not quite so hefty as Johnny Cash, is handsomely attired in one of his wide-lapelled suits with the lapels and records on file in California leave no doubt that the money has come in to the foundation.

A federal Form 1040, For most of the half-hour filed in 1973, traces the flow of money into the camera and into the pocket.

album ... \$5 for a tape," she invites her viewers, giving them the address in Alma, Ark., as a location to send the money.

The record being advertised these days is Susan, I Love You So Much It Hurts Me, Love Tony. It was published by Alamo Records, according to a notation on the record jacket. The address for Alamo Records is listed as 325 Broadway, the location of the Alamos' clothing store here.

While Susan makes no direct TV appeal for gifts, and while some of the foundation's printed material says "we never solicited finances," other leaflets distributed by the foundation say: "Susan has to have money to win more souls for Christ."

FEDERAL TAX records and records on file in California leave no doubt that the money has come in to the foundation.

working there, do they receive a salary?"

Tony answered: "No. Gifts. And everything they have is given to them by the foundation, such as their living facilities, cars, clothing, food and hospitalization."

The story of the background of the foundation, which now collects more than \$1 million a year and has a business operating in downtown Nashville, is not easy to come by. Tony and Susan were reluctant to sit down with this reporter and discuss their past and the events which have embroiled the foundation in controversy.

SUSAN DID respond to questions during one telephone conversation with this reporter, but she said

she would not answer specific questions about specific criticisms that have been made public in the past. Telegrams sent by the Tennessean to Tony and Susan, asking for an in-depth interview, went unanswered.

Thus, the story of Tony and Susan and the foundation of theirs which has attracted hundreds of young adults must be put together from public records, court documents, printed materials put out by the foundation, newspaper reports in California and Arkansas, and from interviews with persons who have come in contact with Tony and Susan over the years.

It is a remarkable story which begins with Susan's birth. She was born Edith

Opol Horn. Tony, in a deposition, said she was born in 1925, which would make her 51 years old. She and Tony now occupy, and their foundation now owns, the house in Dyer, where she grew up, according to a newspaper interview published last February in the Fort Smith (Ark.) Times Record.

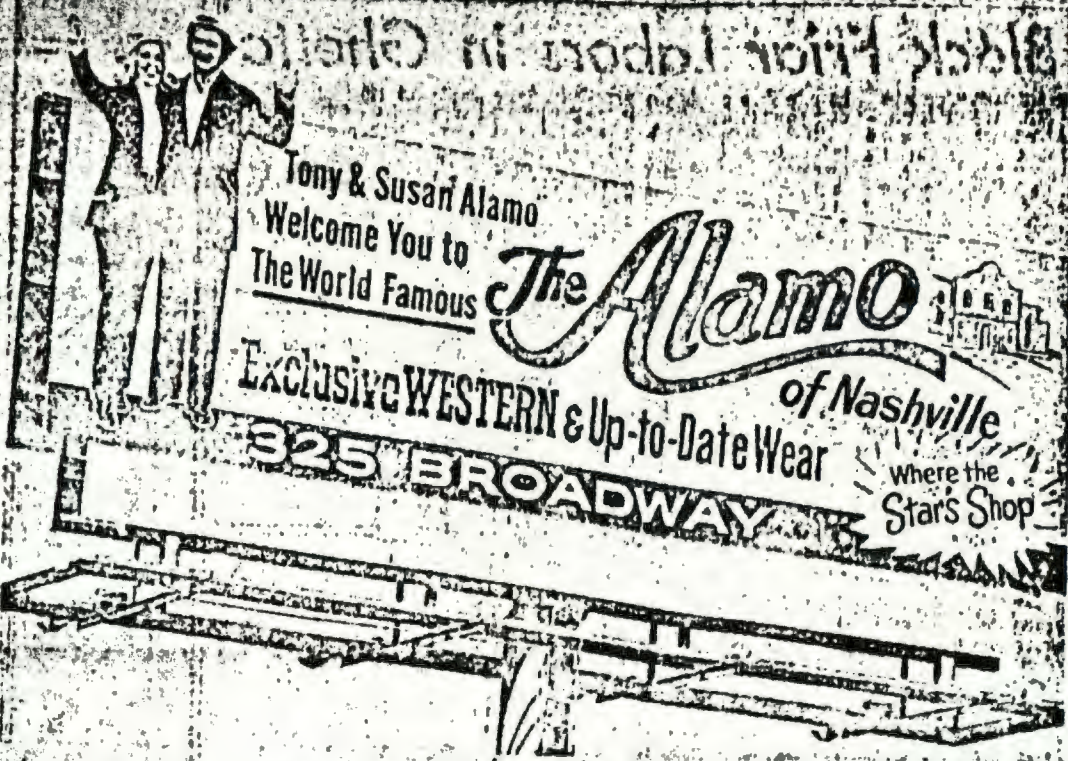
TONY, WHOSE given name was Bernie Lazar Hoffman, was born in 1934, which would make him 42, in Joplin, Mo. He says he originally was Jewish.

Little is known of Tony and Susan's early days. Susan did discuss with a reporter last February, however, what she termed her recovery from tuberculosis after she came in touch with a Pentecostal

religious group when she was a youngster.

Apparently, she married as a young girl. Her first husband, Tom Brown, an Arkansas man, said in a brief interview with this reporter that they were wed in 1936. That may be in error, since Tony says she was born only 11 years earlier.

IN 1940 she was married to Sol Lipowitz. The date is given in a subsequent divorce suit. She and Lipowitz lived in Los Angeles. Apparently it was a difficult marriage since she filed for divorce four times before it was granted in 1966. Tony — in the early days when he was known as Bernie Lazar Hoffman — had his brush with a Pentecostal



Susan and Tony Alamo on Clothing Store Billboard

The Alamos advertise their clothing store, at 325 Broadway, on a billboard on Interstate 65. The billboard is one of several on local interstates which can be seen by motorists as they head toward Nashville. The store is billed as "where the stars shop."

(Continued On Page 10)

which includes the site of what formerly was a motel-restaurant before Tony and Susan bought it.

There is additional acreage owned by the foundation in the Alamo and Dyer, Ark., area. At this location the foundation operates a clothing store, not unlike the one in Nashville, a country store, a fruit stand, a discount store and a large restaurant nightclub. The "religious-oriented" nightclub has featured entertainment by such country music stars as Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, Bill Anderson, Marty Robbins and Buck Owens.

The press in Arkansas has reported that Tony and Susan plan to build a 5,000-seat auditorium and a 114-room motel in the Dyer, Alamo area.

THE ALAMO Christian Foundation, which got a modest start in 1959 in Los Angeles, has been ensnared in controversy and criticism since its founding, according to public records and press reports in cities where the Alamos have conducted their ministry.

Many of the foundation's followers seem to have accepted completely the almost Spartan life-style and the intense religious orientation required of those

"MY MOTHER makes a fortune at this organization," Mrs. Mick testified. "An absolute raving fortune."

In a telephone interview with this reporter in Nashville several weeks ago, Susan said she would not respond in detail to the charges her daughter made against her.

"That daughter has been a blessing in disguise," Susan said, when asked about the testimony Mrs. Mick gave before the legislative hearing. "She is a girl with a weight problem." Susan added, saying Mrs. Mick has experienced difficulties with "uppers and downers" while trying to control her weight.

"SHE HAS made me go all out against drugs," said Susan.

During that same telephone interview, Susan declined to respond in detail to criticisms raised about the foundation. She said the press, in the past, has been unfair to her and Tony.

Sometimes on her television show, however, she does speak of her critics. She says those who are against her "are going to get legislation passed to take away freedom of religion."

HER FOES use words

fingers usually are ring-bedecked, her nails lacquered a metallic pink. Her face, expertly pancaked for TV, appears a healthy tan. Indeed, at first glimpse, she might be mistaken for a country music star.

Tony, not quite so hefty as Johnny Cash, is handsomely attired in one of his wide-lapelled suits with the flared cuffs. The lapels are bordered-stitched with lighter thread. He seems to favor brown, and often wears his collar open a the neck.

For most of the half-hour show, Susan stares intently into the camera and talks.

"WE ARE IN the last days," she warns her audiences, "and Satan and the Lord are locked in a battle."

She does not pretend to be like other ministers. During one of her sermons, broadcast here recently, she said: "I have never seen another preacher or evangelist I would like to be like this side of the heave-ho of heaven. I would only like to be like Jesus."

She says she is the only preacher who has warned that freedom of religion is being threatened in this country. Other preachers fail to discuss this subject, she said, "because they know it will bring on persecution."

ON MOST of their TV programs the format is the same. Susan preaches most of the time and Tony sings two gospel songs. Sometimes she stands before the cameras; sometimes she sits behind a table, referring occasionally to a single page of prepared notes.

On some telecasts Tony and Susan have chatted about "the wonders of the Lord," but usually Tony limits himself to hearty praise; the Lord for his wife and rendering the songs, which sometimes are accompanied with emphatic hand and arm gestures—a sort of reading out to the audience.

Tony and Susan make no direct appeal for money during the telecasts. Actually, many TV stations in the country—including WYVE in Nashville—have a policy against such solicitation. They pay the station \$100 each week for the half hour of Sunday time.

SUSAN consistently has offered Tony's personal accounts for the income tax authorities. She said for the

the Alamo clothing store here.

While Susan makes no direct TV appeal for gifts, and while some of the foundation's printed material says "we never solicited finances," other leaflets distributed by the foundation say, "Susan has to have money to win more souls for Christ."

FEDERAL TAX RECORDS and records on file in California leave no doubt that the money has come in to the foundation.

A federal Form 1040, filed in 1974, traces the success of the Alamo foundation in raising money. That form, a public record, lists annual gifts, grants and contributions over four years as follows:

1970 \$16,743
1971 \$570,432
1972 \$620,339
1973 \$937,347

The total for those four years is \$2.1 million. There is no financial report available for income the foundation received in 1974, according to IRS spokesmen, but the federal Form 1040 for 1973 shows income for that year at \$1,029,990—an indication of continued growth. That same form shows the foundation has had worth more than \$170,000, total assets of \$1.7 million and a net worth of \$1.4 million.

THE RECORD of growth by the foundation is remarkable. But it is even more unusual when considered in the light of testimony Tony gave in a deposition in 1968 in connection with the paternity suit against him.

At that time, Tony swore he had no job, owned no property, possessed no assets and had filed no income tax returns for the years 1962-68, presumably because he had no taxable income. The only income he received, he swore in the deposition, was \$137.50 in state unemployment in California because of his condition of blindness.

Tony and Susan apparently file no salary out of their tax-exempt corporation. Nor do they pay the hundreds of other persons who come to live and work at the foundation.

IN ANOTHER deposition, given in 1968, Tony with another lawsuit in which both he and Susan are defendants, Tony was asked the questions for the deposition in the clothing store. He said

easy to come by. Tony and Susan were reluctant to sit down with this reporter and discuss their past and the events which have embroiled the foundation in controversy.

SUSAN DID respond to questions during one telephone conversation with this reporter, but she said

cards, court documents, printed materials put out by the foundation; newspaper reports in California and Arkansas; and from interviews with persons who have come in contact with Tony and Susan over the years.

It is a remarkable story which begins with Susan's birth. She was born Edith

Hoffman, was born in 1931, which would make him 42 in Joplin, Mo. He says he originally was Jewish.

Latta is known of Tony and Susan's early days. Susan did discuss with a reporter last February, however, what she termed her recovery from tuberculosis after she came in touch with a Penicostal

given in a subsequent divorce suit. She and Lippowitz lived in Los Angeles. Apparently it was a difficult marriage, since she filed for divorce four times before it was granted in 1966. Tony—in the early days when he was known as Bernie Lazar Hoffman—had his first

(Continued On Page 15)

The Alamos: Religion Is Their Chief Business

(Continued From Page 14) like with the law. Police records show he was convicted in Los Angeles on a receiving and concealing stolen property charge. He served three months for that offense, records show.

In 1964, records show, Tony was charged with mail fraud. He pleaded guilty, was fined \$300 and was put on probation for a year by a federal judge.

LIKE SUSAN. Tony has been married three times. In one of his depositions, Tony testified he was married from 1952 until 1953 to a woman named Joann Hill. From 1951 to 1955, he was married to Helen Hagen.

The paternity suit against Tony was filed in California by a woman named Jo-by Stearns. Tony once testified he met her at a dancehall in Omaha, Neb. In 1954, Miss Stearns charged that she and Tony were intimate and that, briefly, they lived in an apartment with Susan and several other persons, just before August 1954 when Tony and Susan married.

At some point in the early 1950s, according to Tony, he became quite successful as a promoter of professional entertainers. Some of the leaflets passed out by the foundation's members tell about how Tony lived in high style with a chauffeur and limousine. It was during that time, he testified, that he changed his name to Tony Alamo because Latin names were popular at that time in the entertainment field.

TONY HAD known Susan for some time before their marriage in 1956, but she was married then to Lipowitz. In fact, Susan was still married to Lipowitz when she founded in 1964 an organization she called the Susan Lipowitz Christian Foundation, a tax-exempt Christian organization which apparently never knew great success.

That early foundation, which never got off the ground, was similar to the Christian foundation Tony and Susan founded in 1964 in California.

In 1960 and the founding of the foundation in 1969, Tony and Susan were ordained to preach, according to Tony's testimony in a deposition. This ordination occurred, says Tony, at the Bible Way Assembly in Santa Monica, Calif.

In 1967 Tony was certified as blind by the Blind Institute of the Department of Social Welfare in California. He began to draw state financial aid because of his disability and apparently still suffers some difficulty in seeing (sources say he does not drive the big, hard-some cars which are leased by the foundation).

This, then, is part of the background of two unusual persons who had led ordinary lives until they married and founded a Christian foundation to spread their religious beliefs.

In the beginning, they operated the foundation from a four-room apartment in the Hollywood area. A California newspaper in November 1969 reported that Tony's eyesight might soon be gone because of his glaucoma condition. But the same article added that Tony and Susan were operating a ministry which was growing steadily.

IN HOLLYWOOD, Tony and Susan apparently dedicated their work to the effort of bringing into their religious program many young persons who were considered "hippies," giving them a chance to change their lives.

They quickly outgrew their quarters in Hollywood and moved to a house on Carlos Avenue. At that location, they would invite persons in off the streets to participate in their worship, and members of the group would go out daily to crusade for new followers.

The message which Susan preached then was much the same as the one she preaches today on television: Those who believe in Jesus should give everything they have to Him.

THERE WERE times when the foundation's activities were confined

outside of Los Angeles. Later the tract was increased to 160 acres.

PRESS REPORTS from those days tell how members of the foundation would travel daily from the Saugus location into Los Angeles, where the work of conversion went on. Persons on the street were approached by foundation members and invited to come to Saugus. Many accepted the invitation and some stayed at the foundation.

Members of the foundation engaged in farm work on the foundation's property and on adjoining farms. Former members of the foundation say the Alamos arranged for this work and that foundation members who did the work understood that whatever money was paid to them would go to the foundation.

In return, the members received housing, food, clothing and the necessities of life. The Alamos do not like the use of the word "commune," however, to describe the operations, they have at Saugus or in Arkansas.

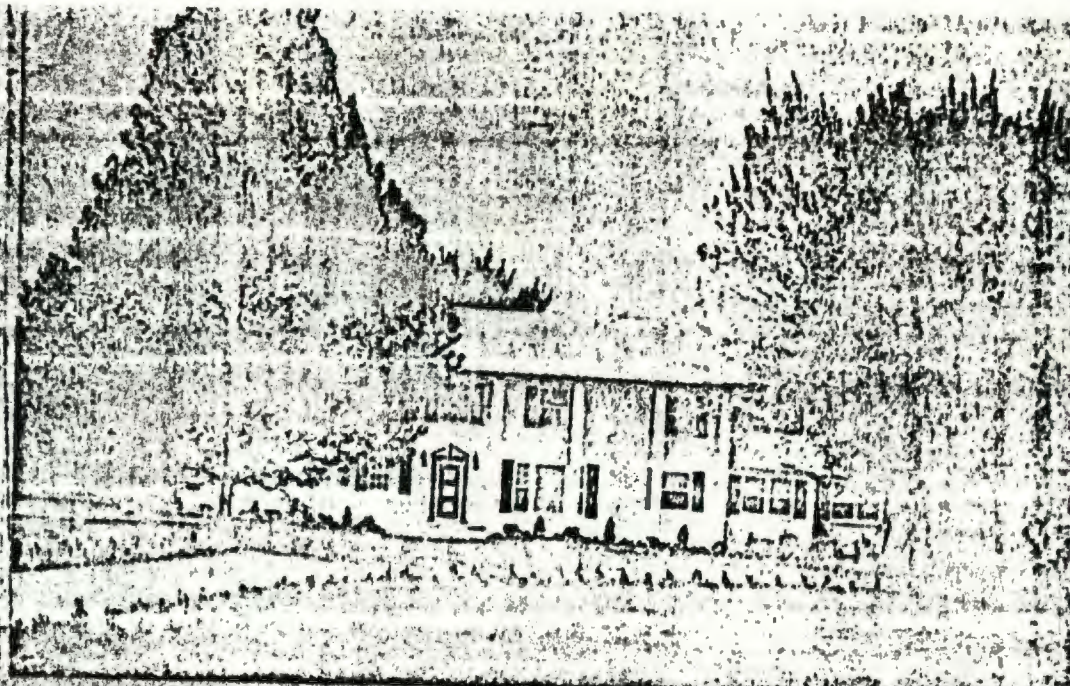
PRIOR TO 1971, most of the activity of the Alamo foundation was centered in California. In September of that year, the foundation moved into Nashville, establishing the clothing store on lower Broadway.

Until the Alamos recently bought the house at Tye Boulevard and Lealand Lane, they occupied a residence on Terrace Place.

In 1975 the Alamos began expanding their operation into Arkansas, returning to the scene of Susan's childhood.

The revenues from the foundation's operations in California and Arkansas no doubt make up a substantial part of the more than \$1 million the foundation took in last year. How is the money spent?

CURRENT expenditures were not available to this newspaper, but a public record in California showed that in 1973, when income was \$1,000,000, expenses were \$275,000.



Alamos' Nashville Home

The Alamos bought this mansion, at 1023 Tye Blvd., several months ago. The evangelists stay in the home when they are visiting Nashville. Some of the city's most established citizens make their homes in this neighborhood.

were "brainwashed" during their stay with the Alamos.

Those who have complained include a young man named Terry Sherwin, who said the religious indoctrination during a night worship service he attended was so intense he almost fainted.

Another former member, a young woman named Lane Petri, told a California court after her stay of two years at the foundation in Saugus: "I came to realize ... that individuals in the group are being used under the guise of religion."

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AND THEN, there is Susan's daughter, Chris Mick, who left her husband who still is a member of the foundation — when she decided to quit the organization in about 1973.

In testimony before the California Senate Legislative Committee, headed by Sen. Mervyn Dymally, Mrs. Mick testified in August of 1974: "You're not accepting

Jesus Christ (when you join the foundation); you're accepting my mother. When you question my mother, you are questioning God."

ANOTHER critic of the Alamos is Mrs. Lydia Wizel of Encino, Calif., who sued the couple after she said she was beaten

when she went to the Saugus property where her daughter, Patty Thorpe, lives.

Mrs. Wizel testified that her daughter was among those who beat her, along with other members of the foundation. She was paid \$12,500 to settle the case out of court.

Religion Is Alamos' Chief Business

(Continued From Page 13)

And in 1974 a group was formed in California to seek legislation to deal with groups like Tony's and Susan's foundation.

IN A RECENT telecast, Susan said this group in California is seeking to curb religious freedom in America. She told of a man who she said had kidnapped adults from the foundation and attempted to sway them against the Alamos.

She warned that the nation is reaching a point where people who believe in law and order, people who believe in this country, people who believe in Jesus Christ, are considered freaks.

God let me live ... Jesus died, so that I might live.

A doctor who attended Susan at Sparks Medical Center in Arkansas confirmed she has been treated for cancer. But despite the fact that Susan frequently suggests on TV that inquiries about her condition can be directed to physicians at the hospital, the doctor said he was not at liberty to discuss her illness in detail.

THE PHYSICIAN did say, however, that it is not correct to say that "terminal cancer" could have existed for more than seven years.

that the foundation which she and Tony started in 1962, when both of them were down and out, has grown into one of the biggest religious organizations in the country.

There is no doubt, too, that the foundation has attracted scores of converts, and continues to be successful today.

Susan and Tony decline to discuss the specifics of their success. In his depositions in various lawsuits, Tony referred numerous questions to his attorneys, his auditors and others ... and they both decline to discuss their past in detail.

EXPLAINS Susan: "Salon is the one who

was a good one. But when I accepted Jesus Christ, He washed away my sins with his blood. He died so I could live.

"WHEN I WAS

Looking sternly into the camera, she then urged her audience: "Give it all up to Jesus who gave His life up for us."

B

—Staff photo by Nancy Womack

(Continued On Page 10)

... and that, briefly, they lived in an apartment with Susan and several other persons, just before August 1966 when Tony and Susan married. At some point in the early 1960s, according to Tony, he became quite successful as a promoter of professional entertainers. Some of the leaflets passed out by the foundation's members tell about how Tony lived in high style with a chauffeur-driven limousine. It was during that time, he testified, that he changed his name to Tony Alamo because Latin names were popular at that time in the entertainment field.

TONY HAD known Susan for some time before their marriage in 1967, but she was married then to Lipowitz. In fact, Susan was still married to Lipowitz when she founded in 1964 an organization she called the Susan Lipowitz Christian Foundation, a tax exempt Christian organization which apparently never knew great success.

That early foundation, which never got off the ground, was similar to the Christian foundation Tony and Susan founded in 1969 in California.

The Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation was organized three years after Tony and Susan married. And although Susan urged him to give up his entertainment business, Tony continued to promote for quite some time after his marriage to Susan.

ONE OF Tony's clients during this time was a singer whose professional name was Rouvan.

Rouvan, who is now dead, later signed a performing rights contract with RCA Records. RCA subsequently sued Tony and Susan over some tapes of Rouvan's voice. The disposition of that suit is not well established, but apparently it was settled out of court.

At some point between the time of their marriage

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IN HOLLYWOOD, Tony and Susan apparently dedicated their work to the effort of bringing into their religious program many young persons who were considered "hippies," giving them a chance to change their lives. They quickly outgrew their quarters in Hollywood and moved to a house on Carlos Avenue. At that location, they would invite persons in of the streets to participate in their worship, and members of the group would go out daily to crusade for new followers.

The message which Susan preached then was much the same as the one she preaches today on television. Those who believe in Jesus should give everything they have to Him.

THERE WERE times when the foundation's activities created controversy. A newspaper clipping from the early days, for example, quotes Susan as protesting what she called police harassment of the members of her group. The article reports that Susan said police had come into their building and sprayed nerve gas on worshipers.

In addition, neighbors with whom this reporter talked recalled that there were perhaps 200 followers of the Alamos in 1970, and that there were disturbances in the neighborhood because of their activities and the opposition which the foundation engendered.

Soon, the foundation had outgrown its quarters on Carlos Avenue, and Tony and Susan purchased seven acres of land at Saugus, which is on the

... members received housing, food, clothing and the necessities of life. The Alamos do not like the use of the word "commune," however, to describe the operations they have at Saugus or in Arkansas.

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CURRENT expenditure statements were not available to this newspaper, but a public record in California showed that in 1973, when income was \$92,000, expenses were \$673,000. There was \$63,000 listed for automobiles, \$11,000 for clothing and \$466,000 for food.

There is no way to determine the number of followers of the Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Foundation. Both Tony and Susan say they don't know the exact number who live at the foundation's properties in California, Arkansas and here in Nashville.

But leaflets distributed by the foundation say Tony and Susan started the "Jesus movement" which they contend is sweeping America and the world.

ALTHOUGH there are scores of young persons who have embraced the brand of religion preached by Tony and Susan, there are others who have abandoned the foundation after a while, contending they

... were "brainwashed" during their stay with the Alamos.

Those who have complained include a young man named Terry Sherwin, who said the religious indoctrination during a night worship service he attended was so intense he almost fainted.

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... member, a young woman named Lane Parr, told a California court after her stay of two years at the foundation in Saugus: "I came to realize ... that individuals in the group are being used under the guise of religion."

AND THEN, there is Susan's daughter, Chris

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In testimony before the California Senate Legislative Committee, headed by Sen. Merryn Dymally, Mrs. Mick testified in August of 1974:

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... (Continued On Page 18)

Religion Is Alamos' Chief Business

(Continued From Page 13)
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And leaflets put out by their foundation also defend the Alamos against their critics. One leaflet says Susan has been "attacked by a group of radicals who called her a thief, a racketeer, a hypnotist, a cultist, and a witch. They're brainwashing because she taught people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

THE LEAFLET adds: "The news media picked up these vicious stories and circulated them around the world. When we tried to open businesses to support ourselves, the press moved in with malicious stories that Susan was operating slave labor camps; even though our work supports hundreds of people and we have never solicited finances."

"What would Susan have been hoarding money for? To buy a tombstone?"

THE DIFFERENCE was to Susan's illness, her bond with what she terms "terminal cancer," which she says she has had for at least 15 years.

She frequently talks of her cancer, stating her television shows "I Can't Live and I Can't Die," should be renamed "I Can't Live and I Can't Die." She says she has had for at least 15 years.

God let me live ... Jesus died so that I might live."

A doctor who attended Susan at Sparks Medical Center in Arkansas confirmed she has been treated for cancer. But despite the fact that Susan frequently suggests on TV that inquiries about her condition can be directed to physicians at the hospital, the doctor said he was not at liberty to discuss her illness in detail.

THE PHYSICIAN did say, however, that it is not correct to say that "terminal cancer" could have existed for more than seven years.

Susan, in a leaflet put out by the foundation the heads, recalls that she was hospitalized earlier this year in Fort Smith for her illness. The leaflet says she told the doctors there:

"I'm going to let you operate on me, but you cannot do anything for me. I have had terminal cancer for 15 years and have worked every day of my life. When you even me up, you will find that every part of me is saturated with cancer."

THREE DAYS later, the leaflet says, the doctors called Tony aside to tell him: "We just found her back up. Everything in her is cancer. Nothing can be done surgically."

Despite that diagnosis, however, Susan has continued to appear on her television programs and at the clothing store on lower Broadway from time to time. She has also been seen at church services in Arkansas.

She indicates that the fact she is still alive is a "miracle." In fact, one of the leaflets sent out by the foundation urges people to "come and see the miracle that God is working in these last days."

THE REASON in fact if Susan's condition of health today is the result of a miracle, the one thing beyond doubt is the fact

that the foundation which she and Tony started in 1963, when both of them were down and out, has grown into one of the biggest religious organizations in the country.

There is no doubt, too, that the foundation has attracted scores of converts, and it appears to be successful to say.

Susan and Tony decline to discuss the specifics of their success. In his depositions in various lawsuits, Tony referred numerous questions to his attorneys, his auditors and others ... and they both decline to discuss their past in detail.

EXPLAINS Susan: "Satan is the one who starts people to talking about their past lives. It doesn't matter what a person's past life was like."

And in her television appearances, she adds:

"When I was a sinner, I



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PAUL CARDEN
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For many years Christian mission agencies and boards have been faced with the problem of non-Christian religions and cults. On all mission fields competitive religious forces exist which pose constant threats to Christian evangelism and many established congregations.

Foremost among these forces are various cults or sects, originating in the United States, who send literature and missionaries to proselytize established religious groups. Such groups as Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, The Unity School of Christianity, Religious Science, Herbert Armstrong's World Wide Church of God, Baha'ism and Eckankar have grown to alarming proportions and their influence is felt on many major world mission fields.

Christian missionaries are literally in the dark when a cult or occult invasion begins in any given area of World Missions either here or abroad. The situation in the United States is as bad as that overseas. While it is true that a good body of literature exists in this area, a large percentage of it is out-dated, unreliable, and unscholarly and shows a marked lack of personal investigation in the field. Field work itself is virtually unknown and second and third hearsay are often accepted as fact. This type of apologetic accomplishes little and continues to do much harm.

Recognizing this problem for what it is—a massive threat to the missionary life of the whole Christian Church—the Christian Research Institute was founded to deal specifically with this issue on an international basis.

A non-profit research, educational, and charitable corporation, the Institute is headed by **Professor Walter Martin**, a recognized authority on cults, the occult, and non-Christian religions. The Institute supplies to mission agencies, schools, churches and laymen up-to-date information concerning the history, doctrines, and methods of the major cultic religious systems functioning in the United States and all major world mission fields.

Professor Martin, Founder and Director of the Institute, comes well prepared and qualified for this unique ministry. A graduate of Stony Brook School, Shelton College, New York University, and California Western University, he holds degrees in Philosophy, Religious Education and Theology. As a former Contributing Editor to *Eternity* maga-

zine he has been described by *Christianity Today* as "the most productive evangelical scholar writing in this field today."

Professor Martin is the author of more than a dozen major books, assorted articles, pamphlets, and tracts on sects having their origin in the United States. He has labored among the cults and the occult for more than thirty years and has lectured throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia where he spoke to six thousand missionaries and workers under the sponsorship of World Vision International. *Time Magazine*, describing some of Professor Martin's constructive work, characterized him as "one who brought 'peace and not a sword.'" He is an ordained minister and a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. He is also listed in *Who's Who in the East*, the *Dictionary of International Biography*, *Community Leaders and Noteworthy Americans*, and *Who's Who in Religion*. Dr. Martin is a Professor of Comparative Religion at Melodyland School of Theology, Anaheim, California, and Dean of the Master's Degree program at the Simon Greenleaf School of Law in Orange, California, and has made numerous television and radio appearances throughout the United States.

Under Professor Martin's direction, the Christian Research Institute has begun effectively to meet for the first time in the history of the Christian missions the challenge of the non-Christian cults and occult.

Christian Research Institute is a pioneer in the field of evangelizing the cults and the occult and is building a team of missionaries and researchers who devote all of their time to actively evangelizing members of the cults and the occult through personal witnessing, research, publications, and lecture series in interested churches and schools throughout America and elsewhere.

As our program expands we will be instituting missionary outreaches to all of the major cultic and occultic movements in America with a special emphasis on preparing the Church to begin its own evangelizing effort to these groups. Christian Research Institute has as its goal a strong and complete staff to help the Christian Church help those misled by the cults of our day.

"Dearly beloved, while I was doing my best to begin writing you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write and urge you to carry on a vigorous defense of the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's people."

—Jude 3





Court of Appeal

FOURTH DISTRICT, DIVISION TWO
STATE BUILDING
SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA 92401

CHAMBERS OF
F. DOUGLAS McDANIEL
ASSOCIATE JUSTICE

August 30, 1982

*Phone
offer an
appointment
w/ me.
JMB*

Morton Blackwell
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Blackwell:

This letter is directed to you on the advice of Tom Nassif, my former law partner, whom you know as the Deputy Chief of Protocol. The enclosed copy of my letter to the President indicates that the objective in writing to him, as well as writing to you, is to seek an audience with the President for George M. Williams, a religious leader of national stature. Mr. Williams is General Director of Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai of America, headquartered in Santa Monica, California. This organization, which its members refer to as NSA, is putting on an historic patriotic pageant and rally in Washington on October 9 and 10. NSA has staged a number of breathtaking patriotic pageants in the past, not the least of which was the entire Fourth of July Bicentennial observance for the City of New York in 1976. It is because of this past experience and demonstrated capability of NSA in such things that I can assure you that its upcoming rally in Washington will surpass anything that even the capital has ever seen.

*THIS IS A
JAPANESE
CULT
WHICH
BELIEVES
YOU CAN
GET
ANYTHING
YOU WANT
BY CHANTING
A CERTAIN
MANTRA
IN FRONT
OF A
SCROLL.
SHALL
WE ASK
CONTROL OF
BOTH
HOUSES?*

It is my sincere hope, because the audience sought here in no way involves pursuit of any private purpose either for Mr. Williams or for NSA, that you will afford my request for an audience with the President for Mr. Williams a favorable recommendation. Your reason for doing so is amplified in my letter to the President.

NSA has an executive office in Washington which functions under the direction of Guy C. McCloskey. Mr. McCloskey is the key person on the site involved in arranging for the rally. He also is authorized to speak for Mr. Williams, and he will be calling you soon after you receive this letter to discuss arranging a possible meeting between the President and the General Director of NSA in advance of the rally.

Respectfully yours,

F. Douglas McDaniel
F. Douglas McDaniel.



Court of Appeal

FOURTH DISTRICT, DIVISION TWO
STATE BUILDING
SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA 92401

CLERK OF COURT
F. DOUGLAS DANIEL
3801 1/2 N. 10TH ST.

August 30, 1982

Ronald Reagan
The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

A very important event is taking place in Washington on October 9 and 10. More than 20,000 members of the Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai of America will converge on the capital from all over the United States, including Hawaii. Their purpose will be to stage, under the leadership of General Director George M. Williams, and to participate in the "Aloha, We Love America Rally!" The festivities will include a gala entertainment at Sylvan Theater on the evening of October 9, immediately following which there will be one of the largest fireworks display ever seen in Washington. On October 10, there will be a parade in which over 20,000 marchers will each be carrying an American Flag to show the nation and all the world that there are young citizens who love the United States enough that they have gathered together as volunteers at their own expense to give a public answer to your detractors. Daytime fireworks will conclude the parade following which there will be a Hawaiian extravaganza staged on the west lawn of the Capitol.

As one of your longtime supporters, going back long before you appointed me to my present position, I have endured frustration and even anger over what I perceive to be the unfair treatment you have received and continue to receive in the media, both electronic and print. The "Aloha, We Love America Rally!" will be so massive in its size and so impressive in its content that it cannot help but attract major media attention. Because of its positive, upbeat theme with which a substantial majority of the nation's people can readily relate and respond to, the rally represents for you an ideal opportunity to be identified publically with a popular and patriotic commitment which the rally will proclaim more eloquently than has ever been done on such a vast scale.

With the hope that you will grasp at once the favorable opportunity which the rally holds for you, I am writing particularly to urge that you meet personally in advance of the rally

with General Director Williams to discuss possible ways in which the staging of the rally could be directed for your benefit.

While you were Governor of California, you occasionally exchanged correspondence with Mr. Williams, and you visited the NSA's World Culture Center on Wilshire Boulevard in Santa Monica. As a result, you will recall that the Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai of America is a Buddhist lay organization whose 240,000 members live in every state in the union and come from all walks of life. Their common goal is world peace and the realization of human dignity for all people without regard for race, color or creed.

As a practicing member of NSA, it is my honor to have been selected to make this initial overture to you. There are two reasons for this. First, I am personally acquainted with Mr. Williams; he himself sponsored me for membership some years ago. Because of this personal acquaintance and friendship, I am in a position to assure you without reservation of his total and enthusiastic support of your leadership, a support which neither seeks to exploit nor to aggrandize. It is Mr. Williams' sincere belief that you will be greatly benefited by your identification with the rally, and it is because of this belief that he feels both confident and justified in inviting you to do so.

The second reason for my writing is the fact of my credibility with you and your staff. My past service to you in the 1971 CRLA skirmishes and as a member of your Manpower Policy Task Force in 1972 plus the faith I have kept with your precepts in pursuing my present duties, enable me to make this overture in good conscience. By that I mean I would be the last person in the world to suggest your involvement in anything other than what would accrue to your lasting advantage and particularly put you one up on the media.

For all the reasons stated, I therefore urge you to consider favorably meeting with Mr. Williams in advance of the rally and to set aside that weekend for what will be a fabulous and inspiring experience for you to enjoy and to take pride in.

Ronald Reagan

Page 3

In aid of this direct overture I am writing currently to National Security Advisor Clark and also to a member of your staff, Morton Blackwell. My former law partner Tom Nassif, whom you know as Deputy Chief of Protocol, suggested that Mr. Blackwell would be the appropriate member of the White House Staff with whom to coordinate because of Mr. Williams' national stature as a religious leader.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. Douglas McDaniel".

F. Douglas McDaniel.

FDMc:d

File
cults

THE CASE FOR DEPROGRAMMING RELIGIOUS CULT MEMBERS

Edward M. Levine

The term *deprogramming* (or its counterpart *brainwashing*) has become extremely suspect, since it is often associated with attempts of parents to regain their children from religious cults such as the Unification Church and Hare Krishna. Quite frequently this means abducting the children against their will or in some other way enticing them to leave the cults. It also entails the efforts of hired agents or friends and family to persuade the cult member to renounce his association with the cult and break with its religious views. The parents' ultimate objective is to regain the affection, loyalty, and physical presence of their children—and to help them reassume their independence.

Since cult members are often involuntarily induced to leave cults, or do so as a result of subterfuge, many regard deprogramming as a coercive means of persuading them to accept others' values and reject their own. Deprogramming is envisaged as a deliberate, unconscionable abridgment of the members' right to join religious cults and to adopt and remain identified with their religious and secular beliefs, values, and practices. Since it is widely believed that cult members freely adopted these beliefs and values and freely chose to convert, individuals attempting to deprogram them are regarded as intentionally, immorally, and unconstitutionally abrogating their right to join religious cults and to accept and practice their religious views. From this perspective—which is that adopted by the American Civil Liberties Union, many well-intentioned individuals, and the cults—deprogramming is unequivocally a premeditated attack on the First Amendment. *Prima facie*, the critics and opponents of deprogramming appear to be standing on firm constitutional ground.

There are persuasive reasons for endorsing deprogramming, however, reasons that are directly related to the fundamental rights and self-interest of cult members and, by extension, of society. Deprogramming or deindoctrination should be removed from the arena of social controversy. It is more accurately understood as symptomatic of much more serious, if not immediately obvious, issues.

arbitrary means of forcing young people to leave cults, or enabling them to make more effective adjustments to society subsequent to leaving cults, although it does work toward both objectives. Deprogramming is more than persuading cult members to question and abandon the religious beliefs they adopted, and encouraging and assisting them to re-adopt those they held prior to joining cults. The generally unrecognized task of deindoctrination is to help these young people overcome the indescribable tenacity with which they cling to their cults' religious doctrines and world views. While a truly adequate explanation of the reasons cult members need, accept, and so intensely identify with such absolutist values and the cults' authority figures is beyond the scope of this article, some comments are pertinent at this point.

Programming Methods

Those who join cults are characteristically white, middle-class young people, many of whom were attending college immediately prior to conversion. Deliberately and carefully sought out and recruited by cult members, they are, and for some time remain, unaware that they have been selected as prospects by the proselytizers. The latter resort to every ruse imaginable to induce these young persons to join the cult. Invited to dinner or an informal social gathering with others their age (cult members who usually were former college students), the prospects are casually, yet persuasively, assured that they can resolve their personal difficulties and the problems of society and the world by joining those with whom they are gathered to pursue such beckoning, idealistic ventures. This approach has a compelling appeal to young people who are isolated and lonely at school, eager to find continuing companionship with peers who appear to share their outlook on life. Those who are interested in the goal of human betterment seem to be far more susceptible to the blandishments and seductive appeals of the cults than are those who are more conservative and less identified with or drawn to such goals.

Such devious ruses are used in exceptionally subtle

"Moonies" (Unification Church), bring prospective members to idyllic settings for retreats lasting a weekend or one or a few weeks. Prospective members are completely unaware that they are being recruited or that they have unwittingly entered the first phase of what is actually a process of indoctrination. Now enveloped by a process of thought control conducted by the most cunning kind of deception and manipulation, cult recruits are deliberately kept involved in group activities for fifteen hours and more a day. They are never left alone, even when going to the bathroom, lest in isolation they begin to doubt or question what they are doing and being told. Purposely kept fatigued so that their minds cannot function effectively, deliberately not told that they are being proselytized, only gradually introduced to the cult's religion, and constantly kept under peer pressure to accept what they are told, cult recruits are deprived of any opportunity rationally to learn about, examine, and appraise the religious and secular views of the cult. The ultimate objective of the proselytizers is not merely to bring in new recruits, but to transform the newly converted into unquestioning, subservient members who automatically obey regardless of what they are ordered to do. This is partially accomplished by preying on and manipulating their weaknesses and gullibility, as well as by "love-bombing" them—continually building up their egos, their sense of self-worth and importance; admiring their personal characteristics, abilities, and potentials; and constantly giving them attention and interest. In such ways the recruits and novitiates are buoyed up emotionally as they have never been before, understandably coming to believe what they are told. Such likable persons, so much like themselves, unstintingly giving them affection and friendship and wanting them to join their cause, provide irresistible inducements to join cults, even though the

The ultimate objective of cults is to take control of the minds and lives of their members.

prospective members are not informed that they are already in the process of being indoctrinated.

There are other cults that are more open in identifying themselves in their approach to prospective converts. Nonetheless, the remarks of ex-cult members indicate that cults generally use much the same disguised techniques—indoctrination, programming, brainwashing—to gain and bind new members, since their ultimate objective is to take control of their minds and lives.

Cults appeal to young people by offering charismatic authority figures, fundamental beliefs, clear-cut, stringent regulations to govern their daily lives, and on-going associations with others their age who share their life style and outlook on life. The beliefs and standards give them a

clear sense of purpose, dispel confusion and uncertainty, and provide them with direction, stability, and an intensely sought-after inner peace. Consequently, many who have had serious drug and emotional problems before joining cults discontinue drug use and become free from

Lying, deceit, threats, and manipulation are termed "heavenly deception" by cults.

emotional difficulties for an indefinite, but impressive, period of time following conversion. Because of this, some parents of cult members regard the cults as at least partially benign, even while they bitterly resent having lost their children to them. Journalist Nicholas von Hoffman wrote favorably about religious cults essentially because their members found a religious belief that enabled them to straighten out their lives.

Cult Indoctrination

Less well known is that cults characteristically indoctrinate or program their members with a deep-seated belief that the cult alone represents good and all who live apart from its beliefs are evil, whether they do so out of choice or ignorance. Only the cult's righteous ways and judgments are true and must be accepted; questioning, challenging, criticizing, or opposing them and the cult cannot be tolerated. For these reasons, cult members must sever their relationships with parents, siblings, relatives, and friends—as well as because such persons are likely to try to persuade them to leave the cult. Since the outside world is held to be evil, cult members are justified in resorting to any means when dealing with it. Lying, deceit, threats, and manipulation, the customary techniques of dealing with the non-cult world, are therefore termed "heavenly deception," practices which gain additional legitimation because they are used for the purpose of advancing the cult's objectives. Those who have watched members fund-raising for cults by selling items on the streets or in airports realize that they do not hesitate to resort to distortion, evasion, and other unethical practices.

Given the objectives of cults, reason is anathema to their ways of dealing with members. Reason necessarily stresses independent thought, choice, and action. It threatens to weaken the attachment of members to the group and must be stifled. The paradoxical attraction of cults for many young people is that they have grown up as reasonably well-educated, middle-class individuals who have been accustomed to using reason. Their abandoning reason and freedom, and withdrawing from and turning against their families and society, point up certain important questions. Why have they accepted the strictures of cults after having been accustomed to a life that offered a plenitude of gratification? Why have they suddenly be-

come so docile and willing to lead an ascetic life, to reject so much of what they were accustomed to in favor of a new belief and way of life so at odds with what they had known? And why are they so magnetically drawn to charismatic leaders upon whom they become so dependent?

Many who join cults appear to have pronounced dependency needs that are far more than the ordinary emotional residues from childhood and adolescence. These young people exhibit a marked need to turn to and depend upon strong-minded, decisive personalities—which they find in the cults' religious leaders and in those who have authority over them. Their unusually high rates of drug use and emotional distress prior to joining cults are further signs of the emotional insecurities which cult life helps to stabilize. Such persons also seem to be susceptible to domination by those in positions of authority. Thus it is not surprising to find that they remain emotionally and ideationally bound to cults, even when their dissatisfactions and doubts begin to mount and momentarily confront them with the realities they had avoided seeing or accepting. In addition, they are held in place by their fear of physical and emotional reprisals—and by their strong sense of guilt.

Former cult members state that guilt, more than anything else, is the ultimate force driving cult members on during times of great physical and emotional duress. They believe that their dissatisfactions with the rigid impositions of cult life, with the stress brought on by inability to fulfill insensitive demands to work excessively long hours and meet fund-raising quotas, are due to their personal failure to believe completely in the cult's religion. One's doubts, inability to persevere, or exhaustion brought on by overwork or malnutrition are signs of failure of the will to believe. Objective considerations yield to subjective beliefs, with the individual disciplined by the cult to turn against himself. Here, too, the role of reason has been displaced by irrational considerations, another manifestation of the fruits of cultist mind control.

Eventual Costs

To suggest that cult members become shorn of their reason and will by indoctrination and peer pressure to conform may appear to be a contrived exaggeration introduced for polemical purposes. For many cult members, however, this is a fair description of their state of mind. Their automatic readiness to carry out all kinds of tasks, including working sixty hours a week in fund-raising activities (and, for at least a few, prostitution), is a fair indication of their state of mind. For unknown numbers, however, emotional pressures ultimately take their toll; some of them eventually lose their powers of mental endurance and suffer nervous breakdowns—some cults term such persons "burn-outs." A former member of the Unification Church revealed in an interview that he had worked for three months in a special center whose chief function was to take care of those who had emotionally

collapsed. During this interval he "processed" 140 such cases, individuals who were in such a dire state of emotional distress that they could function in only the most menial, routine kinds of tasks, such as kitchen work. Except for being sent to this center and given such work, they received no other assistance for their problems.

Apart from such starkly tragic costs, certain kinds of material costs are incurred by all who remain in cults for a few years or more. Efforts to encourage them to recognize these costs seldom avail; cult members dismiss them with indifference because of their absolute faith that all their important material needs will be properly met by the cult. Yet for the unknown numbers who have left cults after a

Deprogramming obliges cult members to confront the false claims, distortions, and rationalizations that cults have used to control their minds and lives.

few years or more, and for those who will break away in the future, this is an unrealistic assumption. For example, cult members usually do not pay social security taxes, nor does the cult make contributions for them, since the income they produce from cash sales is given to the cult leaders. Nor, because of this, do they have personal savings accounts. They do not have health insurance coverage or pension funds. Finally, and equally self-disserving, most have no record of occupational experience, a lack of which will leave them at a clear disadvantage when seeking jobs after leaving the cults. Those who leave cults after two years or more find themselves dependent upon the financial aid of parents and friends until they become gainfully employed. Those stable enough to become independent and seek employment have difficulty finding jobs suitable for their age and life style because they have not completed college and lack work experience acceptable to personnel managers and employers. Costs such as these are as unavoidable as they were unanticipated by cult members.

Judicious Deprogramming

From the foregoing one might conclude that deprogramming is an indispensable technique to detach cult members from their absolute dedication to and identification with the cult's religious beliefs and views, the instrumental means of breaking the cult's control of their minds. If deprogramming dealt only with the individual's cognitive faculties, it would still be an extremely difficult undertaking. Comparing the premises, substance, and meaning of conflicting (not merely contrasting) religious and ideological beliefs, as well as holding to logical, rational exchanges of views, would be arduous and time consuming with cult members willing to engage in such

intellectual dialogues. But the full and open exercise of reason is not a mode available to deprogrammers. The nub of de-indoctrination is to erode and detach the cult member's intensely emotional adherence to the beliefs and individuals who have controlled his mind and behavior. For some, this results in resurfacing of latent emotional problems and insecurities which may seriously impair their lives.

At the outset, deprogramming obliges cult members to confront the false claims, distortions, and rationalizations that cults have used to control their minds and lives. Directly and insistently, it requires them to question and reconsider the beliefs and values that have been ingrained and have led them to permit their own subjugation. Confronting and accepting the truth about cults and oneself are changes not easily or quickly made, for facing and accepting the truth—that one was extremely naive and gullible—can be very embarrassing. It is painful to admit that one has been wrong in believing cult leaders and the cult's religion and that one's family and friends are not the incarnation of evil. In addition, de-indoctrination revives the cult member's awareness of the inherent imperfections and shortcomings of human beings and society. In so doing, it supplants the absolute claims of cult leaders for infallibility, omniscience, and, for some, divinity, with a relativistic perspective and a sense of tolerance for other religious and secular beliefs.

The process of deprogramming achieves different degrees of success, apparently because of the different personalities of those undergoing de-indoctrination. Some effect the transition from cult life to re-entering society with little, if any, real difficulty, even if slightly jolted by their recognition of having been duped by the cult. Such persons readjust to their former way of life with relative ease. Others seem to experience early, though short-lived, problems as a result of breaking with the cult's doctrinaire values and ways. Yet they, too, appear to reacclimate themselves to society rather well. There are others, however, who do not respond positively to deprogramming, individuals who apparently have considerable insecurities and dependency needs. Deprogramming deprives them of the stability, assurance, and meaning of life which they still require and which cults provide. Although such persons may not show signs of discontent and emotional distress, they continue to need the structure and certainty found in cult life. Subsequent to deprogramming, they sooner or later either rejoin the cult they left or convert to another. In the latter case, their dependency needs, rather than the different substance of the new cult's religious views, are very likely to be responsible for this alternative.

This last category is comprised of those for whom deprogramming causes severe emotional disturbances. Sherman Feinstein, a psychiatrist at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago, has remarked that the mental state of such individuals resembles that following a psychotic breakdown. He also observed that in undergoing a

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psychotic alteration of the conscious they develop a post-psychotic state of regression during which they have fragmentary self (ego) controls. Such individuals are in constant danger of regression from almost any stress, and can be described as being in a "floating state"—as though they were drifting into a complete fantasy life or panic.

Saul Levine, a psychiatrist at the University of Toronto, has found that, subsequent to deprogramming, some entering therapy have a compelling need for the psychiatrist to express a genuine religious commitment as a prerequisite of their ability to identify with and trust him. For the therapist to feign or exhibit only a moderate interest in religion tends to lead the ex-cult member to feel that the therapist is incapable of understanding how central a religious belief is to his mind and outlook on life. In such circumstances therapy is futile, for the therapist has created an unbridgeable cognitive and emotional gap between himself and his patient. For such individuals, deprogramming alone poses a real danger to their emotional stability. Their counterparts who remain in cults may be those who "burn out" when their belief in cults wanes or alone can no longer sustain them.

For those in the latter two categories, de-indoctrination severs them from a highly structured, predetermined way of life in which choices are nonexistent and plunges them into the amorphous cultural anomie of urban-industrial society in which confusion and uncertainty abound over fundamental values and standards—a condition which can arouse considerable anxiety in those requiring clarity and certainty in their lives. While deprogramming may be necessary to break the cults' control of their members' minds, it also arouses in some the latent insecurities they are unable to manage apart from cult life. Consequently, however benign their intentions, deprogrammers are well advised to be sensitive to such possibilities and mindful that such persons often require assistance from counselors or therapists. Deprogramming can help break the iron grip of cults, but it cannot provide the structural and ideational substitutes that many former cult members need once they have become independent.

Cults as Symptom

Those who are concerned about or alarmed by deprogramming on the grounds that cults are bona fide religious groups, no different from those of the past or from others that are more acceptable because they are offshoots of major Western religions, incorrectly oppose deprogramming and defend freedom of religious choice. Cult converts are deprived of any meaningful freedom of choice and lead a servile existence which does much to impair and ruin their lives and minds. It is ironic, therefore, that few voices are heard in defense of the right of individuals recruited by cults to be given full and factual information about the cults' religious beliefs and practices, so that they can rationally examine and evaluate them at their leisure—unencumbered and uninfluenced by the powerful pressures and subterfuge of recruiters. Since they are

intentionally deprived of this right, it is reasonable to state that deprogramming cult members is an essential means of helping them to retrieve their freedom of thought, speech, and action.

The controversy over deprogramming raises another issue, one that is much wider in scope and significance than those discussed above. The number of cults has been estimated at three thousand, and their membership has been said to approximate as many as three hundred thousand. Yet most converts have not gone about searching for cults to join. Instead they have been deliberately and carefully sought out by proselytizers. Given the latter's limited numbers and time, it is quite possible that there are many more young people who would respond to their blandishments and false promises were they approached.

The issue of deprogramming raises the question of why so many young people so easily succumb to the deceptions and predations of cult recruiters, and the extent to which other young people may readily submit to the misrepresentations, lies, and delusions of cults. There is a compelling need for research to determine more specifically why so many individuals have yielded to the brainwashing of cults, and how many others there are like them. To the extent that cults are symbolic of broader, if less visible, social conditions, it may be that growing numbers of unprincipled persons, the emerging authoritarian personalities of our times, are coming to the fore. Are such antisocial persons no more than persona in a trend that will soon recede and disappear, or are they a contemporary sign of the warning that Erich Fromm issued four decades ago when he cautioned about the underlying forces that lead human beings to "escape from freedom," as cult members so obviously have done. □

READINGS SUGGESTED BY THE AUTHOR:

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Edward M. Levine is professor of sociology at Loyola University, Chicago. The author of The Irish and Irish Politicians, he has focused his recent work on middle-class adolescents and youth, emphasizing various mental health issues from the perspective of psychiatric sociology.

File Cults

828 Oakton Street 1C
Evanston, IL 60202
July 22, 1981

JUL 24 1981

Mrs. Elizabeth Dole
Assistant to the President
for Public Liaison
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Dole,

As one who has written a number of articles about the ways in which religious cults ruin the lives of their converts and deliberately misrepresent themselves to prospective members and in their dealings with the public, as a member of the Advisory Board of the Center on Destructive Cultism, having lectured to parents and to professional groups about the danger that cults present to society, and having recently been maliciously attacked physically by two members of the Unification Church, I am writing to urge you to support all efforts by government officials and private citizens to counteract religious cults. In order to provide you with information about cults, I have enclosed copies of my publications about them.

Sincerely,



Edward M. Levine
Professor
Department of Sociology
Loyola University

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RELIGIOUS CULTS: THEIR IMPLICATIONS
FOR SOCIETY AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
(Journal of Political Psychology--in press)

Edward M. Levine
Department of Sociology
Loyola University
Chicago, IL 60626

During the past decade, there has been a steady growth in the literature dealing with religious cults. Scholars have studied such of their characteristics as the following: the nature of cults' religious views (Enroth, 1977; Bellah, 1974); their providing a meaningful alternative to young people troubled by identity diffusion and social rootlessness (Robbins, 1974; Levine, 1980b) the appreciable degree of drug use and emotional distress of pre-converts (Galanter and Buckley, 1978; Galanter, et al., 1979); the serious emotional and attendant behavioral problems of ex-cult members (Singer, 1979); the case for de-programming (Delgado, 1980; Levine, 1980a) and the case against de-programming (Anthony and Robbins, 1980) religious cult members; the psycho-social incentives used to recruit and maintain members (Levine, 1980b; Swope, 1980); and whether or not religious freedom of choice is at issue for those who join cults and for those who resist efforts to get them to return to their families (Robbins, 1979; Levine, 1980a). Even the organizations which they have formed have been discussed (Shupe, et al., 1980).

Despite the comprehensiveness with religious cults have been studied, they remain extremely controversial, as even a casual conversation with parents of young people who are or have been in cults attests. Such persons are convinced that cult life is generally impairing, and occasionally destructive, of the well-being of their children. And there is some evidence to substantiate their claims, if the reports of ex-cult members are given due regard and the findings of clinicians are considered seriously.

However, much of the scholarly research about cults has either assumed or indicated that they are but the contemporary counterparts of the religious sects of much earlier eras; or they have concluded that cults provide a stable and structured setting for those who can not cope with these anomic times and the pervasive disbelief that typify this age. In addition, numbers of studies suggest or contend that those who join cults do so voluntarily. Converts, it is said, freely choose their new religion which usually represents an outlook on life and a doctrine that is radically different from those they abandoned. Furthermore, religious cults are also said to be a welcome sign evidencing the persistence of religious faith, even though, as will be seen later, there is little that is genuinely religious about cults.

The thesis of this paper is that the cults under discussion here (e.g., the Hare Krishna, The Way International, the Unification Church, the Divine Light Mission, the Children of God, The Alamo Foundation, etc.) are significantly different from those of preceding generations and centuries, and must therefore be regarded as social phenomena that are essentially unique to urban-industrial society. That is, these groups have not been organized as a result of irreconcilable theological differences that led them to break away from established religions. These are non-schismatic cults that have been formed to satisfy the personal interests of their leaders for what are essentially non-theological purposes. What further distinguishes them is that they intentionally seek to recruit white middle (and upper-middle) class, single, young people--particularly college students, and virtually never attempts to proselytize families. In addition, these cults seek individuals with dependency needs of varying degrees of intensity, needs that are more psychological than social, and which they have been unable to resolve because of the inadequacies of the upbringing and values that are characteristic of middle class nuclear families (Levine and Shaliova, 1977; Levine, 1980b).

In what follows, this paper will identify and describe what seem to have been the salient conditions of the lives of young people during the preceding two decades; why they have been inadequate in stabilizing and guiding the minds and lives of many who joined cults; the ways in which cults impose costs on their members and on society; and, finally, the significance that cults may have for the well-being of the democratic process. Durkheim's (1897) observations concerning the functional utility of deep-seated fundamental beliefs and close attachments to meaningful social groups are especially relevant for this analysis.

The 1960's: From Euphoria to Dejection

Historians will be pressed to find a decade in this country's history that gave birth to more striking and transforming kinds of change than did the 1960's, changes that created a substantially different social and cultural landscape. Adults registered shock, consternation, and dismay at the profound changes in values, attitudes and behavior that increasingly became characteristic of what was then termed "youth culture." The "generation gap" that this culture signified to many, a term fallen into the limbo of outworn phrases popular during that decade, was actually a conflict between the values and life style that youth so eagerly created and adopted and those that their parents took for granted, found comfortable, and expected their children to adopt.

As it developed, the culture of young people took on two distinguishing characteristics. First, it was largely anomic and solipsistic, having essentially dispensed with concern for form, structure, theme and standards. This is illustrated by rock music and dances (Levine, 1966), wearing apparel (Winick, 1968), the graphic arts, and a pointless relativism (there is only opinion, no knowledge). Second, the new attitudes that youth increasingly accepted toward sex, religion, drugs, marriage, life style, and adult authority represented more than a sharp departure from and break with the past. They reflected the impulse-gratifying, self-centered, present-oriented emphases that were ever increasingly gaining ascendance in their minds and lives. In discussing the sexual difficulties, involvement with drugs, and academic problems of college students he studied, Keniston (1965) said of them that their lives were absorbed in a "search for sentience," a quest that has continued to attract growing numbers of adolescents and young adults, as present day rates of drug use alone attests. Parenthetically, for numbers of young people, "tuning in and turning on" proved to be dysfunctional for their lives, and "dropping out" has led them to join religious cults.

A companion trend, one seemingly unrelated to the emergence and efflorescence of youth culture, began during this same decade. Impressive numbers of highly dedicated, intelligent college students became seriously and actively involved in the Civil Rights movement, in the campaigns of Senators Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy, and, above all, in the anti-Vietnam War activities that swept the campuses and the nation. In these and related endeavors, growing numbers of college students, and even those in high school, exemplified in practice their commitment to the ideal of social justice that they had learned from their parents, religion, and education. The underlying significance of their involvement in social and political action was that their identification

with religion lost much of its transcendental meaning and importance, because it was primarily directed to a concern with secular objectives--social betterment. Furthermore, by now they had become largely independent and had lost the more traditional understanding of and identification with the family. Individuals such as these were the products of middle class nuclear families whose attachments to tradition and religion had greatly attenuated. And religion's secular relevance became the signpost of their faith (Bellah, 1974). As its limitations for bringing about social betterment became evident, youth's belief in their family religion waned.

It is sobering to remember that many very talented young people casually abandoned a middle class upbringing and life style and left college for what was called the "hippie" way of life. Some of these "drop-outs" trekked into rural areas in a quixotic attempt to form communes, their utopian notion of a viable alternative to urban living. Inspiring the many who joined them were the goals of unrestricted freedom for the purpose of self fulfillment (the predecessor of the Human Potential Movement) and the abolition of all social and age differences by equalizing all aspects of life (Berger and Hackett, 1974). Theirs was an essentially anomic existence, with impulse gratifying, self-centered pursuits the enveloping interests in their present-oriented lives (Levine, 1979). Communes were short-lived experiments with a self-deceiving, illusory conception of an alternative way of life. They also destroyed the belief of many young people that the freedom to lead wholly self-indulgent lives could provide them with the sense of purpose and direction in life they so ardently sought. Upon having taken the pendulum of freedom to its outermost limits, they found a barren vista.

The Plight of the Nuclear Family

The standards that serve as the foundation for the social controls that deter anti-social behavior (including delinquency and crime), as well as for the effective socialization and emotional development of children, are those that emphasize impulse-regulation, other-regardingness (altruism), and a future-orientation. These standards are viable and effective when they are rooted in cohesive, ethno-religious communities, and characteristically weaken and lose their influence under the impact of the forces of urbanization and industrialization. This is particularly true for members of middle class nuclear families (Riesman, et al., 1950).

The affluence, commitment to utilitarian individualism, and the consumer life style of such families had made it increasingly difficult for them to parent effectively. Yet as August Aichhorn (1925), Margaret Mahler (1975), and Selma Fraiberg (1979), and others have shown, sound parenting is instrumental in rearing children so that they effectively learn how to manage their impulse life. Otherwise, their aggressive and libidinal drives tend to dominate their minds, feelings, and behavior, with seriously self-impairing, and often anti-social behavior often resulting. Whether because of parental neglect, indifference, permissiveness, or inattentiveness, it appears that increasing numbers of middle class children do not receive adequate love and attention, support and guidance, from their fathers and mothers, and therefore become victims of what may be termed parental-deprivation (Levine and Siaoiva, 1974, 1977).

Individuals who grow up without adequately internalizing sound standards to regulate their impulse life lack effective self (ego and superego) controls, and are too frequently dominated by their impulse life. Such persons are said to have character defects or disorders, and experience considerable difficulty in being self-disciplined. Frustrated because of their inability to gratify their impulse needs as frequently as the latter urgently seek satisfaction or relief from tension, they develop a great deal of anger and depression (Freud, 1953; Waelder, 1960; Gaylin, 1968; Levine and Shaiova, 1974, 1977). These disruptive, self-impairing feelings, coupled with feelings of self worth and a weak self-confidence often make it exceedingly difficult for such individuals to establish sound, mutually gratifying, enduring relationships with others. And numbers of such persons use drugs as an anodyne for the emotional difficulties that continually beset them. Parenthetically, character defects and disorders are said by psychotherapists and social workers to be the most prevalent psychopathology among adolescent youth today.

Those who are afflicted with such emotional problems and those troubled by different kinds of psychopathologies are alike in having only few and weak standards to help them chart their destinies and to serve as constraints against their propensity to resort to self-impairing behavior, be it drug use, sexual promiscuity, or abandoning their freedom of choice and action to others who submit them to their will (Levine, 1980b; Swope, 1980). This is largely the result of the secularization of life, itself the product of urbanization and industrialization of life (Riesman, 1950; Potter, 1954; Berger, 1967, 1977). However, a major part of the legacy of the late 1960's and early 1970's for many young people was the bitter realization that their inspired hopes and humane visions for fundamental improvements in society enjoyed so little success. A decade of protest and more practical efforts was required to end the war in Vietnam. President Johnson's "war on poverty" was limited to winning a few skirmishes and an occasional battle against what thus far has proved to be an ineradicable human plight. And the progress won in race relations came only after great effort and still remains a goal to be realized. Because their identification with religion was linked to its efficacy as an instrument of social betterment (Bellah, 1974), numbers of young people found themselves shorn of their secularized religious faith. Their religiously inspired idealism had born little fruit, thus proving to be an inadequate source of belief for a meaningful existence.

Thus did the pendulum of youth's needs swing to the opposite extreme as they sought to "escape from freedom" by joining autocratic religious cults. As Hendin (1977) has shown, young people whose sense of self is weak or damaged are particularly vulnerable to authoritarian personalities who need and seek to dominate those who are weak, passive, and submissive. This has been all the more true for those whose Rousseauian visions and convictions in the possibility of individual and social perfection were crushed and lost. No longer had they an unshakable conviction in a fundamental belief to which they could turn for meaning, clarity, and purpose in life.

Religious Cults: Symptoms, Not Causes, of Alienation

Cults made their appearance almost imperceptibly at the end of the 1960's. Since then, they have proliferated (their numbers are estimated as high as 3000 and they have been extremely successful in attracting converts (300,000 to 3 million are said to have joined cults, although such figures are at

best estimates). Those about which most has been written or reported (e.g., the Hare Krishna, The Way International, the Unification Church, the Divine Light Mission, the Children of God, Scientology, World Wide Church of God, Apostles of Infinite Love, etc.), as well as others about which less is known, are unquestionably intent on controlling their members' minds and lives. It is of less importance that some, such as the Unification Church (the "Moonies"), intentionally use exceptionally deceptive and fraudulent recruiting techniques while others, such as the Hare Krishna, The Way International, and others, are open and direct in their recruiting methods. Regardless of their proselytizing methods, their objectives are the same: the control of the minds and much of the lives of their members, to submit them to their dictates.

Whatever the differences among cults in their recruiting techniques and the extent to which they control their members' lives, they are alike in that they provide their converts with three incentives of immense importance to them (Levine, 1980b): a charismatic, authoritative leader with whom to identify; a religious doctrine that purports to be able to resolve the problems of the world and those of their members; and close, ongoing, personalized relationships with others like themselves. Put in the parlance that has been frequently used to describe what draws people to cults, "belief and belonging" are the two crucial factors responsible for their popularity among young people. However, some cults, such as the Hare Krishna and the Unification Church (the "Moonies"), arbitrarily impose stringent regulations that completely govern their members' daily activities and life style. For example, members of such cults are forbidden to eat meat, to smoke, drink, or use drugs, and must forego pre-marital sex and even socializing with or dating members of the opposite sex. Marriage, in large or mass ceremonies, is permissible only with the approval of the cult leader. As a parenthetical observation, many of the groups that are involved in what has been described as the "human potential movement" also provide their members with the first three incentives.

Because there are so many cults and cult members, hard data for even a small representative sample are understandably not available. Many are not known to scholars, some refuse such inquiries as they would make, and the resources to find and study them are probably not available to numbers of those who would like to study them. However, there is some persuasive, albeit limited, evidence, that many who join cults led troubled lives prior to their conversion. For example, Judah's (1977) study found that eighty-five per cent of the Hare Krishna members he studied had used LSD occasionally before joining this cult. And a study by Galanter and Buckley (1978) of the Divine Light Mission (n=119) showed that 38 per cent had sought professional help for emotional disturbances and 9 per cent reported having been hospitalized for emotional problems at some point before joining this cult. In addition, the authors found that:

the amount of drug use prior to joining was considerable... almost nine-tenths had smoked marijuana at some time, two-thirds had used hallucinogens, and 14% heroin. With the exception of alcohol, the level of all drugs used was two to four times that reported by a representative national sample of college students for the same period.

Comparable findings were reported in a study (Galanter, et al., 1979; n=237) of the Unification Church. Thirty-nine per cent reported that they had "serious emotional problems in the past," thirty per cent had sought hospitalization for emotional disturbances, and six per cent had been hospitalized because of them. Furthermore, "the average convert was apparently in emo-

tional distress prior to joining," and twenty-three per cent said that they had "serious drug problems" in the past. Here, too, the proportion who had ever used drugs of abuse was higher than for a comparable national sample (for hallucinogens, 45% v. 14%). Adding to this is the information given me during an interview with a member of Jesus People USA that approximately seventy-five per cent of their members had serious drug problems before conversion, and that many female members had been extremely sexually promiscuous before they had joined.*

In his detailed analysis of the reasons underlying the serious drug use of college students, Hendin(1975) has graphically illustrated the deep-seated emotional conflicts and seriously impairing dependency needs that were the primary causes of this form of escape. It is particularly instructive to note that subsequent to joining religious cults, those afflicted with drug, sexual, and emotional problems became completely stabilized for indefinite periods of time, which also suggests that they had substituted a dependency on their cult leaders and new religious beliefs for the dependency problems they had before undergoing conversion. That the latter may flare out again and completely disrupt their lives is attested to by a former member of the Unification Church who had "processed" 140 "burn-outs" (those who had complete nervous breakdowns) during a four month period.**

Still other evidence indicating the harmful and, for some, ruinous insecurities and dependency needs that afflict the lives of cult members has been reported by Margaret Singer (1979) and Saul Levine (1979), therapists who found many of the ex-cult members they saw suffering from serious to extreme emotional disturbances. Whether or not the cult member's loss of belief in the cult's leader and his religion occurs while in or subsequent to leaving the cult, for numbers of such persons the emotional costs are extremely high, and point up that their dependency needs were merely stabilized, not resolved.

The Social Costs

The aggregate of the emotional costs to cult members, frequently the result of the cults' constant use of fear and guilt to maintain control of their members, the costs of psychotherapy that numbers of ex-members incur, the unhappiness caused their families, their costs of locating their children and of inducing them, voluntarily or otherwise, to leave the cults are substantial enough to be termed social costs. To them may be added the cessation of individual growth and fulfillment by those whose cults (e.g., the Hare Krishna and Unification Church) put them to work full-time, and often at excessive hours, in recruiting and fund-raising activities. Such persons, it should be noted, receive no income for themselves, nor health and accident insurance, make no social security payments, and are given no pension fund payments. Those who leave, thus, have no personal funds despite their years of dedicated efforts. Other cults, such as The Way International, tithe their members ten per cent of their salaries. In all cases where the cult derives money from its members or work or income, the money is tax-free since the cults are recognized as religious bodies. The huge sums they acquire are devoted to the personal use of their leaders and to expanding their membership.

*Also known as the "Jesus Freaks." The above information pertains only to the Chicago chapter, but members elsewhere apparently have had similar problems before joining this group.

**From a personal interview and from remarks taped at a conference.

Other, and perhaps more serious, social costs are also attributable to cults. Rather than having created and representing improved and more vigorously conscientious and thoughtful theological values and secular moral standards, the realities of cult values and practices are vastly different. Seeking only true believers among the vulnerable and susceptible, the deterioration and corruption of moral standards become normative in the lives of those who are proselytized. Insisting on complete subservience and obedience, they degrade any reasonable meaning of individuality and individual dignity. Furthermore, it is therefore morally justifiable for cult members to deceive, lie to, and cheat the public when selling items to raise funds and in other kinds of encounters. Such moral degradation is accepted by those whose psychological subjugation and insecurities lead them to believe the distortions of those who control cults. Their ultimate immorality, therefore, is their deliberate denial and squelching the independence and reason of their members.

From this perspective, the disapproval of their family and friends, their loss of freedom of thought, choice, and action, and the evidence of their emotional problems and dependency needs are reasonable grounds for questioning the assertions of those who claim they join them as a result of well thought out, rationally made decisions. The academic and other non-cult defenders of cults fail to take into account that those who properly need a firm, decisive, authoritative adult with whom to identify, from whom to gain guidance from his beliefs, and in whom to believe; who benefit from the fundamental beliefs such figures provide them in order to understand their role in life and how to deal with others; who also need detailed rules to assist them in learning how to regulate their daily lives--are young children.

That college students and young adults have such basic dependency needs is a sign of their emotional problems and immaturity, their lack of a firm sense of self worth and their inability to be self reliant. Troubled by domineering impulses and other psychopathological problems, they can not fend for themselves. Such persons are easy prey for the authoritarian personalities of cult leaders and those who rise to positions of power in cults. Their insatiable ego needs feed on the weaknesses and susceptibilities of the weak and insecure who are unaware that they are being used.

The Implications for Society and the Democratic Process

Since cults have emerged as groups purporting to be able to meet certain of the pressing needs of young people that apparently can not be met elsewhere in society, they can be said to be symptoms of the times rather than agents of change. However, since the recruiting efforts of cults are necessarily limited, it is likely that there are far more individuals in society who are troubled with the problems that cults at least temporarily stabilize. Consequently, cult members should not be regarded as more recent examples of those who were "drop-outs" or radical political activists during the late 1960's and early 1970's, or only as persons who are exercising a basic right to make mistakes, to take senseless risks, or to be servile. Instead, they should be regarded as an ominous sign of the times, those who are drawn to organizations which unhesitatingly and openly preach religious intolerance of each other and of all other religions in society. Moreover, since cults

almost always recruit young people and do not seek to attract and convert families, their exclusionary character becomes more obvious, as does their failure to contribute to and participate in society. Cults are fringe groups living a parasitic and predatory existence.

The literature dealing with cults very seldom mentions the incalculable loss to society of the contributions of those who join cults and sever themselves from the outer world. Having succumbed to the domination and apocalyptic prophesies of their leaders, they have been removed from the pressing social and political issues and problems so urgently confronting society today. Insisting that there is only futility and evil in society, cults intentionally segregate their members from responsible involvement in that never-ending secular struggle whose moral premise is the dignity of all human beings, whose goal is human betterment, and whose conception of society is pluralistic rather than monistic.

Apart from standing in hostile opposition to society and wasting the lives of so many young people (and ruining the lives of numbers of them), there is a more telling significance found in cults. Eister (1972) wrote that when there is a proliferation of cults, a special explanation is required, such as the erosion of confidence in traditional belief systems. This has been made evident in what has been discussed above. What seems more pertinent is that there are numbers of individuals with controlling, manipulative personalities who capitalize on the needs of so many young people for stability, purpose, and direction in their lives, and from whose labors some have amassed considerable wealth. They have resorted to various kinds of intimidation in order to halt the efforts of parents to rescue their children and to prevent members from leaving. And some, such as the Unification Church, Scientology, and the Hare Krishna, have sued parents and others for huge sums--and been sued by the latter.* Actions such as these, deliberately undertaken to prevent the exercise of freedom of speech and legal efforts to redress grievances, fundamental constitutional rights, involve them in the political process.

Whether religious cults will become more generally politically assertive presently remains an imponderable. However, the considerably weakened control of political parties over primary and general elections may render them less able to fend off or to defeat the attempts of those who may make such efforts. The diminishing influence of the two-party system in the political process, it might be noted, has occurred over approximately the same span of time that has witnessed the decline of the family and religious institutions and traditional cultural and religious beliefs and values. Perhaps because of this, the alleged use of its members by The Way International on behalf of the candidacy of Hayes Gahagan for the U.S. Senate merits some comment. According to Michael Harden (1979):

In addition to volunteer efforts, aid was also sought in other forms. A Way 'Bless A Letter' from Warwick, R.I., in early 1978 reminded Way members, 'Mr. Hayes Gahagan, from Maine, is running for Senator (federal) and needs \$100,000 by June 1st. Send what you can to Gahagan for Senate'. . . (Here, the Bless A Letter offers the address of Gahagan's Senate campaign headquarters in Maine).

Warden's (1979) observation about this kind of political involvement are pertinent enough to warrant quoting.

The question about the entire matter, even though Way members do not seem to have done Gahagan a great deal of political good (he pulled down 7.4 per cent of the vote running as an independent in the general election for the U.S. Senate), is whether a group of members of a religious organization should use their numbers to align behind chosen (political) candidates.

It would be rash to surmise that this represents a trend and that other religious cults will sooner or later be actively involved in similar kinds of political efforts. Nor is it any more reasonable to speculate that because some evangelical churches have openly supported the candidacy of Ronald Reagan and actively worked on his behalf, this will encourage cults to follow suit in the years ahead. More likely than not, cults leaders will be content to gratify their ambitions in other than political ways. However, the tendency of the mass media to publicize unconventional trends and personalities might help those with autocratic impulses to capitalize on the currents of confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety that may become more pervasive in society than they are today. In no small measure, such conditions and states of mind have been responsible for the success of religious cults. Those who belabor the point that cults offer young people a more meaningful religious choice would be well advised to consider this.

Summary

The significance of contemporary religious cults is least of all that they offer a thoughtful, genuine, and meaningful alternative as social groups and belief systems to young people with dependency problems. Considerably more is involved in their lives than the loss of meaningful social attachments and deeply held fundamental beliefs. While these are clearly among the de-stabilizing influences upsetting their lives, numbers of them were seriously troubled by drug use and emotional distress before their conversion. Thus, not only is it erroneous to hold that young people rationally turn to religious cults to meet certain pressing needs, but it is also the case that cults are prone to manipulate and exploit their lives, some deliberately make their members subservient, and almost all intent on some form of mind control. That so many young people are or become passive-submissive in order to bring order, clarity, and meaning to their lives suggests that there are many more such individuals in society with similar problems and no more than merely satisfying relationships with their families and little more than moderately held beliefs in their religions.

If one uses the criterion of individual fulfillment by which to assess how cults deal with their members and their sense of social responsibility, it is evident that they fail to meet any reasonable test. As exclusionary groups, their objectives are manifestly those which are set to gratify the aggrandistic needs of their leaders, and the means they employ often are at the expense of the well-being of their members. They are morally bankrupt.

As advocates and practitioners of religious intolerance and having a history of having used a variety of means to silence their opposition and deprive it of its First Amendment rights, religious cults have to this extent affected the political process. As presently constituted, they are anti-democratic in precept and example. Whether more of them will quietly (or overtly) enter the political process to advance their interests, as it appears The Way International did a short time ago, can not be said. Nevertheless, religious cults erode and vitiate the moral climate of opinion and those values which are the indispensable foundation of a democratic society and polity. They may prove to be a more ominous sign of the times, in that light, than the public and those who observe religious and social changes now imagine.

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**CONTINUING DETENTION OF
POPE SHENOUDA**

On the first anniversary of the assassination of President Sadat, the Coptic Americans can no longer remain silent about the continuing detention of Patriarch Shenouda III, the Patriarch of more than 8 million Egyptians and leader of several other millions outside of Egypt.

The Coptic House of bishops, The Holy Synod, delivered a petition to President Hosni Mubarak on May 26, 1982, asking him to release Pope Shenouda. The petition was signed by 32 bishops. Eight bishops could not sign the petition because they have been prevented by the Egyptian government from participating in any religious activities. Only five bishops refused to sign the petition.

The petition was not accepted by the Egyptian government for resubmittal by Mr. Hanna Narouz, a prominent Coptic attorney and an appointed member of the Egyptian People's Assembly. Mr. Narouz submitted the petition to President Mubarak with a cover letter. Mr. Narouz stated in his letter that the petition represents the Consensus of the whole Coptic People for the return of Pope Shenouda. He also stated that the committee of bishops appointed by President Sadat is isolated from the Copts who do not recognize the committee; and the high Coptic officials are isolated from the Coptic People, who consider them as seeking self-interest on the expense of the people's welfare. Mr. Narouz acknowledged in his letter that President Sadat's era was marred by the killing of Christians and attacking their properties without making serious efforts to bring the criminals to trial. Narouz indicated that the return of Pope Shenouda will not have more serious repercussion that the government's decision to allow the republishing of the communist newspaper, "Al-Ahali," which is the first enemy of the Muslim groups!

The bishops in their petition stated that revoking President Sadat's decision to depose Pope Shenouda will not pose a security problem. They stated that the decision to depose the Egyptian pope has not affected his ecclesiastical status as the Supreme Head of the Coptic Church. They indicated that Pope Shenouda has been in complete isolation and has been prevented from carrying out his priestly and administrative functions. The bishops stated that many Egyptians have been able to present their point of view to the Egyptian government and President Mubarak; however Pope Shenouda has not had the opportunity to do so. They urged President Mubarak to implement an era of reconciliation between Muslims and Christians for the welfare of Egypt.

After the submission of the petition, the bishops were exposed to harassment by the Egyptian secret police. They were threatened by the Egyptian officials and warned

that such activities were against Egyptian law which forbids the bishops from meeting without the permission of the Minister of Interior! Other Christian groups were also threatened by that if they submitted similar petitions. The members of the Coptic Community Council were likewise threatened with arrest and dismissal from their positions if they dared to submit a similar petition. Also, priests in Cairo and Alexandria were threatened with arrest if they tried to meet together to ask for the return of Pope Shenouda.

It is clear that the Coptic People and clergy are unified behind Pope Shenouda. We call on the Egyptian government to respect the freedom of Pope Shenouda and the released bishops. We call on freedom-loving people to write to President Mubarak, c/o Egyptian Embassy, 2310 Decatur Pl., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, and ask for the release of Pope Shenouda and for the respect of the freedom of the released bishops and priests. We also call on people to write to President Ronald Reagan, the White House, Washington, D.C. 20500, and ask him to intercede.

N.B. Attached is a copy of the petition submitted by the Coptic bishops and the cover letter of Mr. Naroouz that accompanied the petition.

THE BISHOPS' PETITION

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THE COVER LETTER

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