

# Cults climb in popularity while opposition increases

By MARGARET MILLER

Cults that lure youth now face a more organized opposition in Michigan. The number of cults to be opposed was somewhere around 3,000 at last count and still growing.

That is the message brought recently to area clergy by Naomi Eden of West Bloomfield, who goes out on educational missions for the Individual Freedom Federation, a state organization of about 200 members.

Talking to members of the Livonia Ministerial Association at the Church of the Savior, she talked of her daughter, now out of the Unification Church after five years.

She also told the clergy how cults operate and how parents and churches can help young people avoid destructive cults. She talked of her organization, made up largely of parents of young people either in or removed from cults. "We're primarily an educational group," she said. "We'll speak to ministers, church groups, school organizations, clubs. We want people to understand cults and the kind of influence they seek. That is the only way we can fight them."

MRS. EDEN mentioned organizations like Children of God, Forever Family, Scientology, Synanon, and Hare Krishna as well as the Unification Church headed by Korean evangelist Sun Myung Moon. "The cult is a political animal," she said. "Moon sends out articles called 'Master Speaks,' and they talk frankly of ambitions to form a political party."

"The Unification Church has a strong lobby in Washington and is constantly seeking ways to form alliances with re-

spectable organizations such as main-line church groups.

"Cults do whatever they can to infiltrate, gain credence. But all of them are fully capable of bringing about another Jonestown. We know there is suicide training in the Moon cult. Our daughter told us she was supposed to slit her wrists if picked up, and said the only reason she didn't was that she was 'chicken.'"

By recounting the experiences she and her husband, Morton, had when their daughter became a Moonie, Mrs. Eden painted a picture of cults to young people.

Her daughter, she said, entered a group called the International Redemptive Foundation, "which was one of about 70 front groups for the Unification Church, though we did not realize this until four months later and she didn't know it until five years later when we got her out."

"It sounded good when she joined," this mother said, "but we were a little disturbed the first time she came home by the simplistic songs she knew and the simplistic things she said about good and evil. She was a college student and so were the others in the group she told us about."

Mrs. Eden said she and her husband later learned about how the Unification Church group had worked on their daughter — and others.

"These young people are met on the street," she said, "and they are 'love-bombed,' — told how beautiful, talented and clever they are. They are invited to a weekend seminar, which is more flattery and six to eight hours of lecturing and never being left alone, even to go to the bathroom.

"Later there are other seminars, a week, two weeks, 20 days, but after that first weekend most of these young people have been so mentally conditioned that they are unable to leave."

A major factor in this transformation, besides the lectures, is actively live volleyball games, Mrs. Eden said. "They play hard, but the rules are changed constantly, and the participants are told they must win because the team that loses does not have God on its side."

"These recruits are kept in a constant state of not knowing, and this extends to all activities."

"The cults say no one is held physically, but people can also be held mentally and emotionally."

"BRAINWASHING," Mrs. Eden said, consists of reducing the recruits to the state in which "they are not able to think for themselves."

"They are put on a guilt trip first," she said, "because the group has found out all sorts of things about their lives up to that point, and these are thrown back at them when they say they want to leave."

"Parents, siblings and former associates are said to be 'of Satan.' They are

removed from the possibility of association, usually by being put in a different part of the country. They are changed around, so they do not form associations, even within the group."

Activities for the cult members include fundraising and recruiting, according to Mrs. Eden. "The fundraising is called 'heavenly deception,' their term, not mine," she said. "That means they sell things like flowers, and tell people the money goes to homes for the elderly, or rehabilitation institutions for youth, or something like that."

"I can tell you, unequivocally there are no such places. All the money goes to Moon."

MRS. EDEN SAID she and her husband learned during a hearing in Washington that it was possible to get someone out of a cult.

"We met two attorneys and later engaged them and our daughter was removed," she said. "She spent five months in a rehabilitation center, and since then has returned to school and has been able to help others leaving the Unification Church."

The speaker noted that deprogram-

ming is somewhat easier in the case of Unification Church members than some other cults, for example Children of God and Hare Krishna. "That's because they are indoctrinated in such a short time," she said. "With the ones that work more slowly, deprogramming is more difficult."

There is no magic route to the process of deprogramming, she added. It's a matter of sitting down and talking and talking and talking, and "helping the person to use his own mind again."

Since cults call themselves "Bible-based," deprogramming often includes proving to the cult member that something he has learned is actually not to be found in the Bible.

THE CLERGYMEN asked how they would answer questions linking cults and religion and how they could help youth in this area.

"We do not fight the cults on the grounds of religion," Mrs. Eden said. "Everyone has a right to what he believes, but everyone has a right to know what he believes, a right to investigate and not be brainwashed."

She said she had worked with a nun who had left her Catholic order. "You don't get into an order easily,"

she said the ex-nun had told her, "and you are invited many times to reconsider, leave if you want to, be sure that being in the order is what you really want."

The speaker also said the organized church must recognize that a major problem in dealing with cults is that young people are vulnerable at an age when they are normally not active in church.

It would be good, she said, if churches could offer some kind of program that would attract the zeal and idealism that characterizes many who now go the cult route.

Mrs. Eden also said studies have indicated that young people with "strong religious commitments" are less likely to be attracted by cults, and those who have a good relationship with their parents are less likely to join.

Groups interested in hearing more about cults may get in touch with the Individual Freedom Federation, Inc., Box 382, Trenton 48183. The telephone number is 962-9694.

The group in Michigan is part of a national organization known as the International Freedom Foundation Information Service.

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**CITY OF FARMINGTON NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The FARMINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION will hold a Public Hearing on FEBRUARY 11, 1980 at 8:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 23600 Liberty Street, Farmington, Michigan, for the purpose of reviewing a proposed rezoning of the following described property from its present R-6 Residential One-Family Cluster District to R-1 One-Family District:

T1N, R3E, N24 S. Sec. 29, City of Farmington, Oakland County, Michigan, commencing at a point on the East of said Section 29 (also known as Drake Rd.) South 01-45-09 West, 820.00 feet from the Northeast corner of said Section 29; thence extending South 01-45-09 West, 301.65 feet; thence North 87-59-26 West, 400 feet; thence South 01-45-09 West, 420.00 feet; thence South 87-59-26 West, 400 feet; thence North 01-45-09 West, 200 feet; thence North 87-59-26 East, 1070.80 feet; thence South 01-45-09 West, 200 feet; thence North 87-59-26 East, 388.00 feet; thence North 01-45-09 West, 205.00 feet; thence South 87-59-26 East, 884.00 feet to the point of beginning.

(Subject Property is located on Drake Road between Grand River and Freedom Roads)

All interested parties will be given an opportunity to express their views at the above time and place. Any other information desired regarding the above proposal is available at the office of the City Clerk.

NEDRA VIANE  
City Clerk

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