

# Former cultist offers alternative to deprogramming

By JACKIE KLEIN

Six years ago, 30-year-old Nancy Cloyd of Southfield was a devoted member of "Children of God." She

left the religious sect after seven months.

Mrs. Cloyd wants to convey the message to parents and young persons that there are alternatives to "depro-

gramming," a method used by various groups to undo "cult mind control" after followers are "rescued."

"My family was loving and tolerant during my association with Children of God," Mrs. Cloyd recalled. "My parents weren't entirely supportive at first, but they made every effort to understand. That's why I was able to come home voluntarily."

"The key for parents is not to alienate or reject their sons and daughters who are searching for guidelines. Young persons need positive emotional support so they can practice God's ways in society without separating themselves."

Mrs. Cloyd, now remarried and the mother of a 4-year-old son, said she became involved in the group to learn guidelines for living. She was divorced, working as an accounting clerk in Ann Arbor and an agnostic seeking answers, she said.

SHE FIRST CAME in contact with devotees of Children of God when she attended a rock concert in Ann Arbor in 1971. Followers, who impressed Mrs. Cloyd as liberal Bible students, mingled with the crowd and made religious prophecies, she remembered.

"I was a perfect candidate for the group because I was searching for some meaning in my life. I needed spiritual and social help and I wasn't getting it from my job or society around me. I didn't understand why I was failing. I saw Children of God as a possible source of answers to my many questions."

Mrs. Cloyd said members of the group urged her to come and live with them in Detroit. They told her she wouldn't have to hold a job, just do chores around the commune and study scriptures. Mrs. Cloyd left the concert with the only clothes she was wearing and joined the religious movement.

"They didn't ask for money at first," she said. "Anyone who joined the group was required to bring all their earthly goods, but all I brought was myself. The forsaking of worldly possessions is backed up in the Bible. The early followers of Christ gave up all for the common good."

Group members supplied the new recruit with food and clothing and took \$2 from her, all the money she had, she was required to share household chores, attend classes on scriptures of

the Old and New Testaments and memorize verses. The regimen was strict, she recalled.

"WE WERE told society was rebelling against God and we were returning to God's pattern," she said. "We were also informed unless our parents expressed an interest in God's way, they were probably living ungodly lives."

Mrs. Cloyd's parents are Catholic, she said, but they didn't have a strong understanding of the Bible when she was affiliated with the group. She was urged to write to them and share God's word, she said.

The strong point of her experience, she recollected, was thoroughly learning and reviewing at least 75 verses of the scripture each day. The weak point, she said, was the lack of experience and human feelings among some devotees.

"Most of the so-called family members were sincere, loving and godly," she said. "I objected to having to obey 'elders' in the group without question. The elders, or senior members were 18 to 19 years old and I was 24. They knew scriptures but not human experience."

Group members used to ask donations of day-old food from merchants, she said. They distributed literature on the streets but didn't sell anything for profit, she recalled.

Mrs. Cloyd, unlike some former sect members, said she wasn't brainwashed. But she complained about being kept too busy learning new data to think things through. Besides studying, she was among group members who disseminated literature at shopping centers and on college campuses.

"GROUPLIKE Children of God flourish when social conditions are immoral, when there's violence, sexual explosions, X-rated movies and a high divorce rate," she said. "We were told our parents were unsuccessful and didn't care about God's ways."

"My parents visited me and found me peaceful and healthy. They encouraged me to use my talents for the glory of God. They sent my clothes and \$50. My mother became involved in Bible study; she thanked me for my help and kept an open mind. I was respected for trying to find spiritual answers in my own way."

Mrs. Cloyd was sent to a Children

of God colony in Cincinnati and then to New York. She was later assigned to a team of three going to New Orleans.

"It was a faith trip," she remembered. "We were given no money or food. One of the team members was an elder who, I later discovered, was anti-Bible and a hypocrite. He was big on getting money from families."

"I convinced him to let me go home to get money from my folks. I was disenchanted with the group and I never went back. I wasn't rejected and I

found I didn't need a shelter outside the family unit."

Mrs. Cloyd is now active in a Bible study group, "Mothers on the Move." Her criticism of Children of God is that "ultimate power corrupts ultimately."

"I have a much better self-image and I'm a true believer," she said. "God works even with me, so I'm successful in his love. The emotional support of my parents brought a lasting transition."

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### Wayne State induction

Wayne State University's Second Annual Athletic Hall of Fame induction will be held on Feb. 26 with a noon luncheon at McGregor Memorial Center and halftime recognition in conjunction with the Wayne State-Ashland College 2 p.m. basketball game in the Matthaei Building.

Tickets for the Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon, which includes an 11 a.m. cocktail recep-

tion, the luncheon, the basketball game and cross-campus transportation between the two sites, are priced at \$10 and area available by calling 577-4280, or writing the Hall of Fame, 101 Mathaei, WSU, Detroit, 48202. Tickets will also be available at the door.

This year's inductees include 1928 Olympic decathlon bronze medalist J. Kenneth Doherty, shot-put All-American Leroy Dues, basketball-football letterman and long-time basketball coach Newman Ertell, All-American honorable mention punter George Gembs, four-time All-American swimming sprinter and one-time world record co-holder Bill Frew, and the first NCAA four-time fencing All-American Richard Watson.

They join 1976 Charter Inductees Andrew Clark, the late David L. Holmes, Bryon Krieger, Charlie Primas, Allan Olmitch and the late Lorenzo Wright. The hall is currently housed in the southwest lobby foyer of the Matthaei Building.

All of this year's honorees are alive with four residing in the metro-Detroit area. Watson lives in California and plans to attend while Doherty, retired in Pennsylvania, is hopeful of attending if health permits.

The sextet claimed 13 All-American citations and each has received at least one degree from WSU. They also combined to earn 26 undergraduate letters at WSU.

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