

Crazy For God: Edwards tells of life in cult

(This is the second of a two-part series on a lecture given by former Moonie and author Chris Edwards. Part II begins with Edwards' fourth week as a member of the Unification Church. It describes the remainder of Edwards' nine month stay in the cult, and eventual deprogramming. Plus: The signs of a cult, and a cult recruiter. The series was written by Rick Obritschkewitsch, editor of *The Print*.)

It was not until Edwards had been with the Family for four weeks before any mention of Rev. Moon was made. As Edwards viewed a portrait of Moon for the first time, he remembers seeing "a fat little Korean businessman." As Edwards bowed in front of the portrait with the rest of the members he asked himself, "Is this the Messiah?"

"Moon was to lead us in the final battle in the war against Satan," Edwards said. Members were told that World War III was taking place and Moon was leading the force of God and democracy against Satan and communism."

"Korea was said to be the new Israel. The final war would be fought between North and South Korea. I was also told that Rev. Moon had dedicated Unification Army troops to fight the North Koreans," Edwards said.

"Rev. Moon was identified as being one with God. In fact, in one of his speeches, he said he was greater than God. People in the movement were prophets—we were equals with Jesus," Edwards said.

"There were tales of the great powers that Moon had, Edwards continued. There were things such as being able to fly throughout the universe, and enter dreams at will. In one interview Moon said he talked with Jesus, saying 'Jesus spoke to me in Korean, but he spoke with a Hebrew accent'."

Members of the movement would work 19 to 20 hours a day recruiting members and selling dead flowers.

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CHRIS EDWARDS

Staff photo by Duane Hiersche

"Many people in the movement made \$300 to \$400 a day selling flowers on the street," Edwards said.

In order to sell the flowers the use of an informal doctrine called "Heavenly Deception" was used. The principle of Heavenly Deception was "in order to do good, it is necessary to do evil. God's people were tricked by Satan back in the Garden of Eden. Now it was time God's people turned the tables on Satan, and lie for Satan's lie. If the lie worked, it was a ticket to heaven," Edwards said.

A speech has been smuggled out of the movement in which Moon shows the "love" he has for his people. The speech is as follows:

Moon: In order for us to be able to do this (fulfill God's promise), would you prefer to sleep seven hours rather than six hours?

Members: No.

Moon: Would you prefer to sleep six hours or five hours?

Members: Five

Moon: Would you prefer to sleep four hours or five hours?

Members: Four.

Moon: Would you prefer to go to work without sleeping or sleeping?

Members: Without sleeping.

Moon: I do not want you to die, therefore I am going to

let you sleep barely enough to sustain life. What I am thinking, although you get thin like ghosts with big eyeballs, skinny all over, and stooped down, walking and stuttering. But if in your being like that we are successful in fulfilling God's promise, I would prefer to have you do that.

"I knew people in the movement who tried to commit suicide, simply because they did not feel worthy of Moon's love," Edwards said.

Edwards' freedom from the cult came as a result of controlled phonecalls and letters to his parents, in which they felt he was telling less and less about what he was doing. Then his mother saw an article in a newspaper that told one of the fronts for the Unification Church was Creative Community Projects. So Edwards' parents got together with other parents of members and former members to see what could be done.

As a result, Edwards' parents hired deprogrammer Ted Patrick, who was known among cult members as "Satan himself." "People in the cult dreamed about killing him, and even prayed for his death," Edwards said.

Edwards' parents were able to get inside and kidnap their son after coaching from former member parents about how to act inside.

"When I realized I had been kidnapped, I struggled and tried to push my way out of the car. I remember lifting my fist, and I was about to hit my father in the face. As I was looking at my father, suddenly something snapped in my mind. I let down my fist and slumped in the seat, and I said to my father, 'Thank you for saving my life.' Then I asked myself, 'Was I conning him, or did I mean it?'"

Edwards went through what he called a "horrible experience" in being deprogrammed by Patrick. "It was not the ideal way but it was probably the best way of deprogramming at the time," Edwards said.

Edwards was yelled at and made fun of during his deprogramming. He now feels the best way to deprogram a person would be to "counsel and discuss the crisis, and give support."

It took Edwards approximately a year and a half to get back to normal life.

The lecture was sponsored by Citizens Freedom Foundation and the College's ASG. CFF distributed pamphlets that listed signs of a cult, and the signs of a recruiter. Signs of a cult include:

--Usually characterized by a leader who claims divinity or a special relationship with God.

--The leader or founders (usually living) demand absolute and unquestioning obedience and are the sole judges of the member's faith.

--Members are preoccupied with fundraising, recruiting, and worship exercises.

--Meaningful communication with family is sharply curtailed and the cult becomes the member's new Family.

--Members put goals of the cult ahead of individual concerns, interests, educational goals, or career plans.

--Cults utilize sophisticated techniques designed to effect ego-destruction, thought reform, and dependence on the cult.

--Members may be guarded, vague, or secretive about beliefs, goals, demands and activities until one is hooked.

--The cult may maintain members in a state of heightened suggestibility through changes in sleep and diet, intense spiritual exercise, constant indoctrination, and controlled group experiences.

Things to look out for as signs of a recruiter include:

--People who are excessively or inappropriately friendly.

--People with simplistic answers or solutions to complex world problems.

--People with invitations to free meals and lectures.

--People who pressure you because "everyone else is doing it."

--People who recruit you through guilt.

--Invitations to isolated weekend workshops having nebulous goals.

Thomas Jefferson once said, "There can be no freedom of religion unless there is freedom of the mind."

As a sidenote: According to a report in the Oregon Journal, Ted Patrick has decided to quit deprogramming; currently he has been charged with assaulting a lesbian who he was deprogramming.

Scholarship Information

The information below is a list of several scholarships available, the amounts they are worth, and the deadline for application. The information was provided by El Donna Pruitt, Financial Aid Secretary.

American Association of University Women--Oregon City Branch	Clackamas County Home Builders Scholarship
\$200	\$750 \$550
May 1	May 3
Transportation Club of Portland Scholarship	American Council of the Blind Scholarship
\$500	\$2,500
May 17	April 30
Real Estate Scholarship	American Association of University Women--Reedsport Branch
\$500	(Women who have lived in Reedsport, Gardiner, Lakeside, Scattsburg or Galkton areas are eligible.)
May 15	\$375
Land Surveyors Scholarship	
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