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**Research**

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**Aid, Support, and Treatment**

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## Research

## Mission # Objectives [will type in numbers when complete]

- 1-4 \* Maintain a scholarly communication organ (i.e., the *Cultic Studies Journal*) to publish new research and keep professionals and scholars informed.
- 1-4 \* Maintain a popular communication organ (i.e., the *Cult Observer*) in order to document, summarize, and disseminate relevant reports from newspapers, magazines, and other sources.
- 1-4 \* Establish and publicize a comprehensive, computerized data repository of articles, books, reports, legal cases, organizations, helping professionals, and individuals with specialized information or expertise.
- 1-4 \* Write a comprehensive, critical review of the scholarly literature pertaining to cults.
- 1-4 \* Write a comprehensive paper identifying concepts and methods from related fields (e.g., trauma studies, social psychology) that may illuminate central questions and methodological problems in cultic studies.
- 1-4 \* Write a comprehensive paper that analyzes the theoretical issues underpinning cultic studies and that advances a theoretical formulation amenable to empirical testing.
- 1-4 \* Identify the most appropriate methodologies for studying the cult phenomenon; write one or more methodological papers.
- 1-4 \* Develop and refine objective measures (self-report and observational) for assessing the psychological abusiveness of cultic environments, with regard to adults and children.

- 1-4 \* Critically review existing classification systems of cultic groups and apply data collected from objective measures of psychological abusiveness and theoretical reasoning in order to develop an empirically grounded classification system for cults and related groups.
- 1-4 \* Conduct a coordinated program of correlational studies (including longitudinal studies) that aim to identify the relationship of measures of personal vulnerability, personal background, cult experience, and post-cult experience (especially psychological distress). (The precise program of studies cannot be identified at present because findings from ongoing studies will influence decisions concerning future studies.) [A typology of cult victims may arise from these studies.]
- 3,4 \* Conduct a coordinated program of treatment evaluation studies, including post-cult residential treatment, exit counseling, outpatient counseling, and group counseling.
- 1 \* Develop useful evaluation methodologies for assessing the effectiveness of preventive education programs.
- 1-4 \* Conduct at least two dozen detailed case studies designed to illuminate the range of cult experiences (e.g., adults born in cults; individuals subjected to very long periods of meditation; individuals ejected from cults; individuals at high leadership levels who left cults; individuals deprogrammed from cults; individuals exit counseled from cults).
- 1-4 \* In order to increase the representativeness of research in this area, conduct at least three multi-method (self-report; psychological interview; participant observation) studies of the former (and current, when possible) members of groups that are randomly selected from groups that are identified in the development of objective measures (Objective x) and that are small enough to permit identification and contact with at least a large majority of the ex- and current-member population.
- 3,4 \* Conduct a series of surveys of various professional groups (e.g., social workers) based upon the AFF/Pennsylvania Medical Society study (Lottick, 1993).
- 3,4 \* Identify a relatively random population of current and former cult members and their family members by asking identifying questions in a series of 50 or more weekly, national omnibus surveys.
- 1-4 \* Conduct detailed telephone, and to the extent possible, face-to-face interviews with the several hundred persons identified through the omnibus surveys. These surveys would build upon knowledge gained in earlier correlational studies with less representative samples.
- 1-4 \* Write a comprehensive, scholarly review of relevant laws and their administration as applied to cults, including at least some analysis of the experiences of other countries.
- 1-4 \* Write a scholarly monograph comparing and contrasting healthy religious conversions to the manipulated conversions observed in cults.
- 1-4 \* Write a scholarly monograph examining the economic impact of cults on individuals and society.
- 1-4 \* Write a scholarly monograph analyzing how the manipulative processes observed in cults may affect a free, pluralistic society.
- 1-4 \* Write/edit a series of professional and popular books describing the results of

research and providing advice to current and former cult members, their families and friends, and helping professionals. (Ongoing objective)

## Aid, Support, and Treatment

| Mission # | Objectives [will type in numbers when complete]   |
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| 1-4       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain an Information and Referral Service to direct current and former cult members, their families and friends, and others to appropriate sources of information and assistance. (Link to data repository.)</li></ul> |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish and assist support groups for former cult members and their families wherever there is a demonstrable need for such groups.</li></ul>   |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In various geographical areas, conduct workshops and conferences designed to help former cult members and their families and friends.</li></ul>   |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In various geographical areas, conduct workshops and conferences designed to enhance the skills of helping professionals from whom ex-cult members and their families and friends may seek assistance.</li></ul>          |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain a residential treatment center for former cult members. Establish new centers as needed.</li></ul>   |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop educational materials designed to help former cult members, their families, and helping professionals (e.g., booklets, videotapes, communication training workbooks) – overlaps with education.</li></ul>         |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish and maintain cult counseling centers (psychological and pastoral) in major metropolitan areas.</li></ul>  |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further develop the professionalism of the exit counseling field and increase the range of groups concerning which exit counselors have expert knowledge.</li></ul>   |
| 3,4       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with existing and provide technical and financial support to establish and maintain ex-member networks (e.g., TM-Ex).</li></ul>  |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement a systematic program of outreach to the ex-cult member population in order to maximize the number of ex-members who are aware of available services.</li></ul>  |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide legal services to families and former members in disputes with cults.</li></ul>   |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide financial assistance, where needed, to cult victims seeking help.</li></ul>   |
| 3         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide protection for victims and support groups (I don't remember what this item referred to. Seems unnecessary.)</li></ul>   |