

PROFOUND IMPACT



**Snapshot of Two Brothers
and Ones Journey to Understand the
Snare of Destructive
Personality Manipulation**

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INTRODUCTION

I accepted my brother's involvement in a new religious movement ¹until I found out he was being secretive about his whereabouts and activities. This behavior was encouraged in his new way of life. The shock of learning he was nearby, but 'undercover' (when our father was very ill in hospital) drove me to seriously investigate the group he was with. Ultimately this compelled me to arrange for his 'exit' from their tightly controlled environment. What I learned from this experience altered my view of the world by highlighting our individual and societal vulnerability – a vulnerability that continues to this day.

Art Tassie, January 24, 2010

**DEDICATED
TO MY
MOM & DAD
WITH
LOVE AND ADMIRATION
I THANK BOTH MY PARENTS
ART & PEGGY TASSIE FOR
BEING THE BEST PARENTS THEY COULD BE!**

¹ Does this qualify as being religious?

PROLOGUE - WHAT! LIVING IN CALGARY?

It was just the beginning of another day in Fort McMurray, Alberta (see map). I gave my wife Pat a hug on my way out the door. I jumped into the company crew cab and set off to pick up some of my co-workers before heading out to the Texaco steam recovery plant. The plant was situated just behind the Fort McMurray Airport, about a twenty minute drive from our home. It was going to be another busy day at work and I had a lot on my mind. We were doing a plant turn around, shutting down parts of the facility to enable us to do scheduled preventive maintenance and repairs.

It turned out to be a long day. It was not until I was driving home that night that I could relax a bit and let my thoughts drift. I found myself thinking, as I often did, about my brother Ron whom I hadn't seen for over 3 ½ years (since he joined the controversial Unification Church). The followers of this "Church"² were commonly known as the Moonies. This is in reference to the "Church" founder Sun Myung Moon. By coincidence, when I walked in the door, Pat greeted me with the news we had a call from Ron earlier in the day. It was a strange call; he had sounded agitated, two of his friends had recently been 'kidnapped'³. Ron asked if anyone had contacted us about him. Pat assured him no. Given that he moved around with the church, she also asked him if he was still at the San Francisco address, 1153 Bush St. Ron said he was. She told him I would probably return his call if I didn't get in too late. I looked at my watch and figured with the time difference, it was not too late there. I put through the call, but Ron was out. Between the demands of my job and our young family, two weeks went by. I had not gotten around to telephoning Ron again.

Then, on May 11, 1981, I was just about to run out the door to film a scouting event involving my family when the telephone rang. It was my youngest sister Teri in Calgary. She excitedly informed me a lady named Peggy Hogan had just called to say that our brother, Ron, was living and working with some other church members in Calgary and had been for some time. Ron was in Calgary? He had been there for some time? I could not believe it. I told her that we had received a call from Ron a couple of weeks ago⁴ and that he was still living in San Francisco.

I told Teri I thought this was weird. I would telephone San Francisco and see if I could talk to Ron. I then called the Bush St. number, but the person who answered said Ron was unavailable, out with some friends but he would let him know that I called. Now I didn't know what to think. Could Ron be in Calgary? If so, why would he say he was some place he was not? Why would another church member be part of this deception? Who was this lady who had reported his whereabouts to the family and why? I had to find out more.

² Define Church

³ The Moonies refer to any member being forcibly removed from their group as being kidnapped.

⁴ In 1981 caller display was not available

Anxiously, I arranged to take a few days off work. I booked a flight to Calgary for the next morning. I telephoned my sisters Sue and Teri to let them know I was coming. That night I had trouble sleeping as I reviewed in my mind all that we knew about Ron's involvement in the Unification Church.

I often felt there was something not quite right, but believed Ron was living this different lifestyle by choice and because I loved him, I respected his decision. He wrote and called occasionally. At the beginning when Ron first joined the church he would telephone collect to tell me how wonderful it was and he would try to preach to me. One time I got annoyed and told him I loved him and if this was what he wanted great, but do not push it on me. I had enough things going on in my life. After that when we talked it was about how well he was doing in the group and I would try to bring him up to date on the family.

Dad had concerns about Ron's involvement in this group from the start and had voiced his concerns to the rest of the family. Once I was planning to go visit my brother and see for myself how he was doing but, Dad discouraged me from going although he himself had made at least two trips to San Francisco. During one visit with us, Dad and Pat searched the bookstores for a book that had been recommended to him. He had seen an investigative report on the Unification Church on television and telephoned the broadcast number for more information. Shortly after, Ron telephoned Dad to say that since had been in touch with 'deprogrammers'⁵ he didn't want any further contact with him. Dad urged us all to continue to keep in touch with Ron, but to be careful what we said so we didn't lose contact altogether.

On one of those San Francisco visits, both Dad and my brother-in-law Ken McLachlan were there. Dad telephoned Ron to invite him to join them for dinner. When Ron made excuses, Ken decided to go over and talk to him in person. Upon his arrival at 1153 Bush St., he was surprised to discover it was a mansion. After knocking on the door, Ken was asked to take his shoes off. He added them to the twenty odd pair already neatly lined up in the hallway. Ken was then led into a large room where he was joined a few minutes later, by Ron and another church member. As he tried to talk to Ron, the other Moonie kept interrupting, until Ken became so frustrated he told him he was being rude and he would like to talk to Ron alone. After the other Moonie left in a huff, Ken tried to convince Ron to join them for dinner, if not that night, then the next. Finally he said, "Ron, your Dad came all this way to see you and you cannot even find the time to go out to supper with him." At that point the other fellow reentered the room and told Ron they were late for their meeting. Ron got up promptly, said goodbye and left. Dad telephoned to try to talk to Ron the next day, but was told he was out of town.

At different times, two of my sister's, Kathy and Sue, also went through San Francisco on holidays and met with Ron. Both times he was escorted by other Moonies. My sisters they said their presence made them feel intimidated and overwhelmed. Those

⁵ What's the def of a deprogrammer?

stories and more were going through my mind that night as I lay tossing and turning. I hadn't called my Dad about this new development either. He hadn't been well and I did not want to worry him unnecessarily.

I flew into Calgary around eleven o'clock the next morning. I rented a car and drove to Sue's home in North Calgary. We talked about the strange telephone call, wondering if following it up would be a waste of time or if it could be a scam. But we thought- why would our family be picked for something like that? I called Teri to let her know I had arrived. I asked her to get Peggy Hogan's address and telephone number. Teri said she had Peggy's work number and offered to call her to set up a meeting. I agreed. Teri called back a short time later and said we had been invited over to Peggy Hogan's home at seven o'clock that evening.

That night Teri, Sue and I drove to Peggy Hogan's house. When we arrived, Peggy answered the door. She was a red haired little bit of a thing, just five foot nothing and about ninety pounds. She invited us into her living room and served us coffee and cookies. She said Ron was working as the Sales Manager for Champion Services⁶ in Calgary. Ron had been back in Canada for almost six months. We looked at each other in disbelief. A detective Peggy knew, with the Calgary Police who had been investigating a kidnapping charge made by this group told her Ron seemed like a nice guy. The detective also said she should try and get hold of his family to let them know where he was. She said her own son had been a member of the same group in San Francisco and she herself had arranged his rescue and deprogramming about a year ago. Since then, she had been collecting and distributing information about what she called destructive cults and their activities. I asked her what she meant by rescuing him. She said she hired people in San Francisco to kidnap and deprogram her son. What?! We were all troubled by what we had heard and the conversation started to heat up. I decided at that point we should leave and do some investigating on our own. As we left the house, Peggy warned us not to let Ron find out that we knew he was in Calgary, because the group would then likely move him back to the United States.

We got in the car and sat for awhile discussing what we just heard. We decided to drive by the house where Peggy said Ron was living with other church members, since it was only ten blocks from where Sue lived. Once there, we debated whether or not to go up and knock at the door, but Peggy's parting comments made us a little nervous, so we just decided to go back to Sue's.

When we got there we talked and even joked a bit about our meeting. I decided I had better telephone Dad and tell him what we had heard. I told him I was going to contact a private detective in the morning and see if this was worth pursuing.

⁶ a carpet cleaning operation and Moonie business front

The next day I pulled out the telephone book and started dialing numbers. On the third try I connected with a Private Detective by the name of Peter Tarrant. I was able to see at 11am that day.

I arrived at his office by 10:30 that morning and as I sat in the waiting room flipping through a detective magazine, I kept thinking of the detective series "Mannix" I used to like to watch on TV. Peter's secretary escorted me in to his office. I gave him all the information Peggy gave me and told him my concerns. I explained why I wanted to check it out. He did not seem surprised by what I was saying. After some discussion he said if I wanted him to look into it, the fee would be \$500.00 a day.

For a family of five, this was a lot of money especially in the eighty's. I sat thinking for awhile, then finally told him I could only afford one day. I paid him half in advance, we shook hands and I left. I went back to Sue's home and I told her what I had done. Right away Sue said she would help pay for it, but I said no. We reminisced about old times. Our conversation centered on our mother who had passed away just months before Ron had gone on his backpacking vacation, when he met the Moonies. I told her that the last time I had seen Ron was at Mom's funeral and we figured out it was closer to four years, than 3 ½ since then. I was kind of hoping in a way he was in Calgary.

As the day progressed, it got a bit tense, just sitting around, waiting for a call back from the Private Detective. It was not until later that evening that he got back to me. I'll never forget how I felt when Peter verified Peggy's story. Ron was in Calgary. I arranged to drop by his office the following morning to find out more. I spent another restless night as thoughts swirled around in my head. Why would not Ron bother to get in touch with us?

At Peter's office the next morning, I turned down his offer of coffee. I just wanted to know what he had learned. Peter passed me a sheet of paper. As I read through this fact sheet the full impact finally hit me. The fact sheet read:

RON TASSIE from TOFINO B.C.

- Appearance identical to photograph.
 - Lives communally with group at 1128, Regent Crescent. N.E.
 - It is suspected that this is a half way house used to smuggle members from different countries into the United States and hide members from families.
 - Works out of 1007, 17th Avenue S.W. Arrives and leaves via rear door. Always accompanied by at least one other Moonie
 - 1981 FORD VAN GREEN V37258
 - 1980 CHEV VAN BROWN 525 -138
 - 1977 CHEV VAN SILVER 539 - 616
 - Deeply conditioned.
 - Impossible in present state to hold normal conversation with him.
 - If he sees you, he'll report it to others and he'll be removed
 - We will never find him again.
 - Cult has records on family. Addresses, names, employment, 'telephone numbers license plates of vehicles, names of friends and associates.
 - They know you or your family have already approached professional counselors.
 - Cult members on NIL protein diet.
 - Beliefs re-enforced by daily prayer and by each other.
 - Only way to overcome problem is to completely remove them from environment and have them professionally deprogrammed.
 - De-Programming centres only in U.S.A. and will only take members who express desire for De-Programming Cost \$15 - \$30,000.00
 - Abduction is an indictable criminal offence and maximum penalty under the Criminal Code is 5 years under Sec. 247(1)
1. He will resist.
 2. He would have to be restrained initially.
 3. Constantly Supervised by Professional
 4. He will collapse into a ball and Whimper and cry.
 5. Treatment of him to Reverse thinking process will seem
- Inhuman to family and that's why they should not have contact with subject until **He** asks to see them.
 - He will most likely be in-Court #406 at 9.30 a.m. June 5th, 1981 for Case of Abduction which is set down for a plea to be heard.
 - Recommended Family seek professional help and **not get directly involved.**
 - Ron probably has a wife via a mass marriage. She will appear if Legal Process requires her appearance and to claim any monies or Property in event of his death.

I asked Peter that if Ron was in Calgary, why would he not tell his family? Why would his church gather information on us? He said that this was the information he was able

to gather. The people he had talked to said the group Ron was with was a group we should be concerned about.

I took out my cheque book to pay him the rest of what I owed, but he told me to put it away. He said he would have his office send me an invoice but in fact, he never did. The Detective had known where to go for the information.⁷

"If Ron sees you, he'll report it to others and he'll be removed and you will never find him again." I was completely out of my element. I started getting anxious, and feeling a little paranoid. Why would Ron feel it necessary to lie to us and keep his whereabouts a secret? At the supposed time of his arrival in Calgary, Dad was in the hospital there, recuperating from a heart attack. Ron had been in Calgary over Christmas. "They know you or your family has already approached professional counselors". That must be when Dad telephoned a cult information center the TV program had advertised, but how had they found that out?

⁷ We subsequently found out the Private Detective had been in touch with the Calgary Police, they were the source of the information.

ART and RON'S STORY - A SNAPSHOT OF TWO BROTHERS

Ron and I were the only boys in a family of eight children. We had four older and two younger sisters. Only two years apart in age, we grew up together, shared the same room, and as youngsters, often the same bed. We got into trouble together and shared the same punishment. Or one or the other of us would get into trouble and we'd both share the blame! Our folks brought us up strict, the mindset was: "Spare the rod and spoil the child" and "Children are to be seen and not heard". My parents liked to entertain a lot, we two boys were often sent outside, out from underfoot to find our own amusement.

While we were growing up, Dad's career had been in the Royal Canadian Air Force. We moved around a bit as service families do. Ron and I had our squabbles but, were close friends. We learned to depend on each other during times of transition. This made it more tolerable while we adjusted to each new community and made new friends.

Living on military bases back then had a lot of good points. Moving from base to base, there was still a familiarity in the buildings, homes and community structure. We knew what to expect and what was expected of us. We had access to all the recreational facilities available including swimming pool, gymnasium, library, rinks, a movie theater and a lot of organized activities supervised and run by military personnel or dependents. Ron and I took swimming lessons, played baseball, hockey, and were in Boy Scouts. I was an Air Cadet as well. It was a relatively safe environment for children to grow up in.

Our dad was Lutheran and his grandfather was a Lutheran Minister. Mom was schooled by Nuns and decided to raise us Catholic at one point. Later we both served as altar boys at church for a couple of years. Changing beliefs and rituals from Protestant to Catholic, was initially a challenge for some of my older sisters, but for the younger of us, it appeared seamless.

With such a large family, money was tight – our Mom always worked and we all learned early how to contribute to the family. My brother and I shared a paper route, cut lawns, shoveled snow and set pins at the five pin bowling alley. When we were old enough we worked checking coats then washed dishes at the Air Force Base Edmonton Mess Hall where service men ate meals and had social functions. All of us learned to work together and support each other but still had our sibling disputes.

As time went on and we got older, Ron and I went our own ways. I joined the Navy. It was a real experience growing up with the military but it was a lot different being a member of it!

ART'S BOOT CAMP AND MILITARY EXPERIENCE

When I turned eighteen I joined the Navy. We had been living at Canadian Forces Base Edmonton. I enlisted in Edmonton Alberta and went to Calgary for screening. In Calgary I took a test to find out what trade I was best suited for and if I met the military's recruitment criteria. Two weeks later I got the call. I was to report to boot camp at Cornwallis, Nova Scotia in a month's time.

The day I left home, my parents took me for lunch then drove me to the train station. As I gave my Mom a hug I could see tears in her eyes; she hugged me back and told me to write. My dad shook my hand and wished me good luck. He was not one for hugs, but I knew he cared. I traveled by train from Edmonton to Calgary then switched to a train going east. On the train I met a bunch of other young people going to the same place.

Throughout the journey, we got to know each other. We were all young men and woman with different backgrounds and experiences, looking for challenge, a purpose and a chance to see more of the world. Some brought guitars; we sang and partied our way across the country all the way to St. John, New Brunswick. From there we took the ferry to Digby, Nova Scotia. When we arrived in Digby, we boarded a bus that delivered us to the training camp at Cornwallis.

Our arrival there was a sharp contrast to our earlier fun. We were herded off the bus and made to stand in line. Three corporals, one Army, one Navy, and the third Air Force started hollering orders. The men and woman were split up.

We were taken to a room where a line of barbers awaited us; we all had our turn with a razor. Off came the hair. A barber cutting the fellow's hair next me asked him what hair he wanted to keep. The fellow said he wanted to keep the top, so the barber went zip with his razor and handed him a clump of top hair.

We were then herded to another building where we were asked our social insurance numbers. These became our military identification numbers. We were ordered to form three lines. One was for the guys who joined the Navy, one for the Army and one for the Air Force. Each line was handed their uniforms: casual dress and dress uniforms, rain coat, winter coat, hats, tee shirts and underwear, socks, boots, shoes, gym shorts and running shoes. We had to dab paint on everything, using a stencil with our name and identification number.

With our arms full we were then herded to our barracks. The barracks were two stories, shaped like an "H". The middle of the "H" on each floor was called the head area, where the washrooms, shower area and washers and dryers were. The area divided each group of new recruits; four different groups were billeted in each building.

Then we were shown our beds and our lockers. There were two beds with about three feet between them, then a five foot partition and another two beds and so on for the entire length of the room. The ends of the beds faced the lockers and on the other side of the lockers there was another row of beds set up the same way. At the far end there was a small room set up as a lounge area with couches and a soda pop machine.

We were told to change into our new casual uniforms and hand in our civilian clothes. There went our individuality; no matter what our size or shape, in uniform, with our brand new haircuts, we somehow all looked the same. There we stood, feeling more than a little disoriented. We were herded outside, made to form three lines and herded to the mess hall for dinner.

There was no shortage of food there. The menu included three different hot meals, cold cuts, all kinds of salad, dessert, and fruit. It was hard to make choices. But we had to hurry. We were given a half hour to eat and then herded back to our barracks. As we stood in front of our beds, the riot act (all the do's and do not's of life at boot camp) was read to us. Everything had to be done a certain way, how we made our beds, how we put our clothes in our lockers etc.

It was already nine pm and we were told we had to be in our beds, with lights out by ten. We all rushed to the head, got cleaned up and jumped into our sacks. It seemed like I had just closed my eyes when the lights came on at five am. The three corporals who read us the riot act the night before were walking down the hall hollering at us to get out of bed, get cleaned up, get dressed in shorts and tee shirts and be standing in our lines outside the barracks in twenty minutes. We were all half asleep and shivering standing outside. We did a few stretching exercises then went for a two mile run, ending up at the mess hall for breakfast.

We were herded outside again after and taken to a big gymnasium to take part in exercises for an hour then, herded on to the parade square. There we tried to learn to march as a team without running into each other. After two hours of that we were herded back to the barracks to get cleaned up and changed into our casual uniforms for lunch, then classes.

In these classes we were taught our rank *privates* and the ranks of our superiors. We were also shown how to respect their positions, like saluting officers and not questioning superior ranks. We were taught the military names for equipment, tools, weapons and anything else that might have a different name in the civilian world. The idea was to get us to all use the same terms as everyone else in the military to lessen the possibility of confusion.

We went to supper after classes, then were free around five o'clock to clean up the barracks, polish our boots, press our uniforms, write letters, go for a swim or to the gym and do a bit of socializing until lights out at ten. On Saturday mornings we would clean

the whole barracks from top to bottom in readiness for inspections of our lockers and living quarters. If we did not pass, we had to redo it all and lose the free afternoon. Sunday was a day of rest, so getting Saturday afternoon off was important. It gave us a whole day and a half to decompress before the week started again.

The hectic pace did not vary much for the whole twelve weeks at boot camp, but as time went on we got better at the basics like marching, making sure our uniforms were always neat, understanding commands etc. We knew what to expect. There was a lot of peer pressure. If someone was not carrying their weight or performing their duties or disobeyed orders, the whole group would be punished. If we did everything right, we would all be rewarded. This forced us to work together as a team.

Since I grew up on military bases, I already knew a lot of the language and was familiar with a lot of the protocol, but boot camp was still a bit of a shock. For a lot of the other recruits the culture change was so extreme that some had a hard time adjusting at first. There were a number of recruits who just could not adapt and ended up being asked to leave or quit on their own. In boot camp you are forced to make a choice. Either you comply with what's required or get out. But we were given the choice and the recruits that stayed were molded into what the military expected.

The last week at boot camp there were a few social nights for graduates. One evening we were entertained by a hypnotist. She put on an entertaining show. Two recruits I knew well, volunteered to go up and be put under. They were serious guys, at the top of the class and did not believe anyone could hypnotize them. After the performance it upset them to be teased about their behavior on stage, because they had no memory of what had transpired when they were under hypnosis. The show actually made us all a little uneasy, although some of us joked a bit after, that the military should have just used hypnosis to change our behavior from the start because we would have been easier to train.

After boot camp we were all assigned to different places for trade training. We were all revved up for the next phase in our military career. I went to Halifax for my training and again it was a culture shock. I had been programmed to follow every order without question. But when I arrived there, I was treated as an individual member of a team and judged accordingly. Initially I lived in barracks and had to follow the military protocols I learned in boot camp, but I was taking courses now and interacting with others on an intellectual basis. My free time was my own when I was not on duty or on maneuvers.

Once I was assigned to a ship I understood why it was so important to have strict standards. When you have 200 or more adults living in such tight quarters you have to have order or you'll have chaos. It gave me a nice warm feeling being home on my first leave after starting my Halifax training. The family admired my new uniform and my

Mom pampered me. I hung out quite a bit with Ron. We picked up right where we left off.⁸

My next home leave took me to Port Alberni, British Columbia where my family had resettled after Dad retired from the service. Vancouver Island (The Island to those who live there) had been home for us before my Dad joined the Air force. Many of us had been born there. After my grandfather "Doc" Tassie⁹ passed away, a good job offer for Dad led the family once again, back to Alberta - Calgary this time. It was there that Ron completed his high school.

⁸ At the time I was 19 and Ron was 17

⁹ A chiropractor in Parksville and Port Alberni

LIFE AFTER THE NAVY

Life experiences from this point took us in different directions. I married and started a family young. I did not stay in the military and make it a career because after growing up in this structured environment I liked the independence of civilian life. I ended up going to where the jobs were, mostly around Alberta. Both Ron and I, at different times, followed in our father's footsteps working for awhile in the Arctic. I even moved Pat and our sons up to Norman Wells, North West Territories for a few years where my father, mother and youngest sister lived while Dad was manager for Northward Aviation.¹⁰ During that time I worked for Transport Canada. For a time, Ron lived and worked in Norman Wells too.

Visits over the years and living and working in the same small northern community kept the bonds strong between my brother and me. I loved being able to share my family with him. Our boys thought he was the greatest! One event that drew us all particularly close together was the sudden, unexpected death of our mother that left us all devastated.

I had accepted a transfer as foreman to the airport in Fort McMurray in the summer of 1977. I was living in temporary accommodations while Pat and the boys waited to join me. I was at work, when I had a premonition something was wrong. I called Pat at her folks' place in Edmonton to see if everything was okay there. She said my sister Kathy had just called with the news our mom was very sick and had been flown to the hospital in Inuvik. I telephoned Kathy right back and when her husband Ken answered the telephone, I said I heard Mom was sick. He said that it was worse than that, she died! I felt confusion and disbelief. I had just spent two weeks with them in Norman Wells while I covered for the airport manager who was on leave. Dad had suffered a heart attack just a month before and we had all still been worried about him. He arranged for her funeral to be held in Calgary. Those of us from out of town converged on family there as we tried to take solace in talk, hugs and tears. The days leading up to the funeral are somewhat hazy, but I remember the funeral with great clarity. As I viewed my Mom's face for the last time, the reality hit me and I felt like I had been punched in the stomach. We all sat together in the church, crying and squeezing each others' hands. Dad was the head of the family, but Mom was the heart. For a time we were all inconsolable.

¹⁰ Northward Aviation was a small freight and passenger transportation company based out of Edmonton, Alberta

When you suffer a loss like that, you look for answers to heal your heart, but there's no balm anyone can give you. It is something you just have to work through. I was so lucky to have Pat and our boys. Without family you need people around you can trust, because grief makes you vulnerable. I really mourned the loss of my Mom, but now I can recall the good times we had together with a smile. I think of her every day and thank God for giving me the parents I had.

Ron had just started a backpacking holiday when Mom died. He put his trip on hold to go back to Norman Wells with Dad and spent several months there before resuming his trip. As he told me in a call, he just wanted to travel, meet new people and see how other people lived. His plan was to fly to San Francisco, travel south through Mexico and on down to the Yucatan Peninsula.

Resuming his trip after the funeral, Ron called collect from San Francisco to say he had met some nice people who shared a lot of his interests and he had been invited to spend a couple of days with them, I was not concerned. I just told him to be sure and keep in touch. Shortly after when Ron called to tell us that the people he was staying with were part of a religious group that was doing a lot of good things to help the poor and needy, I thought I understood why he wanted to stay. As time went on I did not like the distance that was growing between us, but I had accepted it, because I thought it was his choice.

BACK TO THE MISSION OF TRYING TO FIND MY BROTHER

After I left Private Detective Peter Tarrant's office, I went back to Sue's and discussed with her and Teri what I had been told. I showed them the fact sheet I had been given. I was desperate to talk to Peggy again. I finally got hold of her around six pm when she got home from work and we decided to meet at a restaurant. We sat drinking numerous cups of coffee and talked for hours. I felt emotionally overwrought and was anxious to find out all I could about this group Ron was involved with. I would have stayed all night, but we had no choice but to leave when the restaurant closed. As we were leaving she gave me some literature to read and some names and numbers of people to talk to.

Back with my sisters, I told them I was going to check further and gather more information. I cautioned them not to talk to anyone about it and if Ron contacted them, to act as if he was still in San Francisco. I telephoned the rest of the family too and gave them the same news, the same caution. I talked to my Dad before retiring that night. He was managing the Canstar camp north of Fort McMurray. He told me not to get involved in this and not to do anything that could hurt my family. I could hear the concern in his voice. But being young, and with my feelings in turmoil, I did not listen.

The next morning, when I was at the airport waiting for my flight home, I remember feeling more than a little paranoid that Ron or members of the group he was in might see me there. It was a strange feeling. When I got home Pat and I went over everything that had happened. I showed her the fact sheet the investigator had given me and the information Peggy had compiled. I called work right away and talked to my boss. He said that a relative of his wife's had been involved with the Unification Church too and she had some information on it. I knew Doreen even before I hired on with Texaco, when I was maintenance foreman at the airport and she worked in the office there. So I gave her a call and made arrangements for us to pick up her copy of the book *Moon Webs*, by Josh Freed, later that night. I had always respected Harold and Doreen and the fact that they knew something about this had a big impact on me.

Pat and I studied all the information together. When I am anxious I cannot keep still, so over the next few days, we walked and talked as we tried to digest all that we were learning. We both found it hard to accept that Ron would be in Calgary and not let the family know - not want the family to know. Especially since at the supposed time of his arrival, Dad was in the hospital in Calgary recuperating from a heart attack and he made no effort to contact family there at Christmas. Yet some things fell in to place. It was about six months prior that we had received a letter from Ron relating how much he had enjoyed a trip to the Rocky Mountains. It was also around this time that he had stopped calling collect.

On one of our circuits around the neighborhood, Pat looked at me and said, "You are going to do something aren't you?" I said, "There's something terribly wrong here." Pat agreed. I first tried to find help locally. I met with a mental health psychologist. He

said he had heard about these types of groups, but had no information and could not help me. He was skeptical about the control they had over their members but asked me to share any information we found.

I called the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P) station. The officer I spoke to said they did not get involved in domestics matters unless a crime had been committed. I telephoned a couple of local clergymen and they wanted to talk theology. For me that was not an issue as we were brought up on military bases and taught to respect other people, regardless of race or creed. I started looking farther afield.

I began by calling some of the telephone numbers Peggy had given me and heard heart wrenching stories about children and family members getting caught up in extremist groups. I heard how hard it was to get them out. I telephoned a few deprogrammers and was not very impressed until the last one. A lady in West Virginia, who ran a rehabilitation center, said her son had been on an American bi-centennial cross-country bike trip and when he reached San Francisco, got caught up in the same group as my brother. She and her husband got him out with the help of friends. After that other families started calling them for information and help, because there was nowhere else for them to turn to.

When we were talking to Marie & Lloyd Egan, Pat's sister and brother-in-law in Edmonton, they told us they had talked to their minister, Reverend Ted McKnight. He had given them the name of a University of Saskatoon professor who was knowledgeable on cults – Reverend Colin Clay. When I telephoned him he said he knew Peggy Hogan and had heard of the deprogrammers I had talked to, which was reassuring. We talked for awhile. He gave me the telephone number of another person we might like to speak to, Mike Kropveld, (one of the leading participants in the Moon Webs drama). Reverend Clay and Mike Kropve Id readily dispensed information, but neither recommended hiring deprogrammers.

I was learning more about the scope of the problem, but it did not make the solution any clearer. In the end I decided I just wanted to talk to my brother. I wanted to tell him what I had learned about the group he was in, but I did not want him to disappear out of my life if he did not like what he was hearing. I felt strongly he could be at risk for taking part in illegal activities.

On Monday, I called the deprogrammers in West Virginia again. By now I had decided I wanted their help. The time frame was bad for them. During the ensuing discussion I told them if they could not do it, I felt desperate enough to do it myself. They promised to get back to me that day. Two hours later they telephoned and said they would take the case. A three man team would fly into Calgary that coming Friday. The cost of the team and Rehabilitation would be ten thousand American dollars. A five thousand dollar down payment was required. The remainder would be due upon their arrival at the Rehabilitation Center. In addition, I would be responsible for all other expenses

incurred: accommodation, meals, vehicles, airfares, etc. The estimated cost was about fifteen thousand dollars altogether.

It was done. I did not want anyone else in the family involved, but I telephoned everyone, just to let them know. Reaction was mixed, but overall, supportive. Dad wished me good luck. I could tell he really meant it.

On Tuesday (Monday being the Victoria Day holiday) I made arrangements to take the rest of my annual leave. Pat and I went down to our bank and applied for an \$15,000.00 loan citing family illness as the reason. We were so anxious by this point; we forgot to factor in the difference between the American and Canadian dollars. I eventually had to make up the difference with the assistance of family and by using credit cards. The Loans Manager was compassionate; our credit rating satisfactory. But finalization would have to come from Calgary, perhaps a week's delay. The solution came from Marie and Lloyd. They would take out a demand loan - we could repay them when our loan came through.

"Cult has records on family. Addresses names, employment, telephone numbers, license plates of vehicles, names of friends and associates." It was hard not to be paranoid. Now, as I prepared to leave, I told Pat the less she knew about the particulars from this point on, the better - I would try to get messages to her through her sister or trusted friends.

Tuesday evening I took the bus to Edmonton and overnighted at Marie and Lloyd's. The next morning Marie and I went to the bank. She arranged for the loan and I opened a new account there and wired the required deposit to West Virginia. I then rented a car and drove to Calgary. I had a day and a half to prepare for the team that was due to arrive on Friday afternoon. On the way I checked out a motel that I thought might be a good place to take Ron after we rescued him. Then I drove on to Sue's, to bring her and Teri up to date.

I knew Ron's residential address was 1128 Regent Crescent. N.E. I had the names and addresses of two Unification Church business fronts: Champion Services, A Division of Champion Carpet Cleaners LTD., at 250 One Palliser Square, and Creative Design (an art studio) at 1007 - 17 Avenue S.W.

I drove around to those addresses the next day to get my bearings, then that night I rented two rooms at the Airliner Inn. I called West Virginia to confirm their receipt of the money and the arrival time of the team. I then talked to Pat for awhile and spent another long night tossing and turning.

The next morning I drove to the Calgary airport to pick up the deprogramming team. As they were coming through customs, I recognized one of them by the jacket I was told he would be wearing. I waved to them and they came straight over. I felt nervous as they walked towards me. When they stopped I asked, "West Virginia?" and the

fellow in front extended his hand and said, "Mr. Tassie?" I put out my hand and we shook, then they all introduced themselves. I told them immediately that I was in charge and no decisions would be made without my approval. My main concern was for my brother. I wanted to talk to him, but I did not want him hurt in any way. They confirmed they were there to work for me and would not do anything without my authorization.

We went to the hotel to get settled in; then telephoned the head of the family operation, Ken Conner in West Virginia. During our conversation, Ken said that the team had to be back in West Virginia for a court case in two weeks, so we had to act fast. I told him I was not happy about the deadline, but I guessed I had no choice. He apologized and said it had just come up. The guys were involved in a rescue that had gone wrong and charges had been pressed against them. Oh boy, that was the last thing I needed to hear.

The four of us talked for awhile and I shared the information I had, then we went over some maps of the city together. I asked them how they all got involved in this; they appeared so dedicated to what they were doing. Turned out, Mike was an ex-Moonie. He was a slim African American about six feet tall, very pleasant and well educated. His parents had arranged his rescue and deprogramming two years earlier. He had been a university student, training to be a teacher when he had met members of the Unification Church and was recruited. Eventually he had dropped out of school to fundraise and work full time for them.

Rod was actually Ken's son. He was a husky man about five foot seven, who boxed in a club that was run by his dad. It was his mother who I had talked to initially. He said he had helped his parents get his older brother out of the Moonies and he had been working with them to help other people ever since.

The team leader was called Pete. He was a Conner family friend who had also helped with the initial rescue. He looked physically fit, was about six-one, slim, good looking and a member of the same boxing club as well. Pete and Rod had strong Southern accents. Mike's American accent was less pronounced because he was from one of the northern United States.

It was getting late in the afternoon, but we decided to do a quick drive by the addresses we had. When we got back we went to supper. We talked in the restaurant for about an hour and then went to our rooms. Mike and I shared one room and Pete and Rod the other.

We gathered again to make another quick call to the United States then Pete and Rod returned to their room. I had a million questions, so Mike talked with me for quite awhile before we called it a night.

It was interesting listening to his story about his experience as a Moonie. I still found it hard to believe anyone could have that much control over another individual. He also had a pile of newspaper articles with him. As I was looking through them I noticed articles on Jonestown and we discussed the tragedy that had occurred in Guyana, where over nine hundred Americans had committed suicide.

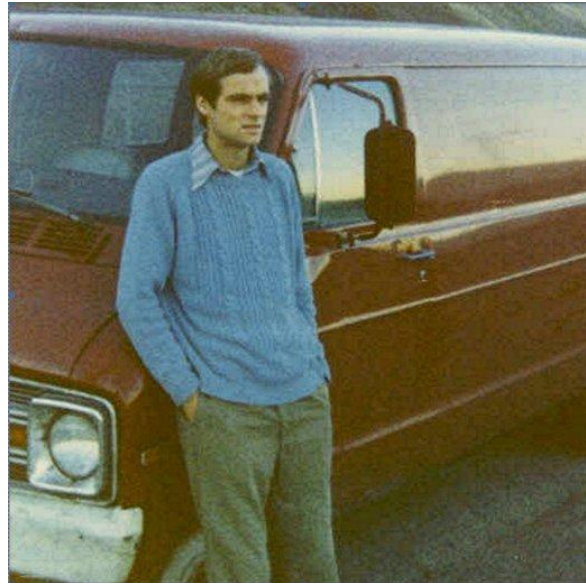
When we had heard those first news reports, in November of 1978, I could not comprehend how that many people could be convinced to do that. I now asked Mike, straight out, while he was a member of the Unification Church, if he had been asked to commit suicide would he have done it? Mike said he was not sure, but they'd convinced him to cut off ties with his family and quit university. He had done that without questioning, so anything could have been possible. He ended by saying they can convince you to do anything by manipulating you into believing it is for the better. Even if you aren't totally convinced, you make an emotional decision to do what's expected. I then asked him, "What if Jim Jones' group would have turned their paranoia outward, against society, instead of inwards the way they did?" Mike said, "That's a scary thought!"

We rose early the next morning, all pumped up with the anticipation of what the day would bring. I was sure we would find Ron. I was equally sure I could talk to him and we could get all this sorted out. We looked over the street maps at breakfast. We drove to the Creative Design art store and decided to observe the activity in front of the building from the third floor of a parkade. There was a man walking back and forth in front of the building the whole time we were there. He was looking around and talking to customers as they were entering the business. We later found out he was a security guard hired by the Church, because two people had already been 'kidnapped' from their Calgary group. One of them was John Ableseth, their leader, or centre person, but he'd gotten away and come back and now they were being more careful.

We watched there for awhile and then went to the house where the group was living. I crouched down as we drove around it. There were two vans parked in back. We parked the car beside a playground, where we had a clear view across the field and down the alley to where the vans were parked. We were far enough away that we were not obvious and could see the vans and the house clearly.

It was decided I would stay in the car with Mike and keep out of sight in case Ron saw me. I gave Pete and Rod the picture I had of Ron and they got out of the car and walked across the field. They walked around the block a few times to see if there was any activity in or around the house.

THE RESCUE



Picture of Ron in San Francisco

When they got back to the car they stopped alongside and told us they did not see anything. At that moment, one of the vans started to pull out of the alleyway. The guy's jumped into the back seat and we pulled out to follow the van. My brother was not in it as far as we could see, but one of the guys and a girl from the group were.

We followed them around downtown all day as they went in and out of buildings with their cleaning supplies, until late at night. It was too dark to do anymore so we went back to the hotel. We spent some time going over everything we saw that day, and then gave Ken a call.

Ken passed on a tip from Doug (an ex-Moonie who'd been rescued from the same Calgary group a month earlier) that they all went to Stanley Park on Sunday mornings to pray. If Ron was in Calgary he would be there tomorrow with the rest of the group.

Sunday morning we debated going straight to Stanley Park, but decided to go back to the playground instead. Around 9am, six members of the group came out of the house got into the vans and took off. We decided to follow one of the vans, but lost it. We asked some young people if there was a park nearby and they told us Riley Park was. We found their vans there, in the parking lot. From on top of a small rise, we observed the members walking around by themselves, looking like they were praying. I remember feeling a little embarrassed, watching them go through their rituals during what should be a private moment. I was more concerned though, about finding my brother.

Mike explained they would usually bury something given by Reverend Moon, in every city the cult operated in and the burial spot would be considered holy ground, giving them a place to pray. When they went to get back in the vans I could see my brother definitely was not with them and I felt really discouraged. We followed them back to the house and then decided to grab some lunch.

One of the vans was gone when we returned. We hung around until we saw the other one leave and then followed it to the Palliser Square downtown. When it pulled over to park, we pulled in about ten cars behind and watched them unload cleaning supplies. We drove once around the block and spotted the other van there as well. We thought they must be there to work, and settled in to wait. It was late by the time they finished; the show at a nearby theatre had just ended. We watched the Moonies leave; Ron was not with them.

Ken told us over the telephone, he thought if Ron was there we should have spotted him by now. (We found out after, that Ron was in San Francisco attending a week-long workshop.) He knew my costs were mounting and the situation with the court case was leading him towards bringing Rod and Pete home earlier.

I understood the pressure they were under, but I told Ken I was desperate to continue. I did not think Mike and I could do much by ourselves and I would not be able to afford to try this again. I went for a long walk to think before going to bed.

The next day followed much the same routine as the previous days. We threw a football around in the field or sat in our rented car. We kept an eye on the vans and when one of them would take off we followed it with the hope Ron would be in it or it would lead us to him.

By now we knew the occupants of the house by their appearance and had learned some of their habits. They took back alleys and long routes to their destinations, always looking over their shoulders. They never traveled alone. There were always two or more people in the vans, but my brother was never one of them. That was so frustrating.

All the pressures were starting to get to us. Each morning we had had to check out of our hotel rooms so we would be ready to go if we picked up Ron. (I had explained we were contractors and never knew when the job would be wrapped up.) Sitting in a vehicle day after day was testing our patience. We could not run the engine continuously, so the air inside got stale and at different times the heat was stifling.

We were always worrying about what we would say to people if anybody got too curious. At the same time we were trying to avoid the suspicions of the Moonies we were tailing around town. At one point I had even changed rental cars and switched hotels. At times, I could hardly believe I was doing this.

Inevitably, as this day wore on, we all started to get restless and irritable. We were even starting to run out of things to talk about. At that point I decided it would be beneficial for us to take a break even though we were under a time constraint. So we agreed to take the next day, Tuesday, off.

That night I could not sleep and got up at 4am to read over some more of the articles Mike had brought with him. The other guys did not roll out of the sack until around 11am. By then, I felt like I had already put in a full day. We had breakfast then I took them to Heritage Park and the Calgary Zoo. I think they had a lot of fun going through all the exhibits; me, I just kept worrying about things as I followed them around. We never once talked about what had brought us together while we were sightseeing.

We drove back to the schoolyard around 6 pm and sat in the car, watching the alley and talking. The guys thought they should make plans to return home; they did not want to spend any more of my money. I asked them to wait, at least until the end of the week.

At the house across the street from where we were parked, a man kept peeking through the curtains at us. He seemed upset, so after a while, we thought we had better approach him and try to explain what we were doing before he called the police. Pete and I went up to the house and knocked on the door. The fellow who opened the door was very nervous at first until I explained the situation with my brother and that I was trying to catch a glimpse of him in a house across the field. He was suddenly very relieved. He thought we were the police watching him because he was growing two marijuana plants in his house! I thought to myself, "What next?!"

We went back to the car and an hour later, Pete said they'd had enough and wanted to go into the house and grab Ron. They were getting frustrated. I freaked out and cried, "Absolutely not! There is no way I want to be that confrontational! I do not want anyone to get hurt, not my brother or anyone else in the house!"

I told the guys to hang on; I got out of the car and walked to a house on the street, directly behind the house we were watching. I knocked on the door and a lady answered. How do you begin to explain this kind of a situation to a stranger and ask to use her backyard to spy on the people living behind her?

My first attempt did not go very well. She said she had heard of the group on TV and she was going to call a friend in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. At this point, although barely able to keep my own composure, I was able to calm her down. I explained I hadn't seen my brother in almost four years and if this group found out we were watching them, I might never see him again.

She agreed to let us use her backyard. When I looked back there, I found I could not see through the trees and bushes against the back fence to the yard beyond. I was so

deflated! I went back to talk to the lady and again pleaded with her not to tell anyone what we were doing. She said she would not tell anyone for a couple of days and I thanked her. I then walked to the house next door trying to work up the courage to go through that all again.

When I knocked on that door an older lady answered. I humbly went through my spiel, and then to my surprise she casually said no problem. She said the newspaper had taken pictures from her kitchen. One of the group's members had been grabbed a few weeks ago by his parents, but had escaped and was now suing his parents for kidnapping. I felt like my heart stopped for at least a couple of seconds. But I gathered my composure again and thanked her.

I almost skipped back to the car, I was so excited. I jumped in the front seat of the car. The guys were looking at me strangely. Pete said, "What the heck is up with you?" I could hardly restrain myself as I told them what happened. They started to laugh and called me a crazy son of a gun.

We drove over to the house and the lady came out to meet us. She told us to call her Mabel and to feel free to come and go as we wanted. She said the lady next door was a friend of hers. She would talk to her. "WOW"!

We went into Mabel's backyard. It had a perfect view of the back of the house we were watching, the whole backyard, and the two vans. We sat on the grass looking through the cracks in the fence until it started getting dark. We were all totally exhausted by then, so we told Mabel we would be back in the morning. The next morning we were at the house by 7am and went to the backyard. Mabel called us in to the house and said we could watch from her dining room. That was so nice of her and we were all appreciative. She had two of her grandchildren visiting, around 3 and 4 years old. We helped to keep them occupied and played games with them while taking turns watching from the window. It was sure a nice change from sitting in the car.

Around 9am, while Mike was watching the house, he excitedly called out that two people had just come out the door. I grabbed the binoculars. The two men had their backs to me and I muttered over and over, turn around, turn around. I watched one of the men pass a large wad of bills to the other and then he turned and looked directly at the window where we were crouched. We all dropped to the floor and I slowly peered over the window edge. He was still looking towards the house and it hit me like a bolt of lightning, that it was Ron. "**It's him! It's him!**" I hollered.

I was looking through binoculars from a distance of about 75 feet away. I had barely recognized him at first. I had a real sinking feeling when I saw the changes in him - he was gaunt, his face flat, pale, expressionless. I felt more determined than ever now to carry through with my plan.

As I watched, another fellow came out of the house and the three of them turned and walked down the stairs. They went over to one of the vans and got in; Ron was in the driver's seat. The van started to pull out of the driveway. My heart was racing and we were stumbling all over each other to get to the car before we lost them. We were about to pile out the front door when we saw the van approaching. We came to an abrupt halt, banging into each other and very nearly toppling down the stairs. The van passed by. We ran to the car and took off.

The traffic was heavy and they were moving from lane to lane. We were falling further and further behind so we sped up, accidentally cutting off another car just before screeching to a stop at a red light. We watched the van disappear as a Calgary police car pulled up beside us. We tried to look less conspicuous.

The car we cut off stopped right behind us and the driver got out and went over to the police car. The police officer turned on his flashing lights, then got out of his car and came over to us. Mike was driving and the officer asked to see his driver's license. He noted it was an American license and Mike said we were vacationing in Calgary and was unfamiliar with the streets. He apologized for cutting off the car. The officer looked over Mike's license again, admonished us to be more careful and let us on our way with a warning. Whew!

We were on McKnight Boulevard, so I figured Ron and the others were on their way to the airport. Pete and Rod talked about grabbing Ron there, but I thought with security police and likely a lot of other people around, we would get caught for sure. My confidence level was not too high at that point, having just had one officer lecture us already.

When we got to the airport the empty van was at the departure area and there was a police car right behind it. Just then, Ron and one of the guys came out of the terminal and got into the van. We could not do anything with the police car sitting there, so we followed the van into town, into the Chinatown area, where we lost it. We could not spot it in the area and it was not at Creative Design, so we drove back to the house and waited for them there.

It was about two hours later when they pulled into the backyard. Ron and the other fellow went straight into the house and half an hour later he came out with three other guys and a girl. They took both of the vans and we followed them back downtown. They unloaded some cleaning equipment at the Palliser Square Bank and went to work. We could see them inside, but there were two security guards in the area so we decided not to take any chances. We knew from experience they were going to be there for awhile, so we decided to take in a movie to kill some time.

We got out of the theater at 11:30pm and sat in the car. Shortly after, they came out of the bank with their cleaning equipment and got into the van. We were ready to try and

grab Ron, when one of the guards came out onto the sidewalk, so we gave up that idea in a hurry.

We followed them, with the intent of grabbing Ron at the house. As we got close to their street, the van started to slow down, and then went around the block a couple of times. They seemed to be taking extra precautions, so we decided to go back to our hotel and try again in the morning.

Around six am we were back at the house and went straight to the backyard. None of the vans were there and our first thought was that they were on to us and we had lost our chance. While we were standing out there in the early morning darkness, Mabel opened the door and invited us back into the house.

She could see we were depressed that the vans were gone. She offered us a coffee and told us not to let it get us down, things would work out. She was starting to feel a part of this as well. We settled in the dining room and around 11am a van pulled up. It was Ron and he was by himself which was unusual. He was wearing work clothes and went straight into the house. Our moral instantly skyrocketed. Pete said, "Let's go get him"! I cautioned, "Let's wait a few minutes; there might be someone in there with him." Ten minutes later he came out wearing a suit, got in the van and drove off. We rushed towards the door. When the van went by we ran out and into the car and followed him to the northeast industrial area. Ron stopped at a warehouse on a main street and went in. We stopped the car just down the street and Pete and Rod jumped out of the back seat and chased after him. My heart was pounding, but after what seemed like forever, they came back to the car without Ron.

Pete said they ran into the warehouse and were about to grab him when some people came out of an office. They stopped dead in their tracks, just as Ron turned around and looked at them. So he and Rod immediately turned around and walked quickly out.

Now they thought for sure Ron might suspect something. It was a long half hour before Ron came out of the warehouse, looked around, got into the van and drove away. He drove right downtown and then turned down a back alley. We drove down to the corner to make our turn, but it was a one way street and we could not turn in the direction we wanted, so we lost him. The guys were frustrated we hadn't grabbed him back at the house. I was thinking the same thing and was disappointed in myself. I thought I had better keep my mouth shut next time, if there was a next time.

We decided to drive back to Creative Design hoping he would go there. We were there watching the building, when I had the feeling we should go back to the alley. Everyone agreed and when we got there we saw Ron's van. We all felt this could be our opportunity.

Mike backed in beside the only other car parked there. I was sitting beside him and I was to hold the back door open when they grabbed Ron. As Pete and Rod got out of the car, I called out a suggestion from a movie I had seen, to jam a cardboard match stick into the lock on the door of the van, which they did before disappearing down the street.

Mike and I sat in the car and talked about what we should do if Ron started to run or if somebody showed up and saw us. Then low and behold, another car pulled into the parking lot. At the same time as this driver was getting out of his car, we saw Ron come out of the building and head for the van.

This was it! We looked frantically around for the others. I muttered, "Where are those guys? Where'd they go? Jeez we're going to lose him!" Mike started up the car and I reached back and opened the back door slightly. Ron bent down to unlock the van door. When the key would not go in he peered down, noticed the cardboard jammed in the lock, stiffened and turned to run, right into the waiting arms of Pete and Rod.

I had the back door wide open as our car pulled up beside them. They pushed Ron's head down towards the door and I reached over and grabbed him by the belt. I was yanking with all my might and brought all three of them into the car just as it accelerated and we sped away! It happened so fast Ron never had a chance to call out.

I looked back to see if the driver of the other car had noticed anything. He was still pulling something out of his trunk and hadn't seen a thing. Everyone was terrified! Ron was being held securely against the back seat. He cried out, "What's going on? What's going on? What are you thugs doing do to me?" I grabbed one of his hands right away and said, "It's me. It's Art. It's Art, your brother. Don't worry, Ron. No one's going to hurt you!" Ron yelled again, "What are you thugs doing to me?" I still had hold of his hand, "It's me, your brother. No one is going to hurt you. All I want to do is talk to you!" At that point he recognized me. Then he seemed to stare right through me and his expression changed from fear to terror. I repeated, "Ron, don't be afraid. No one's going to hurt you. I just want to know what's going on with you! Why didn't you let us know you were in Calgary? Why have you lost faith and trust in us?"

He yelled at me, "Art, you don't know what you're doing! What are you doing with these gangsters? You'll go to jail for this; the church will sue you!" I yelled back, "I don't care. I've got you. Nobody's going to hurt you. I won't let anyone harm you in any way!" He yelled out again, "Art, you don't know what you're doing!"

From Pete came the response, "Ron, this is the first day of the rest of your life!" I kept trying to reassure him. I guess I could holler louder than my brother because suddenly he stopped. His face went blank. Ron started chanting, "Get out Satan! Get out Satan! Satan get out!" Then he became silent. He spaced out as he slumped back in the seat.



Ron being held securely in the back seat. This picture was taken moments after his rescue.

Rod took Ron's pager from his belt and threw it in a dumpster as we were passing by. We were heading to Sundre, Alberta, a ranching town about 1 1/2 hours northwest of Calgary. I had checked out a motel there on my drive down from Edmonton.

For most of that time, Ron sat with his eyes closed while I continued to hold his hand and ask him questions. Pete and Rod kept trying to get a reaction as well. Finally, he started giving me some answers and squeezing my hand, but his expression didn't change until we came to an abrupt stop, after coming over the crest of a hill. All of a sudden, we found ourselves in the middle of a cattle drive!

Ron opened his eyes and started to holler for help! Pete and Rod held him more securely against the seat and I instantly turned up the music on the radio. A cowboy on horseback was looking directly down on us. I nodded my head at him. With the radio blaring he could not hear Ron but after he moved on by, he looked back with a puzzled expression on his face.

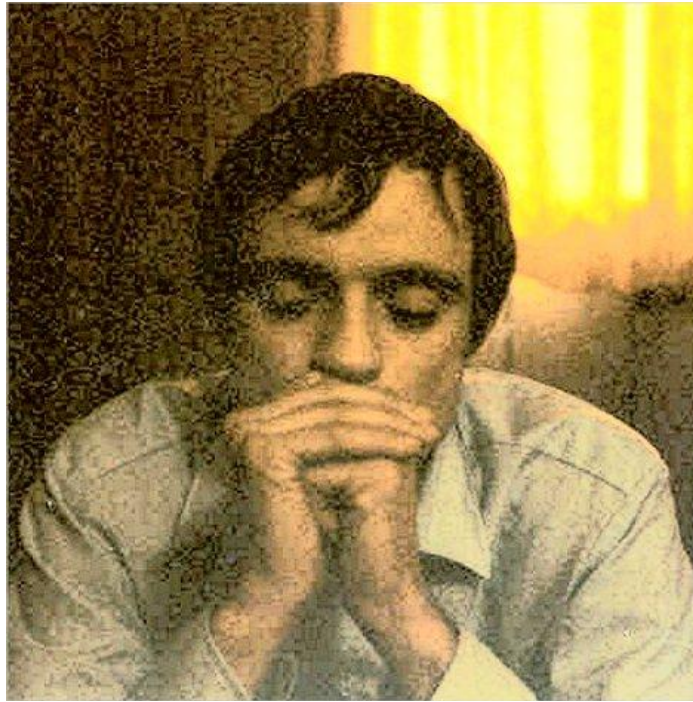
He stopped to talk to another cowboy and they both glanced back at the car and then got back to moving the herd. I was sweating bullets by that time, my stomach was upset and I was wondering what could happen next? What had I gotten myself into? This was nuts! After the longest fifteen minutes of my life, we were finally clear of the herd and on our way again; the whole time I had been reaching over the back of the seat holding Ron's hand.

It took us two hours to get to the motel in Sundre. It was then I let go of his hand for the first time. My arm was numb from hanging over the back of the front seat for so long. I could hardly lift it to put on my jacket. I got out of the car with Pete and we went into the office to check in. I had actually had adjoining rooms reserved, but because I was two days late, I had to take two rooms on opposite ends of the motel. This was inconvenient, but we had no choice.

I used an alias to check us in and paid cash for the rooms. Pete took the keys and left. I had trouble filling out the forms and the lady looked at me strangely. She asked if I was okay and I said I had slept on my arm and it was still numb.

While Pete and I were in there, Rod blocked another attempt by Ron to holler for help when a girl passed by. My brother was not giving in easily. Pete looked over the room before Mike and Rod brought Ron in. He removed all the cords, took a piece out of the telephone and checked out the bathroom. Once they had him inside, he examined Ron's clothes in case he had anything concealed he could hurt himself with. They were asking him to remove his slacks about the time I got back and that upset me. I pulled Pete aside and asked him what the heck he was doing? He said members of this group were taught ways to escape if they were 'kidnapped' and if they could not get away, to hurt themselves so they would have to be taken to a hospital. I still thought it was overkill, but I just went over to Ron and grabbed his hand and said I was sorry. I'd been frightened by things I'd learned and I didn't know how else to find out what was going on with him.

He said, "Art, you don't understand. When the church finds us you will go to jail. I signed a letter giving them permission to press charges against anyone who tries to force me to leave them." I said, "I don't care. I need to know what's going on and if you're in trouble or not."



Ron sitting on the bed at the Motel in Sundre

I sat beside him holding his hand again and tried to talk with him, giving him news of the family and asking more questions. He wouldn't respond and just sat there for four hours while I pleaded with him to say something, anything and the team tried to tease a response out of him. Finally, he turned to me and said if I let him go nothing would happen to me.

I begged him again to please just listen to what these guys had to say. At this point I think Ron started to get a little concerned for my state of mind and agreed to listen, but added that if they said anything negative about his church or his beliefs, he would shut them out. I said that was all I wanted.

He added he would not go to any rehab center because he had heard they torture you to break your faith. I promised him we would not go to a rehabilitation center. All I wanted was for him to listen.

Ron said he felt tired then and wanted to get some sleep. He lay back on the bed, pulled the top cover over himself and went right to sleep. Everybody was exhausted, so we all decided to go to bed. I slept beside Ron. Each of the others took a turn throughout the night lying in front of the door, while the other two grabbed some sleep in the other room.

Ron woke up about nine am and looked better after having a good sleep. He commented that that was the longest sleep he remembered having in the past 3 ½

years. He said he averaged about 2 to 4 hours a night if he was lucky and never had a day off in all that time. He got up to use the bathroom, but before they would let him, they removed all the loose items in there except the hand soap and towels. The door was taken off the hinges and one of the guys stood in the door way with his back to Ron all the time he was in there. I was pretty upset with this but they said it was necessary for his safety.

After Ron finished cleaning up, I asked if he was hungry. He said that he was. It turned out he'd been fasting for seven days. I went to the convenience store beside the motel and bought fruit and sandwiches and picked up bacon and eggs from the restaurant nearby. My arms were full when I returned. I had remembered reading that Unification Church members didn't eat that well anyway and had next to no protein in their diet. I wanted Ron to start eating properly again. We breakfasted together and even joked around a bit. Then the discussion turned more serious again.

They started asking Ron questions, like, was he married? Ron said no, he was engaged to a girl from Honduras who Reverend Moon had picked out for him and who he really loved. I remembered when he'd telephoned and told me this, I'd been really happy for him. Then they ask him if he had ever met her. He said he hadn't, yet. Reverend Moon had matched him with a picture of her at a mass engagement in New York. He had talked to her on the telephone, but through an interpreter, because she could not speak English. This information blew me away.

The team started to tease him about not being man enough to pick his own wife and following this group without questioning anything. At that Ron just spaced out again. I got his attention back and he started to listen again but was very upset. They asked him why he worked practically day and night for no money, slept on the floor and never got a day off for this so-called 'Messiah', who had a number of mansions and a yacht and ate only the best food.

They threw question after question at him. They read him newspaper clippings to reveal things he had never been told and passages from the Bible to bring into question the teachings of the Divine Principle (Unification Church Bible). They wanted to get him thinking about what he had been taught to believe. Ron was floundering for answers and the atmosphere was tense.

Suddenly we heard knocking at the door; it opened and one of the owners of the motel walked in to make up the beds. She looked startled to see Ron sitting on the bed in his dress shirt and underwear, with the four of us sitting around him. She murmured an apology for bothering us as she turned and walked out of the room, shutting the door behind her. What would she be thinking? We looked at each other in alarm. I gathered my composure and I walked over to the office. She was standing with her husband at the counter. I said that must have looked strange when you walked into the room. She said it did but in the motel business you see a lot of strange things.

I asked if they'd ever heard of a group called the Moonies. She said yes her girlfriend got caught up in it when she was going to school in England and it was really a bad organization. "Oh thank God!" I said fervently with a sigh of relief and explained about my situation with my brother. They promised they would not tell anybody what we were doing and wished me good luck.

When I went back to the room, two of the guys were having a beer. I asked them not to drink in front of Ron because it was against his beliefs. They agreed and went outside to finish their drinks. Mike resumed his questioning. Ron was highly agitated and mad about the whole business. He said he was tired and lay back on the bed and shortly after fell asleep. This was the pattern. Ron was bombarded with questions and information. Then he was given time to think about the information he was shown. He was able to walk around the room, eat and sleep when he wanted, but he was not allowed to leave the room.

While Ron was sleeping, Pete called me aside and told me they'd telephoned West Virginia, and been told they had to get back by the end of the week and to be careful because the police were looking for us. They said they had to move Ron to the rehab center in the United States before there was a warrant issued for us.

I said, "What? I just promised Ron he would not have to go!"

They said they had no choice. I could stay here with Ron or we could all go together. So I had no choice either. But I did not mention anything to Ron that day. The next morning Ron woke up more rested and hungry again. He was already looking better and seemed more alert and friendly. I went to the closest shopping center and bought him a change of clothes.

I felt protective towards Ron and was constantly worried about whether or not I was doing the right thing and how this could be damaging our relationship. I wasn't looking forward to telling him we would be going to the Rehabilitation center tomorrow, but knew I couldn't put it off much longer.

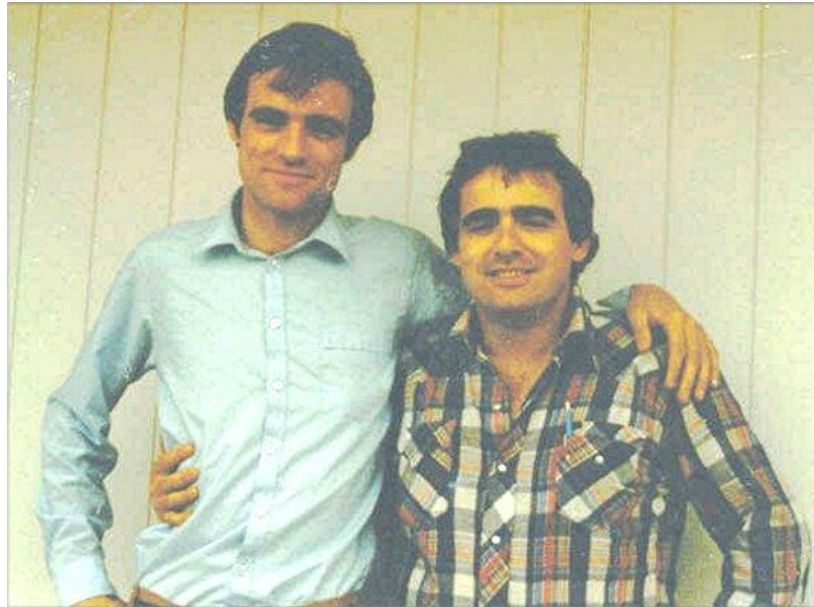
When I got back, I went right over and sat down on the side of the bed beside Ron and told him the news. He stared right at me, looking at me as if I had betrayed him and said accusingly, "You told me we would not have to go to a Rehabilitation center!"

At that point I broke down. I couldn't reply. I stood up, my head bowed, repeating over and over again, "I blew it! I blew it! I blew it!" At this, Ron started to get concerned for me. He assured me, "It's alright. I want to go with you. If it's all been false, I want to know it. If not, I will go back." I said that's all I asked.

We immediately started making plans to leave the following day, Sunday. We called the rehabilitation center in West Virginia and told them we were heading south

tomorrow. They would take care of the plane reservations and give us the flight information when we got over the border.

TWO BROTHERS OFF TO THE U.S.



Sunday morning, before we moved out, Pete prepared a statement for Ron to sign, as a precautionary measure, saying he was with us of his own free will. Ron signed it without comment. I did not know at the time that Doug (another member that was rescued by his parents) told the Conner's all the members in Calgary signed a form letter. This letter gave the Church permission to act on behalf of the member legally if they were grabbed.

LETTER SIGNED BY RON BEFORE GOING TO THE U.S.

May 31, 1981

R

To whom it may concern I Ron TASSIE
was a member of Unification Church a mind control
cult. I wish to annul any association and
documents I signed while in the Unification Church
I am traveling with my brother ART TASSIE
and friends of my own free will. Any attempts
made on my behalf by members of Unification Church
are solely to their advantage and against
my wishes as a free thinking individual.

If I am again approached and psychologically
coerced to leave my family and friends by members
of Unification Church I request that my family
once again rescue me because I will not
be acting on my own free will

signed Ron TASSIE
witnessed A R TASSIE

We all got a little exercise throwing the football around outside, before finally getting underway about eleven a.m. We drove through Calgary and on down to the Montana border.

Ron was sitting in the back seat with Rod and Pete on either side of him. It was a hot day and the back windows only rolled down two inches. We had air conditioning but it was still stuffy and I felt sorry for Ron.

We grew increasingly nervous as we approached the American border. We were not sure what Ron would do. We had worked out three reasons why we were traveling together to the United States. I was driving, but when the customs official came over to ask where we were heading, it was Ron who had the composure to speak up and say that our friends had been doing some fishing with us, now we were going down to do some fishing with them. So after looking over my driver's license, he waved us on through.

We arrived in Kalispell, Montana, later that evening, just as it was getting dark. We took a couple of rooms at a hotel, and then telephoned West Virginia. We thought we'd be directed to go to Great Falls, Montana and catch a plane out of there, but found we were to fly out of the Kalispell airport in the morning instead.

The guys decided to look around the town. Ron and I stayed in our room, called room service to bring up our supper and talked and watched TV for a while before crashing. Watching TV was a treat for Ron because in the cult they were not allowed free access to television, radio, newspapers or any reading material other than their own literature. They were taught Satan used these mediums to corrupt minds.

We were all up early for the drive to the airport then flew to Denver. We disembarked at the terminal and headed for the escalator. As we were riding down, Ron recognized someone from another cult handing out magazines and asking for donations. Ron quickly veered away from him, explaining that he had run into him a few times when he was fundraising himself.

Ron was especially afraid that he might be seen by members of his own group. He knew he would have to go back with them and press charges against me. It was an anxious three hour wait for all of us before we finally boarded the plane for Atlanta, Georgia. We spent another hour on the ground in Atlanta, and then flew on to Charlotte, North Carolina. We rented a car there for the two hour drive to the rehab center.

It was dark by the time we arrived. We went into the house and were greeted by a wonderful lady everyone called Mama Lou. She was the lady who had impressed me the most when I was calling all over the country trying to find help. She gave Ron a big hug and said he was so welcome there. We sat around the kitchen table talking and joking for a few hours then went to bed. Ron and I slept in the same room. Ron woke before me the next morning and was already having breakfast when I walked into the kitchen - Mama Lou's famous sausage gravy on biscuits. I was so hungry and they tasted great.

After breakfast Ron and I went outside. It was a beautiful morning and the dew was still on the grass. We walked around the area enjoying the day for at least a couple of hours. The rehabilitation center and the other neighboring homes were positioned in a horseshoe shape around a large pond fed by the adjoining lake.

The rehab center turned out to be just a family home on a lake. There were no walls or fences to keep anybody imprisoned. Mama Lou's teenage daughter and her friends were in and out of the house all the time and another daughter came home from college while we were there. Two of her three sons were already married.

The neighbors around the pond would drop by for coffee and to see who the new visitors were. They were used to meeting ex-cult members recuperating there. Ron had free run of the place, but there was always someone keeping an eye on him. Basically the Conner home acted as a half-way house between the cult and the ex-cult member's home. They combined talk about destructive cultism with reading, rest and recreation in a supervised family atmosphere. Being at the lake provided wonderful recreational opportunities, swimming, boating and waterskiing. We all took advantage of that while we were there.

By the time we got back from our walk, Pete and Rod were getting ready to go home to their families. I was sorry to see them go because we had shared such an intense experience. I saw Rod Conner after that, but I never did see Pete again.

Ron happened to be the only one in rehabilitation at this particular time, so it was arranged for Doug Lenz to fly down and visit with him for about a week during his stay. Since Doug had been rescued from Ron's group in Calgary just two months prior, his parents were a little anxious about them getting together, but he wanted to come, so they gave their approval.

Doug had been recruited by Moses Durst, a prominent Moonie figure, when he was on holiday in San Francisco after completing, with honors, his Bachelor of Engineering degree. He had ended up working without a visa, cleaning carpets with Ron and the others in Calgary. Ron, Mike and Doug spent time together, talking about their experiences, and when he could, Ken Conner Jr. came to spend time with Ron as well. He was the son they had rescued from the Moonies. This was an important part of Ron's Rehabilitation experience, because they understood what he went through. I sure didn't.

Ron and I continued to spend a lot of the time together though. We would talk about our family and growing up together. As time went by, I started to notice more and more change in him. He was not so withdrawn, and he had more life in his face. Ron was still hanging onto his beliefs though and insisted he was still planning on marrying the girl he was engaged to. I was always afraid of offending him and still felt over-protective and watchful.

At times, when we were all relaxing together, Ron didn't seem all that different than he'd ever been and then I'd wonder if his cult experience had really been that bad. Then I'd think of some of the things I had learned and give my head a shake. One thing I really could not comprehend at that point was Ron slipping in and out of this altered state. I would see his facial expression change when he was under pressure or

sometimes just sitting quietly and you could tell his mind was somewhere else. The events of the next few days clarified things for me.

On Thursday, Ken Conner Sr. was finally able to leave his printing business early and come out to the lake. When he and Ron met, they hit it off right away and kidded around with each other throughout most of the day. But that night, when we were all sitting around the living room, talking, Ken challenged Ron about his beliefs and the control the organization had over him. They got into a really heated discussion. Ken had the information to back up his arguments, whereas Ron only had what he had been led to believe, so he became really defensive and angry. Ron went to bed after that session really upset. When we got up the next morning, Ken was already gone and Ron was still troubled about the night before. The five of us had quite a long discussion, and then Ron and I went for a walk by ourselves. Ron told me he wanted to leave, he had had enough. I pleaded with him to stay a bit longer and he grudgingly agreed. He spent most of that day reading.

Saturday, for the most part, was more relaxed; we did more swimming and water skiing, played football and threw the Frisbee around. Ron had actually been having a lot of fun there. This was the first holiday he had had since he had been recruited into the group. I was getting worn out!

That evening though, Ken came back and right away he and Ron had another go round. Every time Ron would ignore him and space out, Ken would look right into his glazed eyes and say, "You're a Moonie again!" Ron would shout back a reply like, "Yes I'm a Moonie; what are you going to do about it?"

After an hour or so of this, Ron wanted to get out and go for a walk – he was very troubled. So we walked around the pond and then returned to the house. He said he wanted to be alone for a while to think, so I went in to the washroom. When I came out Ron was gone and I was frantic. It was the first time in nine days he had been out of my sight.

I ran back in and asked Lou where he was and she said he had gone next door. As I rounded the corner of the neighbor's house I saw Ron on the deck, talking with him. He had often play football or just passed the time with us. Ron enjoyed his friendship.

I took another walk around the pond, angry with myself for being so overprotective. I returned to the neighbor's, but saw Ron was gone. As I started back to the house, I noticed him sitting in the shadow of a clump of trees. I went straight over and asked him if he was okay and he said he was alright although I could see he was still distressed. We walked around the pond once more, before I could persuade him to come inside.

When we walked in, Ken told Ron he was sorry he'd been so hard on him, but if Ron did not question what had happened to him he would never understand what they'd

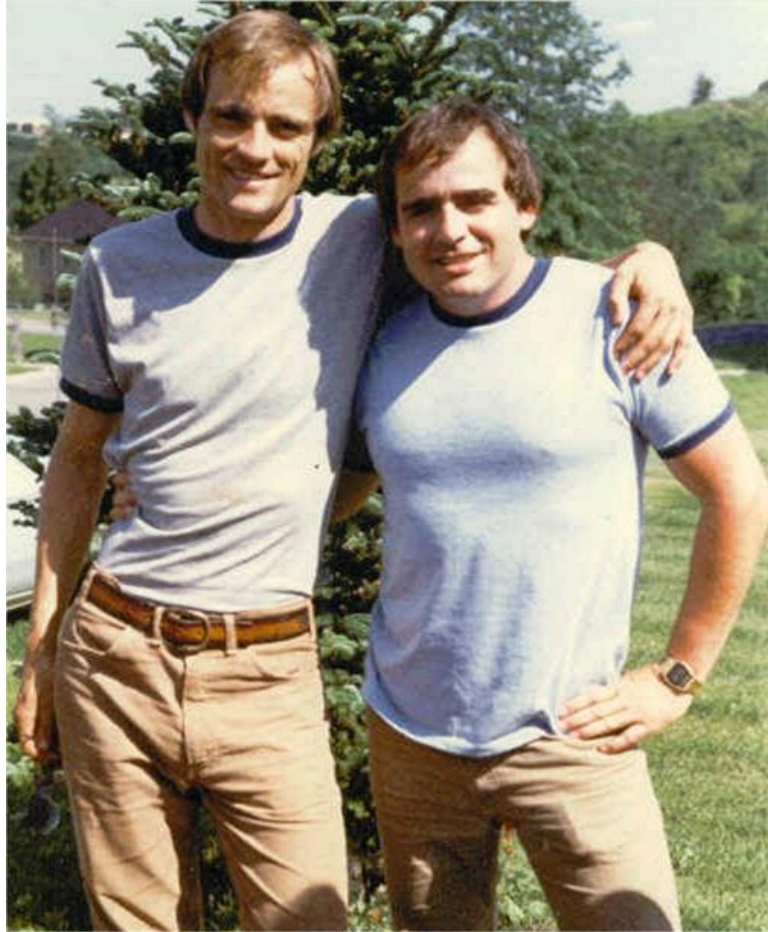
done to him. Ron muttered that was okay, he understood that it was like a disease and you had to force it out. Then he went straight to bed.

I got up early the next morning, still thinking about the night before. I joined the others in the kitchen for coffee and we were talking and joking a bit together when all of a sudden Ron walked into the room. Suddenly, dead silence. Nobody had to say a thing. There was a remarkable change in Ron. His face, his whole body looked animated, full of life. Ron came over to me and gave me a fierce hug and thanked me for saving his life. He said he had woken up feeling different, like he had been living in a dream for the last 3 1/2 years. Everyone started to cry, but I think I cried the hardest because I had my brother back!

Eventually, Ron went on to say he thought he had 'snapped' in his sleep. He had a dream where he was being chased by a group of people when I grabbed and hugged him and then our mom was there hugging him too. He had felt safe, comfortable and warm. Then he woke up.

That afternoon when Ron was having a sleep, I told Ken and Lou that Ron and I would make plans to go home now that it was finally all over. But Ken said it would be better if Ron stayed there for a few more weeks to learn more about what he'd been into. They knew, and I didn't really understand this at the time, that for the first little while especially, Ron would be really vulnerable to 'snapping' back into the cult way of thinking and that the meditation and chanting techniques he had been taught, were like bad habits that he would have to understand and learn to control.

TWO BROTHERS AFTER THE SNAPPING EXPERIENCE



We were having a lot of fun at that point and it was the first time I felt truly relaxed. We needed some clothes, so we decided to go into town to do some shopping. At one point, Ron was by himself, trying to decide what color pants he wanted when, he told me after, the feeling to flee came over him. But he saw me and came over to where I was instead. In the group he explained, he was never allowed to buy anything for himself. Everything was provided and you just accepted what you were given without complaint. After hearing that, I felt a little anxious about leaving.

Later that day we made a lot of telephone calls to share the good news, to Pat, to Dad who was visiting at Sue's and to all our other sisters, Bonnie, Marg, Barb, Kathy and Teri, in different locations across the country. The waiting had been hard on Dad, especially when he was isolated at the camp. He had been keeping the men at the camp updated as well and he told us he would throw a big party when he got back to celebrate Ron's freedom. I guess they were always looking forward to getting the latest news from Dad on what was happening with us. Ron and Dad talked for about an hour that night and Ron's eyes were wet the whole time.

I had had a lot to tell Pat when I talked to her. She was as relieved and moved as I was by Ron's snap back, but had some rather unsettling news to tell me. The police were looking for us! The Moonies had pressed charges against Ron for stealing the van left behind in the parking lot in Calgary and there was a warrant out for his arrest. She gave me the telephone number of a Calgary policeman who wanted to talk to me, Detective Ken Sprouse. I gave him a call the next morning. I told him the whole story and he asked to talk to Ron. Ron told him he was okay and was planning to stay on at the rehabilitation center for awhile of his own free will. Ken then spoke to me again and told me to plan on meeting with him and his partner at the Calgary Airport when I returned to Canada. Just the way he said it, made me feel a little worried about what was going to happen.

That evening I slipped away by myself and went for a walk along the beach just to reflect on everything. Less than a month had gone by since that first telephone call letting us know Ron was in Calgary. The whole experience had been overwhelming and exhausting. It was such a nice quiet evening; a little humid, but calm and the sky was clear. Bright stars and the reflection of the moon on the lake gave me a feeling of peace. It reminded me of being out at sea while in the navy, doing evening watch on the quarter deck of the ship, with only the purr of the ship's engines to keep me company.

I was just about ready to head back to the house, when suddenly two guys jumped out of the bushes and grabbed me from behind. I was freaked and started to struggle, before I realized it was Doug and Ron. They picked me up and threw me in the lake. As I got up, soaking wet, they stood on the shore laughing and asked me how it felt to be grabbed. When I got out, each put an arm over my shoulder and I hugged their waists and together we walked back to the house laughing and joking.

RON'S BOOT CAMP AND MOONIE EXPERIENCE

The day before I headed back home to Canada, Ron, myself and the others sat around the kitchen table as he told us how he met the Moonies and some of the experiences he had with them. This is my interpretation of what I heard. Some information was added from a journal Ron was required to keep for his team leader while a member of the U.C., that was confiscated by the Calgary Police.

On December 5, 1977, Ron was on a winter vacation. He had just spent three hectic days in San Francisco and was preparing to continue on with his back-packing holiday. He had found the hectic pace of a city that size to be a bit of a culture shock after leaving the North West Territories and the people did not seem that friendly. He was actually on his way out of town when he was approached by two young men. Although initially wary of being accosted by strangers on the street, he was disarmed by their persistence and friendliness and some of the things they were saying.

During the course of their conversation, he discovered that they seemed to share a lot of his own values. They said they were part of an exciting community of people searching internally for the answers to a lot of society's problems. They invited him to come over to the house, meet with a few of the others over dinner and take part in the nightly discussion. They were always open to new ideas and because he was from Canada, they'd be very interested in his point of view. He decided to stay in San Francisco one more night and take them up on their offer. After all, he was making this journey to see how other people lived.

That evening he went to the house, a large Victorian era dwelling, on Washington Street. A young woman answered his knock and greeted him warmly, took him by the hand and drew him inside. She showed him where to leave his shoes and sign the guest registry and then led him in to meet the others.

They entered a large room where groups of people were sitting around on the floor eating. He was handed a plate and a new group formed around him. The two guys who had invited him were not there, but the others made him feel welcome and asked him a lot of questions about where he was from and his life in Canada. People from other groups made a point of talking to him too. They were all volunteers, working on many different projects, to help the less fortunate and better society.

Dinner was followed by a sing-song and a few skits; then they listened to a lecture that touched on social and political issues and philosophical ideals he connected with. They were also shown a slide show of the cooperative's farm, at Boonville where they were trying out a lot of their new ideas to build an ideal community. Ron was asked if he would like to go up to the farm for the weekend and see the good work they were doing there. It was a few hours away, but they had a bus leaving shortly. It cost

seventeen or eighteen dollars, so he was reluctant at first, but one of the girls eventually convinced him.

About half a dozen of them rode up to the farm that night. It was dark when they arrived. The guys were shown to a building called the chicken palace where they could bed down, the girls to a trailer. There they joined others already slumbering in sleeping bags on the floor and went right to sleep.

They were awakened early the next morning by two guys singing – one strumming a guitar and the other a washbasin with a stick and a piece of twine tied to it. He remembers his reaction was part annoyance at being woken up at that time in the morning, and part appreciation for the fun of it all. So he joined in the singing and from that point on there was something happening every minute, exercises and games, lectures, meals, sharing sessions and more sing-songs, all interspersed with chants, clapping and cheers. Ron quickly found that the more willingly he took part, the more accepted he was. He also found himself intrigued by the love they displayed – the hugging and hand holding and the interest they took in everyone.

As the weekend wore on though, Ron started to wear down. The meals were sweet or starchy dishes with very little protein. Having a constant companion meant he had no privacy; the constant hand holding gave him no private space. It was hard to give 100% to the program. The lectures contained reams of information that was hard to digest and new ideas that were repeated over and over. Any inattention, drowsiness or daydreaming was discouraged with nudges and entreaties to try to listen to this or try to pay attention to that. He was starting to feel guilty for feeling tired and stressed. Everyone else seemed so enthusiastic, so encouraging and loving. He and the other visitors had been asked to put their negativity up on a shelf for the weekend in order to make the most of this experience, and they were gently reminded of that if they wanted to opt out or questioned anything.

At the sharing sessions, that started at breakfast the first day and continued throughout the weekend, everyone was asked to share a little bit about themselves, so they could all get to know each other better. Everybody took turns. At subsequent sessions they were encouraged to share more and more of their innermost feelings until something that initially felt cathartic became an emotional ordeal. The whirlwind of activity, the games, chants and cheers kept them pumped up. The no rules, group kick ball game was two hours of constant yelling and commotion that left their minds swirling.

There was never a solitary moment to think. It was better to stay focused on what the group was doing, what the lecturer was saying. Better to ignore your feelings. Better to stamp out your doubts and **embrace hope**. Ron's original decision had been to visit the farm for a couple of days, but he was cajoled into staying until the end of the week and then into attending another seminar at Camp K.

There Ron was subjected to an even more intensified indoctrination. After one particular lecture he felt really confused – he did not want to stay, but he felt he shouldn't go, and he felt a sense of urgency - of heavy responsibility surrounding his decision. He escaped to a hill-top to try and talk to God about what he should do. At that point, Ron says, he 'snapped' – a warm feeling came over him like he was bathed in love. He was quickly joined by others who had been watching him and all took it as God's answer that he should remain for the full 21 day program.

Ron went back with a new resolve – to stop doubting and get the most out of this experience that he could. He now became even more vulnerable to the effects of the controlled environment and the messages he was being given.

In the lectures, Ron first heard Sun Myung Moon described as a person who had "sacrificed all his life for the sake of God - for the sake of ending human suffering". Through time, Ron was led to the conclusion that Moon was actually the Messiah, sent to show how the world could be restored back to God's ideal. He also came to believe that Satan was embroiled in a battle with God for the future of mankind and they were part of that battle to win back the world.

They told him Satan worked through our own thoughts and emotions and taught him a thought-stopping technique to stop doubts and fears from interfering with his new life. They called this 'centering' and it is an intense repetitive chant or prayer, a kind of self-hypnosis.

They also told him that Satan used others – especially family and close friends to do his work, so he learned to mistrust all outsiders, particularly the people who loved him most. And they told him that now he knew this – he had a responsibility to sacrifice himself to God and help save the world by working furiously to make money and help convert more people to the 'cause'.

The most effective way to do that was through 'Heavenly Deception', to hide their affiliation with the Unification Church and say and do whatever was necessary, to bring in the money and new recruits. With an important mission and a new clean-shaven, short haired appearance, Ron was ready to go into the city and put into practice what he had been taught.

For Ron now, every day became a working day that started at 4:30 or 5:00 am with a prayer and pledge to God and True Parents (Reverend Moon and his wife). The day did not end until 1:00 or 1:30 the following morning. (Sometimes people even stayed up all night chanting as a penance.) Often nobody ate breakfast, if they did have something it would only be orange juice and coffee. They might have a sandwich or two for lunch, but then once again, sometimes they did not eat lunch either. Dinner would be a vegetarian meal. But Ron says if he was not successful in recruiting someone for the evening lecture, he might feel too guilty to eat it and would go back out instead.

Initially Ron worked without pay in their carpet cleaning business, but was transferred to a Mobile Fundraising Team for a year. Then he worked out of a van with five others, traveling throughout California, Nevada and New Mexico, peddling flowers, cookies, candies, jewelry and anything else they could sell. They smiled as they hustled while silently chanting to themselves to keep focused, and to stave off attacks like tiredness, hunger, unhappiness and fear, from Satan's arsenal of weapons. They worked hard, from the start of one day until the early hours of the next, in all kinds of districts. Sometimes people got mugged. But it was never enough. At the end of the day they'd face the rebukes of their team leader, and spend precious sleep time in a self-imposed penance of fervent prayer.

One night, Ron felt so beaten down by guilt that he could not face getting back in that van and ran away from the pickup point. For awhile he traveled around New Mexico, feeling fearful and unsure of where he should go or what he should do. He ended up calling the Oakland branch and they welcomed him back and put him into carpet cleaning again. Six days a week he drove from Oakland to San Francisco to drum up business; every night he helped clean carpets. He preferred that though, to the long distances traveled and daily rejection of mobile fundraising.

He told us about another difficult situation when he was called into the office, shown a telephone number and asked if he knew whose it was. He recognized it as Dad's and they told him that he had been in touch with deprogrammers. It was a long time before he could initiate contact with Dad again.

Near the end of October, 1980, Ron was sent to Calgary on a secret mission – to work in their new businesses (not known to be connected to the Unification Church) and to provide a haven for American members in hiding and immigrants from Commonwealth countries on their way to work in Unification Church businesses in the United States. He was not allowed to tell any of us of his move or contact our sisters who lived there. All his family correspondence was sent back to San Francisco before being mailed. He was even given a diary to record of all his thoughts for John, his team leader and center person, as a further precaution against feelings that might be invoked by living near family and in an old home territory.

He related how alarmed he and John had felt one day when the answering service gave him a message that Sue Tassie was on the telephone. He told them to take a message and then telephoned back the number he had been given. As it turned out, it was another Sue who'd called; the service had mixed up the names. He felt so relieved; he had been that close to having to leave and go underground, cutting off ties with us altogether.

Keeping a sufficiently strong connection to their 'center person', who embodied the standard of God, was also a never ending mental struggle for Ron and other church members. Their goal was always to find a deeper level of trust in and dedication to

that person who, in turn, judged their level of commitment. Since all feelings were supposed to be shared with the group, having a 'public mind' was a continuing pressure as well. No one ever felt secure in their position or in their relationships.

The day after Christmas that year, Ron received the news from Alan in San Francisco that he had been selected for the matching of couples to be held in New York at the end of the month. To be matched and eventually married was a special blessing you had to be worthy of receiving, so this was overwhelming news. It was also a real test of faith, and turned out to be an even bigger test for Ron, than for most of the others.

THE MATCHING INSTRUCTION SHEET

INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR MEMBERS ARRIVING FOR THE MATCHING

1. Recommendation Cards: Sisters should have 2 pink (Brothers 2 blue) index cards containing 1.)Own name, 2.)Printed name of C.F., and signature of C.F.
2. Registration Table. Go first to the Table #1 table outside the Down Home Inn and identify yourself, receive an application, and ~~go to the Terrace Room~~ and find a quiet spot where you can promptly complete the application.

A. Instructions for Application Form

1. You will not have photos, therefore these can be mailed in later. Don't worry now.
2. Your eligibility has already been determined by your C.F. For Spiritual purposes, it is important that you fill this form out accurately, honestly, and succinctly.

There is no space for physical disability. Please make a note of any chronic illnesses or physical handicaps at the bottom of application.

Spiritual children are those members to whom you witnessed.

If you do not have 3 spiritual children please be aware that Father considers this a promise that you will fulfill soon after your engagement. In other words, please take this commitment seriously.

Regarding 10a - simply answer yes or no
Regarding 10b - If an incident has occurred within the last 3 years of your membership - then please explain the incident on a separate sheet of paper, turn this in with your application and explain this incident to your central figure.

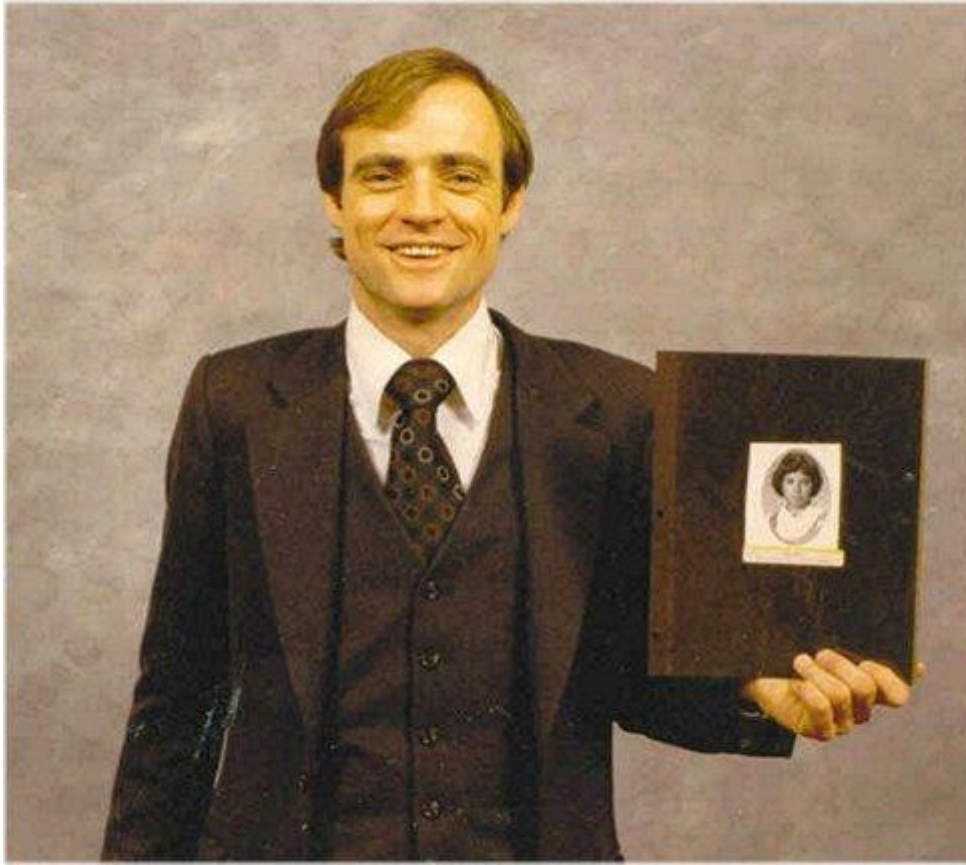
3. Take your completed application to Table #2, where your pink or blue card will be stamped (embossed) with the official seal. This card is your official admission card.
4. International Members from abroad will have green (for men) and yellow (for women) cards and will go to Table #'s 5 & 6.
5. Those members whose situations which require further consideration and who do not have Recommendation Cards should go directly to Table #3.
6. Registration will be open from 9:00A.M. to 12:00P.M. If there are long lines, it may be better to come back later rather than stand in line for a long time.
7. There will be an Orientation Meeting at 10:00P.M. in the Grand Ballroom on Monday, December 29th. Everyone eligible should come.

Emotions ran high at the Unification Church's New Yorker Hotel where the mass engagements were held. Initiates were carefully prepared to have confidence in the matching, which would not be random, but through Reverend Moon's (Father's) intuitive choice.

Moon spoke to the assembly in the ballroom until midnight, and then began matching couples until 5:00am. Ron was not selected until the matching resumed around ten when he and a 'sister' became the third couple chosen. Then, eight hours later, in what he described as 'the most intense and incredible test of faith' he had ever experienced, he **cancelled the match**.

Apparently the sister Reverend Moon had picked for him had been unfaithful to his Oakland family and was therefore not acceptable to them. He took all the responsibility upon himself, so the family would not be accused. He went back to the matching feeling totally drained and tried chanting and prayer to give him the strength to tell 'Father'. He was finally coached on what to say and was able to answer Moon's questions satisfactorily. Over three hours later, in the early hours on New Year's Eve, 1980, Reverend Moon called Ron to stand before him again and after sifting through some pictures, gave him one of a Spanish speaking girl in Honduras. 'They' were among the last of the 827 couples matched on that occasion.

RON'S MOONIE MATCHING



Before Ron's return to Calgary, he went through another round of indoctrination at Kamp K.

The end of March, they were profoundly affected by the death of Ron Prost, one of their Calgary group, in a highway accident in the United States. (Information he was carrying made its way into police files in Calgary. Their mission was not a secret anymore.) Two weeks later, one of their American members, Doug Lenz, was kidnapped. They reported his disappearance and searched for clues everywhere, determined to find him, and certain that Satan was intensifying his attacks against them...

April 28th, John Abelseth was kidnapped from the back of the gallery. They all felt they were truly at war and fearful who would be next. Each felt personally responsible that Heavenly Father had not been able to work through them to prevent this. Through conditions and intense prayer, they endeavored to form deeper connections with God's heart. They believed Ron Prost's parents had deep resentment against the church and were involved in exposing them to the public. May 4th, John Abelseth escaped from his

kidnappers while they were traveling with him in the United States. They were jubilant that prayer, unity and faith had given them this victory.

In the meantime, both their businesses had been revealed as Moonie business fronts. John gave a nationwide press conference with his matched wife, Helen, in Vancouver, before returning to Calgary. Ron accompanied them to the police station to press charges against John's parents for kidnapping.

**THE FORM LETTER AUTHORIZING THE
Unification Church TO
ACT ON BEHALF THEIR MEMBERS**

I RON Lassie have concern for my personal and private safety and feel I may be forcibly abducted because of my religious beliefs. In the event that I disappear without knowledge of the Unification Church, I hereby authorize the Unification Church to initiate whatever legal steps are necessary, so that I may be safely returned to the Unification Church.

I have signed this statement on my own free will.

May 13 / 81
Date

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature

Not long after, they all signed letters authorizing the Unification Church to take whatever legal steps necessary in the event any of them disappeared without the church's knowledge. They continued to spend 24 hours together, believing any one of them could be next...

Reflecting on this time, Ron wrote in his journal, "These past weeks, starting from Ron P's physical death, have been incredible and powerful. I felt as though I was at war and more than once was prepared to die for the sake of Heavenly Father's heart and brothers and sisters. **True love – to be willing to surrender even my life to Heavenly Father. Totally liberating.**"

Although Ron had expressed his willingness to sacrifice his life for the sake of their cause, it was still hard for him to give over his mind completely, so before too long, he was sent back to San Francisco again for more retraining. After his last weekend

there, it was suggested he start a 21 day fast to reinforce his centering and resolve this issue of absolute trust.

These were the conditions he was working under, when he returned to work with the group in Calgary. Late on the morning of May 28th, they had finished a cleaning job and were back at the office. Ron had a supplier and clients to meet with. Because they were shorthanded, special permission was obtained from San Francisco for him to go alone to the house to get changed and go on to his appointments.

He remembers the whole pickup incident clearly, saying, "It was a good pick-up, because I never had a chance to fight back..." He was alarmed and aggressive at first, thinking it might be a mugging, as he had been mugged before. Then he had heard Art's voice and it blew him away; he had thought Art supported him, now he must be working with Satan's deprogrammers – **he had walked into a trap set by the devil!** The thought that he would have to sue his brother and send him to jail disturbed him almost as much. He could see Art was frightened too and he was sure his brother had no idea what he had gotten involved in! Art was shouting questions at him and the faith-breakers had him pinned securely against the back of the seat. He heard his brother saying no one was going to hurt him and he relaxed somewhat. This was a battle he knew he could win. Already Art's voice was receding into the background as he started to chant.

The rest you know...

There are a couple of things worthy of noting here. Ron only agreed to go to the rehab center with us because he understood that my love for him was the motivation for doing what I did. He was right in that I did not really understand what I had gotten into. Once I understood more about the extent of the control the Unification Church organization had over its members, I appreciated even more what Ron was willing to sacrifice to give me a chance. Of course, he's said he was giving himself time to recruit me too!

The night before Ron 'snapped', his patience had run out and his mind was in such turmoil, he said he had have run away if I hadn't noticed him standing by the bushes and gone over to talk to him. Sometimes it still gives me shivers to think, the difference in outcomes could have been just that close.

HEADING BACK HOME TO CANADA AND MY FAMILY

The time came for me to head home. I missed my family and I had to get back to work. I knew Ron was in good hands and I would see him in three weeks, when I came back to bring him home. Still, when Ken Jr. and Ron drove me to the airport, I had mixed feelings.

On the flight back to Calgary, so many thoughts were going through my head. Uppermost among them was my meeting with the police. When I landed at the airport, the two detectives were waiting for me. I was really nervous, but when I got in the police car with them, I was relieved to hear they just wanted information about the cult in Calgary. We drove to the police station and I was introduced to some of the other members of their department, before we got down to business.

The Police told me that the Moonies had initially reported Ron missing, but then later charged him with theft of the van when they were unable to locate it. It had been parked in a no parking zone, and subsequently towed. The missing van turned out to be in the police compound, so the charge of vehicle theft against Ron was not being pursued. They gave me a copy of the theft charges John Ableseth filed.

0178
BEI 6078

ON FILE @ V LIC: 8U2614 ALTA
CALGARY CITY PD AB30009 01 JUN 1981 1317 HRS
STOLEN-VEH TRUCK 1980 FORD VAN BRN
LIC: 8U2614 ALTA 1981 VIN: E14E26J0425
YEAR: *01-2* *PHONE..230-3887* CASE: 81029951

ASSOCIATED TO

TRISSIE RONALD
*CD-4*POSSIBLY ABDUCTED*
MISSING TYPE: INVOLUNTARY
LAST SEEN ON: 29 MAY 81
EXPIRY DATE: 30 AUG 81
DOB 53 AGE 28 MALE 185 CMS (6 FT 01 INS) 073 KG (162 LBS)
BROWN HAIR

ADD-REM: CONTACT JOHN ABELSETH*230 3887*

ADDRESS 1128 REGENT CRES NE CALGARY
CASE 81030247
ENTERED BY CALGARY CITY PD AB30009 ON 30 MAY 81

02JUN81/13:04/38

They said that some of their first solid evidence pertaining to Unification Church operations in Calgary came from a coroner who passed on information Ron Prost had when the van he was driving went off the highway. They went on to show me pictures and newspaper articles of "Moonies" who had been selling wood fiber roses and paintings around the province, without bothering to get business licenses. They mentioned some were probably working illegally; immigration deported them when they could, but others kept getting back in.

Ken disclosed that he had known the private detective I had hired and had given him the information on the fact sheet I was given. He said he had met my brother a few times when he was handling their complaints and thought he was a nice guy. He had given Ron's name to Peggy too, in case our family had been looking for him. "Oh..." Then I heard more about what happened after we grabbed Ron; Ken had built up a trust with the group and was getting regular reports. They were waiting for us at

the airport at Great Falls, Montana, but we had flown out of Kalispell instead. That was another close call.

He also said the Moonies had hired Base Fort Security in Fort McMurray to keep surveillance on my wife and our home. They had had surveillance on my sisters in Calgary and my Dad as well, when he was not at the camp. I swallowed another lump in my throat as I wondered what the chances were I might have contacted the same private investigator they used.

I heard more on that from Pat when I got home. She had had several long distance callers inquiring about my whereabouts after Ron disappeared in Calgary. One caller, John A. left his name and number for me to return his call. He called for Ron once too and at one point called Sue in Calgary and asked her out for dinner. One caller claimed to be the private investigator I had hired, but was not. Pat had also received a lot of silent callers and an unusual number of long distance disruptions, which caused her to wonder about the privacy of her calls. Marie and Lloyd reported the same, after Pat wired them the money they'd loaned us.

It had been impossible for her not to notice the person who sat in a parked car for days just down the street from us, as there was no on street parking in our neighborhood. An incident that disturbed her more was when the girl with 'glazed eyes' came to our door looking for her friend. She had had our address and a telephone number on a slip of paper. When Pat pointed out there must be an error in the address, she had asked to come in and use the telephone. Pat took the slip and said she would call for her and when she did, discovered her friend was not at that number either. When Pat remarked on that, the girl just shrugged and said, "I did not really want to see him anyway..." Her sister, Marie, in Edmonton, had a similar experience.

Attempts were also made to get information through people we knew. For example, a neighbor across the street had a friend in the security company and their home was used to keep an eye on ours. This neighbor was even sent over to ask Pat a few questions, but in the end could not bring herself to do it. In another instance, two boys from a family we knew were asked to point Pat out at the airport when she went to pick up Dad. The funniest recollection Pat has is of once nodding a greeting to a man she later found out was tailing her, not realizing why he had looked so familiar!

Our friends put up with some rather strange behavior from us too. When we were at the motel in Sundre, I had telephoned close friends in Fort McMurray and asked them to have Pat and our boys stay with them for the weekend; they spent a couple of hours trying to track her down so they could let her know what I wanted her to do. Around this time too, Pat became so suspicious of the privacy of her telephone conversations, she had go to our friends next door, or to the homes of other friends to make important calls.

The 'flower-sellers' had been blitzing Fort McMurray too. They'd been at a friend's door one night when Pat and the boys were there for supper. One of them told a reporter it was his own business and the paper published a picture with a small write-up on this entrepreneur. Pat told me this when she picked me up at the airport and I immediately bought another paper there because I could not wait until we got home to see it. When I looked at the picture, I could not believe it; the detective had just shown me a picture of the same fellow.

Pat and I sure had a lot to talk about and the boys were excited. It was good to be home. We had to do a couple of errands right away though. The most important of them was to get an account update at our bank and transfer funds from the account I had opened in Edmonton, so we could get some idea of where we stood financially when we went over our bills later. I still owed the Conner's for airfares and wanted to clear that off right away.

While we were downtown, Pat pointed out the store that was reselling the wood fiber roses sold by the Moonies. I surprised her by running in, asking to see the manager and trying to explain to him why he shouldn't be buying from these people. He looked at me as if I was crazy, and I realized right away that was how I was behaving. I learned that day, that was not how to get the message out.

When we went over our bills and my stack of receipts that evening, things looked a bit grim. The exchange rate on all my transactions in the United States had sure upped the overall cost and I figured my 'adventure' now tallied over \$20,000. We did not have to worry about our shortfall for too long though, because three days later we received an unexpected donation from my sister, Barb and husband Phil Fitzgerald who sent all the money they'd saved for their summer vacation that year. Pat's sister had absorbed the cost of the demand loan she had taken out for me and over time, Dad, Kathy, Bonnie, Teri and Marguerite surprised us with contributions as well. When I was away, my sisters had telephoned Pat often, to keep her spirits up. That's family for you!

I had to go right to work the day after I got back. It felt strange to be there in the 'real world' and not at the rehabilitation center with Ron. The guys at work had to listen to me talk incessantly about the whole experience. Talking was good therapy for me because I felt compelled to share the story with anyone who would listen!

We were concerned that Ron might need someone to talk to when I brought him home. Although he had thanked me for getting him out of the cult, he still felt a connection to a lot of the people in it - people who had struggled alongside him to give 100% to the 'cause'. I realized that through deprogramming, he had lost the faith, work, home, and comrades that had become his whole life. He was going to be starting all over in a way, picking up where he had left off 3½ years earlier, but he was going to have to come to terms with his loss too.

I talked to one of the priests at my church and he suggested Ron attend the charismatic group. But there were still some things I was not that clear about and I was worried that might be too emotional an experience at that point. That would have to be Ron's decision anyway and I had a feeling he would not be looking to join anything for awhile. I also talked to the same psychologist I had contacted earlier, but he still was not convinced, after hearing my story, that anyone could have that much control over another. So I figured we had to be on our own and would work through it.

I called my brother just about every day during that time. My sister Kathy and her husband Ken went down to Virginia to spend a couple of days with Ron. When I called down, he was really enjoying their company. He also appreciated receiving calls from our Dad and others in the family. It was important for him to have this support and understanding, because he was feeling embarrassed for being 'scammed' and still trying to understand how it happened. You see, throughout the whole experience, ***he had felt totally 'okay'...***

GOING BACK TO VIRGINIA TO REUNITE WITH MY BROTHER

I was really looking forward to going back to Virginia, because the Conner's were planning a big 'Freedom Day Celebration' to coincide with the fourth of July. A lot of ex-cult members they had helped, and their families, were planning to attend and I thought it would be a perfect opportunity for me to find out more about this whole business.

Finally the time came. I bought an airline ticket to Calgary and Kathy arranged for my tickets from there to West Virginia return and Ron's ticket home. I was still feeling a little paranoid, so I talked her into having them issued in other names because I was not sure how vulnerable Ron might be if we ran into any Moonies. My flight schedule gave me some extra time in Calgary, so I was able to get together with Sue and go over everything that happened in more detail with her. I also took some flowers to a special lady named Mabel who had been wondering what had happened to us and was happy to hear how things had turned out.

Sue drove me to the airport to catch my flight. Before I picked up the tickets, I rethought the argument Kathy had made for not using pseudonyms on the tickets and had a change of heart. Doing something wrong now just did not seem right, so I went to a pay telephone and cancelled them.

When I stepped up to buy new tickets on my Visa, the total came in over my limit, so Sue immediately pulled out hers to cover my return airfare and I paid for Ron's. I was put on standby too – fourteenth in line and my heart sank. I was sure I would not get on and was kicking myself for my earlier decision to use false names. I was out of money, my Visa was maxed and now I had been forced to accept Sue's generosity and I was sure she could not afford it...

Sue kept me company while I waited; there were just the two of us left when I finally heard my name called and I was able to make the flight after all. My flight schedule was from Calgary to Denver, to Atlanta and then on to Roanoke, West Virginia. In Atlanta, they told me I was on standby, again, and after two hours of pacing back and forth, was given the last seat. I was greatly relieved to walk into the terminal in Roanoke that evening and see Ron and Ken's oldest daughter there to greet me.

Ron was looking real good and I was excited to see that. We gave each other a hug and then I gave him some notes and artwork from our boys that he found touching. I had brought a recent picture of my family to show him too. The three of us got in the car and headed off to the lake house. It was great to see the familiar faces when we got there and after my initial hellos, I was introduced to Doug's and Mike's folks, who had arrived earlier. More people showed up over the next two days. It felt so good to talk to people who had gone through the same experience I had.

I spent quite a bit of time talking to Doug's parents the first night, and the next morning his dad took me out on the skiff. Dr. Lenz was a chemical engineer of some repute and the Moonies had tried to get him to endorse a scientific conference they hosted every year called the International Conference for the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS). He said then that he had played along with them until he was able to find Doug, and now was trying to use his influence to expose ICUS as a Unification Church front. He told me he and his wife were still trying to grasp the whole idea of mind control. After hearing that, I felt better about my limited understanding of all this.

As I listened to others throughout the weekend, I realized there was a real lack of common knowledge about this phenomenon in all our communities. Therefore, the resources people usually turned to for aid could offer little assistance, and families in crisis were turning to others, like themselves, for information and help. I think before I went, I was half expecting that all the ex-members I would be meeting that weekend would be from the same group as Ron, but the only others there who had been in the Unification Church were Mike, Doug and Ken. As I mingled and talked with the other guests, I was surprised to learn of the number of different groups, of varying beliefs, that were abusing people the same way. The personal stories were almost overwhelming.

The comic relief that night came from me. I took a break from one conversation and slid open the screen door on the patio, stepped inside and grabbed a sandwich. Then I turned around and walked out, right through the screen. Someone had shut it behind me and I hadn't noticed. Boy did I get teased, but it lightened the mood in a hurry.

The next morning, I was able to spend time with Mike's parents. His father was African-American and his mother was white. They were both school teachers and seemed like exceptionally nice, caring people. After I met them I could see why Mike was such a great guy.

Mike had been out of the Unification Church about a year, but they were still struggling to come to terms with it all. When they'd first brought him home, they noticed he would 'float' in and out of an altered state at times; he experienced mood swings and he was depressed a lot. They hadn't really wanted him to help the Conner's at first, but they'd come to see over time, that the more deprogramming he helped with, the better he understood the techniques that were used to bring about his own conversion. They said they believed that deprogramming was removing the cult member from the controlled environment, giving them information on the group and time to think about it. They said in essence, cult members deprogram themselves when they realize how they have been deceived.

That day two families arrived whose daughters had been in the same group – in fact, one had recruited the other. Their story was especially heart-breaking. The younger of the girls had come from a rural community to attend college. It was her first time away from home and she was a little homesick and lonely. She took a part-time job in a

coffee shop to help pay expenses and got to know two other young people who were regular customers. Over time they became friends and when they asked her if she would like to go to church with them one day, she agreed. She had missed going to church every Sunday with her family. Unfortunately this church was a destructive cult. She was eventually coerced into dropping out of college, moving in with church members and becoming a 'happy hooker for Jesus'. That was partly how this group indoctrinated and brought in the money.

The older girl was crying when she told me that she was the one who had recruited her. She had often wanted to leave herself, but the others in the group threatened to tell her parents what she had been doing. Her embarrassment and fear of being rejected by her family and friends was one of the techniques they used to manipulate her. She said she was in a constant state of prayer to keep her own feelings at bay and yield to the will of the group. Her parents told me she was in therapy for her depression and was still experiencing a lot of 'floating' too. She was living at home, but her parents said they felt helpless to ease her burden of pain.

Their recruitment experience was not all that different than my brother's initially, but in their indoctrination, instead of centering, they were taught repetitive prayer as a form of self-hypnosis, using Bible scriptures that their leader had altered and taken out of context. The teachings and directives of the leader came to each 'family' in the form of letters that were followed religiously.

Looking back on this time, I believe that while my initial 'battle' with the Unification Church was sparked by love, my later stance against all such destructive groups was fueled by fury. The end of the weekend signaled the end of our time there... It was time for both of us to move on. It was funny, neither of us had much to say throughout the whole trip back to Alberta. There was a lot to think about.

The detectives met us at the Calgary airport as arranged and we talked over coffee there, for quite awhile. Ron knew Ken from meetings they'd had after Doug and John A had been 'snatched' from the Calgary group and he joked how weird it was now, looking at things from the opposite side. Ken was primarily interested in information about any illegal activities the Unification Church was involved in within the province and how money was moved secretly back and forth across the border. Ron did not have too much to add to what Ken and Lyle already knew about that by then.

They were also interested in hearing how Ron felt about being out, and all that had happened to him since he had been 'kidnapped' in Calgary. They said they had a copy of the letter he had signed while he was with the Unification Church there, authorizing them to bring legal action against anybody who removed him from the group. They asked Ron, jokingly (I think) if he wanted them to take action on it and Ron said, "No way!" Our Dad showed up at that point; he had come down to Calgary, and we all stood up to greet him. Ron and I gave him a hug. After a few minutes conversation,

the detectives shook our hands, wished Ron well and took their leave. Ron turned to Dad and said, "I am sorry Dad, about what I put the family through!"

Dad looked at him and replied emphatically, "It was not your fault!" and the conversation moved on to talk of all the family until it was time to leave. Dad put his credit card down to pay for our tickets home that day. We had a joyful reunion with my family at the Fort McMurray airport, although Pat told me after, she could see in Ron's face, even as we walked across the tarmac, he had been through an ordeal. She mentioned there'd been a few telephone calls for him already, but no messages were left. We were not sure what to expect from the Moonies at that point, and the thought of them having any contact with Ron yet, was a little unsettling. We also recognized though, that from this point on, it was all up to him.

I think it might have been around the second or third day that John Abelseth called Ron. When the Unification Church started their businesses in Calgary, they listed Ron as part owner of Champion Services, and now John wanted Ron to sign his shares back to the group. Ron's reply was "No" but when he tried to talk further, John hung up on him. Did Ron have hopes that he could share what he had learned with the 'family' he had been willing to give his life for?

I don't know what Ron thought when we got home. Home back then was a three bedroom, fourteen foot wide company trailer, and although we had done some rearranging, he still had to share a room with our oldest son. Also our boys' ages were 12, 8 and 5 and they kept our home a lively place. In any case, Ron made no complaints, and so we settled in together. He was treated as an equal and had full independence.

School was out for the summer, so to give some structure to the days Pat had enrolled the boys in the Playground Days program, just a few blocks from where we lived. I of course went back to work and Ron began building a new deck to replace our old front porch.

UNDERSTANDING MANIPULATION AFTER LEAVING

Looking back, the six of us living in a trailer without much personal space, was not as bad as I worried it might be. It was good for Ron as well as for us. While Ron lived under the group's control, every second of his day was structured around the rigorous demands and ideology of the group.

Now his life was no longer governed by the daily rituals, the continuous interactions and sharing sessions with other members and the long hours of work. Now he had to learn how to fill this void and keep certain thoughts at bay. Becoming a member of our household meant Ron became immersed right away in the busy life of a family with young children and it helped fill the void somewhat.

Ron was enjoying the freedom of going for nature walks in the forested areas adjacent to our community and sometimes he would take our boys along to walk in the woods, or to pick berries. He even bought a harmonica and spent hours trying to teach them how to play it. Ron started drawing and painting again, a pursuit that interested one of our boys in particular. This was something he had not done while he was in the group because any individual activity was considered a selfish act that would take focus away from the group and its mission.

I didn't initially understand why the Conner's kept Ron so busy at the rehab centre and how important it was for him to keep busy after he came home. Ex-members I have talked to said their cult experience was like having an extremely stressful day at work, still being wound up when you got home, and repeating that day after day after day. That was Ron's experience too. He had been given information at the rehab centre that he brought back. Now, reading the material was a struggle, although he had been a good student and read a lot before. Now he had trouble concentrating.

I quietly laughed many times because every time he would lay down the literature on mind control he would have to go looking for it later because Pat would immediately pick it up and start reading it. We were all so driven to understand what happened to us.

Another observable fact was when Ron was bored or under pressure he would start "**floating**" in and out of trances. I witnessed that when we first picked him up and many times after. Anything that made him anxious would trigger this floating, where he reverted back to how he thought in the group. I could tell when this happened because his facial expression would change, then after a few seconds he would shake his head and pull himself out of it.

Floating was due to a technique the group taught, called centering. Centering is similar to chanting or intense repetitive prayer. It was taught to shut out unwanted information or negative thoughts.

At the Rehabilitation center Ron would start centering when he was challenged to explain Moon's wealth, the group's illegal activities or the way they were forced to live. It is our understanding that individuals in destructive groups become dependent on altered states of consciousness to lessen the effects of the pressure they lived under and the paranoia they felt. After a time it becomes automatic. The longer the mind depends on this way of coping, the harder it gets for the individual to overcome this when they leave, because there is a lot of internal conflict.

There were other noticeable side effects from this experience that Ron had to deal with after getting out as well.

He had to see a doctor, who recommended a nutrition plan to get his strength up because he was suffering from malnutrition after being on such a meager diet for so long. He saw a chiropractor to get treatment for the stiffness in his muscles from years of stress. Ron also had to wear a mouth guard at night because he had worn down his back teeth from grinding them while under duress.

I learned to appreciate what he had gone through and was going through now. I myself felt a total wreck from making the decision to rescue him and carry it out. The emotional roller coaster had taken its toll. I was always wondering if I was doing the right thing and afraid of what would happen next. My body was always tense and I was mentally stressed out. I could not imagine anyone going through these feelings day in and day out for the length of time Ron did.

As time went on we started to get more comfortable with each other and settled into our own routines. Ron made friends with some of the neighbors and volunteered some of his time working with the Boy's and Girl's Club in town.

I was still upset and bothered by everything I had experienced and learned. I became obsessed with trying to understand what had happened and the questions in my mind were unrelenting. My persistent digging for an understanding added a lot more stress to my relationship with my brother, but it forced us to deal with stuff we might not have otherwise and I believe resulted in an even closer relationship between us in the end.

Ron's quest was to understand what happened to him personally. My approach to increasing my understanding was to talk to as many people as I could and obtain their feedback. You could call it a reality check.

Ron decided to take a breather from us, me in particular, and decided to take Dad up on his offer to visit him in Summerland, British Columbia. He hadn't seen Dad since our meeting in Calgary. At that time Dad suggested he go home with him, but Ron just

wanted time to reflect on what happened. Ron went for a week's visit, and when he got back he told me he had a real fright when nearing Calgary. He had an urge come over him to go back to the Moonies and he had a hard time fighting it off. This really upset and scared me. My mind was going in every direction wondering what if he did go back. I tried to reassure myself that he hadn't gone and remind myself that he was free to do whatever he wanted now, but it was all too crazy!

A few weeks after being back in Fort McMurray Sheila McVicar with CBC TV telephoned Ron to ask if he would agree to be interviewed in Calgary along with Doug Lenz. The National was doing a special on the Unification Church and its activities in Canada. Ron had to think about it for a few days, then agreed to do the interview, but with some apprehension. I wanted to go with him but he said this was his thing and time for him to start dealing with it. I was anxious about it, but he was persistent and I had to give in. I drove Ron to the airport and told him to call anytime he wanted to talk. The three days he was gone he did not call once and I was at my wits end. I had visions of him going back to the Moonies. When I finally got the call from Ron to pick him up at the airport, I was so relieved. On the way home from the airport he told me he was mad at himself for getting caught up with this so called church and what he had put his family through. I tried to comfort him and reminded him of what Dad said; that he was the victim.

I was angry at this group for how they manipulated and abused my brother and others I had met, for their own personal gain. That night the interview that Doug and Ron did with Sheila was being shown on TV. Ron was nervous and could not sit down at first, but as the interview came on he sat beside me on the couch and held my hand.

Doug told Sheila he was working illegally in Canada, at the art studio in Calgary, and was not allowed to tell his parents where he was because he was on a secret mission for the church. He said the house they lived in was used to hide people coming from other countries, before sneaking them into the United States. It was also a communal home for the members working in Calgary and a stopover for mobile fundraising teams, also working illegally. Both Doug and Ron told how paintings and other products were smuggled into Canada for sale and undeclared cash taken back to the United States. They said if fundraisers were spotted and deported by Immigration Canada, they were encouraged to turn around and find another way to sneak back.

As we watched the broadcast, Moses Durst, the leader of the Oakland (West Coast) Branch came on. He was being interviewed at the group's head office in New York. He said members of the church had free will and if they broke the law, should be treated like any other criminal and prosecuted. After hearing that Ron stood up and said, "What a liar!" Right from the time he was first recruited, Ron was taught it was okay to lie to anyone outside the group. It was called *heavenly deceit* and by doing it they were buying the mislead people a ticket to heaven. That was the justification.

After that night, Ron wanted to talk more about the group and his involvement with them. I think what he heard Durst say in the interview hit home and reinforced what the critics were saying about how the leadership viewed individuals in the church.

For me this felt like another step forward. I was still obsessed with the evil intent of the leaders of these groups and amazed how little accountability they had for what they coerced their followers to do. Poor Ron. At times he wanted to talk about his feelings and experiences in the group. Unfortunately I wasn't that sensitive, and if what Ron was saying sounded at all positive about the group, I wasn't willing to hear it. He kept telling us we did not understand what he was going through, and at the time he was right, we didn't. I was so caught up in my own emotions. I should have listened more, because he was mourning the loss of his 'home', his work, his 'religion' and the 'comaraderie' of like minded people and at the same time was feeling betrayed and embarrassed for being scammed by them. We learned ex-members from these types of manipulative groups need to feel free to talk about their experiences, because they have a lot of issues to deal with. Ron needed me to control my prejudice and anger and just listen.

I felt compelled to talk to anyone who would listen to me just because I had to get my feelings off my chest and I'm sure grateful to anyone who did (then) and does (even now) listen. I needed different perspectives on how others viewed this experience.

In Ron's case he had been deceived and manipulated and had idealistically given all he had to this group only to find out it was just a sham. I believe they were a big business hiding under the guise of a religion.

We talked a lot about our research into the techniques of psychological coercion, but we needed more references so we looked for individuals to talk to who have gone through similar experience. At the time we thought there was no one who understood in Fort McMurray what we were going through. Overtime we sure found out we were wrong.

The psychologist who we first contacted gave us the impression he still did not believe people could be changed to that degree, even after we got Ron out. A few years later we heard he had charges brought against him that had to do with his relationship with a young patient. Our church suggested joining the charismatic group, which we appreciated but it was not the sort of support we believed we needed. We worried that the emotion was too similar to what Ron had just experienced. I contacted other churches again and was offered support but we could not get past ideology and beliefs. It was so frustrating because we did not want to get into whose belief was right or wrong. That was not the issue for us.

There was a kind of a public awareness support group in Calgary organized by Peggy Hogan. We were desperate to talk to people in person who were dealing with the same issues and when we were asked to come down for a get together, we decided to check

it out. Ron and I drove to Calgary three times to meet with these ex-cult members who had belonged to six different groups in that city. There were teens, adults and even seniors. They met together as a support group to try and figure out what happen to them by sharing experiences and working out their feelings.

There were so many similarities in their experiences! They had been in a variety of personal development and religious groups. They were all struggling with the after affects of their individual assaults.

This was good therapy for both of us knowing we were not alone and it also gave me a chance to talk to some of the members' families. I knew what I saw and experienced over the last couple of months but still did not understand completely how intense the assault was on the ex-members and the support they needed after getting out. These three trips we made to Calgary helped us understand more about this phenomenon as we became more comfortable with our understanding of the techniques and with ourselves. Over time, the meetings became less frequent and most people went their own way. There were some individuals we kept in touch with because we had other common interests, but the majority just wanted their privacy and to carry on with their lives.

STARTING TO MAKE HEADWAY IN GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

My brother-in-law, Lloyd Egan, telephoned one night in late 1981 saying he had set up a meeting with the Alberta Attorney General's office in Edmonton. We scrambled to put together a presentation. Three days later we met with a lawyer who reported to the Attorney General, Neil Crawford. Lyle, (Ken Spouse's partner from the Calgary Police Department) was there as well. He asked how did I ever pull this off and I said it was Lloyd's credibility.

I told the lawyer how I got involved and what my concerns were. Lyle explained his department's dealings with this particular group as well as others. The lawyer said the government was concerned about these types of groups and they were compassionate to our plight. They were aware of the illegal activities and potential threat they posed, but unless they were caught breaking the law there was nothing they could do. There were no laws against the use of these mind control techniques, and until that changed the government's hands are tied. The lawyer said what we were doing to make people aware of the dangers was the first step because demand for change has to come from the people. Until the public is concerned enough it would be disastrous for the government to step in because people would fear religious persecution.

We appreciated what the lawyer told us, but we were hoping more would come of the meeting. I believe it is easier now than before for these groups to get a foothold in our country because of our freedoms and human rights. Our societies' tolerance level is continuously stretching to accommodate all kinds of lifestyles and choices.

Not long after the meeting with the Attorney General, the Unification Church and some other questionable groups were holding a press conference in Calgary. This press conference was arranged by these groups disputing the accusations levied them by their critics due to of all the bad press they were all getting. By this time there had been a number of abductions of young people who had been in a variety of different groups and others who left on their own in Calgary that were speaking out. I had to attend this". I drove to Calgary by myself. I went to the press conference. I was a bit nervous because of what I had heard and read. There were repercussions towards some critics after taking a stand. When I walked into the room Ken Sprouse was there which relieved some of my anxiety. Ken approached me as I walked into the room; he said he had someone he wanted me to meet. He grabbed my arm and guided me over to where some men were talking and tapped one of them on the shoulder. The man turned around and Ken said, "Art I would like to introduce you". That knocked me out of my socks. I was not prepared for this; instinctively I stuck out my hand to shake his. As our hands met Ken said "this is Ron Tassie's brother Art". John Ableseth immediately pulled his hand back, he said I was misguided and walked away with the others.

This was the team leader, John Ableseth. The only other time I saw him was through a pair of binoculars from about seventy-five feet away. The two joined another group of about ten people; they all looked over at me while in discussion. I was starting to feel a

little uncomfortable because at this point Ken was off talking to the media and I was standing in the hall by myself. Ken was definitely an instigator. Finally, we were all told to take our seats and the meeting started. I noticed the members of that group were strategically sitting around me. I first thought it might be to intimidate me from asking questions.

The chair of the meeting gave some ground rules for asking questions, it was then opened up to the media. I took advantage of the moment. I stood up and asked how the Unification church could ask members to break the law and not stand behind them afterwards. How could they just flick off their members like they were nothing? There was a sudden dead silence as he looked down at his notes, then he said forcibly, "Their church members are free to make their own decisions and if they break the law they should be held accountable". Before he had the opportunity to cut me off, I quickly said this comment was predictable and scripted because I heard the exact words used by Durst on TV three weeks ago.

I quickly added this was contradictory to the factual evidence because of all the information the police and immigration had shown me, the newspaper articles I had read and ex-members testimonials. Now you are saying - who cares about the members, they are expendable. I looked around the room at the Moonies who I recognized; every time I made eye contact with each one I shook my head in disgust. This was kind of childish but, I didn't know how else to react to the emotions I was feeling. They automatically looked away. At that point I was no longer intimidated by these people because I realized they were more scared of me than I was of them. I felt they were as much a victim as my brother. They just could not see it.

Right away the chair directed his request for questions to another part of the room and never acknowledged my hand being up after that. It was interesting the people who I thought were strategically placed around me were the ones being picked for questions. I realized my assumption was wrong; they seemed to be placed to ask the questions the speakers were wanting asked.

After the session Ken invited me back to the police station. The good detective showed me some more information on some Moonies who kept sneaking back into Canada after being deported. Ken also said after Ron was safely in Fort McMurray with us, Ken and some other Calgary Police members went into the Moonie house and got Ron's few belongings. This included the diary Ron was required to keep while in Calgary for his center person, the letter giving authorization for the Unification Church to act on behalf of the members in legal matters if they were abducted, his business cards and a few photos of other group members. Not much to show for over 3 1/2 years. Ken gave us all the information. He also said the police had copies.

An immigration officer that was at the session dropped in to see Ken as we were talking and joined the conversation. He said these people were becoming a pain in the butt and there were similar types of groups doing the same thing. He said when the

police handed them over to immigration or they were caught trying to get into Canada they were sent back, but the next thing you knew they were trying to get back in another way. He said some groups were a real concern because of their radical ideologies and one group in particular built bomb shelters in Northern Montana and were heavily armed.

After the meeting, Ken invited me to his house for supper and to meet his family. We had a good visit. I then headed to Edmonton for the night before completing the five hour trip to Fort McMurray. Shortly after this, the CBC aired a documentary they had made on a number of destructive cults in Canada. It was very informative and identified the similarities in the control they used. I think this was in collaboration with an American network because it showed groups on both sides of the border and included some of Ron's and Doug's interview.

THE CHALLENGES OF HELPING OTHERS

One evening just after getting home from work we received a call from the Conner's in Virginia. At first I thought it was just a call to see how we were doing because we kept in touch. After a few minutes of conversation, Ken told me he had been contacted by a farming family from Meadow Lake Saskatchewan named Bowerman.

Their daughter, Janice, had been caught up in a small Pentecostal group in Penticton British Columbia. This group was made up of a husband, wife and a few followers who broke away from a mainline church and lived together in the same house. Ken said the family was concerned about the sudden change in her personality when she had moved in with the group.

Her father, Phil, and his two sons drove from Saskatchewan to Penticton to talk Janice into coming back home with them. Initially, they were successful in convincing her to come with them. However, on their way back to Saskatchewan they overnighted at a motel and when they woke up the next morning, Janice was gone. She'd taken the vehicle, leaving them stranded. She had gone back to Penticton and re-joined the group. Frustrated but determined, the Bowerman's went back to the house in Penticton to get Janice to come with them again. This time, Janice refused. The group's leader came to the door and said he would telephone the police if they did not leave his property. Reluctantly, the three went back home to Saskatchewan, upset and not knowing what to do next.

Not willing to give up on their daughter, Grace and Phil Bowerman started looking for help. After numerous telephone calls, they connected with Reverend Colin Clay an Anglican Minister from the University of Saskatchewan. Reverend Clay gave them information on the techniques of mind control and a number of people to telephone. They ended up contacting the Conner's.

Soon after speaking with the Bowerman's, Ken Conner called me. Ken asked if Ron and I would help the Bowerman's get their daughter out of the cult in Penticton. I immediately felt a rush of emotions. I had just gone through this with my own brother, and I was not sure if I had the energy to take this on. Going through this with Ron was an extremely emotional and stressful experience for both of us. We both had more than ourselves to think about; our family had been through a lot and I was torn about how to answer. I felt I should help the Conner's, because of the help they gave me, but I had to put my family first.

Part of Ken and Lou Conner's rehabilitation, was to bring ex-members along on deprogramming jobs to help and to clarify their understanding of the experience and I appreciated that. Ex-members also understood what the person being deprogrammed was going through and if they were from the same group, would understand the terminology and teachings. But after talking with the police in Calgary I definitely knew what the consequences were if something went wrong. The financial commitment I had taken on limited my options. I needed my job. Harold Feys (my manager in Fort McMurray) and the senior management at the Texaco office in Edmonton had given me a lot of support up to now, I didn't want to push their tolerance. As well, Ron had just started a job working with the Alberta Forest Service and was not eligible for extra time off. The risk was too high for me. I gave my apologies and then told Ken that if the family ever wanted to call us, we would be more than willing to talk to them.

An hour later the telephone rang. It was Phil and Grace Bowerman from Saskatchewan. Ron, Pat and I talked to them for over an hour. Ron was open with them. He told them of the emotional turmoil he was in while with the group. He told them that in this controlled environment, over a very short period of time, his loyalties to his family changed. He said he would still be in it, if I hadn't intervened. Ron also told them in detail what he was going through now, re-building his life and his self-esteem.

After Ron was finished speaking with Phil and Grace, I warned them, that the police told me, if we'd been caught when I grabbed Ron I could have been charged and even gone to jail. There were definitely enough references in Calgary to prove that because there had been two different groups trying to sue family members for interference.

The Bowerman's asked me if I would take that chance again knowing what I knew now. I had to think about that for a moment, and then I said that it would depend on the circumstances because I had a lot more references to discourage me now. I said if someone else close to me got involved in something and it was of their own free and informed choice, then, no I wouldn't. Now, if someone close to me was **coerced** like my brother was into something, I would probably be prepared to take as much risk as I was prepared to take responsibility for.

The Bowerman's thanked us for sharing our experiences with them; they said this definitely showed them they had a lot more research to do. We wished them the best of luck. Finally we told them not to hesitate to call again. A couple of weeks later we were sitting around the kitchen table having lunch when we got a call from Ken Conner and Grace Bowerman, saying they were in Virginia with their daughter. They said she was doing well and they were going to be heading back to Canada in a couple of weeks. They added they'd like to get together sometime.

The night the Bowerman's got back home to Saskatchewan they called us. Janice was going through a hard time and they did not know how to comfort her. You could hear the emotion and anxiety in their voices. I knew exactly what they were going through. I told them when we first got home we went through much the same thing. It was hard

for me initially to understand exactly what had happened to Ron and what he was experiencing now. I was making decisions based on handling every crisis that popped up as best I could. A lot was learned through trial and error.

Life at the Conner's rehab centre was a whirlwind of activity, but there was no manipulation, otherwise I would have challenged it. Ron and other ex-members told me that when they got home they had a lot of spare time, but their minds were in overdrive. They could not concentrate and they were not able to relax. They said they would start to do something, but their mind would drift and they would drop what they were doing and start something else. They were starting new projects all the time. I asked Grace and Phil if they were having trouble relaxing after this highly emotional experience and they said yes. I told them to multiply their feelings by a hundred and that might be what their daughter was feeling.

I believe the freedom of unscheduled time adds to the internal conflict ex-cult members have to deal with and the unscripted days are full of hard to make choices. It all translates into more anxiety for the family who's trying to encourage them to get on with their life. This experience was not something families were trained for. We all had to learn by trial and error as we went on. Getting through this requires strong relationships. I remember Ron and I having arguments and raising our voices at each other in frustration over nothing. We never did that before and I didn't like it. All we could do was work through it.

One time we were just chatting and Ron casually said maybe the group was not that bad; I blew up and stormed out of the house. He followed me into a field behind our place hollering at me to stop and when I did, he said I wasn't being fair and I had to listen to him ***because he was the victim in all this***. I knew Ron was right, he had to be able to talk through his thoughts freely as he had to rationalize what happened to him and deal with the feelings he was having now. I know my reaction to Ron's comment at the time was an emotional one because I was so frustrated with my lack of understanding and the guilt I was still feeling. After that encounter we stood there in the field hugging each other, which we seemed to do a lot since of our unusual reuniting.

I was starting to understand that cult members are kept emotionally on edge in the group. Feelings of guilt, fear and paranoia are fostered, true family bonds are severed, and excessive use of thought suppressing techniques are taught, and so, a residue of that mind set remains afterwards. Ex-cult members can appear to be judgmental, which puts a strain on family relationships. Floating incidents can be triggered by conflict, anxiety, familiar tunes or practices and snatches of memories. Now they have all this time to themselves and they are trying to control their habitual use of thought-stopping techniques. An ex-member told me the hardest part of the rehabilitation was trying to fight the temptation not to use this process.

I don't know if my boys will ever be able to fully realize the invaluable part they played in this whole rehabilitation process for all of us, especially Ron. They were just normal

children who kept us all busy. Our normal day to day living never allowed us too much time to dwell on things. Perhaps the reason a lot of these manipulating groups discourage normal relationships is because they take so much energy and time!

We started to talk to the Bowerman family on a regular basis discussing everything that we knew about this phenomenon. They needed someone to talk to as we still did.

TAKING ANOTHER BIG STEP FORWARD OR TRIPPING OVER MY OWN FEET

After talking to another family affected by this phenomenon, I was even more frustrated that there wasn't more information out there on these groups. I thought we should go more public about our experience. I phoned Howard Elliott the editor of the Fort McMurray Today newspaper. I gave him some background on what had happened to us. He was interested and we set up a meeting for the next day.

I had never met Howard before in person, but respected his point of view in the editorials he wrote. He had always seemed to me to be objective, fair and insightful. I needed to hear his take on this for my own credibility and peace of mind.

When I met with Howard, I found that he already had some awareness of these groups and he was interested in what I had to say. I gave him just a brief overview of what had transpired and some general information that I had with me. I told him that this was the experience from my point of view. Ron had his own take on what happened! Howard said he understood that and we set up a meeting at my home for the following week.

As I was driving up the hill to our home in the Gregoire Park afterwards, I was struggling with how I was going to tell Pat and especially, Ron, what I had just committed us to. I didn't know how Ron would take the news, so I was more than a little apprehensive. When I told Ron, I skirted the truth. I said Howard had contacted me. When Ron asked how he had heard about it, I said that Howard must have seen his interview on TV with Doug. Finally, with a little prodding from me, Ron agreed to let Howard interview us. When Howard came over to our home he brought a tape recorder and he taped the interview. It was a very good meeting and Ron was very open with him.

Once again I had made a spontaneous decision and now, while I waited for the story to come out, I agonized over whether or not I had done the right thing. Then something came up that took our minds off the newspaper interview. Grace and Phil Bowerman called and asked us to come to Meadow Lake. They had invited Ken and Lou Conner to visit them and speak at a number of talks to local community groups about destructive cultism. This visit would give us the opportunity to meet Phil, Grace and Janice in person, provide Pat the opportunity to meet the Conner's and Ron and I the opportunity to reunite with them as well.

We didn't hesitate to accept the offer and made plans to go down the next weekend. Ron had a pickup truck and was going to be in Calgary for a few days to visit with our sisters there. Ron said on his way back from Calgary he would swing over to Meadow Lake and meet us at the Bowerman's.

Just before leaving for Saskatchewan we received a telephone call from Pat's niece, Sheryl in Edmonton. Sheryl had noticed 2 strange ads running in the Edmonton Journal. One read; "Do you like to dash, work hard for lots of money? Play hard for lots of fun? Travel to meet and see lots of interesting people and places. I can give you all three. Call right now, Mr. M. Porter, Hotel MacDonald. The date and time followed. The second ad was geared to students, 18 or over and the contact person was the same. Pat thanked Sheryl for picking up on them and calling. I went out right away to buy a copy of the Edmonton Journal, so we could see the ads for ourselves.

Martin Porter was the name of the president of the Unification Church of Canada, so they were running the ads to recruit people! I was really upset that they were actively, if deceitfully, recruiting right in our own back yard. I thought of all the people who might be attracted those ads. I decided to check it out on our way home from our visit to Saskatchewan.

Help Wanted 380

HIRING NOW
WE'VE GOT SEVERAL OPENINGS TO START NOW IN OUR EDMONTON OPERATION. IF YOU ARE OVER 18 WITH YOUR OWN VEHICLE YOU WILL EARN \$2,000 PER/MO. FOR FULL TIME WORK. EXPERIENCE NOT REQUIRED. PH. 488-1515 BEFORE 3 P.M.

THE CANADIAN CORP OF COMMISSIONAIRES have good openings for ex-military men & women, free uniform, cleaning allowance, wages \$6.15 per hour & up. Apply 505, 10621 100 Ave.

**APPLY NOW
MANY OPENINGS
GRADE 12**

No experience necessary
A Div. of a large Co. is expanding in the Edmonton area, on the job training. You must be available to start work immediately. We need 15 people. For interview call 424-6172.

RECEIVER required. Varied duties. Experience nec. South Side location. 463-7058, Monday only.

DO

You like to dash, work hard for lots of money? Play hard for lots of fun? Travel to meet & see lots of interesting people & places. I can give you all three. Call right now, Mr. M. Porter, Hotel MacDonald, 424-5181, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Mon. & Tues. only.

STUDENTS

18 or over
Travel Western Canada and meet very interesting people working with Headstart Workshops and Programmes for small children. Aladdin will pay for the complete training program, and provide all necessary transportation. Must be free to travel & available immediately. Those that qualify will have a 5-day company paid trip to Mazatlan, Mexico, prior to returning to school. Must be willing to learn and work hard and receive a far above average income based on units. To arrange a personal interview, call Mr. M. Porter, Hotel MacDonald, 424-5181, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Mon.-Tues. only.
Absolutely no telephone interviews.

Experienced Telephone

Help Wanted 380

PRESSER & seamstress wanted for fashion care. Apply in person, 10517 107 Avenue.

\$6-\$12/HR.

\$6/Hr. guaranteed to start for people to sell newspaper ads by telephone. 203, 10235 124 St. 488-1862.

GRADER Operators req'd. Apply to 16065 132 Ave from 8 to 3:30.

Career Opportunity

National Company requires 5 well dressed, aggressive individuals with own auto. Income range \$1500+ per mo. For interview ph: 433-3841.

**Special Education
Staff Wanted**

Positions for staff to teach adults who are trainable, mentally handicapped, will be available beginning September, 1982. Requirements include: a relevant college diploma (2 yrs. or more) and successful experience working with mentally handicapped people. For more info. ph. 453-2391 weekdays, prior to 4 p.m.

INDEPENDENT contractor for mobile patrols, must be honest, bondable, hardworking person. Shift work. Only genuine applicants need apply. Please contact 454-0731.

ACTION ESCORTS needs reliable escorts & dancers. 420-0601 anytime.

WANTED 1 daytime commission sales person. Good earning potential, will train & provide leads. Call 482-7308, 9-4, for appointment.

EXP. salvage yard dismantlers required. Min. 1 yr. recent exp., newer models, cars, & trucks, own tools & trans. req'd. Call 998-3973.

REQ. personnel for daytime work. Earn up to \$4,000/mo. Car nec. Contact Larry at 9245 35 Ave. 2-3 pm.

SECURITY GUARD

Ed Miller Sales & Rentals has a position for full-time Security Guard. Ideal candidate will be mature & reliable. Shiftwork is required. Please apply in person at 10430 178 Street.

LOOKING FOR A

FUTURE

Part Time 381

MATURE, DEPENDABLE sales person req'd for part-time weekend help in women's wear outlet. Ph. 452-1390, 10-5.

40 PART-TIME positions available now. Call Mike 471-3231.

PART-TIME experienced spotter required. Also require part-time experienced presser. Apply 7625 104 St

PART-TIME driver for Sat. & Sun. Apply within, 9436-27 Ave. 463-7950.

DAIRY QUEEN

Part-time day help wanted. Apply within, 10250 101 Street.

\$\$ EARN \$\$

Part-time \$ try Coppercraft Home Party Plan. For more info., 464-4017

EVENINGS. Persons required for telephone sales-fund raising campaign. Ph. Gordon 464-3192.

PART-Time receptionist req'd for weekday mornings by office of medium-sized construction Co. in S.E. Edm. Duties incl. typing, invoicing & general clerical work. Call Al Gordon at 468-3111.

AUTO mechanic needed to work on British imports. Must be experienced. PH. 459-0490.

PART-TIME south side office requires a mature individual. If you enjoy working in a small pleasant office doing a variety of clerical duties, this position is for you. Car required. 465-9433.

REQ'D Drivers 1 day (Tuesday) for Auction in N.W. area, must have valid D.L. & drive auto & std. 452-2157. No calls Tuesdays.

NEED HELP. Make money at home. Enjoy sharing the results of Dr. Schilling's Weight Loss & Maintenance Program. Ph. 475-2101.

Sales Agents & Distributors 385

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464-6033. ALSO OPEN SUN.

**Boats
Marine Supplies 420**

RAINBOW MARINE
JOHNSON SALES & SERVICE
11416 156 St. 455-8480
Interest free layaway plan on all new and used boats and motors.

JET MARINE
JOHNSON SALES & SERVICE
LAYAWAY PLAN NO INTEREST
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Power & Sail Marine
OMC-Sales & Service
Complete line of New & Used Boats, Motors & Trailers.
Your Hable Cat Dealer
184 -St. Albert Road
458-2411

20 Ft. and 16 ft. ALUMINUM JET BOATS for sale. 467-4552.

WILLSON'S SAILCRAFT
OPEN FOR SEASON. 484-0256.
10610 172 St.

1976 GALAXY 17 1/2', 302 O.M.C stern drive, \$9,000 or best offer. 484-2174.

1978 PETERBOROUGH Olympian, 18'9", 235 OMC, 25 hrs. Calkins trailer. \$10,500. PH. 468-5477 days; 463-2637 evgs.

12 FT. & up Wabasca cedar and canvas canoes, made from old chestnut molds. 929-2170, Beaumont.

15' Venture Calamarian sail boat, excellent, \$1,500. 435-1758.

RIVER JET BOAT
24 1/2' River King, marathon hull. 2 tops - 460 V8, all options, exc. cond., sacrifice price. Ph. 1-827-2129 days, 1-827-3260 evgs. Grande Cache.

14 FT. Glasfron fibreglass boat, 1981 60 hp Johnson, till, speedo, 2 props, tarp, E.Z. loader trailer, spare tire, paddles, \$4,500 or best offer. 973-7412 evgs. & wkends.

12' BOAT, 7 1/2 hp motor. Utility trailer, 6x10. 487-4897 after 6.

12' Princecraft boat, trailer, motor, steering, controls, \$1,250. 465-2430.

22 FT. JET BOAT Freebar hull. Completely equip'd tandem trailer. Ron, 1-347-7122; Butch, 1-346-7635, Red Deer.

Part Time 381

**Boats,
Marine Supplies 420**

1976 FIBREFORM Waikiki, 115 hp Evinrude, p. till, elec. start, ski bar, low ropes, 2 sets of skis, life jackets, only 200 hrs. on motor. 478-0179.

FIBREGLASS supplies at Lower Prices. Tuff Epoxy Paint-The only paint for glass boats. See 583 & 176 Yellow Pages. Polar Craft Ind. Box 4247. 6816 78 AVE. PH. 469-3453.

22' RIVERBOAT, 403 Olds Berkley, 1981 model, painted, top, tandem trailer, low hrs. 467-9598.

1978 GLASCON 14 1/2' skiboat, c/w 1978 75 HP Chrysler, power till, dual tanks, metal flake point, Speedo, reclining seats, ski acces. Call Bill, 462-2232, or 1-895-2689.

SAILBOAT & TRL. c/w access. Exc. cond. \$1150/best offer. Dan, work 482-5771 ext. 249; 488-9321.

IDEAL Family recreation, 1981 CATALINA 22, sail boat, sleeps 5, fully equipped for cruising, incl. Merc. Outboard & trailer. 484-9037.

14 FT. FIBREGLASS Customized Elgin boat c/w 40 h.p. Viking engine, trailer and tarp. 466-1677.

OWENS ski boat, 60 hp. Evinrude, equip., trailer, evenings 459-4721.

24' BUCCANEER sailboat, 6' head room, berths for 6, fully equipped with easy load trailer & club membership at Wabamun Lake, 1/3 replacement cost \$13,000. Ph. 481-1566.

ALUM. JET BOAT
OLDS BERKLEY. PH. 464-3707.

NEW Jobe, pro water ski, \$350. 19 pitch sst prop. for Johnson or Evinrude \$180. 438-3001.

17' CRUISING sailboat, sleeps 2. 3 sails, motor, trailer, ideal weekend. \$1,500 below replacement. 474-1066 days, 483-8378 evgs.

14 FT. Springbok Rocket 3, 55 Johnson, full convertible top, new 1979, winter stored, Calkins trailer, \$4,000. 436-1910 after 6 p.m.

1980 VANGUARD CUTLASS 17 1/2 ft. convertible top, seats 9, open bow, 105 h.p. Outboard Motor complete with instrumentation panel, till & trim, ladder, 3 gas tanks, Calkins trailer, exc. cond., used 10 times, \$8,000 or best offer. 473-4150.

Part Time 381

I was looking forward to meeting the Bowerman's in person. All the people Pat and I had met so far were just ordinary, good people, and from our conversations, they seemed no different.

I took part of Thursday and Friday off work and by late morning we were loading the kids in the car and it turned out to be quite the trip. The road from Fort McMurray to Cold Lake, Alberta was fine, but just after getting into Saskatchewan we hit a stretch of road that was under construction. It had just rained and for an hour and a half I was fishtailing, but did not dare stop because the road was like a bog. There was no other traffic on the road and no construction crews were out due to the weather. No one was around and I knew if I did get stuck we'd be there for a long time. Nobody had cell phones back then!

We finally arrived in the area where the Bowerman's lived around dusk. I called from a pay phone for directions, but it took another hour of searching before we arrived at their farm, where they greeted us with open arms.

The Bowerman's were a hard working farm family who were actively involved in their community and church. Phil farmed and Grace was still teaching some at the college. Their sons were grown – one was a rancher, one a welder. Janice was young and attractive and friendly. They all seemed like really nice people. We stayed up late that first night talking, sharing stories and getting to know each other. Ken and Lou would not arrive until the following day.

Ron arrived late the next morning just before Phil returned from the Saskatoon airport with the Conner's. It was great seeing them again! Everyone was so wound up no one could stop talking until it was time for their first community presentation. That night, Ken, Lou, Phil and Janice gave a talk at the United Church in Meadow Lake. It was packed with people. Ken had us stand up at one point, so they could see another family that had been affected by this too.

Afterwards we met quite a few other people from the community, and they sure thought highly of our hosts. Everyone seemed to know everyone else. It was a really tight knit community.

We followed them around to all the presentations that had been scheduled in the different communities that weekend. Ken and Lou wanted us to sit up front with all of them and be ready if any questions were directed at us. At one meeting, I spoke of my experience. It was interesting to watch the audience and hear their questions. There were very few skeptics that I could see. Once when we were leaving, I saw one man step up and press gas money into Phil's hand, although he was reluctant to take it.

Janice spent a lot of time talking to us while we were there. I think it was easier for her to talk to us. We could appreciate what she went through without being emotionally involved. I think I was listening more and talking less with Janice than I did with Ron. Looking back, it seemed I had a comment for everything Ron would say. It must have been so frustrating for him!

Janice said she and a girlfriend went to British Columbia after graduation to look for work. When some people she met invited her to their church, she felt comfortable going. What she found there was instant acceptance – then, step by step, she fell under their control. She was still really struggling when we met her, and feeling embarrassed at getting caught up with a group like that. It was really important for her to meet and talk with Ron, who was smart, good looking and likeable, and see that he was struggling with the same things too.

What Janice and Ron didn't really understand or fully accept yet, was that their conversion was a **normal** reaction to being in that type of environment. What a terrible thing cults do to people!

Janice expressed her feelings at this time very eloquently in a poem she wrote and gave to us. It appears on the following page, with her permission.

JANICE'S POEM

A dream that died.
It took a lot from me.
Eighteen long months later,
It's been washed through my mind,
'Til it's almost washed away.
Is this what life is?
Ups and downs, and inbetweens,
Learning how to cope.
I could die tomorrow
Then what?
Will I just perish back to dust?
Or is God really there?
Will he let my soul live?
Will my dream ever live again?
I think so
I can see a ray of hope
But each day has to run its course
If I take tomorrow, today.
I get flustered... and fail
I have to face reality
I can't be perfect here on earth
It hurts to think of that
But I knew because I've tried.
It hurts to hurt someone I care for
But everyone hurts someone now and then,
And once again, that's Reality
I'm glad for friends who understand
Who know just what it's like
Because reality sits before them
Waiting to attack
I have to say,
I think I can, I know I can
And life goes on at that!

We couldn't stay for Ken and Lou's last talk, which was on a Saskatoon radio station, but we listened to it as we were driving back to Alberta. This was a fitting goodbye for us. We took a much better road back to Alberta and arrived in Edmonton in time for me

to go to the Macdonald Hotel with Marie and Lloyd, and see what the Unification Church was up to there.

When we arrived at the hotel, there were about two dozen people protesting and some were carrying placards, so, we joined them. Marie looked at me and said this was the first protest she had ever attended, I told her it was the first for me as well. I had no idea what to expect. I recognized two of the protesters (Detective Ken Sprouse had introduced us) and went over to say hello. They were John Ableseth's brothers. He was the Moonie who was suing his family for 'abducting' and trying to deprogram him.

There were a lot of young people as well as some older individuals that had shown up in answer to the ads and we tried initiating conversation with as many as we could. All the individuals we talked to were excited about the offer they read in the newspaper ad and hoped they would be chosen for the jobs that offered such good opportunities. We tried to convince as many people as we could not to go in. Some people were surprised when we told them it was the Moonies who were sponsoring the ads and they turned away. Others didn't know who the Moonies were and they didn't really care, because all they wanted was the job, and the adventure that were being promised.

The main door of the hotel was shut and security was posted outside to keep the protesters out. I went over to talk with John's brothers. They said they had found another way into the hotel, and with me in tow, we snuck in the back door and past the security inside. Once inside, we tried talking to people who were on their way into the session room, to advise them that the job they were expecting was not what they would be getting.

We weren't too successful convincing the attendees to leave, so we decided to try to get into the presentation ourselves. But CFRN TV news had noticed us and the reporter came over to try and get an interview. By then, my adrenaline was up and I tried to push my way past a group of Moonies standing guard over the door. At this point, thankfully, the police showed up and told us we had to protest outside. I gave in and went back outside to join Marie and Lloyd who were waiting for me, and after about another half an hour we left.

Pat and the boys were with Pat's folks, and when I got back, I went off on my own to reflect on what had happened at the hotel. I realized that kind of confrontation would not get the point across to people who didn't know what the issues were and I would lose far more than I gained. I was still glad I had attended and hopefully prevented some people from getting involved with them or at least gave them something to think about before committing. We're lucky to have the right to protest; it's a privilege that I would use, but not abuse, again!

In the military environment Pat and I were brought up in, we were raised to follow the rules, and show respect for authority and for others. But it was a sheltered environment

and it was a shock to discover, years later, that there are evil people in the world. In a way you could say we lost our innocence or naivety and it changed the way we viewed the world. Now, I still do respect the individual but I believe trust has to be earned, and authority has to be accountable.

Anytime there was an opportunity to work the topic of this type of mind control or manipulation into a conversation without offending anyone I would I try to give people a reference by telling them what happened to me and my brother. And most of the time, people found something in the story they could relate to and learn from. It became my cause.

THE STORY WAS OUT IN PRINT - THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK NOW

The next morning the five of us left Edmonton and headed home to Fort McMurray. When we arrived, our two older boys started to help us unload the car. We noticed the full mailbox and a heap of papers on the deck Ron made.

I scooped up the newspapers as I was carrying in my youngest son who had fallen asleep. I dropped the newspapers on the table and went down the hall to his room. I put him down and I headed back to help the others with the bags noticing the front page of the top paper on the table. The headline read “**Unification Church, Creed or Curse, then Part Three, The Abduction**”. It was our story and it had run on 3 consecutive days while we were away. My heart was just a pumping, I was so nervous. We all sat in the living room while Pat read the articles to us.

I listened intently to what was written while the boys listened quietly and watched us. When I heard what was written I felt a weight lift off my shoulders, I was so relieved. This decision to go public had weighed heavily on me. I thought my perception of what happened was right, but because it was all so bizarre I was always second guessing myself. My youngest son woke up and wanted me to cuddle him on the rocking chair, giving me some time to reflect and hold him tight. Howard had done a lot of research and I thought he presented our story and the motives of these groups accurately. At that point, I felt he had a better understanding about this destructive cultism than I did, but then again he was viewing it objectively and I was still wrapped up in so much emotion.

I did not fully realize in advance, what the impact of doing this newspaper article would be for us. The story was picked up by other syndications and we started getting calls from all over the province and across the country from people looking for information.

Fort McMurray Family and Support Services (FCSS) in conjunction with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) contacted us saying they recognized the need for a seminar on destructive cultism. We were asked if we could arrange to bring in speakers if FCSS paid the costs. We contacted the early forerunners for the Edmonton Society Against Mind Abuse and Allan North, an ex-Hare Krishna and Treva Steel, an ex-member of a group called the Students of Light, agreed to come up to give a talk in the Keyano College Theatre.

CMHA gave out their handouts and we had prepared a questionnaire to find out if many other people in town had been affected by this. Unfortunately, the first question we asked was “Have you heard about cults before?” not taking into account that our story had run for 3 days in our local paper, so it pretty much invalidated the survey in terms of its usefulness! This survey was another example of our inexperience. We were learning, and making our mistakes in public, but no one seemed too judgmental,

although we always felt bad when we made them. The talk seemed to be well-received by the people who attended and the Fort McMurray Times did a write up in the paper.

People started to ask us to give talks in the community. The first were individuals on staff with FCSS who were interested in learning more and we were invited to give talks at informal gatherings at the homes of Myreene and Rose. Thus began our venture into public speaking.

We condensed our research on the different groups and our basic understanding of how the techniques worked, into a speech, and began sharing this and our own personal story, when we were asked to give presentations. It was good therapy because it gave us an opportunity to work through our feelings and increase our understanding by talking with others who sometimes held differing views. Every time we were challenged, we searched for better answers and our understanding of how these groups operated increased. It also seemed that at every talk we gave there were people who had been affected in some way by this new technology, either through their own personal experience or by knowing someone who had been involved themselves.

Occasionally at our talks, someone would come up to us after, to thank us for talking about it because they were too embarrassed or afraid to tell of their own experience. Others in the audience you could see were struggling with some internal conflict. Some people said they just did not believe us. People from different groups came to see if we were attacking their beliefs. But the majority of people were just individuals wanting an understanding of what these groups were all about.

We were still continuously receiving calls from people looking for help or needing to talk. We heard a lot of sad stories which were not much different than ours.

In March, 1982, the Alberta Report Magazine called me and I did an interview over the telephone with them. The story ran in their weekly magazine under the religion section. I guess that was the appropriate place for it, although for me it was not a religious issue; it was psychological abuse.

Soon after the story came out in the Alberta Report, Ron received a couple of telephone calls from old friends of his who were surprised to see the story in the magazine. They told Ron that with his intelligent and self-reliance, if he could get caught up in this they had better learn more about it. They said they were happy he was out and appreciated the way he talked to them about the experience. I think that made Ron feel good because he still sometimes felt that people must be judging him.

I felt good about the Alberta Report magazine running the story because it was one of the best resources we had in Alberta for keeping up on what was happening around the province. Some people considered it too conservative, others considered it too controversial, but the magazine never seemed to be afraid to write about or challenge any topic and I appreciated that.

Things were constantly changing and Ron had his own social life now. We were starting to see less of each other which is to be expected when you are individuals living your own lives. Work kept me busy and Pat had her volunteer work and took care of all of us. Together we kept busy preparing and giving presentations in our community. Telephone calls and mail from provinces across Canada was increasing as well as requests for printed information. A nurse we'd known in Norman Wells had even read the Alberta Report article and wanted some information on the group Ron had been affiliated with. She had a cousin in New Zealand whose son had gotten caught up in the Moonies and his family was concerned for him.

We were finding that the Unification Church was no small organization; they operated worldwide, under different names, so it was hard identifying who they were. They recruited on campuses or any place young people hung out. They had businesses all over the world. They owned influential newspapers. They had money and money buys power.

We received an unexpected invitation in the mail to attend a conference in Calgary on destructive cultism being put on by the chaplains at the University of Calgary. There were an increasing number of destructive groups recruiting at the University and they wanted to get more awareness out to the students. We wanted to broaden our knowledge, so we decided to go.

We drove to Calgary arriving around 4pm, and stayed overnight at my sister, Sue's place. I was looking forward to having some time to talk to her and update her on what we had been doing. We'd just started to get comfortable when a friend of hers dropped over unexpectedly. We were trying to talk about meditation and different techniques of self-hypnosis with Sue and he seemed restless. He started playing a coin game with Sue's two boys. The boy's were 12 and 14 years old at the time. He had a quarter in the middle of the palm of his hand and one of the boys would put their hand, palm down, about 4 inches above his. The idea of the game was to grab the quarter before he closed his hand and if they caught it, they could keep it. He was too fast for them, so after awhile they got bored and wanted to quit, but he would tease them into trying it again. Finally they just left the room. He then challenged me to try it.

I remembered a technique that Ron told me he was taught to use when recruiting new members to put them off guard. The technique was to stare at a point on their forehead and concentrate on that. This was a way of taking control right from the start. I decided to try this, so I picked a spot on his forehead and stared at it without blinking. When I did that, he couldn't concentrate on what he was doing. Each time he went to close his hand he glanced away and I would grab the quarter out of his hand. It worked, every time and it was so simple.

He got frustrated after losing a dollar. He wanted to quit but I got another fifty cents off him before I let him. Her boy's were back in the room by this time watching, so I gave

them each seventy-five cents just to rub it in. I have never had much time for bullies. As the four of us were having another coffee, Sue's friend said I should not be so negative about all groups that use meditation because for some people it was good. I said I agreed that meditation as a form of relaxation can be beneficial for some people and told him I have friends that do it. My concern, though, was with the frequency and length of time meditation or other forms of self-hypnosis were used as thought-stopping techniques by destructive groups to control their members! At this, he went on to say that he thought it was wrong, what I did to Ron, and then shortly after, he left. He had contacted her out of the blue and after that evening, she never saw him again.

Afterwards, Sue told us he had been studying Kung Fu and learning meditation to better his concentration. She said he seemed different and had even quit his job as a department manager at Zellers to spend more time with his meditation group and was now working for one of their businesses. Sue gave us the name of the group he had joined and Pat remembered seeing that name in a new book on destructive cults she'd just bought. She ran upstairs to get it and as we read the information on this group, all we could do was look at each other and shake our heads.

The next morning after breakfast, Pat and I drove over to the University to attend the conference. We were at the hall signing an attendance sheet when one of the organizers, Reverend Guy came over and introduced himself. Reverend Guy said he had heard a lot about Ron and me. He led us in to the conference room and took us to where Ken Sprouse was talking to some people. This was the first time Pat met Ken. We shook hands and then turned to the others. I knew them already, but Pat didn't. I'd seen them last at the protest in Edmonton. Jim and Dave Abelseth and I had a bit of an uncomfortable laugh reminiscing about that experience!

I was so sorry that the Abelseths did not succeed in getting John out of the UC. Jim said the charges their brother pressed against the family had already cost them close to \$50,000.00 in lawyer's fees and other expenses. It made me appreciate how lucky I was. We had so many close calls and it could have been me in that situation.

There were three chaplains that spoke about cult activity they were seeing and their concerns. A few of the attendees were family members concerned about one of their own. Others were people who had enrolled in meditation or personal development training and had been convinced by high pressure sales tactics and demoralizing sessions to take more advanced and costlier courses. When they ran out of money they were just dropped by the trainers who said initially the money was secondary. Their experiences sounded so similar. A couple of other individuals were just on the fringes of other questionable groups and were questioning what they were being told. Then there were others who had been able to walk away from a destructive group but still needed answers for what had happened to them. Everyone was there for information and/or help. Two stories stood out in my mind after hearing them.

A United Church minister whose son had been recruited into a UFO cult four years previously had not heard from his son for a long, long time. Then two days before the conference, his son telephoned him at home and told his dad not to attend. If he did, he would never hear from him again. The minister said his son had been an honors student and had been really interested in space and astrology. He'd started to attend an astrology club that was advertised in a magazine he subscribed to. After going to a few meetings his son was encouraged by his new friends to take a free course they were running and learn to meditate. Not long after that he was invited to attend a week long workshop sponsored by the group in the mountains to enjoy the tranquil setting. This retreat was being promoted as an opportunity to gaze at the stars away from the distraction of the city lights. After returning home from the retreat, the minister said his son started to become more withdrawn. He spent less time with the family and more time with this new group of friends. Three months after joining the group his son moved out of his parent's home without telling them. He cleaned out his bank account, but left all his belongings behind. There was a note saying because they did not support his interest he could not be around them anymore. That note was the last communication they'd had with him, until now.

Reverend Guy said this group meditated for long periods of time while fasting, hoping to leave their bodies and astral travel. The minister said his son believed that while meditating, he had left his body a few times and travelled to other universes. Once his son experienced this out of body travel, he was obsessed with trying to talk others into experiencing it too. The minister said he had told his son a couple of days before he left that there was something wrong with this group. He asked him to look at some of the information he'd collected on them. Now his son was gone, and his father was carrying a lot of guilt for not finding out more information before his son got so deeply involved. The minister and his wife have been devastated ever since.

One young woman there had been recruited into this group and her main function was to fund raise for them. She would spend up to twelve hours a day running up and down streets trying to sell whatever they gave her. At first she said she had a lot of energy and was praised for being a good fundraiser bringing in a lot of money. This group ate out of garbage cans or whatever they could beg from people. They were not allowed to spend any money they made for themselves. As time went on she started to wear down physically and felt sick and tired all the time. She got bad blisters on her feet that never had a chance to heal and one foot became infected. Members of her fund raising team would beat on her leg chanting Satan get out. When she got so bad and could not walk anymore they dumped her off in front of a hospital. She said looking back she was lucky the team showed even that little bit of compassion because reliance on society in any way was totally against their doctrine. The infection was so bad she almost lost her leg and her real family was called to come down from Canada. When she was on the mend her family brought in a counselor to help her work through what had happened to her, but basically she ended up deprogramming herself. She found out that the leader of this group never helped anyone; he lived like a king of the backs of his followers. She said after being given information and looking at what had

happened to her, she came to the realization herself that what the leader did was wrong.

Out of the blue, Reverend Guy asked if I could tell the conference attendees our story. I was caught a bit off guard and nervous talking in this setting, since many of the attendees were professionals in their fields, but I just took a deep breath and started to speak about my personal experience.

At the end of the morning session, people were standing around talking and some people started coming up to us and asking questions. By the end of the day, both Pat and I were exhausted and happy to get back to my sisters place. All the emotion was draining, but it was a good conference and we were glad we'd come.

We also came away with the following statement that was distributed there.

A Statement from the Chaplains at the University of Calgary

WE BELIEVE IN FREEDOM OF RELIGION, THE FREEDOM TO BELIEVE, TO WORSHIP, TO ASSEMBLE AND TO TEACH RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

WE BELIEVE THAT ALL RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND PROFESSIONAL LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS ARE UNDER OBLIGATION TO GOVERN THEMSELVES BY THE HIGHEST ETHICAL STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, AND TO DO ALL THEIR BUSINESS OPENLY UNDER PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY.

WE BELIEVE THAT WHILE PERSUASION IS A LEGITIMATE TOOL IN THE SPREAD OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS, COERCION, EVEN OF THE MOST SUBTLE KIND, IS NOT.

WE BELIEVE THAT PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS, PARTICULARLY THOSE PEOPLE CONSIDERING FULL-TIME LIFE-LONG SERVICE TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS, SHOULD BE GIVEN COMPLETE FREEDOM AND ADEQUATE TIME IN WHICH TO LEARN THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUCH A COMMITMENT, AND TO EXAMINE THE FULL COST OF SUCH COMMITMENT WITH THE HELP OF FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ADVISORS OUTSIDE THE RELIGIOUS GROUP. (IN THE CASE OF THE HISTORIC CHURCHES OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION FULL FREEDOM OF INQUIRY AS STATED ABOVE IS GUARANTEED, AND THE PROCESS MAY TAKE FROM THREE TO SIX OR MORE YEARS.)

AS FELLOW RELIGIONISTS COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE WE ARE OBLIGED TO RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS WHOSE METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING FOR LIFE-LONG FULL-TIME SERVICE DENY THAT BASIC RESPECT FOR PERSONS WHICH IS UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED IN A FREE SOCIETY.

---SOME OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS RECRUIT BY FALSE REPRESENTATION.

---MOST OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS EMPLOY HEAVY DOGMATIC INDOCTRINATION, THE MANIPULATION OF PEOPLE IN A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT BY STRONG YET SOMETIMES SUBTLE GROUP PRESSURE, AND SEEK TO GAIN OBEDIENCE BY THE USE OF GUILT AND FEAR.

---MANY OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS PRESSURE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO FULL-TIME LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS OR WEEKS.

---MANY OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS WHICH ATTRACT RECRUITS INTO COMMUNES FOR INDOCTRINATION DENY RECRUITS THE FREEDOM TO REFLECT ALONE, OR TO LEAVE THE GROUP IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE GROUP'S TEACHING WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ADVISORS OUTSIDE THE GROUP SO AS TO EXAMINE THEIR OWN READINESS FOR LIFE-LONG COMMITMENT.

---SOME OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS REFUSE TO ALLOW RECRUITS THE FREEDOM EVEN TO CONTACT THEIR FAMILIES; IN SOME CASES THEY ALLOW MEETINGS WITH MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY ONLY UNDER TIGHTLY CONTROLLED CONDITIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH GROUP LEADERS IN ATTENDANCE.

WE BELIEVE SUCH METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING FOR A LIFE OF RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND SERVICE CONSTITUTE AN ASSAULT ON HUMAN PERSONALITY AND A DENIAL OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

WE CLAIM NO PREROGATIVE TO JUDGE AND CONDEMN OTHERS FOR THEIR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES, BUT WE CANNOT EVADE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO QUESTION AND CRITICIZE OTHERS ON THEIR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES. WE OURSELVES ARE READY AT ANY TIME, SHOULD OCCASION ARISE, TO ANSWER THE SAME QUESTIONS AND RESPOND TO THE SAME CRITICISM. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT OUR RELIGIOUS FAITH PLACES US ABOVE PUBLIC CRITICISM.

WE WISH TO ADD THE FOLLOWING NOTE:

INTERVENTION COUNSELLING, COMMONLY KNOWN AS DEPROGRAMMING, HAS ARISEN SPONTANEOUSLY IN NORTH AMERICA IN THE LAST TEN YEARS TO MEET THE URGENT NEED OF FREEING UP RECRUITS IN CERTAIN NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS TO EXAMINE FRANKLY AND FREELY THE MEANING AND NATURE OF LIFE-LONG FULL-TIME COMMITMENT TO THESE GROUPS. INTERVENTION COUNSELLING PROVIDES SUCH RECRUITS THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE VITAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE AND PRACTICES OF THE RELIGIOUS GROUP WHICH WERE DELIBERATELY SUPPRESSED BY GROUP LEADERS DURING INDOCTRINATION.

SOME PARENTS RESORT IN EXTREME DESPERATION TO SUCH MEASURES AS ABDUCTION OF THEIR CHILDREN FROM GROUP COMMUNES IN ORDER TO ALLOW INTERVENTION

COUNSELLING TO TAKE PLACE.

WHILE WE GREATLY REGRET THE DECISION OF PARENTS TO ABDUCT THEIR CHILDREN, WE RECOGNIZE THE EXTREME PRESSURES WHICH LEAD THEM TO TAKE THIS ACTION, AND WE HAVE GENUINE SYMPATHY FOR THEM IN THEIR PREDICAMENT. AT THE SAME TIME WE DEPLORE THE PRACTICES OF THE NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS WHICH HAVE DRIVEN PARENTS TO SUCH EXPRESSIONS OF FAMILY LOVE AND LOYALTY.

ABUNDANT FACTS, AND THE PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF FORMER MEMBERS OF NEW RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND OF THEIR PARENTS, TO SUPPORT THE STATEMENTS SET FORTH ABOVE CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Hostage to Heaven, Betty and Barbara Underwood, (1979)

Crazy For God , Christopher Edwards, (1979)

Moonwebs, Josh Freed, (1980)

Gifts of Deceit, Robert Boettcher, (1980)

Snapping, Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, (1978)

The Chaplains at the University of Calgary represent the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church the Roman Catholic Church and the United Church.

This statement is endorsed by the Calgary Cult Information,
Sub. P.O. Station 140, 4909 17 Ave.S.E., Calgary, T2A 0A0.

It wasn't until we got back to Fort McMurray that we could reflect on it all.

We often felt overwhelmed sometimes, with all of this emotion and all the information we were trying to absorb. Having our families and good friends to talk to make things easier. We talked a lot with my Dad, my sisters and Pat's family, especially her sister and brother-in-law, Marie and Lloyd, who right from the start, offered their support. Good friends like Chris & Myreene Tobin, Rose and Jim Bendfeld and DeVar and Elaine, and a few others who had to listen to us for years and still do. I remember DeVar telling me once his Dad said if you have one close friend in your lifetime you are a rich man. Well, I feel exceptionally lucky and rich.

It's so sad that cult recruits are manipulated into severing ties with family and friends and replacing them with superficial relationships. I personally have never seen any compassion or compensation for members who have been misused and abused by any of these organizations, from any of these organizations.

Another story that underscores this was told to us by a lady we met in Fort McMurray, a respected and influential member of the community there, whose cousin's daughter belonged to a destructive cult in BC. While she was pregnant, members of this group would beat her on a regular basis for being evil and carrying an evil baby. Family members tried to intervene, but because she said she was a member of this group of her own free will, they could do nothing about it because of our laws.

According to the story, one time when the team leader picked her up, he was upset with her for not bringing in enough money. So to give her what he called a character builder, he dropped her off at a slum hotel and made her go from room to room asking for donations, while he sat outside in the van waiting for her. At one of the rooms two men pulled her in and raped her. She returned to the van beat-up and crying, but the team leader put the blame on her. She never called the police because their teachings were based on society being corrupt and evil. She got pregnant and when she started to show, the group would often beat her for carrying an evil baby. Eventually, when she could not fundraise anymore, the team abandoned her on the side of the road. Her family came to her rescue; she gave birth to twins, went on with her life, finished school and became very successful. We were glad to hear that such a horrifying story had a good ending!

BRINGING REALITY HOME FOR RON AND I

One evening we received a telephone call from one of the Abelseth brothers in Southern Alberta. They said they had their brother, John in a farm house just outside Sylvan Lake near Red Deer, and asked if Ron and I could come down to talk with him. I told them we would call them back. I was reluctant to get involved because it would cost me to get there and we were on a tight budget. And it was so risky. But I had rashly promised them my help at any time because I knew the situation – they had already made two unsuccessful attempts. John had been Ron's Centre Person in Calgary and Ron said he owed it to John to tell him what he had learned about the group, in case that made a difference. After some serious discussion, I telephoned them back to let them know we were coming down and got directions to the house.

When we arrived at the house, after dark the next evening, I knew right away what the situation was because of the somber mood. You could feel the desperation before anyone said anything. We talked with Jim and Dave who said they were scared that things weren't going well. I told them we had to leave in the morning because of work commitments, but would offer any support we could that night. They said they just wanted us to talk to John because he wasn't listening to anyone. We were taken to a bedroom on the second floor where John was being kept. We met the deprogramming team lead by Ken Conner Jr. outside the door.

They said they were frustrated because they weren't making much progress. John already knew what to expect from earlier attempts to deprogram him. When they'd given him some cassette tapes and left him alone to listen to them, he'd put scotch tape over the hole on the back of the cartridges and erased them all. I almost smiled at this sign of rebellion but this was not a funny situation.

John was not expecting us and when we entered the room, he was sitting on the side of the bed. He looked up at us in disbelief; then he got angry. He asked us what we were doing there. Ron walked over to John, extended his hand and said, "John we just came to say hi and see how you are doing". John shook Ron's hand saying good to see you. But when Ron started talking about what he'd been learning about the Moonies, John wouldn't acknowledge him anymore and Ron decided to leave the room.

John was lying down on the bed now, so I sat beside him, saying I was sorry for what he was going through. I didn't know what else to say, so I started telling him everybody in the house cared about him and he wasn't going to be hurt. All everyone wanted to do was make sure he clearly knew both sides of the issue. That's what family and friends do; they put themselves at risk to help someone they figure is in trouble. He said I didn't have the right to do this. I said I agreed, and it made me angry that family and friends had to go to these lengths to have a normal discussion.

I knew these brothers had a bond between them even though John was upset with them at this point of time. I felt bad for the three of them because they were nice guys and I knew what they must be feeling right now.

I left the bedroom after a short time because I did not want to be in the way and found Ron in the living room in conversation with some of John's old friends and there were quite a few. They all really cared about him and were there to add moral support. Ron was explaining to them what he had experienced going into and getting out of the group and the dilemma John might be going through now. Ron was also cautioning them that what he was talking about was his experience. He made it clear that John was a completely different individual.

We were not in the room then, but were told later that John asked to go to the washroom and get cleaned up in private. The deprogrammers were concerned about John being in the bathroom by himself, but his brothers thought it would be ok. They loved their brother and didn't want to subject him to any more humiliation than necessary. I could relate because I was so conscious of Ron's feelings when he was being deprogrammed.

Suddenly we heard glass breaking and then shouting. Someone was hollering that he'd cut his wrist. We were told John went downstairs to the washroom and with the door partially open and with one of his brothers standing just outside, he broke a water glass and cut his own wrist with a broken piece of glass. Everyone ran to the washroom.

His friends had hold of his arm and were applying pressure to the wound to curtail the bleeding. It was fortunate that some of John's friends had medical training and they were able to stop the bleeding. Two of them sewed up the gash. He did not cause any serious damage, thankfully. Later when things settled down John started talking to his brothers, and the three of them were hugging and crying. After that, John started to get more involved in the conversations and the next morning he spent time talking with Ron.

We could not stay any longer because we both had to get back to work and we apologized we weren't able to help more. They said they appreciated us taking such a big risk and coming for a time, which was a big support for them. We loaded up the car and headed home.

It was a seven hour drive back to Fort McMurray and Ron and I did not say much for half that time, because we were so wrapped up in our own thoughts. Ron broke the silence by saying he was surprised at what happened at the house and it kind of blew him away. He said it was scary to think how much control they'd exerted over him while he was with the Unification Church. He said he wondered what he might have done under certain circumstances. If he was convinced an action was necessary for the greater good, or if it was put in some context to justify it, he might have done anything...

I glanced at Ron. He was looking straight ahead at the highway and shaking his head in what I thought was disbelief. Ron said in the group there was a lot of talk that if they were ever grabbed and could not get away, they should cut their wrists. They were told of two ways to do it; one way would force their abductors to get medical aid and the other way would likely cause death, which was preferable to being forced back into the satanic world. I thought to myself, now that's paranoia!

Ron said that getting him out of that environment gave him an opportunity to look at the group from the outside, which he would not have been able to do otherwise. What he saw he did not like at all, so he said he would never go back. Ron also said they probably wouldn't want him back at this point because he would ask too many questions and demand answers.

After that trip I knew I did not want to get into deprogramming. Educating people about our human vulnerability to this new mind control technology seemed the better option for me and I resolved to put all my energy into that.

John ended up going back to his parents place in Kelowna, British Columbia. He lived with them for about two months. One day he disappeared and went back to the group. Shortly after John pressed charges against Ron and some of the other people who were at the house. He did not press charges against his family again and the charges against Ron and the others were later dropped.

CHARGES STAYED



ATTORNEY GENERAL

Provincial Court of Alberta

403/261-8444

Office of
The Crown Prosecutor

15th Floor, Rocky Mountain Plaza
615 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2G 4T8

May 19, 1982

Clerk of the Court
Provincial Court of Alberta
5th Floor, Provincial Court House
323 - 6th Avenue S.E.
Calgary, Alberta

Dear Sir:

Re: R. v. Kenneth CONNOR JR., Richard McNABNEY, Michael JAMES,
Ronald TASSIE and Thomas GILLESPIE
Section 247(1) of the Criminal Code

Pursuant to section 508 of the Criminal Code, you are hereby directed by counsel instructed by the Attorney General for the purpose to make an entry on the record that the proceedings against the above named on a charge pursuant to section 427(1) of the Criminal Code are stayed.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. H. Davie".

R. H. Davie
A/Senior Agent of the
Attorney General

RED*jle

So, the charges were stayed; nothing came of it even though it did make us all a little concerned for a time. Pressing charges or suing is one of the ways these groups intimidate their critics. In most cases they have loads of money therefore, nothing to lose and everything to gain. Suing someone until they back off is not a big financial commitment for them, but it usually is for the recipient of the lawsuit. That is probably why they are not challenged as much as they should be.

I heard John and his wife Helen took part in some interviews on TV, on the radio and for newspapers. They referred to his parents' house as a jail. This really hurt his parents because they said John was free to come and go as he wanted while he lived with them. John's parents called one time and told me they just wanted John to live his own life; there were no restrictions in place when he was there. They knew he might go back to the group at anytime, but wanted him to have the opportunity to think about it first. We admired them immensely.

After all the fervor settled down, John's mother wrote the Alberta Attorney General's office with their concerns about destructive cult activity in Canada. Below are copies of a letter Grace sent us and the response she got back from Neil Crawford the Attorney General for the Province of Alberta.

LETTER FROM Mrs. J. ABELSETH

790 Clifton Rd.
Kelowna B.C.
V1V 1A8
May 11 1982.

Dear Art and Pat,

Sorry not to have written you before to say thankyou for all your phone calls, Christmas card and good wishes. We are so happy for you that you have Ron back and wish we were so lucky. It is really hard to believe that John is saying the things he is. I understand he was in Calgary when Ken and Lou Connor were there and has seen Judge Brian Stevenson, with the view to laying charges against some people who had nothing to do with his rescue. Ron's and Tom Gillespie's only crime was coming to wish him well. It is really incredible that he can be so controlled. I have been writing letters like mad and have received a couple of very encouraging answers. I am enclosing a copy of the one from Neil Crawford and am hoping that Ron will contact him to offer proof of the mind control techniques used by the Moonies. I plan to send one to Peggy Hogan and hope that John will do the same. We are very fortunate that the people who have their loved ones back are still helping the rest of us. Jal and I have been on two talk shows here and I have been on Naniamo radio by phone, also an FM station here and in Calgary. Jim, Jal and I talked on the phone to a Chicago station that John was on the week before. I have also spoken to a PTA meeting and a young peoples group from one of the churches here. I am determined that Moon is not going to get any more slaves if I can help it. Our minister has suggested a workshop on cults in our church and we are meeting each week to finalise plans. It is to be on June 5 at 7pm and we hope that Ken Sprouse will come as one of the speakers. We have Ray and Marg Steffich for sure. They are great people and it is really too bad about Mike. He was arrested and put in jail and has been let out on a technicality. We got a letter from John on April 26, just as I predicted we would. We had him for two and a half months with no contact with them, so they had to punish us by allowing no contact for the same period of time. If you know someone who is going to attempt a rescue I have lots of advise for them. Too bad we weren't so wise sooner. I understand that your parents live in Summerland. If I had their address and phone number we would look them up. We would even let them know about the workshop. There may be a couple coming from Vernon, Surrey and Victoria. The more parents we get the greater the impact on the public. I have several people wonder how an intelligent person can get into a cult and one woman even said "my daughter is too intelligent to get into something like that". Ignorance is bliss!. Give our very best regards to Ron and if any of you are here on a visit please stop in. We can rest assured that your sons will not be Moonies. Sincerely,

Grace E. Ableseth.

PS I just got a call from the gal who hosts the open line show here on one of the radio stations and she wants me to go on her show on June 1, very good timing.

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S RESPONSE



ATTORNEY GENERAL AND
GOVERNMENT HOUSE LEADER

Office of
the Minister

403/427-2339

227 Legislative Building
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T5K 2B6

April 28, 1982

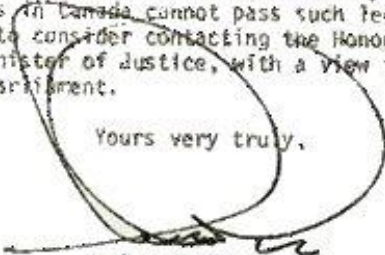
Our File Number: 1280-1

Mrs. Grace E. Abelseth,
790 Clifton Road,
KELOWNA, British Columbia,
V1Y 1A8

Dear Mrs. Abelseth,

Thank you for your March 29, 1982 correspondence relating to your son's involvement with the Unification Church. I am indeed familiar with this and many other similar cases involving the "Heavies" and I can say without hesitation that I share your concerns. As you are no doubt aware the activities of the Unification Church and similar groups are monitored carefully to ensure that they do not breach the law. Unfortunately the criminal law at present is not well equipped to deal with the indoctrination process utilized by cult groups and there are few members who appear willing to break ranks to help the authorities develop enough hard evidence to expose the "brainwashing" techniques employed and thereby facilitate prosecution. One alternative referred to in your letter is 'conservatorship' and this, I believe, is presently under consideration by a number of Provinces as well as the federal Government. Such legislation would of necessity have to be federal in character as it would act as an exception from prosecution under the Criminal Code for kidnapping. Unlike the United States where conservatorship may be legislated by each state as a corollary to the State Penal Code, the Provinces in Canada cannot pass such legislation. With this in mind I urge you to consider contacting the Honourable Jean Chretien, the Federal Minister of Justice, with a view to having such legislation enacted by Parliament.

Yours very truly,



Neil Crawford
Attorney General

GOING OUR OWN WAYS

As a family we were all growing together and our bond was strengthening with every shared experience. Ron was busy at his job working with forestry in their warehouse in Fort McMurray. In the summer he fought forest fires in Northern Alberta as part of the crew that did back burning. Back burning is when the firefighters purposely light a small fire in front of the main fire to try and control its size. This back burning is kind of like giving individuals information about the techniques manipulators use. When manipulators try to burn an individual, awareness can serve as a protective shield

Ron had a lot of new friends in Fort McMurray, and some old friends like Dave and Iris Kirschner who he knew from Norman Wells. These folks gave him a lot of moral support which had a big influence on his readjustment. After eight months of living with us, Ron decided to move on with his own life. He was starting to understand how the techniques were used to manipulate him, but still had some feelings to work out. He wanted his own space now to work out his own stuff as an independent individual. It was hard to see my brother go. All of us put so much into each other as a family then all of a sudden there is an emptiness or void when someone leaves. For all of us that was another part of growing and he was free to do anything he wanted, matter of fact so was I.

The night before Ron left we joked about the last eight months being a whirlwind. We reflected on how we had grown as individuals as well as in our relationship as brothers. He said he had appreciated living with us and being part of the family. The next morning my brother left.

Pat and I continued to gather information on groups that used manipulation to maintain a following and we gave presentations whenever we were asked.

A letter had been sent to the parent advisory councils of schools within the separate school district and some of them invited us to speak. Following that we were invited in to the Father Mercedi High School to give a talk to a group of students as part of their religion course. Initially, we shared the time with the religious education coordinator, Joe McMorrow. We started to do this on a regular basis, and it was one of our most rewarding challenges.

At one point Joe McMorrow asked us if we would be interested in participating in the development of a course dealing strictly with the techniques of psychological coercion and of course we said yes. Basically our role as collaborators involved getting together for meetings, gathering resource information and reading the drafts. Joe said if this course was approved it would be offered as an optional course for the high school curriculum throughout separate schools in Alberta. The object was to make students aware that there were some people and groups who use specific techniques to manipulate people and change their beliefs and

Pat had been reading information on cults after Ron had been in awhile. She even read the book "Sun Myung Moon", by Richard Sontag, that Ron had sent us. After Ron came to live with us collecting information became a passion and now she had files of newspaper clippings and magazine articles that she'd read or that people had given her (especially Rose) and a large number of books. I was starting to collect quite a number of video tapes, as I was recording anything that was broadcast. So we had a lot of information.

When Joe finished the final draft, it was submitted to the Alberta Religious Education Consortium for approval. We hoped it would be accepted for possible inclusion as an elective area of study and when Joe telephoned us saying it was approved it was a great feeling. Joe paid us a compliment in the media interviews saying we were the catalyst of the program, but he was the one who put it all together.

We were spending the little bit of spare money we had on photocopying articles, which was an easy way to provide people with information. At one point we even bought an old copy machine, although it made pretty poor copies by today's standards.

We did not affiliate ourselves with any other organization because we did not want to get caught up in any ones else's agenda. We were slowly making inroads increasing public awareness on our own, but we did see the need for counselors we could refer people to

When we called around, we were surprised to learn only two ministers in town were qualified counselors – one of the Catholic priests, Father George LaGrange and Reverend Bruce Matika, the pastor of the Baptist Church and we met with both of them.

When I gave Bruce a telephone call, he said he'd attended one of our talks and would be interested in having a meeting. We invited him over for dinner and it turned out to be a very pleasant evening. I asked Bruce if anyone was looking for advice would he mind if I gave his name to them and he said it would not be a problem at all.

Two weeks later, Bruce invited me to be the guest speaker at the Fort McMurray Ministerial Society's monthly meeting. I was nervous; this monthly meeting was attended by ministers from all the mainline churches in town. But it gave me another

opportunity to tell our story. I explained to them that for us this was not a religious issue, but one of abuse towards the individual, and they seemed to appreciate that. There were a lot of interesting questions. I got the feeling in general there was no concern about what I was doing because we were not challenging individual choice.

We were given an opportunity to move from our trailer in Gregoire Park to a house in downtown Fort McMurray. This move gave our boys a lot more room with more privacy than they had in the trailer. In the area where we moved, the neighbors I met were hard working families who had been there for awhile. As I pattered about the yard some people came over to welcome me to the neighborhood. We would make small talk, but of course when the opportunity presented itself I would talk a bit about our story. No one seemed offended; they were all interested.

One Friday after work I was cutting the lawn when Bob Daleug the neighbor across the street from us asked me if I Pat and I would like to come over for a coffee. Pat and I went over to Bob's house. We went over and sat around their kitchen table, initially making small talk and then getting into my favorite topic. They asked a lot of questions, but I didn't think that much about it.

A few days later, just as I got in the house from work the telephone rang, it was Bob sounding distressed asking if Pat and I would mind coming over to his house because he had a problem. He explained his sister was at the house with them and they did not know what to do. I asked him what he meant. After our talk on Friday, Bob drove to Vancouver, grabbed his sister out of a very controlling group and brought her home with him. Wow! Bob said his family had been concerned about her for a long time. When I told him about our experience the similarities were so overwhelming, he felt he had to do something.

Now Bob and Mary asked if we would talk to his sister. I told him that was all we *could* do. Before we went over we asked them if we could put Bruce Matika on standby and they agreed. When we got there and she came out of her room you could see she was really agitated about being there and she really seemed to be uncomfortable meeting us.

Bob did not tell her what he planned when he picked her up in Vancouver; he just got her in the car and kept driving straight back to Fort McMurray. Now she was very anxious and prayed constantly with little cards the group used, praying to go back to Vancouver. Bob and Mary were at their wits end and unsure what they had gotten themselves into.

Bob hadn't told her our story. He introduced us as friends, and we tried to keep the conversation relaxed, joking a bit. When everyone was feeling more at ease, Bob's sister started to join in the conversation. Bob said he wanted to hear the story of my brother and me. I told the story right from the beginning, and you could tell she was thinking about it. Her facial expressions would change and her eyes would gloss over

at times while she listened to what I was sharing. When I finished telling my story she was sobbing a bit and said she appreciated us sharing such a personal experience with her.

We had some more coffee and she participated in the conversation, and even tried to joke with us again. But the next morning, Bob telephoned to tell me he had admitted his sister into the Fort McMurray Hospital. He found her wandering up and down the street crying and confused about where she was and they did not know what else to do.

Bob told me when his sister was a young girl she had been attacked and had suppressed the memory for many years. Friends at work suggested she attend a personal development course. While there she was encouraged to open up about her personal experiences and feelings. She told the group about being assaulted and the person running the session focused on her emotional distress. He told her it was her fault she was assaulted because she was a weak, pathetic person. The only way she would be strong was to take responsibility for her personal failings. The trainer kept beating on her verbally, until she wanted to hide, but there was no place to go. She was brought to tears then, complete hysteria. An ambulance had to be called and she was admitted into a hospital for psychological help.

Back then, there were no standards for running a personal development course and very little accountability. There were a lot of people being hurt in these group dynamic sessions because the trainers had no counseling experience; they were simply manipulating emotions.

Often their only knowledge came from courses they themselves had taken. In my opinion, the leaders were just in it for the money; the people were expendable.

When Bob's sister got out of the hospital she was still fragile, confused and vulnerable. She went to a church for spiritual help and counseling and inadvertently turned to one of the largest fundamentalist destructive groups in North America. Her experience with them left her feeling even more guilt and paranoia. They taught her to use prayer cards to chant throughout each day as a method of internal control. The chants were segments from the bible with the wording changed to reflect the leader's interpretation. There was one card for each day of the week and each day's verse seemed to set the mood for the day.

Bob's sister was showing all the traits I'd seen in other ex-cult members who had been through intense indoctrination. This time, she ended up getting *qualified* help, including talking to Bruce Mateika. The last time we talked to Bob and Mary they said she was doing very well - she had her dignity and independence back.

CAN THE MIND ACHIEVE WHAT IT CONCEIVES?

Once we were sitting in a coffee shop with Phil and Grace Bowerman when a couple they'd known for years came to our table. Phil introduced them to us and added the man was an old friend he'd gone to school with. They seemed somewhat troubled and asked if they could come over later and talk.

Grace without any hesitation said she would put the tea on and to come on over. When we all arrived at the house, and were seated around the kitchen table, Phil's friend said that he and his wife were having a lot of problems after she'd joined a charismatic prayer group affiliated with their church. His wife was really troubled and embarrassed and apologized for asking to come over, but she said she felt like she was going crazy. She was trembling as she told us her story. She was encouraged to join this particular prayer group by some friends from church. But right away the leader of the prayer group made her feel bad about herself for not being a more committed Christian. Over time she became convinced the reason she wasn't a more committed Christian was because of her thirty year marriage to a man who did not attend church with her on a regular basis and was now not supporting her involvement with the prayer group. It was causing conflict in their marriage.

At prayer group meetings, they would pray for long periods of time and there was a lot of "*sharing*" which lead to "*repenting*" for everything they had done wrong in their life. She said she started to feel depressed and paranoid. Her marriage was suffering and it got to be too much so she stopped attending the prayer group meetings. The leader of the prayer group kept telephoning and one time came to the door of her home. Gayle said when she opened the door and saw him; she slammed the door in his face and ran frantically into their living room, looking for a place to hide. She hid behind the chesterfield for about an hour until she felt it was safe to come out.

She went on to say she was having a hard time concentrating and making simple decisions. When she felt frustrated and overwhelmed she'd just start silently praying and couldn't stop.

One time, she was having a particularly bad day. She found herself sitting on the couch in the living room and her mind and body felt numb. It was at that point she saw Jesus walk through the living room. Initially, it felt so real and peaceful, and then all of a sudden an overwhelming feeling of terror hit her. Gayle said as she was watching Jesus she saw him turn into the devil and then there were two of them and she had to make a choice – which was the right one?

She said she became terrified and closed her eyes and prayed frantically. When she opened her eyes they were both gone. This really scared her and this is why she thought she was going crazy.

Now their relationship was deteriorating because her husband could not understand what she was going through. They said they were both upset.

Phil and Grace told them of their experience. Janice came in at one point and shared what she was going through, with them. The confusion she was feeling, the anxiety and the guilt.

We shared our story and some experiences other people had shared with us that were not much different than hers. You could see her eyes become more direct and her face became more animated. She was acting more relaxed. Afterwards, she said she really had to fight off the anxiety and concentrate on what we were saying because her mind was telling her to pray and not listen.

Another story

The Fort McMurray Boys and Girls Club was fortunate to have 'Jazza' as program coordinator, as she was really in tune with the kids dropping into their location downtown. She once had us in to talk to 'her' kids and encouraged a young man she knew, who was relatively new in town, to come and talk to us.

Jon was a very well-spoken young man who had just joined the military and would be leaving the area soon. He'd had a brief relationship with a girl in town, who was part of a group of about twenty, who had an interest in Satanism. She wore a ring which was considered symbolic. They believed in a connection between world events and the prophecies of Nostradamus.

As well, he knew a number of the cadets in town who seemed to have Satanism as a common interest too. They played a lot of Dungeons and Dragons and even played by mail or by phone after they moved away. This was a game that required a lot of strategy, so to play it you had to be a real thinker. However, he'd heard the head of the players for this cadet group was a 'white witch'.

His girlfriend's group of friends would get together and party wherever the parents weren't home. Parties included drinking and he'd heard one girl talk about putting bleach in the drinks. They practiced other forms of self-injury. They believed they could get power by drawing blood or having sex with someone.

He was once invited into a bedroom to watch one girl put into a trance through 'guided imagery', a form of self-hypnosis. She didn't remember anything about it after. His girlfriend used to have staring contests with her cat which she called 'staring down the cat'.

They needed to learn how to put up a screen to keep people from reading their minds, which they believed was possible. The screen was working when they were able to turn the white screen in their mind, to red, another form of trance inducing exercise.

Because this was an emotional experience for him, he started to wonder if by having sex with her, she somehow had *captured his soul*. Furthermore, he was missing items from his room and he worried that if she'd taken them, she might have other means of controlling him as well. I must make the point; Jon seemed a very intelligent, self-assured young man otherwise.

We told him our story and what we'd learned and he asked a lot of questions. He left feeling that he had a better understanding of what he'd experienced and we wished him well in his career choice.

We'd heard before from some teachers that they'd heard rumors of kids involved in Satanism and some counselors at the Youth Assessment Centre were concerned that a number of kids had an interest in it as well. They were supposedly practicing control over authority figures and if anything at all went wrong, they took credit for causing it.

At one point we were asked to give a private presentation to some psychologists with Social Services who wanted to ask us specific questions about these types of groups. The session was taped for those who were not in attendance.

What we were told was that one family found out about their daughter's involvement in Satanism, when a new boyfriend phoned their house and announced he'd had great sex with their daughter the night before. Her parents had urged her to join the cadets and the wrong bunch befriended her. Now she was in counseling, with the hopes of her parents, that they could rebuild their relationship.

CONTINUING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Chris Tobin, the director of Family and Community Support Services was a personal friend and he suggested it was time for FCSS to sponsor another seminar for the community. It was decided to hold it in the multipurpose room of the public library, with evening and daytime sessions, for broader accessibility. The local cable station wanted to video tape this presentation. We had a pretty free hand on how we wanted the seminar presented and what reference information would be provided.

We arranged for Ken Sprouse with the Calgary police department to talk about groups acting illegally in Canada. Reverend Guy with the University of Calgary volunteered to talk about how these groups were recruiting in Universities. The third speaker we had was a young fellow from Winnipeg, Manitoba named Tom Gillespie, who had been a member of the Unification Church.

Tom's father got him out of the group's environment by calling to say his grandfather was very sick and he should come home. Tom got permission to go, with the condition he call in twice a day. When Tom arrived home his dad said he was relieved to tell him that his grandfather was feeling better and wanted them all to go fishing for the day. Tom agreed to go because this was something they'd enjoyed doing together in the past. His dad said he'd chartered a flight into a lake for the day and the plane would pick them up before dark. Decisions were being made so fast, Tom never had time to telephone the church to ask for permission. When they landed at the lake, they tied the plane to the wharf. Tom and his dad walked from the beach up to the cabin. Tom said he remembered asking his dad why there were so many supplies already there. Right after he said that, he heard the plane taking off. He had suspicions but his dad said it would return later. When it did not come back, Tom realized he'd been tricked. He was mad, but there wasn't much he could do about it. He was stuck at a lake somewhere in Northern Manitoba, until the plane returned. After a couple of weeks away from the group and out of that environment, he had no interest in going back, but said he did need counseling.

Tom's story was not much different than that of Ron or other ex-members whose stories have been documented. In general, all of the different groups we heard about used a rigid code of behavior plus an internal thought suppressing habit to sustain their beliefs. When the individual was out of the structured environment, it allowed an opportunity for them to reflect and question.

This approach might not have worked with everyone, as individual experiences vary by group, individual personality type, length of time they were involved and their reasons for leaving. But it worked in this case and it underscores how important the environment is to the conversion process.

Some ex-cult members who I have talked to over the years said that they could function independently for periods of time away from the group and that's what people find confusing. There are reasons why they can do that.

First, getting some independence is usually a reward for a long time of 'right' behavior and they would want to show that they were worthy of that trust. They would still have to check in on a regular basis. Within groups using this type of control, there are some rewards, but as they are expected to meet impossibly high standards, low self-confidence is usually the result.

Second, the internal control becomes automatic. The centering, or chanting or speaking in tongues or singing or praying, or whatever method of thought stopping control is taught, kicks in, during times of stress, or indecision, or temptation etc.

As manager for the Moonie's carpet cleaning business in Calgary, Ron had to interact and joke with people while drumming up business, but that internal barrier existed while he was making these sales, to keep all negativity out. Mind you, when they thought he was coming off centre, he was sent back to Camp K for re-indoctrination.

At the seminar, Tom told the audience of one experience he had that he felt guilty for now. Tom said he was fund raising at a mall and was not having much luck and he was getting frustrated. He said if he did not make more money he knew he would have to justify his poor showing to the fundraising team leader. He said he turning to go down a street when he left the mall and saw a wheelchair by a building. He took the wheel chair because he thought it would make people feel sorry for him and increase his chances to get money for the church. So he sat in the wheelchair in the car parking lot and Tom said people were giving all kinds of money until someone who had turned down his earlier fundraising pitch recognized him.

Tom said he could justify taking the wheelchair because it was to further their cause and by accepting someone's donation, he was giving them a ticket to heaven whether they knew it or not.

The feedback we got about the conference showed it was quite well received by the community. We had maximum attendance and the presentations were videotaped. They aired on our local TV station four times every day for a month, and were shown from time to time over the next year.

At least twice a year I made a point of going to British Columbia to visit my Dad who was now retired there. A number of his military friends had retired there. Those who had known our family well were astounded this had happened. But some who had served in the Korean War knew of people who were in prisoner of war camps in North Korea and remembered the stories about brainwashing.

Once when I went to visit dad when he was living in Victoria, I approached the editor of the local newspaper to see if they would be interested in hearing about our experience. I gave them some information and answered some questions and then, gave them Ron's telephone number so he could add his point of view. It was up to them at that point to decide if the information was credible. They ran the story and so did the paper in Penticton, when I used the same approach after Dad moved there.

For awhile, I was on a crusade and poor Ron would keep getting these calls, without warning, from different newspapers!

When Dad moved to Summerland some of his friends asked us to give a talk at their church and Dad and I stood there together, talking and answering questions. Afterwards, a man came up to me and asked if I'd ever heard about a particular group. His best friend had attended a week long revival meeting in the United States and when she returned to Canada, she sold her house way below market value, so she could move in with her 'new friends' in States. I had to apologize, I didn't recognize the group's name, but I gave him some telephone numbers of different organizations to contact.

I felt sad because I'd heard stories of seniors who donated everything they had to one group or another only to be treated poorly or kicked out if they became a liability for some age or health related reason.

It has been suggested that there are thousands of groups using mind control techniques in Canada and the United States. They could be as small as two or three people, or thousands strong, so trying to learn all the names is futile. Their names can change, or people can leave and start their own group. To protect yourselves, you have to learn how to recognize danger by the techniques they use to recruit and keep members.

HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE IT WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT?

If someone tells you they can't tell you, or explain what something's all about because you have to be there or experience it, beware! Manipulation is all about getting you out of your environment and getting you to behave a certain way. Yes, sometimes people walk away and sometimes they're asked to leave for a variety of reasons. They want to recruit people who are idealistic, energetic, wealthy, influential, personable and smart – in short, the best.

The psychologist in Fort McMurray who told us he did not really believe that mind control was possible, was teaching a course called *Relaxcentration*, and Pat and I signed up. It sounded like it would be a safe form of meditation. There were about eight couples taking the training. To begin, we all had to tell why we were there and what we hoped to gain from the course. I said we wanted to learn techniques to relax or meditate in a safe environment, so we could understand it better. We were taught some breathing exercises and then asked to lie on our backs on a mattress on the floor with our eyes closed.

The trainer led us through a visualization exercise, encouraging us to pretend we were on a beach and the waves were moving back and forth slowly.

- He said the only other sound we could hear other than the waves was our heart beating, *kuthump... kuthump... kuthump... kuthump.....*
- Soothing music was being played and at the same time we were asked to start to concentrate on our toes.
- Could we feel our toes relax?
- Then slowly he worked through the rest of our foot, then our ankles and calves.
- He told us to relax our knees and our thighs,
- He said our bellies were feeling tingly and our chest and shoulder muscles were relaxing.
- He worked down our arms to the tips of our fingers, just staying still and letting our body and mind relax.

I really wanted to do this. I felt much the same experience as if I was in bed relaxing. You know - the feeling of being not quite asleep and not quite awake, oblivious to everything around you and hesitant to move in case you spoil the sensation? The next thing I knew our time was up and the session was over. Everyone struggled to get up off the floor.

Pat said she hadn't really felt anything; she just couldn't relax and a couple of others said the same. Unfortunately some people knew us by name and our being there may have worried them. It wasn't that we were concerned about all forms of meditation, just the amount of time that people were engaged in it and the environment they were in at the time.

There were some tapes for sale, so if we wanted we could practice the *relaxcentration* at home. We bought one of the tapes to see what it was like, but only listened to it once. It ended up on a shelf with the rest of our collection.

We'd frequently seen an ad for a non-denominational prayer group meeting in our paper. It ran every Wednesday night in a school auditorium nearby. We thought it might be a helpful learning experience to go and one night we decided to attend. Our plan was to sit quietly in the back and just observe. We didn't want to bring attention to ourselves and we didn't want to disrespect anybody.

It turned out to be a very small group and we had to join them in a circle. They all seemed very nice, and we immediately felt uncomfortable that we weren't there to join them in fellowship. Four of us were newcomers; everyone else seemed to know each other already.

After an opening prayer and a song or two, we were all asked to tell a little bit about ourselves and give an example of how Jesus was working in our lives. It immediately got very emotional.

I'll never forget one young couple who were expecting a baby very soon. They had no jobs and nothing for the baby, but they were sure everything would be okay – they had faith in God and He would take care of them.

When it came to be our turn, we were in a quandary. We didn't want to upset anyone, so we gave false names and took the opportunity to excuse ourselves. These people seemed so open and sincere. We didn't stay any longer because we didn't want to get any more involved under these circumstances. It sure gave us a good reference in understanding just how powerful that type of emotional experience can be.

We had heard that there was some controversy surrounding one of the groups that attended the non-denominational prayer group and their influence in some of the mainline churches. Eventually this core group formed their own church, together with members drawn from other congregations.

There seemed to be a lot of internal struggles going on in mainline churches all over at that time, between the fundamentalists, the more traditional members of the congregation and the charismatic's. So we had a hunch what might have happened, when a Grand Prairie couple phoned us, with concerns about their daughter, Violet.

They said she had been going to a private school in Saskatchewan and had been attending a branch of their church there. She had been taking part in prayer group meetings and stopped attending the church when the prayer group branched out on their own. Now they were worried that their daughter might be in trouble.

When they spoke with her shortly after she started attending the prayer group, she talked obsessively about the prayer group leader. Then one night she phoned them to say she could no longer keep in touch with them, because, she told her parents, they were a negative influence on her. She went on to say that to find God she could no longer have the distraction of family and friends.

Her parents persuaded her, to agree to meet and talk with them. They drove to Saskatchewan to pick her up and when she got in the truck, they just kept driving. They never stopped until they reached Delmas, Saskatchewan, where they had relatives. They called us from there and pleaded for us to come and talk to her because they didn't know what to do next. Violet wouldn't talk or even eat anything. She just kept whispering the same prayers over and over again. I was reluctant, but after talking with Ron, we decided to go and see if we could help.

On the way through Edmonton we stopped to pick up my brother-in-law, Gord Balbar. We had talked a lot to Gord and his wife, Heather about mind control over the years. They were always there and good people to bounce my thoughts off of. Gord was a high school teacher and popular with his students, so we thought he might be a good support. In fact, I was sure the three of us could turn things around.

We arrived at the motel late in the afternoon and found Violet with her parents. She was really upset with her them for interfering with her life but was starting to talk to them by this time. However, when we tried to talk to her, she just started praying, and then the wall went up. She did listen to Ron for awhile but then shut him out. We did not know enough about the group's beliefs to effectively debate with her, so in the end, we weren't able to turn things around.

Her parents seemed grateful that we'd tried and kept in touch with us for awhile. We heard later, that she'd had to be admitted to a mental hospital.

A month later Gord asked Ron, Pat and me to give some presentations to his grade 10, 11 and 12 students. It was a full day and a long day of talking, but they seemed really interested and that always made it worthwhile.

THE LACK OF PROFESSIONAL HELP

In the eighties there was not much help in Canada for people looking for information or assistance. There were a few organizations that circulated information, such as the Cult Information Centre in Montreal and the Council on Mind Abuse in Toronto, who besides distributing information, provided us with links to other families. The groups in our own province, in Edmonton and Calgary, for all their help, were fledglings at the time.

Mind control was still a relatively unknown phenomenon, here and there were few professionals who were trained to deal with the aftereffects. For most people, it was in the realm of science fiction. But already there were people being hurt by those applying this new technology.

Some individuals were able to walk away, but for many it was a struggle after. One huge impact was in the loss of self confidence. Another was the overall damage to marriages and family relationships. Some people were swallowed up by another group, or drifted from group to group. Some felt caught in limbo, in an identity crisis, unable to move forward.

Families, unable to find help through the usual channels, faced a dilemma. The more determined, chose intervention counseling, or deprogramming, like we did.

We all had to learn as we went along, seeking support by word of mouth. None of us were experts, but we built our own support networks and we are still humbled, in remembering by the kindness, self-sacrifice and inner strength of the people we met. I felt so fortunate Ron and I won back our relationship. I wished it could have been that way for everyone, but it wasn't.

It is too bad so many people have been abused by destructive personality manipulators because there's no magic in it – all manipulators use similar techniques.

- Beware of any group that can't explain what they're doing because you have to experience it.
- Beware of anyone who wants to give you something for nothing, you'll end up feeling obligated to give something in return.
- Know you're most vulnerable when you're away from home, in a strange environment.
- Look for the hard sell, suggesting this is your only chance or opportunity. Or the lowest discount price.
- Understand that if a group can get you to act a certain way, they can ultimately get you to change your beliefs.
- Know that it's normal to want to be liked by those around you, but there are no instant friendships.

- Understand that if the message is totally anti-government, anti-education, anti-church, anti-medical system, anti-law and anti-family, that's called propaganda. Remember you grow up in an environment that helps define who you are.

I made my own choices and gained my understanding of this based on what I was told and what my brother and I experienced. In the ensuing years we have seen more scientific research and more professionals available to help. Unfortunately, we have seen the technology more widely applied as well.

WORKING AWAY FROM HOME

In 1985, I was sent to Frog Lake, Alberta, to supervise a construction project. I stayed in a hotel in Lloydminster and commuted back and forth. One night when I went for supper at the hotel restaurant, I noticed a poster in the hotel lobby offering a free introductory meditation course. I looked closer at the poster and recognized the name of the survivalist group that the immigration officer in Calgary had told me about. That was the group that was stockpiling arms and building bomb shelters in Montana. So I went to the Lloydminster Daily Times. Ron got another call; the paper ran a story and shortly afterwards, the posters came down.

While working on the Frog Lake Reserve, I met many interesting people who befriended me and invited me to supper. They really made me feel welcome and watching them enjoy their families helped being away from mine more bearable for me.

It was a surprise that even in this close knit society, there were some people who had been affected by this mind control technology as well. One person I really liked and respected, who taught me a lot about lessening the environmental impact when building leases, told me the following story.

When he turned forty, he had a bit of an identity crisis. He felt the need to get closer to his roots, so he took a holiday by himself and went to a Pow-Wow in the United States. He met a fellow at a traditional dance performance who showed a real interest in him and his life in Canada. He invited him to a two day, traditional, spiritual retreat, at his ranch. When two others sitting beside him said it sounded like fun and they'd like to go, he decided to go too.

The fellow who invited them on the retreat was not affiliated with the organizers of the Pow-wow, but mentioned they were good friends, which reassured them. He took the three of them, and four others to his ranch which was an hour and a half away. He made a call to get the sweat lodge ready for their arrival. They got out of the van and were directed to a blanked area, where they put on bathing suits and then entered the sweat lodge.

They all sat on mats around a fire pit filled with hot rocks. Behind them, their host explained in detail the experience they were going to have. Hotter rocks were added to the pile, then, ladles of water were poured over them. It created an instant fog of steam so thick; they could hardly see each other. A rhythmic chant was begun.

My new friend said he didn't know how long they chanted, because he had to concentrate so hard on keeping the rhythm, he lost track of time. In the background, their host was encouraging them to clear their minds and open up to the experience. After a time, he felt he had an out of body experience, observing them from above and felt a real feeling of euphoria come over him. Then he said he saw the vision they were being asked if they could see.

They never ate, for the time they were there, just drank lots of water. That night they had maybe four hours of sleep, then went right back in the sweat lodge until noon.

Afterwards, everyone excitedly shared their personal experiences. Then they were asked to make a donation. My friend said he had a few hundred dollars on him at the time and gladly gave it to their host. He'd left most of his money back at the motel. They were being encouraged to make donations on their credit cards, but thankfully, his wife had made him leave his at home. He believes he would have used them at the time. He said it scared him a bit that he lost control like that and hadn't told anyone, until he told me. He'd read my story in the paper and it struck a chord with him. I thanked him for sharing his experience and we never talked about it again through the remainder of my time on the job there.

HAVING TO GO WHERE THE WORK WAS

Shortly after wrapping up the construction in Frog Lake, I was told the plant in McMurray was being shut down. Pat and I were really disappointed to hear that, because it meant uprooting our children and ourselves from our friends and a community of people that had given us so much support.

I was told by my employer, Texaco Canada, that I was being transferred to the border city of Lloydminster. (Part of the city is in Alberta, and part is in Saskatchewan, and it makes for an interesting division of provincial responsibility.)

Initially, I worked there as an assistant production foreman, out of the hamlet of Lone Rock, just inside the Saskatchewan boarder and south of Lloydminster. I was put in charge of field maintenance which I really enjoyed because my mandate was to upgrade operation facilities to comply with company and government environmental and safety standards.

My experience in preventive maintenance and loss prevention gave me the tools to be able to identify a problem, and then put in place measures to manage it. I did a lot of traveling between operating properties, conducting audits. Part of my mandate was to make sure field complaints by employees were being addressed. Later, my position changed to Health, Safety and Environment Coordinator, for all properties being managed out of the Lloydminster office.

My position gave me a lot of flexibility to go to different areas and of course, I met a lot of interesting people. When we had a chance to exchange stories, over coffee, or after work, I was surprised how often someone told me they had been affected one way or another by this technology and could easily relate to what I was saying.

We were still being asked to give talks and for a time Pat and I continued to give them together. We spoke in a few of the smaller communities in our area, to a few church groups and to students at the Holy Rosary High School. Then it started to get harder to synchronize our schedules and I started doing it on my own.

I gave a presentation to the District Nursing Chapter, the Oil Wives Club, the Lions Club, and the Rotary Club. For three years I was asked to speak to the International Agriculture Exchange Association's student exchange program, twice in Vermillion and once in Olds, Alberta.

The reason for my participation in this program was because an Australian exchange student got caught up in the Moonies when he went on a holiday after the exchange ended. His family had to fly from Australia to the United States to get him out of the group's control.

I continued to go in to the Holy Rosary High School a couple of times a year and spoke twice at the Lloydminster Comprehensive High School, once with Ron. On this occasion Ron planned his days off at the same time.

It was career days at both the public and separate high schools. We were asked to give eleven presentations over a two day period between both schools. It was great talking with these young people, but it was nice when it was over because we were exhausted. We finally had a chance to relax and talk to each other.

It had been 6 years since Ron and I had gone through our adventure together and at times it still seemed so surreal. We went for a walk that night just after it got dark, talking and reminiscing. Ron stopped me, put his hands on my shoulders, looked me right in the eyes and said emotionally, "Thanks brother, you saved my life and I can never thank you enough for giving me back my freedom." It was unexpected and as I took in what he said, I got a lump in my throat and just about started to cry. For the first time in 6 years I was not worried anymore. I really knew I had my brother back and we just hugged for a long time.

One issue that always came up whenever we gave presentations was the issue of religion and personal faith. We tried to stress that this is not a religious issue. However we believe that anything that interferes with an individual's ability to exercise free will is wrong. We believe we learned that evil exists.

One other very important thing that we learned is that we all have a spiritual aspect to our nature that must be expressed in some way. How to do that is up to the individual.

TURNING THE PAGE

As life changes, so do our priorities. Our boys were turning into young men. Life was busy and it was hard keeping up with the news on all the different extremist groups. In any case, I believed that basically the same techniques of mental coercion were being used by all these groups.

Throughout the years we had collected a lot of information that was now not being utilized effectively. One day, out of the blue, we got a call from a sociologist at the University of Alberta, Stephen Kent, who was researching the growth of cults in Canada. He had been given our name and wanted to meet with us. We made arrangements for him to stop and visit on his way to a cult conference in a neighboring province.

I guess we never realized, until we started going through our files with him, how valuable the information we had collected might be to a researcher. Steve called it a gold mine. We had a large filing cabinet and a closet full of books, videotapes, magazine articles and newspaper clippings and we ended up giving most of it to him for his own research, with the promise he make it accessible to others.

It was clear in our conversations with him, that he was looking at this phenomenon from a sociological perspective, rather than a psychological and physiological one, but he still saw it as having a negative effect on the individual. Now, years later, he has become one of the foremost authorities on cults.

LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR RECEIVING INFORMATION

Department of Sociology
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G 2H4

November 6, 1989

Art and Pat Tassie
3504 57th Ave.
Lloydminster, Alberta
T9V 1S7

Dear Art and Pat,

Just a heartfelt 'thanks' for the extraordinary collection of material that you provided me, along with your splendid hospitality and generosity. I was quite moved and impressed by it.

An official from the Alberta Provincial Museum is coming to look at the collection next week, and I meet with the University librarian in two days. Certainly this information will end up where it can be accessed by researchers. It really does tell an incredible story.

I hope to see you here in Edmonton sometime in the not-too-distant future.

Regards,


Steve Kent

IS BIG BUSINESS USING THIS MANIPULATION TECHNOLOGY?

A couple of years after we moved to Lloydminster, Imperial Oil (ESSO) took over Texaco Canada. By that time, I was Safety and Environment Coordinator and had to attend restructuring meetings as part of the old Texaco team. These sessions were called “*synergy meetings*” and the intent was to pull both companies’ cultures together and select the best practices from both.

Even now, when I hear that term *synergy*, I feel upset. Employees were sent on team building workshops contracted out to independent motivational consultants. At some of these workshops, employees were encouraged to participate in team building exercises. Some were pretty silly, but who would protest and risk being put on the spot in front of your coworkers?

Outside of the contracted workshops, the consultants offered further advanced personality courses, of graduating levels, to those who were convinced their personalities could be improved. The costs of these were supported through Human Resources.

At some sessions, employees were encouraged to role play and share personal experiences. Some individuals, after revealing private information, broke down in front of their peers. Some employees told me they only wanted to take these courses so they would look like team players to their new supervisors.

I overheard some ladies discussing how some women had been “*empowered*” to split up with their husbands as a result of their participation in these courses. I thought to myself, if these ladies were being abused, that’s one thing, if they weren’t, what value was it for the company to encourage this possibility?

I believe there are a lot of similarities between a person who stays in an abusive relationship, and an individual in a destructive cult. Two of my sisters were abused by former spouses, both psychologically and physically. It took them a long time to get their confidence and self-esteem back. We often talked about it when we got together.

I had a lot of concerns about the techniques that were being used by these contractors under the umbrella of the company, and I challenged the use of them with internal memos. It was not surprising some of these employees who did not want to participate in the workshop exercises, were branded as not being team players.

A certain amount of control in the workplace is necessary to maintain company standards, ensure productivity and foster company loyalty and pride, but I was concerned that the wrong avenue had inadvertently been taken to advance these. I was happy to learn that a memo was circulated through the company's business units after a newspaper article expressing the concerns of some of our employees.

MEMO DISTRUBUTED THROUGH ESSO

CC USO LEADERS.
give B us Union. M
i.D.

MEMORANDUM

HUMAN RESOURCES
Capability Development

90 02 22

To: DISTRIBUTION LIST
(See attached)



Subject: CONTEXT TRAINING CORPORATION
(The Excellence Series)

Many of you may have seen the article in last Sunday's Calgary Herald referring to a personal awareness training program being actively promoted in Calgary by the Context organization.

We are aware that, over recent months, a number of our employees have been requesting their supervisors to sponsor their attendance on this series of courses (*The Pursuit of Excellence, The Wall, The Advancement of Excellence*). The feedback from employees who have attended the program is generally positive. However, in view of the newspaper article and the potential risks of such programs if they are not conducted by qualified professionals, we are undertaking an investigation into the merits of the Context organization.

Until we have completed our investigation, we strongly recommend that you do not sponsor employees' attendance on Context training sessions. We recognize that many employees have identified a need to attend personal awareness programs and we would be pleased to advise on alternative programs.

David
D.E. Ellerington

0222DE/bm

cc: D.D. Baldwin
G.H. Agnew
N.H. Eggen
D.I. McEvoy
G.J. Willmon

L.S. Fisher
J.V. Harries
K.L. Johnson
D.M. Glassman
W.S. Routledge

Shortly after the memo was circulated, I received a call asking if I would share my basic knowledge of psychological coercion techniques at the monthly meeting of the safety and environment coordinators and trainers. This one was being held in Devon just outside Edmonton. We met primarily to ensure our company's due diligence to safety and environmental issues was in place and ensure the welfare of company workers was protected.

MEMORANDUM

ART
Do you want
to retain it.
in 1-

DATE: 1990-04-30
TO: Training Advisors
FROM: A.R. Tassie
SUBJECT: Personal Development Courses

After circulation of the memo dated February 22nd on the Context Training Corporation, I was asked to give this brief presentation explaining my concerns about personal awareness programs in general.

As some of you might know, my brother was drawn into a world-wide organization (that has been called a destructive cult) while he was holidaying in San Fransisco over ten years ago. Certainly for him, it proved to be a destructive experience. There was very little help or information available in Canada at that time to address our family's concerns. My knowledge of coercive techniques comes from my efforts to help my brother adjust to a normal life. It was gained through research and through networking with others who encountered problems with similar group experiences in other organizations.

While I concede that positive advances can be obtained through the dynamics of a group experience, i.e. team building, I believe that a line should be drawn at the use of powerful behavior modification techniques on unsuspecting trainees during courses taught by non-professionals and promoted through the work place.

Due to the fact that there is currently very little consumer protection covering the realm of personal development courses, it remains up to the individual to learn to distinguish between a destructive organization and a legitimate one.

- Destructive organizations use manipulative techniques to increase their clientele and promote their own philosophies. This is a hidden agenda, that is not evident in their course promotions that seem to guarantee 'a better life'.

- The course agenda is veiled in secrecy and talking about it is 'taboo'.
- Experiencing it is a must!

- New trainees may be surprised at the number of rules governing individual behavior.

- Questions are discouraged, but frankness and openness on the part of participants during group sharing sessions is encouraged.

- Some may be forced into confrontations.

- Emotional breakdowns are not uncommon.

- Sessions are abnormally long.

- Self-hypnosis, under the guide of meditation, relaxation, guided imagery, or repetitious chanting, etc. may be taught.

All of the above techniques are designed to bring about an emotional experience which 'bonds' participants to the group.

As training advisors, our awareness of the potential for exploitation by these organizations can serve to prevent ourselves and our clients from being taken in.

For further information, see attached articles.

ART/tlm

Attachments

MORE CHANGE AND MY NEW PERSONA

Another change in my work environment took place when ESSO sold off some of their properties, including the area I worked in, to a junior oil company called CS Resources. I still maintained my position as Health, Safety & Environment Coordinator, but reported directly to the executive management of the company.

At my first meeting with the Board of Directors, I gave them an overview of the strategy being used to manage liability, due diligence and compliance with government regulations. I also informed the members of my position on some issues affecting the industry. I felt that if they wanted me to continue in my position, I needed their support. It turned out they were very aware of the importance of the health, safety and environmental programs and I was told to make regular progress reports to two members of the board. I also managed to work in a short version of my experience with my brother so they would understand why I'd be against using any encounter group techniques in the workplace. The board, thankfully, did not seem to have a problem with me or my stand!

GAINING CONTROL BY STRIPPING AWAY INDIVIDUALITY

Every individual is unique and it seems so wrong, that our uniqueness can be stripped away during the process of psychological coercion. Gradually, like someone putting a foot in the door, pushing until we lose control and they're in, individuality is stripped away.

In the **controlled environment**, the foot is the wedge of uncertainty that creates doubt about who we are and what we believe. At first the lure of the promise, the opportunity or the ideal and the instant acceptance is compelling. However, as you try to follow the directives that are given when you enter into the experience, it becomes harder, more uncomfortable.

Loss of control over time and personal space is difficult. When you have no control of when your day begins or ends, whether, when or what you eat and can't even go off on your own for bathroom breaks, that's stress.

Through long lectures, sermons or readings, you're exposed to alternative belief systems and start to question your own. There is a further invasion of your privacy when you are prompted to divulge personal information during sharing sessions. This makes you even more vulnerable to manipulation.

You learn to use meditation, chanting, speaking in tongues, or repeated prayers, like a talisman or protective shield or as an emotional release. At some point you have a **conversion** experience, which is a physical feeling...

At this point you no longer define yourself by past experiences, but by the approval shown by the group. You **give yourself over** to the group. You turn away from family and friends because you can no longer trust them. They probably don't or wouldn't understand or appreciate the change in you anyway.

Given the right set of circumstances, everyone is vulnerable.

Another way I've heard this explained is through the comparison of a boat tied to a wharf. The boat is the person and the rope is all their experiences, past and present that make them who they are. As each past reference (or strand of rope) is severed, it makes the boat more vulnerable. When all the strands are severed, the boat is adrift, at the mercy of the practices of the group, and becomes tethered to it.

In normal everyday life your self-confidence can be undermined by a number of emotional upheavals, like the breakup of a relationship, loneliness, tragedy, fear, or negative peer pressure. Over time, most things can usually be worked out with the help of someone who has your best interest at heart, usually family or close friends. Unfortunately, these are the times when people, are more susceptible to the lure of the destructive cult or manipulative individual.

People can also be brought into a group through close family or friends who recommend the experience, or if a legitimate organization or agency appears to support it, whether that perception is true or not. This can happen if meetings are held at a church, school, or expensive hotel, for example, or if participation is encouraged or paid for by an employer.

Unfortunately, our rights and freedoms make us vulnerable. Many groups hide under the guise of religion or therapy. There is still no law against what happened to my brother and others. And there is no protection for an individual who has been psychologically coerced into breaking the law.

I believe destructive groups practicing psychological coercion are really just businesses set up to **use** people to make money. The kind of money some of these groups have made has made them very powerful.

After all these years, education is still our only defense.



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers - Local 213

4220 NORLAND AVENUE, BURNABY, B.C. V5G 3X2 • TELEPHONE: 294-2361

May 18, 1988

MAY 24 1988

Canadian Federation of Labour,
300 107 Sparks Street,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5B5

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Re: The Enclosed Article - Report on the Hazards of Groups

I, recently, represented the widow of one of our members in an appeal to the Review Board concerning a W.C.B. decision, denying her widow's benefits.

Our member had committed suicide and circumstances pointed to his participation in a "Team Building Seminar" put on by his employer, as the likely reason for his having decided to take his own life. Expert witnesses said the "Seminar" was, in fact, an encounter group.

Although such seminars do not appear to be frequent or widespread, they are dangerous. They have a uniform, casualty rate of 7 - 10% and employees need to be warned.

The Union commissioned the enclosed article and I provide it to you to use in any manner you deem appropriate. I would like to see the article circulated as widely as possible, but it is, as I said, yours to do with as you want.

Hoping that the enclosed article will make you aware of a problem you may not have known about before, I am;

Yours fraternally,

G. Dyck,
Assistant Business Manager

GD/gj
oteu: #15
encl.

NO REGRETS WHATSOEVER

In 1981 we were faced with the decision to help my brother get out of a group we thought was manipulating him. I was upset when I found out my suspicions were right. As we learned more we became aware that the techniques used in the Unification Church recruitment camps, were similar to those being used by other groups to recruit and indoctrinate new members. It was a new technology. Our focus changed from being upset with "The Unification Church", to learning more about the manipulative techniques being used by them and others. It seemed clear that information was our only defense as a free society.

This happened many years ago and many believe this is something from the past. In reality it is a bigger issue now because we are constantly pushing the boundaries between what is acceptable to us as a free society and what is not. What was once new or even bizarre is now common.

In a democratic society we have the constitutional right to freedom of religion. This right should not protect leadership that encourages members to break the law – if found out, people that break the law are prosecuted! Being under mind control is not a defense.

I believe that any individual or group that uses **deception** to get an individual to participate in activities designed to ultimately change their beliefs should be held accountable for any harm done.

In a free society like ours, we cannot afford to become complacent and take our freedom for granted. When we are complacent, we risk losing our freedom by giving control to another person or group with their own agenda. We must stand by our values. We should feel free to "agree to disagree" to reach a compromise all can live with. Open and honest debate can affect the final outcome or at least make decision makers more accountable. In a totalitarian or highly controlled environment there is no tolerance for debate.

We were forced to take action when a family member's personality was subjugated by what we believe is a manipulative organization. It tested our upbringing, our family, our values and the strength of our sibling bond. In the end, owing to the strength of the truth and the ability to choose freely, the bond which makes our family unit strong won out. We were lucky because, as brothers, Ron and I never expected anything other than respect and trust from each other. This was just a given between two brothers. It could have turned out completely different though. I could have been charged or gone to jail because this closed and manipulative society forced me to challenge our laws.

I most definitely did *not* write this book to recommend that anyone remove an individual from the influence of this type of manipulated environment the way I did. The risks are too great. We were extraordinarily lucky.

Feel with your heart; think with your mind; lead with your common sense!

“But do I have any regrets? No, none at all!”

MAY YOUR GOD BLESS YOU AND
GIVE YOU THE GUIDANCE TO
MAKE FREE LIFE CHOICES WITHOUT
BEING COERCED BY OTHERS!

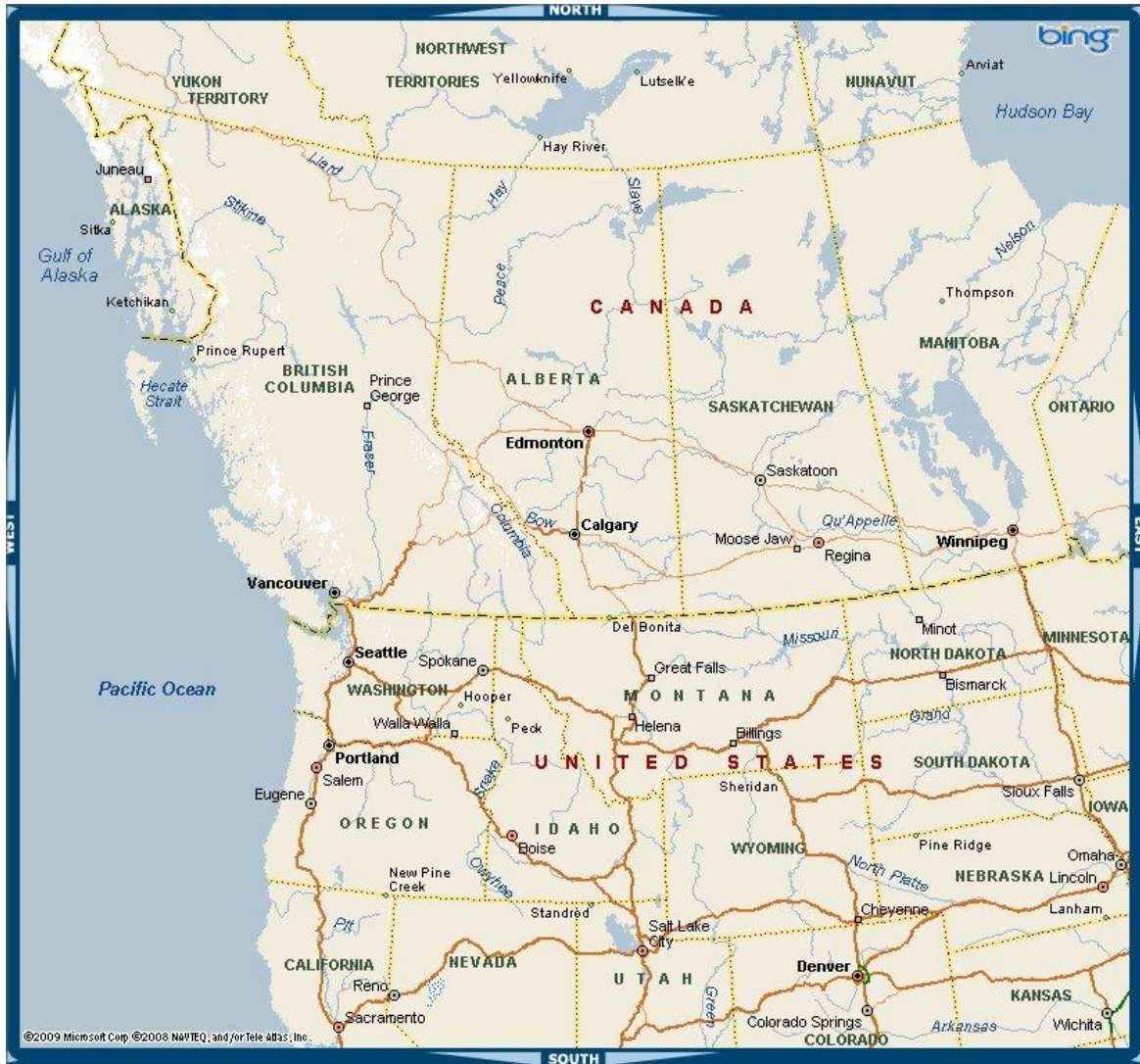


HOW TO KNOW

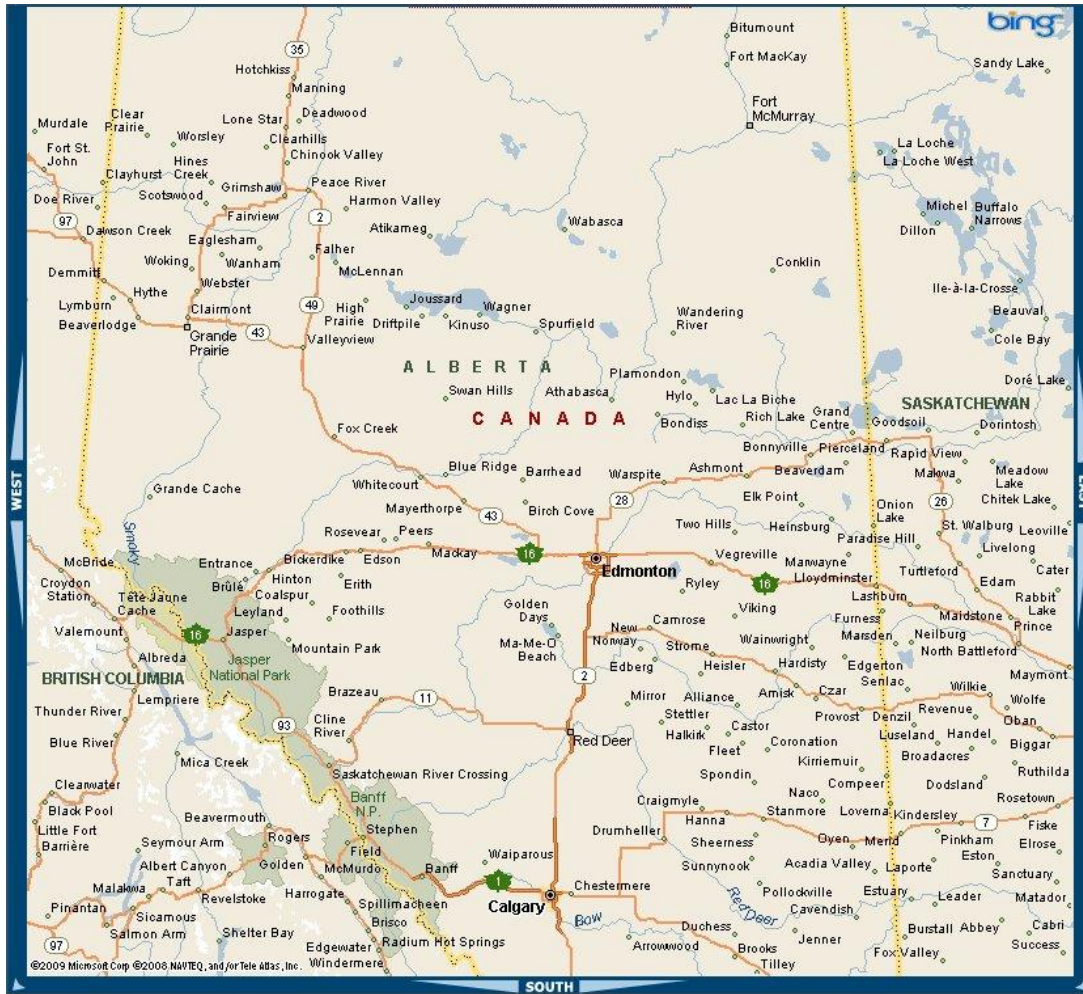
The sad thing is no matter what your interest, there are individuals or groups out there ready to exploit it. In these examples the victims were not looking for lifetime involvement, they were just curious or wanted to learn more, or better themselves. They were normal people, who, because of trust, circumstances and slick sales' pitches, were vulnerable.

So how important is it to be aware of one's vulnerabilities? A lot of manipulating people and groups follow the same premise, if they put out a large enough net they are bound to catch someone's attention. That's one reason they do a lot of advertising and/or proselytizing, with offers of free meals, free workshops, free entertainment, whatever it takes to get you in the door. They offer instant acceptance, and when they get you in their highly controlled environment, they can be selective who to keep or throw back. They choose the best! Are you young or idealistic or intelligent or energetic or personable or influential or wealthy? If so, they want you! Would you agree to put your doubts or concerns or questions *on the shelf* for just awhile? If not, you'll be asked to leave. Disruptive individuals are scorned and treated accordingly. Getting new recruits to willingly participate in these powerful manipulating techniques without questioning is the core ingredient. Once the individual starts to participate it is hard for them not to get caught up in it. In the controlled environment they are ripe for ***personality manipulation!***

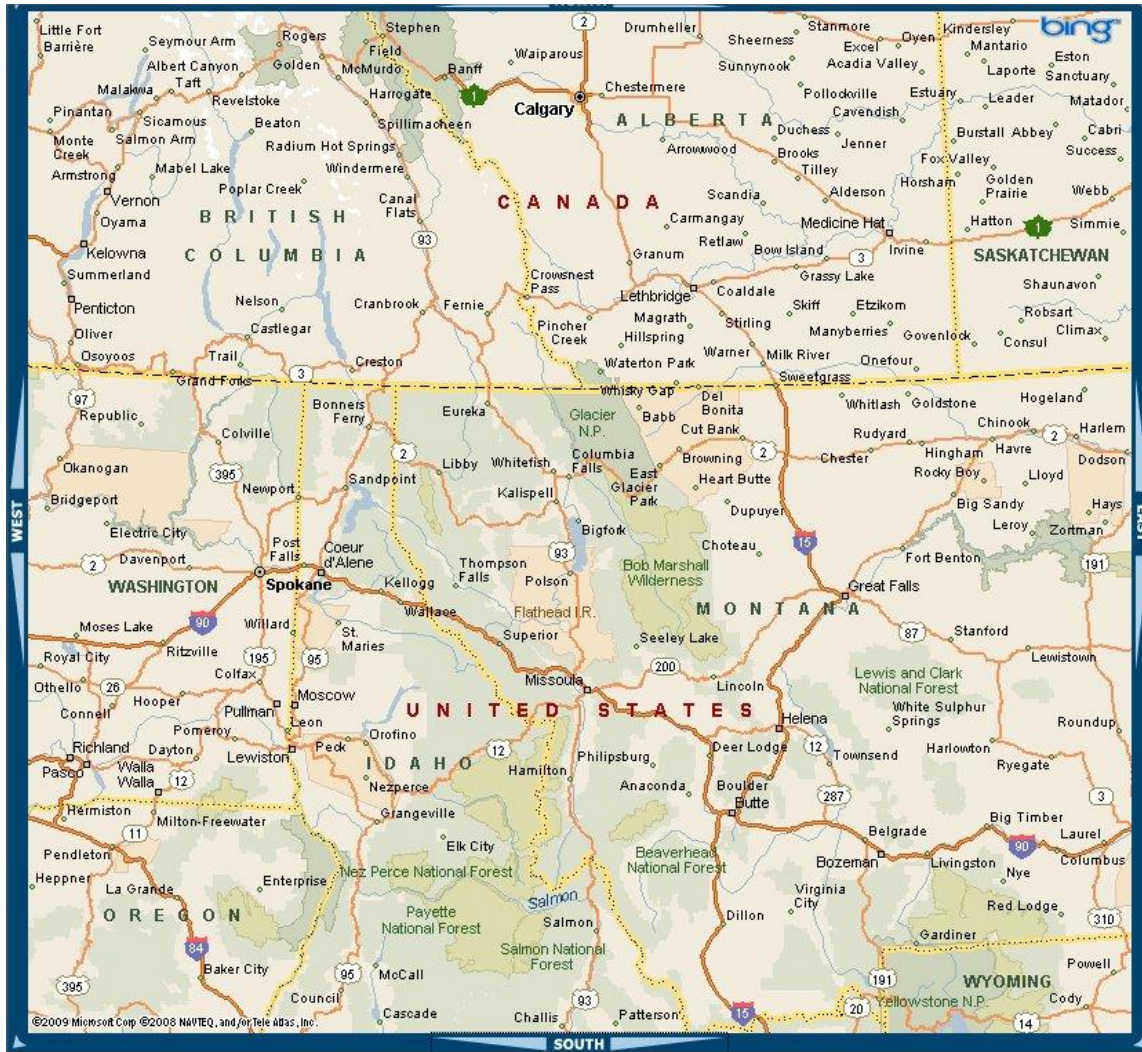
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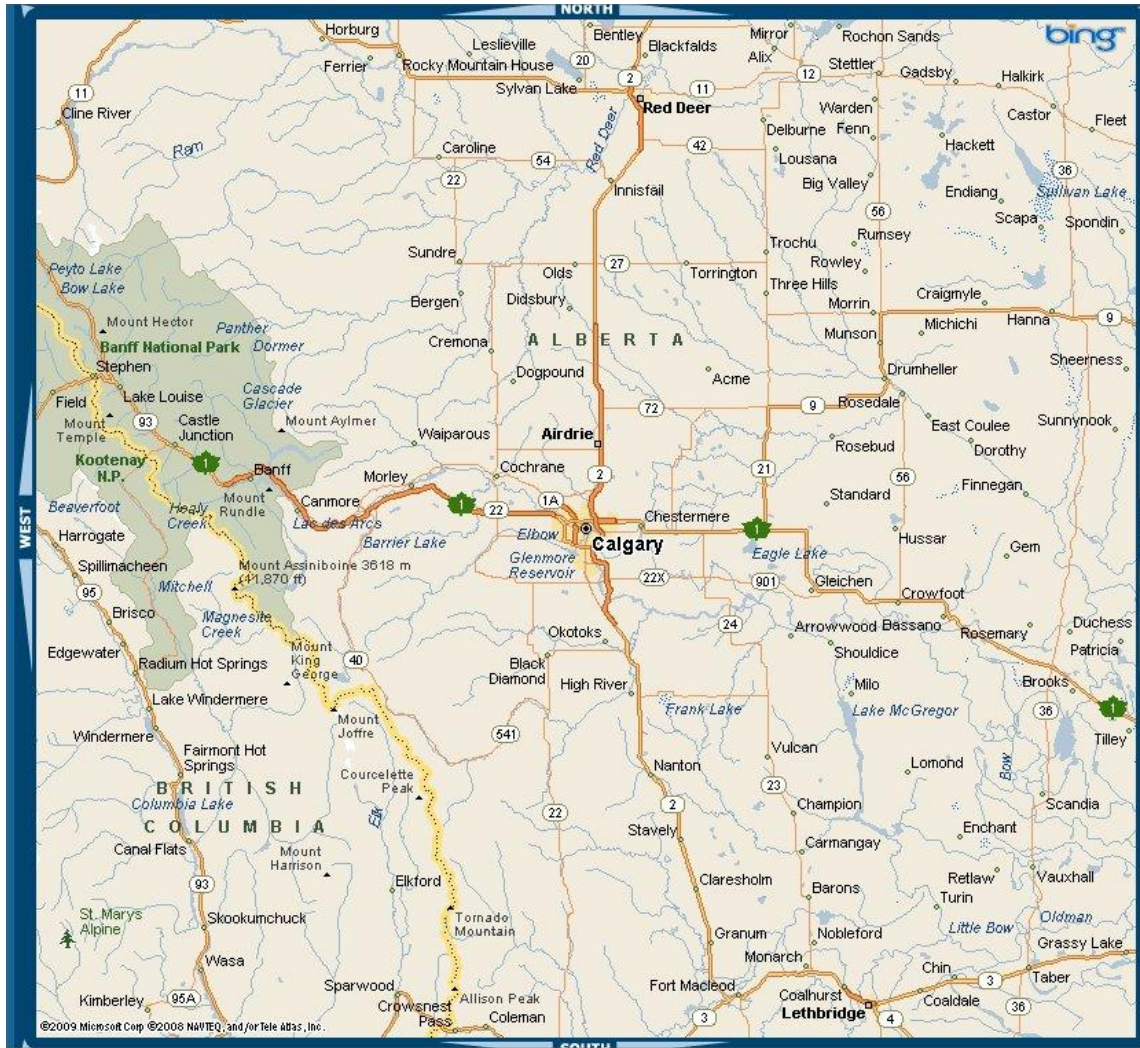
Western North America



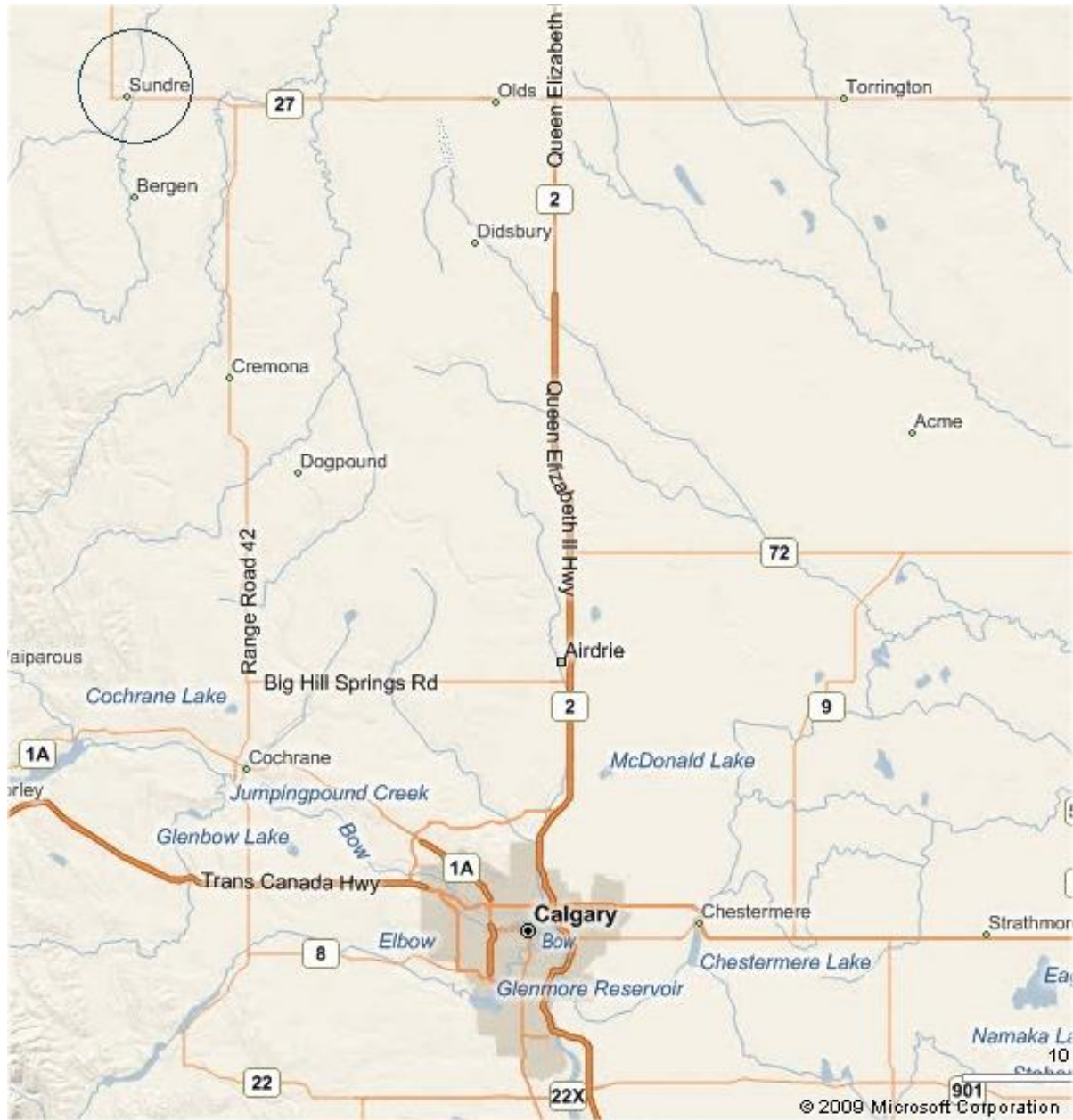
North Central Alberta Canada. Montana is 180 miles due South



Calgary to Great Falls



Calgary Alberta Canada



Calgary to Sundre Alberta Canada



Eastern Seaboard with Charlotte in the centre