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**Great Commission fits cult definition, other groups say**

The June 29 letter from Rodger Lewis accusing Matt Dickerson of making a "distorted reference" to the A&M affiliate of Great Commission Students is itself a distortion of facts concerning Great Commission. As a former member and leader in the organization and a somewhat close observer of it since my exit, I know whereof I speak.  
 Mr. Lewis states that "Great Commission Students is not now, nor has it ever been, 'widely recognized' as a cult," then he adds, "at least not in the usual sense of the word cult." Technically speaking, this may be a correct assertion, but only because he refers to "Great Commission Students," and not its parent organization, "Great Commission Association of Churches," formerly known as "Great Commission International."  
 Most discussions of the movement in public forums of the latter, and among organizations that seek to counter the harmful effects of cults GCAC/GCI has been widely considered a cult or cult-like organization. This belief is true not just in the Cult Awareness Network, but of various evangelical Christian counter-cult organizations.  
 Mr. Lewis failed to say what "the usual sense of the word cult" is. So again, depending on one's definition, his objection may be well taken. If he understands it to refer to the more bizarre groups like the Hare Krishnas, Moonies, or Flying Saucer Contactees, he is correct: no one has compared GCAC to the beliefs or practices of such groups.  
 If he means "cult" in the sense of a group that denies fundamental Christian doctrine such as the Trinity, the inspiration of the Bible, salvation by faith in Christ, etc.; again, no one has said GCAC has done that.  
 However, in the sense used by CAN and many other cult agencies — namely, that a cult is psychologically manipulative in one degree or another, and abuses dissidents to bring them back in line or expel them — from my experience GCAC definitely fits the description.  
 Allow me to correct Mr. Lewis' implication that CAN is anti-evangelical. This is simply not so. CAN has no beef with anyone's religious beliefs. If someone wants to believe God is a little green man who lives on a moon made of cheese, that's fine.  
 What CAN doesn't tolerate is psychological, physical, sexual, financial or other kinds of abuse committed in the name of religion, self-realization or political goals.  
 Ironically, the author to whom Mr. Lewis refers as having commended GCAC for taking steps to correct "leadership weaknesses" actually took more space in his book to report the abuses. (By the way, the author is Ronald Enroth and his book is "Churches That Abuse.")  
 Mr. Lewis alleges that most of the "leadership weaknesses" (a rather watered-down phrase to describe what actually occurred) took place "more than 15 years ago." Certainly, some of the worst abuse occurred in the late 1970s, but by no means did most of it occur then.  
 In 1985 three second-level leaders of the Kansas City GCI church were excommunicated on charges of "faction" (division) because they disagreed with certain teachings and practices of the movement and dared to say so in public. Their aim was not to divide the church, but to correct it, and their manner was conciliatory, not rebellious. Nonetheless, they got the axe. Ironically, their excommunication ended up splitting the church.  
 The following year (1986) between 10 and 20 members of the GCI church in Champaign-Urbana, Ill. were either excommunicated or "marked" as dangerous during the space of about a week and a half. Again, the charge was "faction."  
 Throughout the 80s and into the 90s abuse has continued. Pressure to conform to the behavioral standards of the organization has often been intense, leading to emotional and spiritual distress in many cases — sometimes even to nervous breakdowns and suicide attempts.  
 Some reform has taken place in the past few years. Three other former leaders and I met on three occasions in 1991 with current national leaders of GCAC to discuss our concerns. We were initially cautiously optimistic that the movement was finally heading in the right direction.  
 Since those meetings, however, there has been clear backtracking on some of the progress we thought GCAC had made. The leadership has acknowledged certain "errors and weaknesses" and for that we are grateful. It's a start, but much more needs to be done.

add my "yea!" Actually, I am very much pro-choice, which means that women may choose from many options.  
 One option is to choose not to have sex until one is better prepared to deal with the potential consequences. Contrary to popular belief, sexual intercourse is not essential to survival.  
 Another option for those who choose to have sex is to use birth control which is available in a multitude of forms for even the poorest and most modest women in the United States.  
 Another option is to choose one's sexual partners with more discretion. When considering whether or not to have sex with someone, decide if he is truly worth the money, time, discomfort, and emotional baggage of an abortion. One might just change one's mind.  
 I have stated that I am pro-choice, but I am also anti-abortion. While I do not mind providing birth control devices for men and women who choose to have sex, I do not want my tax dollars spent to provide abortions for those who choose to be irresponsible.  
 Americans need to consider what it really means to be pro-choice, and perhaps they may discover that it's really not about a woman's constitutional right to her own body.  
 It's about choosing to eliminate an inconvenience which could have been prevented. It's about a woman's irresponsibility to herself and society.

Connie Larimore  
 Class of '94

**Runaway DNA experiment escapes A&M for Ft. Worth**

I wish to clarify the report on research on dinosaur DNA that appeared in The Battalion recently. At the suggestion of the Athletic Department, these investigations were initiated several years ago.  
 The objective of the work was to produce a small carnivorous species that is "agile, mobile, and hostile" with the goal of further enhancing Texas A&M's reputation as "Linebacker U". In addition, it was hoped that maroon skin could be obtained as a means to reduce operating costs for uniforms.  
 Although most of the researchers here scoffed at these possibilities, there were some individuals who were intrigued by the idea and who felt that these were laudable goals.  
 Working in collaboration with a bestselling author who has contacts with a similar project being conducted somewhere in or near South America, our investigations advanced rapidly. One change in the protocol was introduced. The investigators here used extra DNA from the Texas horned frog rather than the frog DNA used elsewhere; this was done for technical reasons.  
 About five years ago, the studies produced a single specimen that met some of the criteria; this was viewed as a startling success. The specimen was indeed "agile and mobile", and the color was almost maroon.  
 The project took a decided downturn, however, when it was discovered that the specimen sang songs; it particularly liked one entitled "I love you. You love me."  
 Furthermore, it was not at all hostile and displayed a real fondness for small children. It became severely depressed at repeated attempts to get it to become a "hitter" on the practice football field. About three years ago, it escaped from the laboratory here.  
 It has reportedly been seen in the Ft. Worth area, although the researchers here have been unable to verify this.  
 The project was canceled, and there is no research of this type currently in progress here. However, because of leaks, other parties have expressed interest in restarting the project.  
 There are rumors here that representatives of Texas Christian University have inquired about obtaining specimens similar to the one that was produced here.

Donald W. Pettigrew  
 Associate Professor  
 Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics

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