

CAMPMEETING: The Church Together



The annual Church of God Campmeeting, the church's largest state-wide meeting of the year, ends Sunday at the church campgrounds north of Dulac.

A program for all ages has made it a full week, with times of prayer, special speakers, conferences, recreation and fellowship highlighting the program.

Speakers include Bob Edwards, missionary in Tanzania, and Rev. Carl F. Hovater of Vancouver, Wash. (from left in photo at left).

Other highlights include the annual March for Missions (shown left) and a day camp and creative activities explore the children's interest, and a little horseback riding, swimming and other recreational activities (in photo at right) in some of the spare hours for adults and young people.

About 100 persons from across Louisiana are attending the camp, some staying in cabins and others having their own campers and vans.

The mission offering will help build a missionary headquarters in Tanzania. The camp closes Sunday after a 2:30 p.m. service.

Text & Photos
By Lory Jorden



Cults Proving Divisive Religious Issue

By Lory Jorden
Town Talk Religion Editor

Of all the trends on the religious horizon, the emerging battle lines over the cults appear the most divisive.

Cult members, leaders of established religious organizations, parents, civil libertarians, deprogrammers and judges have all gotten into the fray.

The sexual abstinence in the war against the cults is the most controversial. Traditionally, the term was applied to spiritualists of Christianity such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Armstrongism, and others.

With the anti-establishment of the 1960s, however, many young people turned to other religious groups that espoused their dissatisfaction with

the standards of their parents.

A number of these groups had their roots in fundamentalist Christianity. Others were Western adaptations of Hinduism and other Eastern religions.

The term "cult" began to have its traditional meaning, and became applied to the new groups, especially those not of favor with the older generation.

Today, the successors of these enlightened and scattered communes and camps have emerged as large-scale, well-financed international organizations.

They are of divergent beliefs, theologically — usually following a strong charismatic leader — and almost totally reject existing society.

Their adherents are mostly the young, and they do the term outspies to them all. They contend they are simply religious organiza-

tions entitled to the same freedom of conscience enjoyed by others.

While evangelism is a hallmark of many religions, it is not "evangelical" in practice by the cults that some of the fiercest battles are being fought.

Established religious leaders and parents of young people who have joined the cults maintain the cults exploit their followers, brainwash them, force them into separation from their parents, and engage in sometimes illegal and immoral practices.

As both sides seek court redress, judges and civil liberty groups are caught in the middle.

The American Civil Liberties Union has petitioned the public hearing to the side of the cults.

Legal practitioners have come to the aid of parents by taking their children out of cult groups and attempt-

ing to reverse their influence.

In recent cases, some states have added the deprogramming by using counter-therapy techniques to give parents custody of their children until they "deprogrammed."

Rev. Don Kelley of the National Council of Churches said deprogramming was "the most serious violation of religious liberty in this country in this generation."

On the other side, Ralph Maricotte Davis, chairman of a committee on cults of the General Conference of American Rabbinics, criticized the ACLU for its "unethical" defense of the cults.

He said the national examination "is a new dimension of brainwashing" the groups are engaged in.

He contends the cults use "intensive, isolated indoctrination techniques" that involve mental coercion and brain fire will.

The cults dispute such claims, saying their intensive religious training is not unlike that of other religions.

Deprogramming has proved successful, usually ending with the decision to leave the cult. Whether it will prove legal, says one of the ACLU's top lawyers, will ultimately rest with the Supreme Court.

In an article by Louis Moore in the Houston Chronicle, attorneys are generally been unable to prove their children were held by the cults against their will.

He said a person's civil rights are violated when held captive during a deprogramming session and forced to discuss his religious views in a deposition.

The Cultman added that in a little-reported case, a Mississippi court sentenced John Hanson, leader of a religious commune near Ephraim, to 10 years in prison for kidnapping Charles Hill of Dallas and holding her captive at the commune farm.

It is reported in the Supreme Court, Gutman said, the case could produce a landmark decision on cults and their practices.

A check with Central Louisiana churches uncovered little knowledge of cult activity in the area.

A few evangelists maintained contact with "Witnesses," followers of Rev. Mark's Christian Church and some noted they remembered Hare Krishna followers in Baton Rouge and New Orleans airports.

Most noted the cults are most operative in larger population centers, with their concentration of young people living away from family and established friends.

If they are operating in Central Louisiana, they are keeping a low profile.

Alexandria Daily Town Talk
Religion
Saturday, August 6, 1977 A-7

Youth To Nashville

Nineteen youths from Broussard Drive United Methodist Church have returned from a trip to Methodist facilities in Nashville.

The youth and their sponsors visited the Methodist Publishing House and The Upper Room while in the Tennessee capital.

They also visited Scovett College, Vanderbilt University and Oprey Hall.

Leading the group were Mrs. Pat Breaux, youth director; Mrs. Patrice Ethier and Mr. and Mrs. Billy Young, counselors, and Mrs. Shirley Baucite and Mrs. Dorothy Brechtel, chaperones.

The youth had worked since September raising money for the trip.



Leaving LC

Mark Smith, 21, director of public information at Louisiana Legal Aid for the past five years, has returned effective Aug. 11 to his home public relations position at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

A 1975 graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Smith was editor of the Shawnee (Okla.) News-Star before taking the LC position. His wife, Stella, teaches school in Polk.



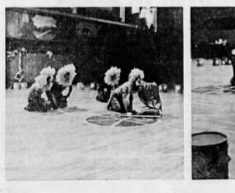
Circus Ends the Summer

Nine weeks of summer fun camp at the Catholic Youth Organization Center ended last week with a circus.

The circus, presented in the CVO Center Gym, was attended by parents and friends of the younger performers. It was created by the children under the direction of Rev. Eric Matthews, Catholic Parish youth director, and Barbara Brown, camp supervisor.

At these points show, the circus was complete with elephants (left), lion (center left) and tiger.

Other camp activities included swimming, tennis, bowling, softball, fishing, singing, volleyball, ping-pong, and a daily religious program.



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Portrays Paul

Rev. Buck Thomas of West Monroe portrays the Apostle Paul this week at Liberty Assembly of God in Shreve. Using costumes and props, he re-enacts the cult in which Paul wrote several of his epistles, quoting scriptures from memory. The presentation will be at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Friday.