

1982

RESOLUTION: DESTRUCTIVE RELIGIOUS CULTS

WHEREAS, In the last several decades certain groups, hereafter called cults, whose actions seem destructive, violent, divisive and highly questionable are a rapidly growing part of our religious and cultural scene; and

WHEREAS, Some cults are deceptive in their recruitment techniques and publicity, violating followers' abilities to make reasonable, informed, valid choices; and

WHEREAS, Some cult leaders have been shown to be autocratic - demanding total allegiance to themselves, - self-serving, and drawing members on to greater disruption of our society; and

WHEREAS, No human being shall be given ultimate authority (Deut. 5:7); and

WHEREAS, Many cults are anti-family and may isolate members from the outside world; follower's ties with their families outside of the group are strained if their family disapproves of the cult, and adherents may be forced to sever connections with them; and

WHEREAS, Some cult followers are asked to yield every career or life decision to the cult or its leader so that career and schooling may be abandoned and all other interests discouraged, thus causing followers to lose their right of self-determination; and

WHEREAS, There is frequently an aura of violence or potential violence; and

WHEREAS, Some of these new religious cults are dangerous to their followers, some of whom have paid a high price by having physical or mental breakdowns - some never gaining their full potentialities; and in some instances there is evidence that cults are threatening to life itself, as in the tragic Jonestown episode; and

WHEREAS, Many cults appeal primarily to individuals who are unsure of, or ignorant about their own religious heritage, or for whom this heritage has meant little.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that since all evidence indicates it is the home which chiefly transmits basic religious identity and belief, all parents within the reach of this resolution be urged to live out their commitment to Jesus Christ so that Christian values become vibrant and alive for the family as a whole; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that our churches consider:

A. Continually owning and updating our understanding of our Christian heritage; and

B. Incorporating a "cult awareness" theme into their Christian Education curriculum, aiming especially at the junior and senior high school age group, preparing them for

coping with the aggressive recruiting and proselytizing techniques of some of the groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference and the Christian Education Department be instructed to gather materials pertinent to this subject - including films, printed materials, speakers (deprogrammed cultists and parents of cultists) - and make themselves generally knowledgeable on this subject in order to resource those in need of information.