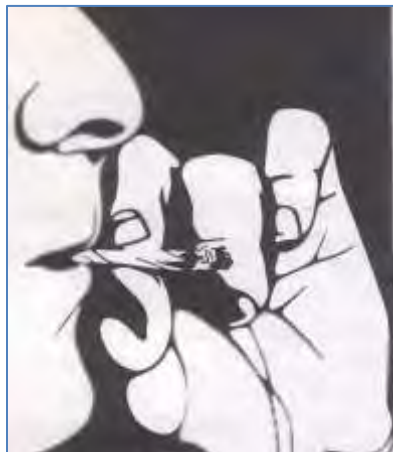


## Unification Church Drug Education Program

James Cowin  
August 1974



The United States is discovering a new need in the educational field -- the need for education against drug abuse. During the past fifteen years many of our education programs were developed in response to a problem. For example, Soviet successes in the "space race" produced a demand for increased emphasis on technological subjects. A decade later colleges began restructuring their curriculums because students claimed that many courses denied channels for self-development.

Today, the greatest problem among American youth is the increasing use of drugs for recreation and "mind expansion." The potential for serious damage to his generation is staggering. According to a survey done in 1973 for the Shafer Commission on Marijuana, almost twenty-six million Americans have smoked marijuana, thirteen million of them on a regular basis. Most users are between 18 and 25, but drug usage has been increasing rapidly in high schools and even junior high schools.

While use in many "problem" cities appears to have reached a saturation point, it continues on the upswing in areas which formerly did not have a drug problem. While most users are students, a number of young executives and professionals, as well as workers, have joined the drug culture.

Increased knowledge of the extent of the problem only causes more sleepless nights for parents, teachers and youth workers. Not enough research on drugs had been done for them to clearly state the dangers of drug use. Detailed work has been done only on amphetamines, and most recently on marijuana. The newest conclusions of the marijuana researchers were presented before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee in mid-May of this year, and have not yet received widespread publicity.

"Bad trips" have made students wary of drugs such as amphetamines, hallucinogens, opiates and even barbiturates. But the American public has gradually been led to believe that marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol. The latest scientific research, however, reveals that marijuana is quite toxic and can have pronounced effects on vital organs, especially the brain.

Although there is a crying need for drug education, efforts in this area have had only limited success. A survey of sixteen drug abuse organizations in the Washington, D.C. area, done by the Drug Education program, reveals a probable reason. The various programs are based on an incomplete understanding of human nature.

### **"Liberal" and "conservative" Approach**

The "liberal" approach appears to be based on compassion for suffering of individuals without full understanding of the cause or solution to their predicament. Liberal educational groups, oriented toward white middle and upper middle class youth, stress that the ultimate cause behind drug abuse is the desire to escape from an intolerable situation generally caused by a lack of love. Until [his love is supplied, the drug user will take drugs as a substitute. Liberals also feel that drug abuse has become so widespread that attempts at elimination are "unrealistic." Educational programs should attempt to reduce the dangers of drug use by showing youth the difference between "hard" drugs such as heroin or cocaine, and "soft" drugs (relatively harmless) such as marijuana (sic).

Liberals oppose "cynical put-downs" of drug taking in anti-drug literature. Mention of the extreme harm drugs can cause is labelled "scare tactics." Most liberal groups feel marijuana is less harmful than alcohol.

"Conservatives" feel that man suffers because he has failed to uphold certain behavioral standards which are necessary for his well-being. He must achieve these standards to save himself. Conservative drug

educational groups directed at the same white middle and upper middle class youth feel that they take drugs mainly because they do not realize the danger to themselves.

Conservatives feel that a "Drugs can kill you" approach is necessary. They regard marijuana as being more dangerous than alcohol, and they regard alcohol and tobacco as dangerous drugs. Groups oriented toward black, inner city youth take a somewhat conservative approach. They emphasize both the dangers of drug abuse and the need for blacks as individuals to accomplish something for themselves, their families and their race.

Black-oriented groups deal mainly with hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine, where addiction... and be a life or death situation.

White-oriented groups deal with a wider variety of drugs, where toxic effects may not be as pronounced in the short run.

### **Religious groups**

Several groups have united both approaches. Religious groups, such as the Teen Challenge of Washington, D.C., the Catholic Office of Drug Education (CODE) and B'Nai B'Rith appear to be in the forefront. The District of Columbia Narcotics Treatment Administration (NTA) has also had much success.

CODE and B'Nai B'Rith emphasize that if a young person does not receive love and inspiration from his parents, his own hope for his life will diminish and he is more likely to turn to drugs. Parents are urged to give their children proper values. CODE emphasizes the family's relationship to God as the key to raising good children.

Teen Challenge witnesses especially to teenagers. It emphasizes Christ's power of love as the force which gives youth no need for drugs.

NTA also concentrates on high schools, with young ex-addicts telling their personal experiences. The director of the educational unit is a former addict who made a deathbed conversion to Christianity. He promised God that if healed, he would devote his life to overcoming the drug epidemic.

Every drug education program, however, has to overcome the pro-drug pressures outside the classroom. Movies like "Easy Rider" (glorifying marijuana), songs like "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (LSD) and "Maryjane" (marijuana) and popular adaptation of the language and clothing of the drug culture gave drug usage a flying start. The campaign for legalization of marijuana may push the drug irreversibly ahead of the drug educators.

The steady, rapid increase in marijuana smoking has federal and state governments considering the legalization of possession to keep many otherwise decent teenagers out of jail.

The D.C. survey recommends a steady continued nationwide publicity campaign, making full use of the media, as well as a nationwide, coordinated educational campaign, as the only possible means of reversing the trend of increasing drug use. Such campaigns are not yet in existence.

Hopefully some organizations will develop them in the near future.

### **Recommended focus**

Marijuana is the first choice as the drug of entry into the drug culture.

Most people realize that amphetamines, opiates and hallucinogens are harmful. An increasing number are realizing the same about barbiturates. Many, however, believe that marijuana is harmless.

It is also the most controversial. The drive for legalization has given it much publicity. Most of it unfortunately proclaims the harmlessness of marijuana. Recent testimony before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee has shown it to be very dangerous.

Its use is increasing rapidly. Almost twenty-six million Americans reported usage, thirteen million regularly. (Shafer Commission Report, 1973). Fifteen million Americans reported use of it in 1971, ten million in 1970. The Drug Enforcement Agency reports a low (thirteen percent) rate of success in seizure of marijuana supplies in the U.S.

The Senate testimonies provide a very strong position, which the pro-marijuana forces should not be able to refute. Many parents, confused and alarmed at its popularity among teenagers and the uncertainty of its effects, would welcome a very strong stand backed by scientific evidence. (There is a possible limitation,

in that research presented before the Senate is "preliminary." It has not been verified by repeated experiments by many scientists over several years.)

### **Recommended programs**

Mobile educational teams, complete with props, displays and literature to visit schools, churches, etc., to lecture to parents and exhibit the displays.

Follow-up groups at centers to train young people in drug education techniques. These students will then educate their peers, under the supervision of the follow-up group.

Public relations teams, both mobile and at the centers, to influence the media and politicians.

A central office in Washington, D.C. to: supply resources (literature and aid in developing programs) to the educational teams and to other drug educational groups; maintain contact with scientists doing research on drugs, with the aim of obtaining copies of their material for distribution and possibly scheduling them for speaking engagements; publish a newsletter; and raise funds. Regional offices to coordinate programs and raise funds in their region.

### **Underlying philosophy**

Although all drugs are basically harmful in some way, as medicine they counterbalance other harmful materials. Everyone should know the dangers of drugs and not take them unless given a prescription. "Highs" as relaxation or recreation should be sought through give and take with other people and with God, through family activities, religious activities, athletics, music, etc.

Peer influence is stronger than parental influence for a teenager. Parents will be asked to volunteer their teenagers to be trained as drug educators to speak to their peers.