

Best protection against cults is to be careful

The mass suicide involving "Heaven's Gate" 39 cult members in California seems to have taken everyone by surprise, and I can not figure out why. Think back. Some time ago

Paquita Herring

a large group of black and white men, women and children committed suicide by drinking soft drinks laced with poison. Four years ago, the broadcast media showed the fiery destruction of a compound located in Waco, Texas where another group of "religious zealots" had been living. The truth is cults have been in existence for years and they are everywhere.

People who give up everything and join cults are easily led and gullible. That explains why one person can persuade another to make him or her abandon God, society and family and join an organization that has a belief in aliens and an outside world.

Maybe it is time for us to rethink and reevaluate ourselves. We should take time to examine ourselves and determine what influences us. We may discover that some ideas may sound good at the time, but may have a negative impact on our lives later. If we don't take that look then maybe we are just as weak-minded as those 39 people who committed suicide in California.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines a cult as "...a religion or religious sect generally considered to be extremist or bogus; followers of such a religion or sect..." The government can not eliminate cults because the Constitution protects everyone's freedom of religion.

Therefore, we must protect ourselves against a cult -- which could be within walking distance of our school.

The opinion expressed in this column is that of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Bennett Banner staff.



THE BENNETT BANNER

The Newspaper produced by the Phenomenal Women of Bennett College

Paquita Herring-----EDITOR
Aleshia Barrett-----BRIEFINGS & KUDOS
Luree Benjamin-----CIRCULATION
Camisha Gentry-----PHOTOGRAPHER
Shamilah Harris-----GENERAL ASSIGNMENT
Brandy Jones-----GENERAL ASSIGNMENT
Annisteon Pack-Lovelace---GENERAL ASSIGNMENT
Kenya Samuels-----BOOK REVIEWS
A'Shauna Tyler-----HERSTORY
LaKeisha Walker-----GENERAL ASSIGNMENT

Dr. Lona D. Cobb
FACULTY ADVISOR

Some photographs published in the Banner are courtesy of Gene Keenum in the Admissions Office and the Public Affairs and Marketing Office.

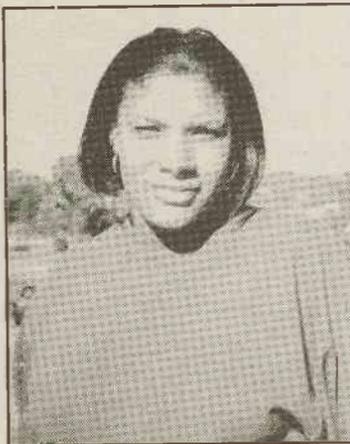
The Bennett Banner is a laboratory newspaper published twice a month during the academic year, except during months with College recognized holidays or College vacations. The newspaper is produced by and for students at Bennett College. The newspaper office is located in Shell Hall C-2.

Student Opinion Poll:

Bellespeak

What is your opinion about religious cults?

The recent mass suicide in California and the anniversary of the Waco incident four years ago has brought a lot of attention to the topic of cults.



DAYDRA WILKS
CLASS: SOPHOMORE
MAJOR: ELEM. ED.
HOME STATE: MISSOURI

People who join religious cults are just looking for something to belong to. Cult leaders look for individuals searching for love and companionship. It is all just crazy.



ALINE FERTIL
CLASS: SENIOR
MAJOR: INTERDISCIPLINARY
HOME STATE: FLORIDA

I am in no position to question or judge people and their religious beliefs. Whatever reasons an individual has decided to join a cult is based on their own morals, standards and their own set of rules.



SHELONDA SMITH
CLASS: JUNIOR
MAJOR: BIOLOGY
HOME STATE: WASH. D.C.

Not all religious cults promote suicide and euthanasia, some promote religious beliefs of Christianity, sisterhood and brotherhood. We are in no position to judge a man for his religious beliefs.



MARNELL HUGHES
CLASS: JUNIOR
MAJOR: MASS COMM.
HOME STATE: WASH.D.C.

Religious cults are of Satan. I bind them up in the name of Jesus and send them back to the pits of hell where they belong.



NAZRA PETERSON
CLASS: FRESHWOMAN
MAJOR: PSYCHOLOGY
HOME STATE: S. CAROLINA

Religious cults are pointless because I do not need to be in a group to know that there is a higher being and to know that I am devoted to the Lord.



CADENCE M. TAYLOR
CLASS: JUNIOR
MAJOR: ENGLISH
HOME STATE: OHIO

Just like people fault Christians for believing in the Holy Trinity and call us crazy - religious cults are just as crazy. These people are just sick.