

The Boston Movement: Critical Perspectives on the International Churches of Christ, 2nd revised edition.

Carol Giambalvo, & Herbert Rosedale. American Family Foundation, Bonita Springs, FL, 1997, 230 pages.

As a family therapist who is often invited into a family at the point where the child is cut off from family connection and as a mother of a daughter who was involved in a cult during and after college, *The Boston Movement*, edited by Carol Giambalvo and Herbert Rosedale is an invaluable resource for therapists and families. Divided into four parts, in Part I, the reader is introduced into the development and evolution of a group from benign and well-intentioned beginnings to deception using "the enthusiasm of people desiring noble ends to justify unethical means of achieving ends that aren't so noble" (p.vi).

Part II, in which Former Members Tell Their Stories, rings with the sincerity of truth and much familiarity. Chapter 3 of this section begins with A Mental Health Approach by Lorna and William Goldberg, clinical social workers who have been "working with families of current and former members of cults and destructive groups since the 1970's." In two sentences, they capture the critical issue: "Our concern about these groups is aroused not because of the beliefs or doctrines. We focus on the unfair and manipulative recruitment techniques that induce fear and guilt and narrow the options of those recruited. Once recruits become involved with the group, they develop a fear of leaving ... they equate leaving with being condemned to Hell" (p. 41). They summarize key issues such as the vulnerability of young people in this life stage and how joining a Bible study group on campus appears to be a "safe and enriching way to make friends ... becoming more involved because they had difficulty saying no (asserting themselves) to a religious group ... they did not recognize the extent to which they were being manipulated" (p. 42).

This chapter is followed by four stories as told to the Goldbergs by former members. The stories demonstrate the process of outreach, induction, involvement, quest, questions, loss of personal freedom and group pressure into behaviors and mind sets that become increasingly destructive. Each story is all the more poignant because the voice is first person and disarmingly candid.

This theme continues in Section III with four more first person stories. Mary, speaking in Chapter 8, states, "It was often preached that part of being our best for God was to imitate those who were more spiritual ... to speak with authority ... ultimately, this translated into my judging others as if I were Jesus myself, viewing everyone outside the Church as not saved, deceiving and manipulating unsuspecting people, being totally submissive and obedient to leaders, and disassociating myself from my family and ... from my husband" (p. 84). After leaving, she writes: "Picture the most important person in your life, and know that this group has the power to destroy even such a relationship" (p. 95).

The last section of the book is superb. Carol Giambalvo, a thought reform consultant and exit counselor, takes the reader through an exiting process with a client named David. This, alone, is worth the price of the book. She deals with the daunting task of identifying and naming Robert J. Lifton's eight psychological themes identified as ideological totalism. By systematically choosing examples from the previous cases, she leads the reader through an integrative process. Step by step, she identifies, explicates, and explains concepts and ramifications. This chapter makes clear the critical and complex fact that for an exit to be successful, the individual has to have the benefit of an exiting process that can deal with and undo the myriad dynamics that lead to personality change and its ramifications.