

LOWELL D. STREIKER, Ph.D.

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February 16, 1993

Dear Herr Kristensen:

I have been informed that Landmark Education is listed by your organization as a "cult."

For seven years, I have worked in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Africa, and Japan as a counselor and had occasions to come in contact with numerous cults and to deal with the damage they did to individuals and their families. I have also written several books on the subject of cults. I am considered a leading expert in the field.

I first became aware of The Forum in 1985 and I personally participated in The Forum in 1987. I have also had an opportunity to examine very closely the work done by Landmark Education. The programs offered by Landmark Education provide individuals with a unique and valuable educational opportunity that allows them to thoughtfully inquire into their own lives. Nothing at all would lead to the conclusion that The Forum is a cult. On the contrary, what I have observed are people becoming more engaged with their family and community lives rather than removed from them. There is a strong emphasis on responsible behavior within one's family, business, and civic life.

I can state unequivocally that The Forum is not a cult. I arrive at this conclusion by attempting to determine if a number of "cult" characteristics manifest themselves in The Forum/Landmark Education. While the term "cult" is pejorative and does not have a precise scientific meaning, I have dealt with families and individuals whose lives had been disrupted by involvement with certain kinds of religious movements. These movements shared common characteristics:

A cult is a nontraditional religious group based upon the teaching of an *authoritarian leader*.

A cult is a *highly structured, strictly disciplined* group which demands the *total* time, dedication, and resources of its members.

A cult sees itself as the *only possessor of truth* and see those outside the cult as enemies.

Primary cult activities are *recruitment* of new members and the *raising of funds* for the group.

Cult initiation techniques are frequently based upon *deception* and *psychological coercion*.

Money is often obtained under *false pretenses*.

Members of cults are encouraged to *cut off communications* with family members and friends.

Cultists allow the cult leader to *make important decisions* concerning career and marriage for them.

In many instances, cult members give their possessions and earnings to the group and, in turn, are *totally dependent on the group*.

Most cults encourage *systematic forms of consciousness altering practices* which make individuals amenable to *group direction rather than self-determination*.

None of these characteristics is to be found in The Forum or Landmark Education. The Forum is not a cult in any sense of the word, religious or otherwise.

Sincerely,



Lowell D. Streiker, Ph.D.