

Moonies and Military Recruits

By Julie Smith

Techniques of coercive persuasion — or brainwashing — are used in Army and Marine Corps boot camp, a psychiatrist testified yesterday in the "Moonie brainwashing" hearing.

Dr. Samuel G. Benson made the statement in a hearing to determine whether Superior Court Judge S. Lee Vavuris should make the parents of five young members of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church their guardians for 30 days.

The parents claim the young adults are brainwashed and can be returned to their true personalities only through a process called deprogramming.

Under cross-examination by attorneys for the young people, Benson said he had been in Army boot camp and "I'll never forget it, either."

"Would a person be in need of immediate psychiatric attention after boot camp?" he was asked.

"I felt like I could have used some," Benson said. But he stopped short of recommending psychiatric care for everyone who undergoes military training.

He said techniques of brain-

washing are also used at salesmen's training seminars.

But the difference between true brainwashing, and these seminars is "that they don't last very long. The people are allowed to go home."

Benson also testified that he has not read much about brainwashing, or religious conversions or the Unification Church.

He said the deprogramming process, as described by the young people's attorney's "could" cause their mental health to deteriorate.

He testified on Wednesday that he had examined all five young people — Barbara Underwood, Johnny Hovard, Janice Kaplan, Jacqueline Katz and Leslie Brown — and found they have common symptoms he believes are caused by coercive persuasion.

Margaret Singer, a clinical psychologist and lecturer at the University of California, told the court she observed many of the same symptoms in the young people.

Singer testified that during her career she has interviewed and evaluated former prisoners of war after the Korean conflict, Jesuit

priests who were held prisoners by the Chinese and 40 former Unification Church members.

Testifying with little facial or vocal expression, she told the court she had each of the young people draw a picture "of a person" during her examination of them.

She said the drawings they produced were comparable to those produced by former Korean War POWs immediately after they were released — primitive, lacking detail and without features that distinguished the sex of the figure.

The drawings, which she showed the judge, varied widely in style and detail, from a simple stick figure to a whimsical figure carrying a bouquet of flowers.

Singer said the speech patterns of the five cult members were childlike and showed an impaired level of functioning.

All five, she said, avoided comparing or evaluating ideas or expressing negative opinions.

Under cross-examination, Singer testified she believes the five would benefit from treatment.

Judge Vavuris granted the parents of the five young people custody of their children for the weekend, but specified that the children should not be required to talk with anyone — presumably, including "deprogrammers" — against their wishes.