

The Miracle Isles

By Dale Richeson



AS IT happens, some of my best friends are scientologists.

This fact becomes blushing appropriate for this column because Hawaii apparently discovered us just this week.

Stories in this week's flow of daily news focused upon our activities in Washington, D.C., and in Hawaii.

The story out of Washington said we are a secretive lot. So please don't breathe a word of what I am writing.

Just between the 100,000 or so of us, scientology has been going about the things it goes about for more than a dozen years in Hawaii. If you haven't heard of us, blame it on our alleged secrecy which extends this far: scientology is listed in the yellow pages of your phone directory — because we don't like to put anything in black and white.

CONFUSION

Back in the 1950's, when we first got going in Hawaii, a lot of people confused scientology with psycho-ceramics. That's Latin for crackpots.

Today, however, we have graduated from crackpot to menace, and hence the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's raid on our Washington headquarters. Our crime: claiming to cure illnesses, (quote) ranging from radiation burns to cancer (unquote).

Since this presumably includes the common cold, we are, no doubt, a menace to the future of television advertising.

A brief note on our history in Hawaii: We began shortly after publication of the book "Dianetics," by L. Ron Hubbard. This was the first of several doben books based on a radically new approach to mental health.

The fact that it became a best seller may testify to the number in America who are at least on the fringes of sharing our condition.

OAHU BRANCH

Today there is a professional scientology center in Honolulu staffed fully with trained personnel. I'll not speak for them, however. They're communication experts and can speak for themselves.

But speaking for myself, let me answer some questions I'd like to put in your mouths: First, what is scientology?

According to Hubbard, it is "that branch of psychology which treats of human ability."

According to Richeson, however, it is "the successor to psychology," or "psychology with muscles."

Or better yet, "psychology that works."

(I didn't claim to be unprejudiced, did I?)

In my three years in Hawaii's scientology, I have seen some amazing things happen: Disorganized people became organized and efficient in their work. Husbands and wives pulled their marriages from the brink and became lovers again.

Apathetic people became enthusiastic. And congenital soreheads became likable humans.

MEMORY FOG

What it can do for memory is a little short of amazing. (Oh that? Well, you should have seen me before.)

Your next question: How does it work?

Partially these results are achieved by study; mostly, however, through therapy.

The study of certain principles of communication, the anatomy of problems and the nature of our survival urge, as approached in scientology, can help a person stay out of the traps which tangle up our thinking processes.

And the therapy, called "auditing" in scientology, helps pull you, out of the traps you have already fallen into.

This "auditing" can be done as group therapy, but faster, on an individual basis. The flow of Dianetics was the concept that just anybody could be an auditor.

In scientology today we know that the precise techniques require exhaustive training.

In an auditing session, you sit in a comfortable chair and hold two electrodes in your hand. These electrodes are attached by wires to a device called an E-meter.

The E-meter registers whenever you have an emotional reaction. A trained auditor can interpret what kind of reaction.

By watching your response to certain carefully-prepared sets of questions, the auditor can tell whether they are the "right" questions. This prevents wasting time on random meandering and wild goose chases.

TO THE POINT

If you are embroiled in a problem concerning your wife's wild spending, the auditor will not spend your time, asking you whether you were bottle-fed as a baby.

The E-meter keeps him on target.

Suppose you're tense but you can't put your finger on just what you are tense about. The auditor might ask you a series of questions, such as "What might (just might, mind you) be a problem?" or "What might be a problem to a person?"

These two questions would be asked alternately until the E-meter indicated that they were no longer evoking an emotional response. Long before this, however, you would probably have discovered many of the things which had been making you tense.

(These are not precise scientology questions, just a columnist's example of typical auditing questions.)

Another set of questions, aimed at another type of problem, might run like this: "Who blamed you for something?" Alternated with: "For what have you been blamed?"

There are dozens of such sets of questions, all of which have been researched to determine what response they will evoke. The auditor, with his E-meter, can pick out just which set will benefit you most at the particular moment.

Then, when the E-meter indicates that the questions have stopped producing results, another set of questions is substituted—again, selected with the help of the meter. It's sort of like a sculptor working: a specific tool for a specific problem.

WHAT HAPPENS

What happens when these tools are used?

Well, just for fun, sit down and write out the answers to the two questions about "blame." Do it, say five times each. (I'll wait for you.)

Did you suddenly recall when your kindergarten teacher blamed you for something? Or your boss? Or your wife?

Did these discoveries revive some old emotions, and did you sort of re-experience them?

Well, to oversimplify matters, this is a sneak preview of what might happen in an auditing session.

In actual auditing the process would be continued until the meter indicated that the old emotion—which has been hanging around and cluttering up your emotional stability and thinking processes all these years — had disappeared.

After that you would feel forever a little less uncomfortable about being "blamed for" things.

What's more, you would probably discover a new willingness to take on responsibility, because you wouldn't fear being blamed if things go wrong.

So much for auditing techniques, since this is just a column, not a thorough treatise. What else do I know about scientology? Well, I know this about scientology:

It is not a healing cult. It does not try to heal anything except mild fractures in healthy minds.

SOME RESULTS

But when you relieve a man's tensions, don't be surprised if his ulcers just happen to get well.

We are not in the business of seeking and saving the insane. We prefer to work with able people, and make them more able.

In so doing, we have a hunch, this planet will become a playing field for happier games than nuclear roulette.

Is scientology a religion? Yes, in that it seeks to improve the well-being of human spirits. It is unlike most religions, however, in that it imposes no dogmas of sin and salvation, no commandments and damnation. To us, salvation is sanity.

Our goal? A world that is more fun, more creative and more sane.

What has scientology done for me? Most important, it has made living more fun. But then, I could be wrong. Maybe it only seems to be more fun.