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William F. Willoughby Ask No Questions, Get No Lies

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO WHEN I landed at Heathrow Airport in London, I wasn't quite sure what was going to take place. I had read some pretty wild tales about the Scientologists, but only a couple of weeks before that I had read some even wilder tales about the British Immigration people and their attitude and actions toward the Scientologists in Omar Garrison's new book titled "The Hidden Story of Scientology."

I didn't know for sure that I would be allowed to make my way down to East Grinstead, 30 or so miles south of London in Sussex County, to visit Saint Hill, the international headquarters for the controversial religion. My objective was to continue gathering extensive material to write a follow-through book to Garrison's on the Scientologists.

Fortunately, the Immigration officials didn't ask any specific questions, so I didn't have to give them any specific information. Ask no questions, get no lies.

Only a very few years ago if they learned that an individual — particularly a student — were heading to Saint Hill, that person would be cut off at the pass and not even allowed entry into the country.

One girl was detained in jail for several days simply because she wanted to study at the headquarters and it was discovered she had no money for the return fare to New Zealand when she was refused the privilege of going to Saint Hill.

With the high price of things in England these days, that's another question I'm glad they didn't ask, namely, if I was going to have enough money to get home on. The way my money was going, I wasn't too sure if I was going to make it back. As much as I love England and its people, I almost wouldn't have minded staying — but not exactly on the same terms as that poor girl stayed.

TO THIS VERY DAY, the founder of the religion, L. Ron Hubbard, is not allowed to enter the country to visit the very much alive nerve center of the fast growing religion. The psychiatrists got to the legislators and they got to him.

That fact and the fact that technically the British government could come into Saint Hill and arrest the numerous foreign students who are studying the religion there is one of the strangest tales of religious persecution I have run across in modern times.

Once you've spent as much time with those people as I did during my working vacation, not only in England, but in Los Angeles and in Oregon, and

you've seen the product of their beliefs working so beautifully in life — and now, increasingly in improving society — you wonder how all these tall tales came about and why everywhere they emerge Scientologists become the object of vilification and persecution.

Underneath the welter of material that was being uncovered this week in hearings conducted by Sen. Joseph Montoya regarding Interpol, the international police agency, lies part of the answer. Some of it lies in ignorance, and a lot of it willful ignorance at that.

ANOTHER PART OF IT LIES in the "dirty tricks" tactics which were exposed in the aftermath of Watergate and the "enemies list" of the Internal Revenue Service and the domestic spying of the Central Intelligence Agency, plus some other policing agencies.

I can't go into all that right now, but wait until my book comes out. I think I have plenty of the right kind of material to make one's head swim. I hope it sells for at least \$10.95 a copy.

I'll give you this clue, though. After you've cut down through the debris all these intrigue-laden agencies have scattered, you can trace the real culprits back to a small group of psychiatrists who set out to oppose Hubbard and his new religion, Scientology.

THERE IS THE STORY TOLD of the man who was walking with the Devil when they saw somebody on the path bend over and pick up an object. The man asked the Devil what the man had found, and the Devil said, "He's found Truth."

"Why does it make you so happy that he's found Truth?" the man asked.

"Because I'm going to help him organize it," the Devil replied.

Essentially, Hubbard and the Scientologists believe that the people with the wrong notions about the nature of mankind and the world have gotten hold of nearly everything from education to mental illness and are manipulating things accordingly.

At heart, it boils down to materialistically inclined people trying to bring the world to its senses when it is a spiritual problem which is at the root of the whole thing. I think anyone who takes religion seriously will agree with Hubbard and the Scientologists — at least on that point.

DON'T THINK FOR A MOMENT that I've flown

the coop from Christianity to Scientology. I haven't — not by a long shot. I still look very questioningly at my Scientology friends when they try to tell me that it's possible to be a good Christian and a good Scientologist at the same time.

I just don't believe a Christian knows what he should know about his religion if he buys that reasoning. While I agree with at least 90 percent of what I know about Scientology, I don't believe Christianity admits of being eclectic (picking and choosing from all religions) in its theology.

But I am firmly convinced, after scrupulously observing those who profess to be practicing Scientologists, there is much in the methodology and the technology of that religion that could be applied with no little bit of enrichment to one's spiritual — and especially ethical — dimensions in Christianity.

Christians get a lot of theory, but we often fall short on application. I saw a whole lot of application being put to an awful lot of ethical insight everywhere I encountered my newfound friends. It made me more determined to apply it to my own religion, which, I feel has all the right ingredients for getting the lid screwed down good and tight on this world if only those who believe in it believe in it.

I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY certain psychiatrists have initiated and carried out the war with Scientology and how disinformation, added to misinformation about Scientologists, propagated by such groups as the FBI, IRS, the CIA and Interpol and then printed unquestioningly in the press can paint a real bad picture of them.

But for the life of me, I can't see how it can persist if one takes the time to look at the clearcut evidence these people present to the contrary in their personal and public practice.

It seems even stranger to me when I consider that I know at least as many people who have paid handsomely for psychiatric help as I now know who have paid just about as handsomely for help from Scientology.

I've yet to see a genuine Scientologist, no matter how rich or poor, who didn't seem to have the world by the tail.

PLEASE, FRIENDS, be like the Immigration people at Heathrow Airport. Ask me no questions about my friends visiting the psychiatrists and I'll have to tell you no lies about the kind of help I think most of them got.