

# Clearwater Sun

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### Judge's ruling calls sect 'corrupt, immoral'

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A London High Court judge characterized the Clearwater-based Church of Scientology as "corrupt, immoral, sinister (and) dangerous" in delivering a damning indictment of the sect during a civil trial.

Mr. Justice Sir John Latey's July 23 comments concluded a six-month court battle over custody of two children whose father is a Scientologist but whose mother has left the sect.

In awarding care and control of the children to their mother, the British judge minced no words in

his condemnation of Scientology, calling it "both immoral and socially obnoxious."

"(Scientology) is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit and has as its real objective money and power for its founder (L. Ron Hubbard), his wife and those close to him at the top," Latey said from the bench, reading from a prepared statement.

"It is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices both to its adherents who do not toe the line unquestioningly and to those outside who oppose it.

"It is dangerous because it is (Please see \* SECT, next page)

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out to capture people, especially children and impressionable young people, and indoctrinate and brainwash them so that they become the unquestioning captives and tools of the cult.

"The stranglehold is tight and unrelenting and the discipline ruthless ... the church resorts to lies and deceit whenever it thinks it will profit it to do so. For those of us old enough to remember, it is grimly reminiscent of the ranting and bullying of Hitler and his henchmen."

Richard Haworth, the Scientology's spokesman in Clearwater, said Latey's ruling and comments are "the desperate decision of one judge that is of no consequence."

Justice Latey verified his statements Tuesday during a telephone interview with the *Clearwater Sun*, and his comments echo similar findings expressed by California Superior Court Judge Paul G. Breckenridge, who called the sect "schizophrenic and para-

noid" at the June 21 conclusion of a Los Angeles civil trial.

Breckenridge—whose decision exonerated former Scientology archivist Gerald Armstrong of charges he stole thousands of sect documents—also found that the evidence presented to his court "reflects on (Hubbard's) egoism, avarice, lust for power, greed and vindictiveness against all persons perceived by him to be hostile."

"He (Judge Breckenridge) seems to have come to very much the same conclusion that I did," Latey noted Tuesday.

Armstrong, at the conclusion of his nine-week trial in California, flew to London to testify in the child custody trial before Latey.

According to the *London Daily Mail*, although Latey awarded the mother custody of her children, ages 8 and 10, he said the children should not be cut off from their father, with whom they had been living.

The *Daily Mail* reported that even though the father, who has

remarried since the couple's divorce in 1979, had promised to seek to correct the evils of Scientology, Latey declared there was very little the father could do.

"The result would be that he would be declared a Suppressive Person with all that that would entail for him and his family," Latey said. "The baleful influence of the church would, in reality, still be there and the children would remain gravely at risk."

Haworth said Tuesday the London trial was "biased (and) tainted by the infusion of psychiatric jargon."

"This case is just another symptom of the times in which we live where the integrity of the family and other cherished institutions are cast aside as the state assumes increasing control of every facet of our lives," Haworth said.

He also said the custody case, like the California theft case, will be appealed.