

# Reader disagrees with Scientology coverage

**Editor:**

There was an editorial in the Saturday, Nov. 17 edition of the *Sun* entitled, "The right to be heard," which stated among other things that the *Sun* doesn't acknowledge the First Amendment rights of Scientology to be recognized as a religion even though several government bodies including the IRS have so ruled.

The editorial then proceeded to assert that the *Sun* takes the Constitution very seriously. This presents a discrepancy which I don't think can be easily disregarded.

Scientology is a religion and has been acknowledged to be a religion by innumerable scholars, independent organizations, and governmental agencies and courts ranging from the United States Internal Revenue Service to as far as the Supreme Court of Australia. This is a fact. No one today questions that Scientology is a religion.

This area of the country is well known as a center of drug traffic, and the *Clearwater Sun* is well aware that the Scientologists are anti-drug and are very effective in helping people fight drug abuse. The thousands and thousands of Scientologists who come to Clearwater do not get involved in drugs and they do not contribute to this problem. Rather they pour millions of dollars into the community in buying goods and services supplied by local merchants and productive citizens. Scientology has the lowest crime rate per capita of any group in Clearwater, and yet the *Sun* rants and raves. Is it that you are in favor of crime and drugs and Scientology represents a threat to this?

All communication to your reporter, Mr. Shelor, are now in writing because he can't seem to get his story straight. And the *Sun* is probably the only voice in the world which denies our status as a religion in complete disregard of the evaluation of a multitude of learned men. The citizens of Clearwater are being betrayed by the *Sun* and are being denied the truth about their good friends here in Scientology.

MICHAEL O'BRIEN  
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**Editor's note:** Whether Scientology is a religion has been, and continues to be, questioned in courts around the world. An English court ruled this year that Scientology is based on deceit and called the organization "corrupt, immoral, sinister (and) dangerous."

In a July 23 ruling, Justice Sir John Latey stated that Scientology "is corrupt because it is based on lies and deceit ... it is sinister because it indulges in infamous practices ... dangerous because it is out to capture people (and) for those of us old enough to remember, it is grimly reminiscent of the rantings and bullying of Hitler and his henchmen."

Scientology has been stripped of its right to operate as a religion in Germany and the same status is presently before courts in Holland and Canada.

In a September ruling, the United States Tax Court stated that the California Church of Scientology is not entitled to a tax exemption as a religion "because it is operated for a substantial commercial purpose and because its net earnings benefit L. Ron Hubbard," its reclusive founder.

Although the court noted that there are philosophical beliefs within the sect which may be religious in nature, it concluded that the sect's "highly commercial method of operations, its high annual profits and its substantial, undedicated cash reserves convinced us that it had a substantial commercial purpose."