

## ETHICS and RELIGION

# Youngsters expelled from school in Church of Scientology storm

By John McCoy  
P-I Reporter

Two youngsters were expelled from a private school in Bellevue last week because of a continuing dispute about the real wishes of a 72-year-old man who hasn't been seen in years.

The youngsters, brothers Garrett and Allen Dean, aged 6 and 9, must wonder what happened. Despite their good grades and conduct, the boys were kicked out of The Learning Place School, a private institution that follows the educational philosophy of L. Ron Hubbard but invites students of all faiths.

Hubbard, a multimillionaire science fiction writer, is the founder and chief philosopher of the Church of Scientology. His whereabouts — if he is alive — are unknown. But in his absence, the church that he founded 30 years ago has been shaken by divisions, accusations and power struggles.

The expulsion of the Dean brothers is just one little example of the storm.

Late last week, the boys' parents, Chuck and Athena Dean, received a letter from Sue Love, director of The Learning Place School.

### Church philosophy

The letter told the Deans that because they were antagonistic to the church their sons would no longer be accepted at the school. Their antagonism, Love wrote, was placing the boys in a stressful situation that hindered their education.

The school director said the Deans obviously disagreed with Hubbard's philosophy because they resigned from the church.

"You can't put your child in a Montessori School and then say you disagree with the philosophy of Maria Montessori," Love said.

The school is independent of the church and espouses a non-discriminatory policy, although its staff members are Scientologists. Love said she consulted with an attorney and the Rev. Ann Ruble, the church's Washington state director, before expelling the youngsters.

She and Ruble both said there was no church pressure to kick out the boys.

Chuck and Athena Dean, who spent 10 years as church workers, don't believe that for a minute. The



Garrett Dean, 6, left, and his brother, Allen, 9, shown here with their parents, Athena and Chuck Dean, were expelled from The Learning Place in Bellevue, a school run by the

Church of Scientology, after the Deans left the church. They claim that L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, is dead and the leaders are using the church for their own benefit.

expulsion, they charge, is a cowardly attempt to harass them for being critical of the present church leadership.

"For someone to boot our sons out of a school they love because of my religious beliefs is blatantly discriminatory," Chuck Dean wrote in an open letter to other school parents. "Do Scientologists think they can just bully their way around the U.S. Constitution and the Christian principles of our Founding Fathers?"

The Deans, who said they moved from Olympia to Seattle in January so the boys could attend the school, resigned from the church in March.

Athena Dean, now regional director for an insurance firm, said she and her husband still consider themselves Scientologists but object to the way the church has been run in Hubbard's absence. Athena, 31, said she is convinced that an inner group of church leaders has been covering up Hubbard's death.

Because the reclusive church founder has not been seen in public, his followers have produced handwriting samples and voice tapes they claim are his. More than 500 Seattle-area Scientologists were among the thousands of church members who listened to a taped New Year's message from Hubbard.

On tape, Hubbard said compe-

tent, independent management had saved the church from ruination by "people who sought to take over the Scientology churches in a perverted form and exploit them for their own profit." Hubbard said he had remained "aloof" so he could renounce it in his writing.

Athena Dean, who once subsisted on \$13 a week and a diet of rice and beans for love of the church, calls the voice tape a fake. She and others did a voice print of the tape and found it didn't match with earlier Hubbard tapes, she said.

"It's like real obvious that Ron Hubbard isn't even around anymore," she said.

Athena figures the church needs

Hubbard in order to justify what she sees as exorbitant prices for church counseling, known as "auditing." Without Hubbard, she suggested church members would drift off to independent Scientologists who, she claimed, can provide the same service for a fraction of the price.

"The church is losing tons of people tired of paying \$3,500 for 12 and a half hours of auditing," she said.

Her husband agreed. Contrary to Hubbard's teachings, members are now encouraged to take out loans to cover the cost of auditing, Chuck Dean said.

Dean, 40, is co-author of a recently published pamphlet that accuses church management of price gouging, brainwashing and mind control.

"They're moneymongers," he said of church leadership. "They want to amass as much money as possible for themselves."

### 'Rabid grippers'

He now operates an independent drug education program called Neighborhood Outreach.

Since their resignation, the Deans say church members have heckled and harassed them. Scientologists who worked for them have quit. The Deans believe it's part of a church process called "disconnecting" or "striking a blow to the enemy."

That's ridiculous, said Ruble, the local Scientology president.

Ruble, who oversees 16,000 Scientologists in three Northwest states, called the Deans "rabid grippers" who are making a career of attacking the church.

Allegations about mind control and brainwashing are absurd, she said. "I don't run anybody. I can't order any punishment to do anything."

Although Ruble doesn't know where Hubbard is, she said there's no doubt that he's alive and that the church is being governed in accordance with his wishes.

# Scientology: 'auditing' the 'engrams'

By John McCoy  
P-I Reporter

The basic premise of the Church of Scientology is that humans can realize their full potential only if they clear away negative memories.

The means of doing so were presented by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard in the best-selling book "Dianetics," which he wrote in 1950. Hubbard argued that by a process of counseling ("auditing"), negative memories ("engrams") could be erased.

Auditing involves the use of an E-meter, a sort of lie detector on which the subject holds two tin cans wired to a galvanometer. The machine, patented by Hubbard, measures electrical impulses which supposedly indicate a level of emotional distress.

The Scientologist conducting the auditing asks the subject about painful or embarrassing experiences in hopes of eliciting buried memories. The subject's responses are dutifully recorded, filed and kept in voluminous folders in church storage rooms.

A subject who manages to root

out all negative memories reaches a state of "clear" or happiness. He or she can then reach back into previous lives.

"Know thyself and the truth shall set you free," said Hubbard, who claimed to have reached back 74 trillion years.

A 12-hour auditing course costs about \$3,000, said the Rev. Ann Ruble, president of the Church of Scientology of Washington state. But the fee includes follow-up counseling, courses and other services, she said.

Advanced courses, which help rid the body of the ill effects of chemicals, alcohol and drugs, are available at additional cost. A complete curriculum of courses can cost \$40,000.

After the success of "Dianetics," Hubbard began the church in Phoenix in 1954. He sold franchises to operate other churches on the condition that 10 percent of the income be returned to the parent church. Today, church assets are estimated at \$250 million.

Church operations, however, ran afoul of the Internal Revenue Service which claimed it was due \$6 million in taxes from income that

was not tax-exempt. The church's status as a tax-exempt, religious organization is now unclear because courts have ruled both ways.

In 1966, Hubbard, feeling harassed by the IRS and the FBI, set up headquarters with 500 followers at sea on a converted British ferry. He came ashore again in 1975, unsuccessfully tried to take over the city government of Clearwater, Fla. (where the church is headquartered today) and, in March 1980, disappeared. Some say he lives in a heavily guarded, walled estate near Palm Springs, Calif.

In his absence, some of his followers got into trouble. Last year, 11 Scientologists, including his third wife, were convicted of burgling U.S. government offices in Washington, D.C. Meanwhile, his estranged son sued for control of his estate. And a group of "Sea Orgs," the elite who sailed with him on the converted ferry, purged the church, creating a new corporation which claimed rightful ownership of Hubbard's trademarks and techniques.

After that takeover, many members either left or became independent Scientologists



L. Ron Hubbard, Scientology founder, claims to have reached back into previous lives for 74 trillion years