

## Readers respond to *Scientology*

Editor:

In response to the your recent editorial headlined "Silence on Scientology—I'm afraid you misinterpret this "silence." It doesn't mean apathy or lack of interest. It means "So, what's new?" or "What more is there to say?" Nothing has come out at the trial that surprises anyone. So L. Ron Hubbard is not what he claims to be: Who knows what he claimed to be? Who reads his writings, except those poor troubled people, most of them young, I imagine, who are conned into buying an "earthly paradise" in return for lots of money and hours of donated labor? I would have been surprised to learn that he was a naval hero during the war, but I'm not surprised to learn that he was not.

How can anyone believe in the integrity of a group that has its "ministers" wear the Roman collar and uses the cross in its symbol, when—as far as any information I have seen—they do not profess to believe in Christ or in Christianity?

I strongly support freedom of religion, but I fail to see what relation this concept bears to Scientology or the Reunification Church of Sun Myung Moon, which are really businesses and profitable, too, if you believe what you read in the news media.

I would like to see them out of Clearwater, but don't hold your breath.

T.J. McQUILLEN  
Dunedin

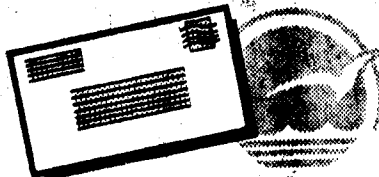
Editor:

Please do not accept the lack of letters to the editor as an indication of your readers' reaction to your excellent reporting on the Scientology expose by staff writer George-Wayne Shelor. We are all intensely interested and concerned with the California trial and with all other exposes of these "cloak-and-dagger" activities.

The best deterrent against involvement by your readers is the unwillingness to expose themselves to the legal prosecution so evident in the activities of this self-annointed "church." Another deterrent is the Clearwater Sun's magnificent and detailed reporting. Surely, the Sun's continued recital of the repugnant activities of Hubbard and his henchmen will some day bear fruit and Clearwater will be rid of this cult.

I have noted the reaction of a "reverend" from the cult headquarters in California. Typical is his criticism of Mr. Armstrong rather than a justification of the sect. I am a bit confused by the assumption of the reverend title. Reliable definitions of the term say it is one "deserving of reverence."

I have also noted that the Sun has made available all the editorials and other data concerning the cult story and history. This material would be a complete and comprehensive source for someone to write a book. Complimentary copies could be smuggled into the "Fort" together with copies of the Sun. It would seem that forbidden reading would excite the "money source" into reading what their contributions are doing.



### Letters to the Editor

Finally, we are so familiar with wrong-doing in every phase of our lives that we do seem complacent. Only when events hit our pocketbooks or our personal safety do we react. But, perhaps the disclosures in California and our experiences in Clearwater may someday build up an active resistance to the farce in our midst.

WILLIAM T. TIFFIN  
Clearwater

Editor:

Questions about Scientology: Why the great secrecy about moving into Clearwater, why the burly guards, why the effort to discredit the mayor and others, why do they call themselves the United Churches—which they were then and now are not. Churches don't charge admission, don't need or hire guards, don't prevent their members from talking, don't want or get tax exemptions for every home where any of their members reside, and don't need a battery of lawyers everywhere. Why are lawyers reluctant to stand against them? Could it be those big fat fees? While officials are careful about what they say, they and many of us are convinced that there is a worldwide conspiracy to destroy this nation. Are the Scientologists part and parcel of that conspiracy? Were their agents here before they moved here, already in law and business?

S.L. SNYDER  
Clearwater

Editor:

Possibly other readers, like I, felt the Scientologists would bury themselves, especially with the evidence coming from Los Angeles now.

Anyone who could conceivably believe that Scientology is a religion or church, in the true sense, is daft. And that includes the judges who have ruled favorably for so many years.

I guess, however, I'll have to get back to my typewriter and correspond with the offices you suggest.

JACK KERWIN  
Clearwater

Editor:

Ever since the Scientologists moved into Clearwater, I have been observing them.

I travel by car, almost daily, from east Clearwater down Cleveland Street.

They are so unkempt looking, rain or shine, hot or

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gold. They walk from the "Heart of Clearwater Motel" to downtown Clearwater looking like they are never dressed for the weather.

They are very rarely friendly to each other. They pass without looking or acknowledging the other's presence.

Are they afraid to talk to their comrades? Are they afraid of each other?

Did you ever observe their eyes? There is no "light" or smile. Just dullness.

I look at them and feel sorry for them. Their lives seem not to be their own. They walk like "robots" looking neither to the right nor left, just straight ahead, going from one building to the other, never "stopping to smell the roses." Just going for the next Scientologist message.

Thank God for the few strong people willing to go against them and show what their program really is. Let's all pray for them.

D.B. BROWN  
Clearwater

Editor:

I am writing in response to your May 25, editorial concerning the apparent apathy on the part of our city's residents.

Surely there are many concerned citizens who are eager to read and assimilate whatever information your reporters are able to provide us on the progress of the Scientology trials and the current status of nationwide and local legal proceedings.

However, until your thought- and action-provoking editorial, many of us were guilty of being content to wait with passive expectation for someone else to comment. But I firmly believe that the time has come to put our convictions to work. In order to do this intelligently we need to be better informed (or re-informed) and more aware of the whole system of Scientology and how it works.

Why not re-televisize the City Commission hearings on Scientology that were aired live two years ago? Vision Cable of Pinellas brought more than twenty hours of testimony into our homes so we could become more informed. In addition to refreshing our memory of the facts brought to light by the ex-Scientologists who testified of their personal experiences with the sect, it will serve to enlighten and inform those who have become new residents of our city since the hearings.

MRS. J.M. ESSER  
Clearwater

Editor:

Regarding coverage of the Scientology court case:

Congratulations for the excellent work you are doing in publicizing the case so well.

I have managed to get some press cuttings of your newspaper and I am very interested in obtaining your complete coverage of all your articles on the subject that you are currently publishing.

We are fighting the church here in the United Kingdom and your articles are a big help to us. It really is in the public interest that any fraud be exposed.

R.J. LAWLEY  
East Grinstead  
West Sussex  
England

## On the Armstrong trial

Editor:

A former Church of Scientology employee revealed that her fears of being harassed by the church were completely unfounded, according to court transcripts recently released by church officials.

During her second day of cross-examination by Attorney Barry Litt of Los Angeles, Litt elicited an admission from Laurel Sullivan, 34, that she could not cite any factual instances to support her earlier allegations of harassment of herself by the church or any of its members. Additionally, according to the transcripts, she could not support her earlier testimony that others had been sued as a form of harassment for leaving the church.

Sullivan's testimony was sought by attorneys seeking to defend Gerald Armstrong, 37, a former church archivist who admits that he took thousands of pages of valuable historical material when he left his position in 1981. The church is suing Armstrong in Los Angeles Superior Court to have the documents returned.

Church attorney, Robert Harris of Los Angeles, confronted Sullivan with sworn testimony she had made in a prior court case that completely conflicted with her testimony in the Armstrong trial, regarding the alleged practice of "fair game" by the church. Sullivan stated that she knew of no policies or practices of the church that try to convince or prevent people from leaving active participation in Scientology or that encourage them to harass people. Sullivan stated, "if somebody just left (Scientology) and said 'I don't want anything more to do with it'... then I would sit down and talk with them."

Attorney Harris asked Sullivan if she did tell the truth in her prior testimony. Sullivan replied that she thought that she did.

According to church spokesman Sandy Block, the trial, involving a suit brought against Armstrong for taking the valuable documents of Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard, entrusted to the church, is expected to continue for as many as three more weeks.

RICHARD HAWORTH  
Church of Scientology  
Clearwater

## On the living will ruling

Editor:

Thank you for the editorial in the May 29 Sun, "Living Wills ruling lets us die with dignity."

Rep. Byron Combee's bill, "letting terminally ill patients reject extraordinary medical efforts to prolong their lives," which needs only Gov. Graham's signature to become law, is meaningful. The law lets loved ones know that there is now a chance to let doctors remove unnecessary life-prolonging implements so that their patients can die with dignity.

The loved ones who have been sitting at the bedsides of their patients and are becoming stoop-shouldered, haggard of face and dim of eye, can now begin to live again. These loved ones have known for a long time that their dear patients could not be brought back to life, but they have given their very lives in loving care, sometimes for years. They can now have a little respite.

This significant law is long overdue. My heart-felt congratulations to Rep. Byron Combee for being so sensitive to this important law.

RUTH W. SLEMP  
Clearwater

Your letters are needed and welcomed. Especially desired are letters that express an opinion briefly and in a forceful, well-organized manner. Short letters usually are read by more people than long ones. All letters must bear the writer's name (first and last name or first two initials and last name), address and telephone number where the writer can be reached. Thank you.