

5-8-85

Scientologists relieved of answering on tenets

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Members of the Church of Scientology who appear as defense witnesses in a fraud case against their church will not have to answer questions about basic tenets of their religion, a Portland judge ruled Tuesday.

Multnomah County Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer based his ruling on the constitutional right to religious freedom. "Religious beliefs are of no concern to the court," he said. "Basic tenets of religion will not be made the subject of examination."

The ruling was a victory for the defense because lawyers against the church had planned to question Scientologists about religious beliefs in high levels of the church's complicated course structure.

Although church members cannot be questioned about basic religious tenets, three Scientologists, including a former professional football player, testified Tuesday about benefits they feel they have received as a result of their Scientology training.

Londer ruled earlier that testimonials about the benefits of Scientology would be relevant to the case after several former church members testified during the plaintiff's case that they felt they gained little or nothing from Scientology courses and books.

Robert B. Adams, who said he played tight end for the Pittsburgh Steelers and New England Patriots between 1969 and 1977, said his involvement in Scientology helped him as a player and as a businessman after he retired from the game.

He said he felt Scientology study increased his concentration as a pass receiver. "I was able to look at the ball and follow it right into my hands," he said.

Adams said Scientology helped him become aware of himself as a spiritual being, as did Dr. Mary J. Pagel, an Aloha physician. Pagel said both she and her husband, who she said have spent an estimated \$100,000 taking Scientology courses, believe their lives are better as a result of Scientology.

"I wouldn't change anything I have

done," she said when she was asked about her expenditures on Scientology.

Jill M. Crandell, a former staff member of the Portland Scientology mission, said she found Scientology helped her resolve problems in her personal life by getting to the root of them and by learning about herself as a spiritual being.

"You feel like you are bigger than the problem, and then you can get over it," she said.

Crandell also testified she knew Julie Christofferson Titchbourne, the plaintiff in the case, during Titchbourne's involvement with Scientology in 1975 and 1976. She said Titchbourne came into the church's "ethics office" in January 1976 in a frightened state because her parents had made an unsuccessful attempt to restrain her for programming.

Titchbourne, who testified earlier that she was deprogrammed later in 1976, contends the church and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, defrauded her by making false representations about Scientology as a science, its ability to improve eyesight and personal intelligence and its benefits in helping students learn to communicate and study.

Crandell testified she was not aware during in her years with the church of any instance in which a Scientologist was told to "disconnect" (end all relations) with family members who opposed a person's involvement with Scientology.

Titchbourne testified earlier she was told by a Scientology ethics officer she would have to overcome her mother's objections to Scientology or else break her ties with her mother. "As far as disconnection goes, it never occurred with me," Crandell said.

Crandell said she now works as an office manager in a chiropractic clinic where two of the three chiropractors are Scientologists. She also said her husband is executive director of the Portland Scientology mission.

The trial is nearing the end of its second month and is expected to run about another month before it goes to the jury.

THE OREGONIAN, SATURDAY, MAY 1985

Scientology case testimony ends

Testimony in a civil fraud trial against the Church of Scientology and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, ended Thursday in Multnomah County Circuit Court near the end of the ninth week of trial.

Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer scheduled closing arguments to begin Monday and indicated that they would last at least two days.

Londer and attorneys in the case plan to spend most of Friday discussing legal instructions to be delivered to the jury at the close of arguments. The jury also is expected to receive Friday the last of several hundred exhibits received into evidence during the trial.

Julie Christofferson Titchbourne, a Portlander who was involved in Scientology for nine months during 1975 and 1976, seeks the return of \$3,000 she paid to the church plus up to \$42 million in punitive damages. She contends that the church de-

frauded her in many representations that were made when she joined the organization. She also has testified that she was a subject of retaliation by the church after she requested a refund of her money in 1976.

The defense contends that Scientology is a religion and that its members

Closing arguments are likely to last at least two days.

have a constitutional right to practice it.

In rebuttal testimony Thursday, Titchbourne's attorney, ~~Gregory D.~~ McMurry questioned June Conway, a

Portland nurse, who said her eldest son, Leonard Conway, suffered serious mental problems after becoming involved in Scientology in 1978.

She said her son "lost touch with reality" and had been treated for psychiatric problems in hospitals and treatment centers for several years since. Conway described her son as a "talented young man" who graduated from high school with honors in 1977 but who now has difficulty functioning in society.

McMurry presented her testimony in response to Scientologists who testified that they benefited greatly from their involvement with Scientology training and materials.

Titchbourne won a \$2 million judgment against the church in 1979, but that verdict was reversed by the Oregon Court of Appeals, which sent the case back for retrial.

5-10-85