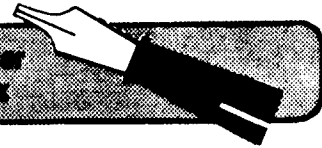


Dear SirWrite to The Editor, The East Grinstead Courier
29 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex

Scientology defended

I HAVE several points to make about your last week's coverage of the Church of Scientology.

1. On your front page, you used photographs taken by two men who at the recent May Fayre heckled and abused the two female Scientologists who were giving their help to get the street signs cleaned. In fact these photographs were taken while the heckling was going on. Thus these men have been "rewarded" for their hooligan antics.

2. You rely almost exclusively for your feature on allegations made by former members of the Church. Naturally, if one has left an organisation after a long involvement, one will explain one's departure in terms which are critical of that organisation. It is easily done and absolves one from any personal responsibility.

Does that mean, however, that the only bona fide organisation, the only bona fide religion, is one which has no ex-members? Where would that leave the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church, the Hindu community, the Islamic community, the Jewish community? I can imagine their reaction if you were to publish a front page article "explaining" their religion solely by using quotations from a disillusioned ex-member!

What matters in evaluating a religious philosophy is not whether it has ex-members but whether it is growing as a whole, and providing people with a fulfilling way of life. Are their religious needs being met fully and are these people of greater use to themselves and others as a result? By these criteria Scientology passes with flying colours.

3. You use a tatty journalistic trick of quoting parts of Mr Hubbard's writings without giving them their full context. For example, you quote from carefully selected parts of a policy document written by Mr Hubbard on the subject of finance.

This document, read in its entirety, means something completely different from what you imply. The entire document, however, is merely one of several hundred policy documents contained in a single large volume which sets out how the financial affairs of the Church are to be conducted. This volume, in turn, is only one of nine volumes in which general administrative policies are discussed by Mr Hubbard in considerable depth. These volumes, in their turn, are distinct from the 12 large volumes in which general administrative policies are discussed by Mr Hubbard in considerable depth. These volumes, in their turn, are distinct from the 12 large volumes, the 600 books and titles, the 3,000 taped lectures, and the numerous videos and films in which Mr Hubbard sets out the religious and philosophical tenets of Scientology. And these religious works are completely separate from Mr Hubbard's secular writings, which include, by the way, not only his vast output of fiction but also the "Way to Happiness" booklet.

Thus your out-of-context

quotes completely distort the picture, which is unfair on your readers — far more unfair than it is on Scientologists who read the article. Most of your readers have no way of realizing that they are not being told the truth.

You will no doubt reply that my comments were also reported in the article. This is true, but it misses the point. Scientology is not about a response to a newspaper interview.

It is easy to phone up or write in to a newspaper and make an allegation — anybody can do that. It is far harder for a man to develop a religious philosophy that will benefit millions of people, and to establish an organisation that will make that philosophy available to those people even after he has passed away. To build that organisation up in the face of vicious and unprincipled attacks from vested interests, while continuing to research and further refine the philosophy, is another gigantic step.

It is because Mr Hubbard did those things that people admire him.

JOHN FOX
Community Affairs Director
Church of Scientology,
Saint Hill Manor.

'Leave us alone'

I WAS upset to read your story about the church of Scientology.

I feel my circumstances were used as a vehicle to mount a slur campaign against my church.

This has been a very distressing time for my family with national and local press calling at my home day and night. It has been difficult enough without an attack on my religion as well.

I would like to mention that the church of Scientology is involved in many good works around the world. These include programs for drug rehabilitation and campaigns against psychiatric abuse.

I feel people should be left alone to practice whatever religion they choose.

A. HAYMAN
The Ferns,
Woodshill Lane,
Ashurst Wood.

Editors note: We called at Mr Hayman's home once — during the early evening.