

Promise the moon; then ask for money

By Julie Edgar
Staff Writer

"They promise you the moon — that's what's wrong with it," says an ex-staff member of the Church of Scientology.

Despite her disillusionment, "Nanu," as she prefers to be called, maintains that it is the organization that is destructive, not the principles it espouses.

"The technology does work; the church doesn't," she states. "They're so into money, money, money."

When she and her husband, a painting contractor, left the church in 1984 — primarily because of disagreements with other staff members — Nanu went into private practice as a metapsychologist, which she says "restores the original meaning of psychology as the study of the soul or spirit."

Her association with the church, however, did not end when she left.

Nanu claims that for several months after her departure, church members harassed her and church attorneys deluged her with letters accusing her of trademark infringement.

Although she couldn't pro-

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**—Nanu
former church
member**

duce the letters, Nanu, 32, says they warned her against using the Dianetics name and distributing church literature.

Over a two-month period, she adds, church staff members kept vigils on her lawn. When she would enter or exit the house they would say she couldn't use Dianetics technology, telling her it was a "business secret."

Nanu admits she uses some of the "processes" she learned at the church in her own metapsychology practice, but calls them more "streamlined" and says she's not into evaluating patients.

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When she counsels a patient, she also uses the E-Meter, a device used in Scientology auditing that is similar to a lie detector.

Nanu names current staff member Debbie Blair as one of those who harassed her after her departure from the church, an allegation Blair calls "ridiculous."

"We have no reason to get somebody back here who doesn't want to be here," Blair says, adding that if a private person were advertising Dianetics it would be "trademark infringement."

But Nanu claims church members also regularly intercepted her mail, including letters she posted to the Advanced Ability Center (AAC) in California, an organization founded by another ex-Scientologist named David Mayo.

Mayo was a high-ranking staff member at the Church of Scientology who left the church in 1983 to form the AAC, an group that "researches metapsychology" and "updates" the technology of Scientology, Nanu says.

In an AAC pamphlet written in response to a 1985 lawsuit in which the Church of Scientology accuses the center of racketeering and breach of contract, Mayo refers to a threat involving the denial of a church service to its members:

"That extraordinary threat has been used . . . as a whip to keep parishioners in line. It was the final

control mechanism, when heavy ethics and heavy fines failed to suppress disagreement with exorbitant prices, ultra heavy commercialism and mismanagement of that which once began as a religious philosophy."

Nanu, who is a member of the AAC, describes her alienation from the Church of Scientology in similar terms.

She estimates that she and her husband spent \$25,000 on auditing services at the church — money she wishes she could get back.

In addition, Nanu claims she was subjected to a variety of indignities during her five-year affiliation with the church.

"They'll send you to the ethics

officer for the smallest things. I asked them once to put on the heat at the Detroit org (another word for the church) and they sent me to the ethics officer."

"They make you dependent on them. If you're not, they throw you out," she says.

She says she was "hoodwinked" into joining as a staff member when she walked into a smaller Scientology mission in Southfield in 1979.

Nanu stayed on, eventually marrying another staff person, until the woman who ran the mission "went bananas."

Nanu and her husband went to the Detroit branch, remaining there until she heard that the

church was "throwing David Mayo out and accusing him of crazy things."

Since then, Nanu, the mother of two daughters, has remained close to the metapsychology movement. Her private practice, she says, is flourishing.

Aside from her grievances about other staff members and the way in which the church goes about making money, Nanu says there's one aspect of Scientology she could not abide:

"What bothers me is that they say they're a religion, but they don't touch God or a supreme being . . . Scientology promises you can become God, but they never talk about God."

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