

St. Petersburg Times

Florida's Best Newspaper

2 TIMES ■ WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1993 CT

LETTERS

Criticism of Scientology is 'old worn-out record'

Editor: In order to build a better future it often is necessary to let go of the past.

I am referring to the Nov. 17 letter on Scientology by Gabe Cazares, which sounded much like a record stuck in the same groove for far too long.

Mr. Cazares may disagree with the IRS' exemption ruling on the Church of Scientology, however, that decision followed the most thorough and demanding investigation ever conducted of any exempt organization. The result: The IRS granted the church full tax-exempt status as a bona fide religious organization.

Cazares praises city officials for their decision to continue fighting a losing battle and press forward with an appeal of the Charitable Solicitations Ordinance, but does not mention that the city now faces having to pay several hundred thousand dollars to cover the church's legal costs and fees in the case, not to mention the companion suit filed by seven national religious organizations and churches.

The truth is that the Church of Scientology has been part of the Clearwater community for 18 years. Thousands of Scientologists live and work in the area. They raise their families here, send their children to the local schools and you may find many active in the community as members of the Chamber of Commerce and our local merchants' association and in community outreach programs.

An old worn-out record can play in the same groove for only so long, and even neighbors who think the worst of each other mend fences eventually.

All of us are part of this community and can work together to

and a brighter Clearwater.

Richard Haworth
Clearwater