

RELIGION

Scientists focus talks on spiritual freedom

profiles in faith

BOB BARBER

The Church of Scientology began with the publication in 1950 of Hubbard's "Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health." "Dianetics," coined by Hubbard, comes from the Greek "dia," meaning through, and "nous," soul. So, Hubbard said, Dianetics means "what the soul is doing to the body through the mind."

From the latin "scio," meaning "know" and the Greek "logos," which means "the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and made known," Scientology is knowing about knowing.

Allison Gonzalez, 41, one of five ministers at the local Scientology church, is senior case supervisor, overseeing the proper application of

spiritual technology. She has been involved with the local group since 1975, when it was still a mission. In 1980, the mission became a full-fledged Church of Scientology.

"I was always interested in the spiritual aspect of man, and Scientology aligned with what I wanted to do," she said. "It gave me answers on how I could

improve my spiritual abilities, and gave me the tools to increase those spiritual abilities now."

Other local ministers are Robert Radsliff, Donna Matlovsky and Bob Bulat. Ministers conduct church services and perform weddings, funerals and naming ceremonies for the newborn.

Among statements in the Church of Scientology Creed are:

"That all men of whatever race, color or creed were created with equal rights; that all men have inalienable rights to their own practices and their performances, and to their own lives, their own sanity and their own defense.

"That all men have inalienable rights to think freely, to talk freely, to write freely their own opinions and to counter or utter or write upon the opinions of others; that the study of the mind and the healing of mentally caused ills should not be alienated from religion or condoned in non-religious fields."

Holzinger, born Oct. 23, 1957, in New Jersey, graduated from Miramonte High School in Orinda, Calif.,

in 1975, and attended Diablo Valley Junior College. He joined the Church of Scientology in 1975, and in 1978 began ministerial training at the church Mission of the East Bay in Oakland.

In May 1978, he committed himself to a lifetime of application of Scientology, and began working at the American Saint Hill Organization (ASHO) in Los Angeles, an advanced-level Scientology auditor-training organization.

He spent 18 months at a Scientology retreat in Florida, and also completed Hubbard Professional Course Supervisor training. Returning to ASHO, he was course supervisor for ASHO's Academy and the Saint Hill Special Briefing Course, from 1980 to 1983. He worked with church lawyers in the Office of Special Affairs, on matters including litigation and trademarks.

Holzinger married co-worker Kay Gilmore on May 22, 1987, and they came to Santa Barbara in the spring of 1988. They have two sons, Daniel, 7, and Kevin, 5. Kay Holzinger is director of training at the Santa Barbara church and works at home assisting an author of religious publications.

The minister said he devotes considerable attention to community outreach activities, including the church's Adopt-A-Highway cleanup program, which concentrates on parts of Los Positas Road and Cliff Drive. He is current president of the board of the Santa Barbara Old Town Merchant's Association.

The Church of Scientology grew from one church in Los Angeles to 1,039 churches, missions and organizations in 71 countries in 1992. Statistics indicate that 500,000 new individuals were involved in auditing services and course services for the first time last year.

The Scientology and Dianetics works of Hubbard, who died in 1986, include 18 volumes of technical writings, 12 volumes of administrative material, and more than 3,000 taped lectures on various aspects of Scientology. A well-known author of fiction, he also wrote on education, drug rehabilitation, morals art and many other areas.

Bob Barber is a Santa Barbara freelance writer.

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Since its founding in 1954, the Church of Scientology has sparked some fear, mistrust and controversy. This doesn't surprise the Rev. Lee Holzinger, 38, minister of the Santa Barbara Church of Scientology.

"We are different from other churches in many ways," he said. "How could anything come along that is so fundamentally important to life and society and not rouse controversy?"

The church was involved in a 40-year battle with the Internal Revenue Service that ended Oct. 1, 1993 when the IRS issued letters granting tax-exempt status to the Church of Scientology International and 150 related churches and groups.

Scientists have targeted the use of Ritalin, a drug used to calm children diagnosed as hyperactive, and Prozac, an anti-depressant drug.

Scientology, developed by L. Ron Hubbard, "provides exact principles and a practical technology for improving spiritual awareness, self-confidence, intelligence and ability," Holzinger explained. He said the goal is "to free people from self-imposed imprisonment and move them over the bridge to spiritual freedom."

Hubbard wrote that a person is "neither a body nor a mind, but a spiritual being, independent of both, which uses the mind and the body to interact with the physical universe."

The local church has, since 1985, been located in a three-story building at 524 State St. Earlier, the refurbished structure housed a luxury hotel called the Park Place.

The Santa Barbara Church of Scientology has five full-time and seven part-time employees. The everyday focus is on two basic activities — auditing, (spiritual counseling) and training, which "free people and help them reach a higher state of existence," Holzinger says. The auditing and training are the church's religious services, the minister said.

Approximately 300 persons in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura counties participate in activities, according to Holzinger.

Some 75 area individuals are auditors (counselors).

Dianetics concentrates on the "reactive mind," which reacts when a person is confronted with similar stimuli.

In auditing, a trained counselor asks questions designed to bring out memory of a trauma while the client is connected to an E-meter, a device which detects a change in electrical charge, indicating that the energy of an old trauma has been released.

"We are not a Christian religion, and the church has no dogma concerning God. Although Scientology affirms the existence of a supreme being, its practice does not include the worship of such," the minister said.

About Jesus: "Scientists hold the Bible as a holy work and have no argument with the Christian belief that Jesus Christ was the savior of mankind and the son of God."

"Heaven and hell are not part of Scientology beliefs, and not part of my life," the minister said. The church "has no specific views on abortion and homosexuality." Holzinger believes in the concept of past lives, but not in the reincarnation theory that says one can be born again in different life forms.

Does Scientology have scriptures? "Yes. The writings and recorded spoken words of L. Ron Hubbard on the subject of Scientology collectively constitute the scriptures."



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The Rev. Lee Holzinger and the Rev. Allison Gonzalez minister at the Santa Barbara Church of Scientology.