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Ex-Scientologist Tells of 'Fear' Atmosphere

McMaster Accuses Hubbard of Fostering Spiritual Tyranny Within Organization

BY JOHN DART
Times Religion Writer

One year ago an articulate but soft-spoken man named John McMaster was extolling the virtues of Scientology and L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of the worldwide, quasi-scientific "religion."

Appearing on television talk shows and giving lectures as Hubbard's personal representative, McMaster was eminently qualified. He was the first person to achieve Scientology's state of "clear," which purportedly gives a person full control of his mental processes.

Now McMaster describes the Church of Scientology and other organizations run by Hubbard as engaging in "spiritual tyranny."

"Ron was always busy getting everybody looking beyond the mulberry bush for a nonexistent enemy," said McMaster in a recent interview.

Discipline Group

The 43-year-old South African was in Los Angeles for the first time since he resigned last November from Scientology's Sea Organization.

Scientology was an outgrowth of a book, "Dianetics," published in 1950 and written by Hubbard, a onetime science-fiction writer and Hollywood screenwriter.

For more than a decade, working from a yacht in the Mediterranean, Hubbard has elaborated on psychoanalytic techniques with the "E-meter," similar to a lie detector, and the courses offering "the road to total freedom."

The Scientology organizations have had run-ins with the Food and Drug Administration and Inter-

nal revenue Service in this country and with some government agencies in other countries. However, Scientology officials claim that they have been falsely misrepresented by some disenchanted followers, government officials and the news media.

London Suburb

World headquarters is in a London suburb, but a large following exists in the United States, particularly in Los Angeles where the American Saint Hill Organization, 2723 W. Temple St., represents the only advance-course center for Scientology in this country.

McMaster said he resigned because of "unnecessary harshness" in the organization "that kept people in a kind of electronic jitter." He said he also opposed his reassignment from a public relations

mission to the United Nations to service aboard one of the Sea Organization's several yachts.

McMaster, still convinced of the value of Scientology's teachings and analytic techniques, recently gave some lectures in Phoenix and the Los Angeles area on behalf of a Dianology organization in Westwood run by Jack Horner, another ex-Scientologist.

Lecture sponsors in Phoenix, McMaster said, were told by Scientologists that "a different spirit was occupying the body of John McMaster." McMaster said he had heard that explanation used be-

fore in Scientology to explain the changed attitudes of some persons.

A spokesman from the Church of Scientology, 2005 W. 9th St., denied that the church has said that of McMaster.

Regarding the circumstances of McMaster's resignation, the spokesman said reports had been made by Scientologists last year that McMaster was "holding the founder in contempt in public," was becoming money-motivated and was accused of conduct unbecoming a minister of the church.

"We started making every attempt to get him to undergo spiritual rehabili-

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tation, but these attempts were thwarted," said the spokesman. A telegram was sent recalling McMaster for rest and spiritual counseling, but no reply was made, said the official.

Later Expelled

"At that point he left and went into hiding and tendered his resignation, but not through proper authorities," said the spokesman. For McMaster's "betrayal of trust" and other acts, he was later expelled

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from the church, the spokesman said.

McMaster left New York by freighter to his home in Durban, South Africa, but only after expressing the hope for some rapprochement with Hubbard.

While in Durban McMaster said he was approached by Scientologists who offered to give him some "Class A auditing (interviewing)" free of charge. "I accepted it as a peace offering but I asked my mother to come with me," said McMaster.

"It wasn't auditing. It was a security check—they were trying to find some crime I'd committed," McMaster said.

'Closed Book'

"At this stage, they left me and I realized that Scientology was a closed book for me," he said.

McMaster said he has not denounced the techniques of Dianetics and Scientology "and never will." But the organization in charge has "built a structure and called it God," he said.

McMaster in February, 1966 became the first of thousands to achieve "clear" status.

If McMaster disagreed with the practices in Scientology, why didn't he quit sooner? "I felt that as long as I could get out and deliver the sane truth, this would show that all this ethics stuff (internal security) was perfectly unnecessary," he said. "It didn't work," he said.