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Scientologists Making Impact on West Side

Church Largest and Fastest Growing of Its Kind in the Area

BY JOHN H. HALL

Despite a 10-year running battle with the Food and Drug Administration and the American Medical Assn., Scientology appears to have finally arrived on the West Side.

Aided by a 1971 federal district court decision, the Church of Scientology is not only a recognized religious science but the largest and fastest-growing pandominational church in this area.

And the greatest concentration of its members may well be here.

There are 75,000 Scientologists in Los Angeles, according to the Rev. Glenn A. Malkin, executive minister of the Church of Scientology of California, and the majority live on the West Side.

The Rev. Peter Crundall, executive director of the Westwood mission, says, "It's really amazing. I've been in many parts of the world, and the West L.A. area has the largest number of self-improvement-oriented people I've ever come across. A lot of people stop in just to see what it's all about."

Mr. Crundall, a native of Australia who has been in Scientology for 18 years, has been in charge of the Westwood center for the last year and a half. His wife, Lisa, is also employed there as director of public relations.

Worldwide, according to a 1972 census, Scientology has 5.5 million followers, and membership is doubling annually, Mr. Malkin said. "This is quite an accomplishment for a church that was established barely 20 years ago," he said.

Developer of Philosophy

Scientology is the creation of L. Ron Hubbard, a former Navy officer and former engineer who developed the philosophy and techniques largely from his study of Eastern religions.

Dianetics, introduced by Hubbard in 1950, is the basic conception of the theory which grew into Scientology. It is based on the premise that man is good and perfectable, and Dianetics is still operable today despite many advances in the church's technology. According to Mr. Malkin, ministers in other religions often use Dianetics counseling techniques to deal with troubled parishioners.

Dianetics advanced the theory that virtually all of man's ailments, psychological and physical, everything from cancer to the common cold, are psychosomatic in nature. The causes of these ills are "engrams," charged traces left in the mind by experiences involving pain and partial unconsciousness — experiences stemming as far back as the moment of conception.

Dianetic therapy, called auditing, searches out these hidden engrams,

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removes the charge and frees the individual from their influence.

Scientology differs from Dianetics in much the same way that religion differs from medicine. Scientology views man as primarily a spiritual being who has occupied many bodies in different times. Auditing in Scientology, therefore, may carry the individual back along his "time track" to different lifetimes to seek out the cause of his current problems.

Via the auditing process, a Scientologist progresses upward through designated levels, the highest of which brings the individual to an acute awareness of God.

From its beginning, Scientology enjoyed immediate success, particularly in this area. However, it was always the subject of controversy and contradiction. Some members of the medical profession, for example, openly endorsed its techniques, while others ridiculed it and warned of possible dangers.

Orthodox religious bodies were largely quiet on the subject during those early years.

Then, in 1963, federal marshals representing the Food and Drug Administration raided the Washington D.C. headquarters of the Founding Church of Scientology and seized 100 electronic "confessional aids,"

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called E-meters, and two tons of printed material.

Outraged Scientologists shouted charges of religious persecution and invasion of a church sanctuary and several traditional churches sided with Scientology in protesting the violation of constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom.

Much of the misunderstanding involved the E-meter, according to Mr. Crundall. "The FDA falsely stated that the meter was a curative device," Mr. Crundall said. "This simply isn't true and never was. The E-meter is a guide, nothing more, and it is used as such. It is a useful tool, similar to the polygraph, that saves a lot of time in the counseling process."

Finally, on July 30, 1971, Federal District Judge G. A. Gessell ruled that Scientology is a religion and is entitled to full protection under the First Amendment.

The FDA was ordered to return the E-meters and other materials and the Church of Scientology was officially recognized.

Today, Scientology is firmly established, widely accepted and it is regaining its previously tarnished respectability.

During the troubled years, Scientology was very suspicious and defensive. "This was only natural," Mr. Crundall said, "because of the presence of direct government persecution."

"We're not worried about violation of the church anymore. There's no trouble with the government now so we can be completely open. Dissidence hasn't existed in the church for years," Mr. Crundall said.

Examples of this new respectability and openness may be noted from the numerous endorsements from celebrities and from the highly successful social programs recently launched by Scientology.

San Francisco 49er quarterback John Brodie and actress Karen Black, for example, have praised Scientology. And, whether or not he knows it, Jonathan Livingston Seagull is a practicing Scientologist. Scientology bookshops feature Richard Bach's best-selling book and, although Bach is not known to be a Scientologist, "the book epitomizes, symbolizes beautifully what Scientology is all about," Mrs. Crundall said.

The Westwood center, in addition to its primary duties of offering counseling services and self-improvement courses to UCLA students and area residents, also acts as a referral agency for Scientology's two principal social programs, Narconon and the Committee on Public Health and Safety.



ELECTROMETER—The Rev. Peter Crundall, executive director of Westwood mission of the Church of Scientology, operates machine as "confessional aid."

Times photo

State Prison

Narconon, a drug rehabilitation program initiated at Arizona State Prison in 1966, has recently been praised by the governor of Hawaii, and it has received awards in both Hawaii and Arizona. Mark Jones, national director of Narconon, recently received the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Intra-Science Foundation at USC.

The program claims an 87% success record in California, 75% throughout the United States. At the Los Angeles Narconon center, 150 drug users have been successfully rehabilitated, and 500 addicts are currently undergoing treatment in prisons across the nation. According to Mr. Malkin, local police departments are very much in favor of Narconon.

The Committee on Public Health and Safety, working out of Westwood and elsewhere, handles complaints from people who have failed to get proper health care and offers qualified legal advice on health care. Described as highly successful, the program considers health care from a consumer point of view, according to Mr. Malkin.

He also stresses that Scientology is not opposed to standard medicine. "On the contrary," he said, "Scientology is the largest referral agency to M.D.s in this country."

Opposition Noted

Scientology is, however, very much against involuntary institutional psychiatry and psychosurgery. "We will be very happy if Governor Reagan closes down the institutions," Mr. Malkin said, "and we are pleased to see that psychosurgery is on the decline."

And Scientology is opposed to the American Medical Assn. "We aren't alone in that," Mr. Crundall said. "A Committee on Public Health and Safety survey reveals that only 3% of the medical students at UCLA and USC plan to join the AMA."

Such programs as those are indications of Scientology's future emphasis, according to Mr. Malkin. "There will be a lot of action now on social programs and community projects," he said, indicating that Scientology has long awaited the opportunity to open itself up to the public.

Basic Abilities

"We're here to improve people's basic abilities and awareness, and we are successful. We stress application, and an applicant won't be accepted if he doesn't want to apply him-

self. People are here on their own determinism, and they are winning," indicating a large stack of personal testimonials from former students at the Westwood center.

"My greatest problem," he insists, "is toning down my own enthusiasm about Scientology so that people don't think I'm a fanatic."

There is a definitely cheerful aura surrounding Scientologists, a noticeable confidence that exudes from them—a quality that has been commented upon by numerous writers and interviewers. When asked about it, Mrs. Crundall smiled and summed up the answer in one sentence:

"Scientologists look you in the eye."