

# Shocked officials say they'll fight

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Sun Staff Writer

CLEARWATER—Church of Scientology documents released Thursday that outline the Scientologists' intention to control or "take over" the city left local government officials wondering Friday how the group planned to reach that goal—and what it should do about it.

Mayor Charles LeCher and City Manager Anthony Shoemaker agreed the city's first move is to seek copies of the documents released Thursday in Washington, D.C., by U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey.

"We have to find out what the documents say to decide if, as a city, we should take any action," LeCher said.

Shoemaker said he wants more facts before drawing any conclusions about the Scientologists' documented plan to maneuver the media and government officials.

But he said he was "shocked" to learn of the Scientologists' expressed desire to gain control of "key points" in the city, such as government agencies and media outlets.

LeCher pointed to the potential impact the Scientologists could have on local elections.

"They could control the city commission. They have 1,600 people here, and that many people could swing an election," he said.

LeCher and Jim Parker, executive director of the Greater Clearwater Chamber of Commerce, said they didn't think the Scientology presence had hurt the city's vital tourist industry.

But LeCher, concerned about the future, cautioned: "Down the road, I hope when people think of Clearwater, they don't think of Scientology.

"We're too small. We can't absorb all of them."

Referring to former mayor Gabriel Cazares, the city's most vocal spokesman of anti-Scientology sentiment, Shoemaker said Cazares "was right. He may prove to be a very farsighted man."

In late 1975, after the Scientologists moved into the city as the United Churches of Florida, Cazares hounded members for information on the "master plan" for their Clearwater operation.

Without knowing that United Churches was the Church of Scientology, Cazares criticized the organization for buying property under a front name and demanded that it "reveal" its master plan.

Friday, the former mayor said he wasn't surprised by the revelations coming out of Washington.

"My request for a master plan finally came out, from

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## React

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Judge Richey," Cazares said. "This is only the tip of the iceberg. If the real story is ever known, it will boggle the mind. This cult poses the clearest threat to American society and institutions that exists."

Cazares used the revelations to again criticize elected officials, both local and national, who haven't been as outspoken against the Scientologists as he.

U.S. Reps. Richard Kelly, R-New Port Richey, and C.W. Bill Young, R-St. Petersburg, came under special attack from Cazares for not conducting a congressional investigation into the Scientologists.

Commissioner Richard Tenney echoed Cazares's remarks. The commissioner traveled to the nation's capital in March, trying to solicit interest in such an inquiry.

Tenney said the recent revelations will prompt him to again ask for a congressional investigation, in addition to urging local probes by federal officials.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Raymond Banoun, chief prosecutor in the federal court case that led to the release of the documents Thursday, soon might move the Justice Department investigation to Clearwater, Tenney said.

Kelly and Young also weren't surprised by disclosures that the Scientologists sought to gain control of this city of 90,000, nor by the revelations that the group kept files on them.

"I have assumed for a long time that they did" keep such files, Young said from Washington in a telephone interview.

He and Kelly agreed that reports of Scientology-held dossiers on their activities make "little difference" to them.

Young, a member of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, said he had asked for a briefing on the

documents next week.

The senior congressman said he first contacted the FBI about the Scientologists soon after the group bought property in Clearwater, and he said he was asked not to turn the sect's arrival here into a political issue.

At that time, he said, the FBI was investigating the Scientologists and feared a national-level political issue would hinder that inquiry.

"It may be that now, the government authorities will decide there is no reason for political authorities" not to get involved in the Scientology issue, he said.

Kelly said he hasn't yet seen any of the documents seized by the FBI in July 1977 and would want to review the information before promoting an investigation.

But Cazares came down on the congressmen, the press and city and county officials for "looking the other way," allowing the Scientologists to operate their Clearwater center free from criticism.

LeCher said the Scientologists have not intimidated or harassed him or any other commissioners. He said the group did tell him, however, that its American Citizens for Honesty in Government arm planned to investigate city officials.

"But they wouldn't say how," LeCher said. "I asked them how they would conduct such an investigation, and they wouldn't tell me."

"Everything seems to be falling into place. It annoys the hell out of me."

Scientology spokesman Nancy Reitze denied that the organization ever investigated city officials.

The group did survey city residents, asking them whether they believe government to be corrupt. The overwhelming majority replied yes, she said.