

# For some, Scientology delivers the answers

## Whereas other religions may hold out promise of salvation, founder Hubbard offers immediate solution to problems

**J**oann Harvey paused when asked why she took her life's savings of \$45,000 and turned it over to the Sacramento Church of Scientology.

"That's an interesting question," she said with a sigh. "Being in Scientology gave me an anchor point. The philosophy works. I know it."

Harvey was nearing middle age and undergoing marital problems when she discovered Scientology.

Sacramento businessman Don Pearson, on the other hand, was just out of college and Catholic. But he said Catholicism didn't provide the kinds of answers he was seeking.

Scientology, said Pearson, now 35, has delivered answers to questions most all religions have addressed over the eons: how to improve both yourself and the world.

"The bottom line is to better the world," said Pearson over the chatter of breakfast conversation at Pearson's Natural Eatery, the I Street restaurant he and his wife, DeLores, own.

Pearson said he was searching to "under-

stand myself" after he earned his masters degree in psychology.

"I used Scientology to develop my potential. I have never found any method that addresses you like an onion — it peels away layers to the core — where you can find your potential. Dianetics enables that. When I choose an expert, I choose one who gets results. Hubbard's techniques get results."

Unlike Pearson, Harvey, 40, no longer believes in the leaders of Scientology.

Harvey said she acquired the money spent for Scientology courses from the sale of a home on 12 acres of land when she and her husband were divorced. She and her children now rent.

"I took a lot of courses, like one called 'happiness rundown.' I really enjoyed that one. And when I took the 'purification rundown' ... I was able to get off my asthma medication for one year.

"I watched them closely before I gave them my money. I saw a bunch of dedicated underpaid people who were interested in helping people with their problems. But I think the people who are running it now are not good.

"My life was not at a pretty point when I

got into Scientology. It would be hypocritical of me to say I did not get any benefit. I spent all my money on the church. That's a point I sometimes feel bad about. But you can't cry over spilled milk."

The road to Scientology's benefits for Harvey was very different than the route others follow in older, more traditional religions, such as Catholicism.

Whereas other religions might promise salvation in another life, Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard offers an immediate solution to one's problems. Some members believe in God, some do not. Scientology is essentially a form of therapy.

Therapy is accomplished through a process known as "auditing" in which one person confesses his past to another and purges troubling experiences. Some of these negative feelings are known as "engrams."

Hubbard says that a person can't reach his full potential because of these engrams.

To measure engrams during the auditing process, little tin cans are held in the hands that are wired to an "E-meter," which registers electric charges from the body. The E-meter measures emotional responses for the auditor — and is akin to a lie detector.

The auditor delves into past lives, sometimes probing former lives in other galaxies. When a person goes through the auditing process, the ultimate goal is to become "clear." This is a state free of any negative feelings, where nothing from the past can ever affect that person again. "Clears" do not get colds, and being clear raises one's

IQ, says Hubbard

Hubbard's stated goal is to clear planet Earth. There are 30,000 Clears on Earth, said church spokeswoman Kathy Gorgon.

Some Scientologists believe people have an immortal spirit, called a "Thetan," the Greek word for "yourself." Those who progress above the clear state are known as "operating Thetans," or OTs.

OTs are heroes of a long-lost intergalactic civilization who were then banished to planet Earth where they waited until Hubbard came along to restore them to their rightful place in the Galactic Confederation.

A course description for OT level 3 in a brochure offered at the church's school in Clearwater, Fla., is described as follows:

"Revealed here is the final secret of the catastrophe that has laid waste to this sector of the galaxy for millions of years... In 1967, Ron resolved this secret and mapped the precise route through the wall of fire, the first person in millions of years to do so."

Cost of this course in January: \$9,023. Each month that price is increased by 5 percent, according to the church.

In the mid 1970s, the cost of auditing was about \$40 an hour. A member of the Sacramento church said the current charge for auditing is \$307.

"I spent about as much money on Scientology as I did on graduate school," said Pearson. That, he said, comes out to about \$15,000. "From my viewpoint, it was a good investment."

Auditing has extremely practical applica-

tions, said Pearson, who is at level 5 on the "OT" scale. "He (the auditor) never gives an opinion." This allows a person to open and unload all his bad thoughts, he said. The person's innermost thoughts are put into "confessional formularies."

Pearson said he hasn't studied details of the church's controversial management and the church's past covert activities. He said he can't comment about such things.

"It bothers me what the CIA does," he said. "It bothers me what Reagan does. I don't get the inside scoop on those things. The church is evolving. There hasn't been a church that hasn't evolved. I'm not saying it hasn't made mistakes. I see that it corrects its mistakes."

Pearson says he dislikes the media for doing negative stories about Scientology. He says such negative stories discourage people from looking at the church's good points.

The negative image associated with Scientology has hurt his business, he said, even though the church has nothing to do with his restaurant.

"Part of the problem is that when you get into Scientology, your credibility is destroyed. What one does for religion is unrelated to business.

"I wasn't naive and easily conned when I first heard about Scientology," Pearson added. "I didn't come in wide-eyed looking for a magic cure, and therefore I don't think I was disillusioned as some people are who may have been looking for something. It's a workable system that helps people."