

Scientology Is Fighting For Its Future in France

By Barry James

International Herald Tribune

PARIS — The Church of Scientology is battling charges in a Lyon courtroom that it is a manipulative and fraudulent cult that practices false medicine and hounded one of its followers to his death.

The case could derail the sect's campaign to be accepted as a mainstream faith in several European countries. Last week, it began beaming satellite television advertisements to Britain, its biggest recruiting ground in Europe, despite not being recognized there as a bona fide religion. The advertisements stress a single word: "trust."

At the heart of the Lyon case, involving 23 leaders of the cult, is the suicide of a young man who the prosecution contends took his life after the sect harassed him for money to continue a pseudopsychiatric course in "purification."

His was not the only such case, prosecutors say. The suicide of a young man who had turned over everything he owned to the self-styled church prompted a Time magazine cover story in 1991 that the sect has sought to suppress. Last month, a British inquest ruled that a man threw himself to his death off a bridge because of harassment by the group.

In 1988, Patrice Vic woke at 5 A.M., said it was "the only way" and threw himself off the balcony of his 12-story apartment. Prosecutors say the 31-year-old industrial designer had paid thousands of francs to the Lyon Dianetic Center, one of Scientology's subsidiaries, for the group's so-called purification process. Prosecutors said he was under pressure to take out a loan for 30,000 francs (\$6,000) to continue the courses. Mr. Vic joined the sect after receiving a brochure through the mail.

Left alone to bring up two children, his widow, Nelly, initiated a civil case against the sect. A tenacious investigating judge, Georges Fenech, has been trying for more than five years to bring the Scientology leaders to trial, in the face of what the French media has described as political pressure and a blizzard of protest messages from sect members around the world.

The French government is wary of cults and is expected to announce new measures to police them for financial and sexual abuses. After the apparent murder-suicide of 16 members of a doomsday cult in the French Alps in December, a parliamentary committee identified 173 sects in France, of which Scientology is one of the most prominent.

Two Scientology members were

found guilty in Toulon this month, and are awaiting sentencing, for threatening Jean-Marie Abgrall, a psychiatrist and expert witness in the Lyon trial.

Mr. Vic was one of tens of thousands of people in France who have submitted themselves to an "audit" by the sect, answering intimate questions while attached to a lie detector.

One of the group's teachings is that the evils of the world are caused by the disembodied souls of a lost race of beings who were transported to earth from a galactic federation 75 million years ago. The "audits" are supposed to help disciples "clear" the suppressed memories of these evil spirits.

The treatment also includes sauna baths accompanied by large quantities of vitamins to eliminate purported physical impurities. A key to the prosecution's case is a scientific report that attempts to establish a link between Mr. Vic's death and the treatment he received.

Jean-Jacques Mazier, a real estate investor and the former president of the church in Lyons, is charged with involuntary manslaughter, and others are accused of the illegal practice of medicine — for administering psychiatric and other treatment. Among the defendants is a Roman Catholic priest.

The case is expected to shed light on the complex financial dealings of a sect that also runs a global business empire, has its own cruise liner and sponsors its own race car in the race at Le Mans.

Judge Fenech followed a money trail that led to Scientology's European headquarters in Copenhagen and to banks in Luxembourg. Scientology has conducted a long media campaign against Interpol, which is based in Lyon, after it investigated international money movements connected with the sect.

Experts say the sect, which a British judge once described as "immoral, socially obnoxious, corrupt, sinister and dangerous," has managed to win converts in Europe because of its confident, assertive image and its association with such celebrities as John Travolta, Tom Cruise and Priscilla Presley. The sect's wealth and the extent of its membership are not known. Estimates speak of 40,000 members in France, 100,000 in Britain and 8 million in the world.

In trying to unravel the extent of Scientology's penetration into French life, researchers are stymied by the hydra-headed nature of the organization, which behind its public face conceals an arcane hierarchy and an impenetrable vocabulary of more than 11,000 words. The cult is based on the writings of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction writer who died in 1986.

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KIRK MCKOY / Los Angeles Times

Pianist-composer Chick Corea says creativity is something "that will flower if given a receptive environment."

Straight, No Chaser

By DON HECKMAN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Chick Corea, one of the primary creative forces behind the electronic jazz fusion of the '70s, is talking about "carrier waves."

"Carrier waves?" So what's that? Some kind of music in cyberspace?

Corea laughs at the reaction for a moment, then continues, clarifying: "Carrier waves. That's what I call them. You know, all the mechanics, the techniques, the styles of playing and performing. The delivery stuff."

Ah hah. The ever-thoughtful Corea, who constantly ponders music from a broadly philosophical point of view, is not simply being obtuse or talking about new electronic gadgetry, he is

Chick Corea Prefers to Focus on Creative Simplicity of Jazz Instead of Mechanics and Styles of Playing

defining the difference between technique and inspiration.

"It's what I call the routines of performing—carrier waves—because they're just something to be used like tools. They're there to be utilized and combined and molded in various ways.

"But their only real purpose is deliver the message and the feelings that we want to get across to an audience."

Pianist-composer Corea, who opens a weeklong run at Catalina Bar & Grill tonight, has been giving a lot of consideration to many aspects of performing lately. And with good reason. This year alone, he has rendered pop and jazz standards in a series of solo piano concerts in Europe, played the Mozart Piano Concerto No. 20 with orchestras in San Francisco and Japan, worked with duos, quartets and quintets, and performed his own piano concerto in Italy and Sicily.

No wonder he's talking about "carrier waves."

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"I think the important thing," he says in a phone call from a rare few days of vacation in Florida, "is that, no matter what kind of music you're playing, you don't get distracted by the carrier waves of technique and method.

"What you're really looking for is . . . to try to get across to the audience, right now, what you're feeling, what you want them to feel, what you've got in your mind."

Corea has been remarkably successful at doing precisely that throughout a career that stretches across gigs with Miles Davis in the '60s, his own seminal fusion group, Return to Forever, in the '70s, and a series of Elektric and Akoustic Bands in the '80s and '90s. Along the way, he picked up eight Grammy Awards for music ranging from streaming, straight-ahead improvising to cutting-edge electronic jazz.

A longtime Los Angeles resident, Corea and his partner, Ron Moss, operate their own recording facility, Mad Hatter Studios, and record company—Stretch Records. Corea's wife, Gayle, is a singer and keyboardist, and his two grown children, Thad and Liana (from a

previous marriage), are both musicians.

At the moment, Corea is especially concerned with the fine subtleties of performing, of not being distracted by "carrier waves" because, like many other contemporary artists, he is thinking in acoustic terms. He has just released a new CD, "Time Warp" (Stretch Records), his first quartet recording in more than a decade. And the group that he will bring to Catalina tonight—his current working ensemble—is focused on making real-life, unsynthesized sounds.

But it has taken a certain amount of effort for the 54-year-old Corea to direct his younger musicians through what is, for them, less familiar territory.

"I grew up in the '60s with acoustic blending," he says. "Then I came through an era in the '70s when the acoustic environment was completely replaced by an electronic environment, with electric jazz bands like Return to Forever completely abandoning

the acoustic approach. Things like detail and nuance and subtlety in the music were set aside for other effects.

"Well, the guys in my quartet—saxophonist Bob Berg, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Gary Novak—grew up in the electric period. And in order to try to get them to play acoustically, and get that nice delicate sound, we have to constantly remind ourselves of what we're doing."

The results seem to be justifying the effort. Heard at the Monterey Jazz Festival two weeks ago, the Corea quartet displayed an energetic ensemble togetherness that was underscored with a brawny, mainstream rhythmic muscularity.

Although Corea is delighted with the "nice, easy hookup" he feels with his group, it would be thoroughly atypical for him not to have other expressive vehicles waiting in the wings.

And he does.

There is, first of all, the need to support his new album, an unusual,

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11-section, conceptual work that serves as an illustrative score for a fantasy story (included with the recording) written by Corea. Does the production's combination of music, story and colorful cartoon art, which is included on the cover and in the album notes, suggest a visual as well as an audio potential?

"Hmmm," Corea says. "Maybe. We'll see."

Another project has been in the works for 15 years.

"It's taken a while," he says, "but I've finally gotten into it—selecting and recording some of the compositions of Bud Powell that I've liked all my life. You listen to his albums and say, 'Wow, listen to that. Let me hear more of that.' Well, I'm going to put a group **Please see COREA, F5**

COREA

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together and render that music.

"There's so much there, even little compositional gems, and I think it's kind of natural to want to go back and pick up some of the very powerful, very creative things that he was doing. Not literally the way Bud sounded, of course, but to present them in my own way."

The far-reaching eclecticism of Corea's creative curiosity traces, he believes, to the impression that Scientology has made upon his thinking. He has been one of the entertainment world's most visible Scientologists for years, and he is quick to emphasize its abiding relevance in his life. I constantly refer to [Scientology founder] L. Ron Hubbard," explains Corea. "His writing and his lectures are [a continual guide] to me. They're every bit as flowing as a John Coltrane solo—just his way of putting across what are ultimately incredible, mammoth simplicities, but which take a lot of explanation, and looking at, and experience, and testing out to get the full value of."

Corea also stresses the significance of his "personal belief that creativity is innate in us," that it is something "that will flower if given a receptive environment."

"Here's the way of the world," he says. "A little child is wide-eyed and bright and 'innocent'—naturally open to life in a creative way. Then kids get put out into an environment where they begin to see some conflict, and they think: 'Hey, I'd better watch out. I can't bring this mud pie in here just because I like it. There's other factors.' And they grow up and lose the connection with that innate 'creativity.'"

"And that's really what I'm talk-

ing about when I mention carrier waves," Corea says. "All the stuff about technique and styles and method is a kind of illusion. What really matters is very simple. The trick for the musician is finding a way to get back to that innate, creative simplicity."

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LAUGH LINES

Punch Lines

Poor sports: This week's Great Umpire Uprising began when Orioles player **Roberto Alomar** spat in the face of ump **John Hirschbeck**. Says **Premiere Morning Sickness**, "Although Hirschbeck claims the blob hit him in the face, replays show it was high and outside."

■ Adds **Mark Gonzales**, "Had Hirschbeck responded the same way, it would have been a case of 'The Umpire Spits Back.'"

New York City has started a quality-of-life hotline, which citizens can call to report crimes committed, trash heaved and flagrant loitering. "In other words," says **Alan Ray**, "Jets game summaries."

An America West plane, already airborne, was ordered back to Dallas to offload its 53 passengers so the California Angels could fly home on it instead. Says **Alex Pearlstein**, "I knew the Angels sucked, but not strongly

enough to actually pull a plane out of the sky."

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In the news: A 13-year-old honor student in Ohio is in trouble because she accepted a packet of Midol from another student. Says **Gary Easley**, "She obviously had a bad case of PMS—Pretty Moronic School."

Mother Teresa became the fourth person ever to receive honorary U.S. citizenship when **President Clinton** conferred it on her this week. Says **Steve Tatham**, "The **Dole** campaign responded, 'That's all we need, one more immigrant with a low-wage job.'"

The American Heart Assn. says it's OK to overeat on occasion, as long as you make up for it later. Says **Easley**, "Now we know where Clinton got his balanced-budget plan... McDonald's."

A potential juror in the **O.J.** civil trial told the court she knew nothing of the first trial and did "not have an opinion on anything." Says **Bill Williams**, "Scientists tested her DNA and think she's a direct descendant of the ancient '50s Sitcom Woman."

The PSAT scholarship test is being changed to eliminate gender bias. Says **Jenny Church**, "Now it will be perfectly OK to stop and ask for directions."

A street in Hollywood is being renamed in honor of Scientology founder **L. Ron Hubbard**. Says **Tatham**, "It's a cult-de-sac."

Former "NYPD Blue" star **David Caruso** wants to return to series television. Says **Pearlstein**, "I think he'll have better luck on cable. **Shelley Long**, **Gabe Kaplan** and **Erik Estrada** are pooling their money to start up the Has-Been Channel."



For the Record

Scientology—An article in Wednesday's Times incorrectly stated that the Church of Scientology's international headquarters has been on Berendo Street in Hollywood for four decades. In fact, the church moved there in the 1970s from its original home in Glendale, church officials said Wednesday.

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