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Fight Over Funds Divides Scientology Group

By ROBERT LINDSEY

Special to The New York Times

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 5 — The Church of Scientology is embroiled in a bitter internal battle over the control of hundreds of millions of dollars.

The church is described by its leaders as a religion and by its critics as a highly profitable business with cultlike overtones. It has long been a target of investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other law-enforcement agencies in this country and abroad.

According to dissident members, former Scientology officials and allega-

tions in court documents, the church is currently controlled by a cadre of former servants of the organization's founder, L. Ron Hubbard, 71 years old, whose 1950 book "Dianetics" became the cornerstone of its program. The takeover by these members, who are in their 20's, has led to the expulsion or resignation of more than 150 senior members in the last year.

Faced with the loss of millions of dollars in income, the expelled operators of several regional Scientology franchises have set up their own organizations based on Mr. Hubbard's teachings.

Meanwhile, the oldest son of Mr. Hubbard, Ronald E. DeWolf, has contended in a lawsuit that his father is either dead or being held captive by the former servants. He is suing to gain control of his father's estate, which he says is worth more than \$100 million.

Last Thursday, a Superior Court judge in suburban Riverside County ordered a trial to be held April 18 to determine whether Mr. Hubbard is dead or mentally incompetent.

The Church of Scientology says it has a worldwide membership of six million.

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Church of Scientology Embroiled in Internal Dispute Over Millions of Dollars

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although former officials say the number of adherents is probably fewer than 700,000. Whatever the correct number, the recent defections and the publicity over Mr. DeWolf's suit are believed to be cutting into the membership.

In interviews and affidavits, some former church officials and other dissident members have contended the church is a lucrative business enterprise that systematically suppresses dissent. And more than 20 suits have been brought against the church by former members, represented by Michael Flynn, a Boston lawyer.

Spokesmen for the church have denied the accusations, including assertions of fraud and contentions that the church does not represent a bona fide religion.

In 1979, Mr. Hubbard's third wife, Mary Sue, and seven other members of the group were convicted on charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice or conspiracy to obtain Government documents illegally. After losing several appeals, Mrs. Hubbard is scheduled to appear for sentencing Friday in a Federal court in Washington.

Documents seized at Scientology offices in Los Angeles and Washington and made public at the trial showed that its members had stolen thousands of pages of Government files and had run a far-reaching intelligence operation that included burglaries, wiretapping and spying on more than 120 public agencies, including the F.B.I., the Central Intelligence Agency and the Internal Revenue Service.

Harassment of Officials

The documents also revealed a pattern of harassment against public officials and journalists who investigated or criticized the organization.

In an interview Heber Jentzsch, the church's chief spokesman, said the organization was not currently involved in such operations.

"It's a con — it was a fraud from the beginning," Gerald Armstrong, formerly a close aide to Mr. Hubbard and the church's archivist, said of the organization. He said he left the church a year ago after gaining access to records that he asserted indicated a long pattern of deception and fraud.

And in a declaration submitted in connection with his suit, Mr. DeWolf, who says that he worked closely with his father from 1949 to 1959 in developing Scientology, asserted that most of the details of his father's life presented to the church's followers were lies.

"Thousands of people," he said, "have paid millions of dollars to my father on the belief that he was 'twice pronounced dead' from war wounds and miraculously cured himself through Scientology, having achieved a state of 'perfect, physical, mental and emotional health' for the past 30 years; in fact, this is a total falsity, but my father suffers from severe paranoid schizophrenia with delusions."

In a telephone interview, Harvey Silverglate, a Boston lawyer representing the church in most of the lawsuits, said

that its religious status had been upheld in court and that the attacks by former members were part of a "gigantic power struggle" aimed at tapping the church's resources. And Bent Corydon, who was head of the Scientology branch in Riverside, Calif., until he was expelled two weeks ago, agreed, saying, "It's all about money."

According to estimates by some former church officials, the organization, much of whose income is tax exempt, has assets of more than \$300 million around the world, much of it in bank accounts in Switzerland and the Caribbean area. And each week, the former members said, it takes in more than \$2 million at more than 100 branches in this country and abroad. The church declined to give an estimate of its total assets.

Although some of the income is generated by the sale of Mr. Hubbard's books, the former officials said, most comes from people who, for a mandatory donation of up to \$300 an hour, receive a type of counseling called "auditing."

Special Counseling Sessions

In the one-on-one auditing sessions a device called an "E-Meter" is used to test emotional responses by measuring changes in the electrical properties of a person's skin.

The tested individuals are told the session will help them eradicate debilitating mental images called "engrams," allowing them to communicate with others more effectively and to become better able to help solve the world's problems.

According to Mr. Corydon, whose Riverside branch in the past was one of many accused of using high-pressure sales methods to push its counseling courses, it is not uncommon for people to spend more than \$100,000 over five or six years to eliminate all the "engrams," a state referred to as "clear."

"He's Not Very Happy"

Mr. Corydon said that many had mortgaged their homes or otherwise gone deeply into debt to pay for the counseling. "I just talked to a plumber who had spent \$250,000," he said, "and he's not very happy."

The Church of Scientology owns large teaching and counseling centers in several places, including Clearwater, Fla.; Los Angeles, and Suffolk, England. Former officials estimated that the Florida facility alone took in upward of \$1 million a week.

However, much of the church's income, according to former members, originates in its regional branches, and the current dispute has largely involved a battle for control of revenue from these so-called missions, which until recently had been largely independent.

In past years Mr. Hubbard's organization franchised the right to use the E-Meter and sell the counseling services based on his teaching to more than 80 of the local missions. According to the former franchise owners, the missions paid 10 percent of their gross revenue to the central organization.

Much of the current strife in the organization, former members say, began in the spring of 1980, when, with-



Associated Press

L. Ron Hubbard in a photo made some years ago.

out warning, a number of new people appeared in the church's upper echelons and began demanding more money and less independence from the regional franchise owners.

Most of these new people joined the group when they were 13 or 14 years old and have known no other life except Scientology, according to Mr. Armstrong's wife, Jocelyn, a former member. Except for intensive daily schooling in the writings of Mr. Hubbard, she said, most have had no formal education beyond elementary school.

The majority of them were members of a group called the "Commodore's Messenger Organization." This designation stemmed from a period in the 1970's when Mr. Hubbard ran the church from a 300-foot yacht, the Apollo, and referred to himself as the "Commodore." Some Scientologists took their children to live with them on the ship, and older children were designated personal aides to Mr. Hubbard.

On the ship, and later, when Mr. Hubbard moved the headquarters to a 500-acre resort, called Gilman Hot Springs, that the church bought in the desert near Palm Springs, Calif., the status of the teen-agers was raised.

According to the dissidents, they were taught to obey Mr. Hubbard explicitly, to mimic his voice and to inform on members who criticized him. Not long after moving to the desert facility, former church members say, Mr. Hubbard retreated increasingly into seclusion and usually saw only members of the messenger corps, who were granted the right to discipline adult church members.

Question of Control

Many of the former messengers are said to wear the naval uniform of an elite church branch called the "Sea Organization." The dissident members say that a half-dozen or so of them appear to be controlling the church and its assets through the Religious Technology Center, a corporation established in January 1982.

"It's like the 'Lord of the Flies,'"

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said a former franchise holder who spoke with the understanding that he not be identified. "The children have taken over."

The central figure in the corporation is David Miscavige, 22, who has told franchise holders that Mr. Hubbard had granted the corporation exclusive rights to the Scientology trademarks and the copyrights of his books.

According to the former officials, the new leadership group has demanded that franchise owners send their clients to the church-owned counseling centers rather than continuing to profit from them at the missions.

"They take what they want," asserted Mr. Corydon. He and franchise owners in Omaha and Kansas City have formed splinter churches. He said that it had become common for officers of the Religious Technology Center to demand payments of \$20,000 to \$30,000 from franchise holders and to take away franchises if the money was not paid.

At an Oct. 17 meeting at the San Francisco Hilton, members of the new leadership group informed the franchise owners that the church had been reorganized "to make the whole structure impregnable, especially in regards to the I.R.S."

'New Breed of Management'

According to a transcript of that meeting, at which the Religious Center warned it had the right to withdraw franchises, one of the former messengers said, "The fact of the matter is you have a new breed of management in the Church. They're tough, they're ruthless, they are on Source." The term "Source" refers to the teachings of Mr. Hubbard.

In his lawsuit, Mr. DeWolf, a 48-year-old Nevanian who changed his name from L. Ron Hubbard Jr. after becoming estranged from his father, has accused Mr. Miscavige and others of forging his father's signature to gain control of his father's trademarks, copyrights and other assets.

The suit, filed in Riverside County, noted that Mr. Hubbard had not been seen since March 1980. It contended that he was dead or seriously ill and, in effect, being held captive by the his former servants, possibly at a secret hideaway in the California desert.

Mr. Jentzsch, the church's president and chief spokesman, declined to make Mr. Miscavige available for an interview. He said that he had not seen Mr. Hubbard lately but that he had no doubt that Mr. Hubbard was still alive.

Others, including some of the recent church defectors, also said they believed Mr. Hubbard was still alive, possibly living under an assumed name in or near Los Angeles.

In his court declaration, Mr. DeWolf said that his father, a one-time science fiction writer, was a drug addict and that he had referred to Scientology as one of the "most advanced 'brainwashing' technologies in the world."

Spokesmen for the church have dismissed Mr. DeWolf's allegations as an attempt by him to obtain the church's millions. "Ron DeWolf in classic oedipal fashion would like to take over what he perceives of as the empire his father

created and to step into his shoes," Mr. Silverglate asserted.

Mr. Flynn, the dissidents' attorney, said he had been harassed and his life had been put in jeopardy because of his court battle against the church. He asserted that its internal struggle was significant but added, "The real story is the power they have to use information for blackmail."

In the auditing sessions, he said, Scientology members are required to disclose various personal facts, including the "most intimate" details of their sexual activity and family lives. He said the church made this information public if members criticized or left it.

"They have audited two to three million people," he said, "and they are all recorded and stored, and they use it."

Mr. Armstrong, 37, who said that as

an aide to Mr. Hubbard he sometimes shuttled suitcases stuffed with \$50 bills and large denominations of Swiss francs to accounts in a variety of foreign countries, was a Scientologist for 11 years.

"When I first went in to it, I thought it was the hope of mankind," he said. But he added that later, after being assigned to collect biographical material about Mr. Hubbard, "I learned it was all based on lies and deceptions."

"I think L. Ron Hubbard is either dead or he's being kept locked up by this group of people who have taken over," Mr. Armstrong said. "What you have is a situation where people of sub-average intelligence are in charge of thousands of people and in control of countless millions of dollars; they bleed these honest, trusting people who pay up to \$300 an hour."

Los Angeles Times

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Los Angeles Times

Scientology Founder's Wife Ordered to Prison

WASHINGTON (AP)—Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of the founder of the Church of Scientology, was sentenced to four years in prison Friday for directing a conspiracy to steal government documents and plant spies in federal offices.

U.S. District Judge Norma H. Johnson rejected Hubbard's request to be sent to a halfway house and imposed a \$10,000 fine as part of the sentence stemming from her 1979 conviction.

Hubbard is the wife of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.

The judge sent Hubbard to a minimum security prison but added that she could be released at any time if she could not receive proper medical care. She would be eligible for parole in 40 months.

Says She Wants to Apologize

Hubbard, 51, stood sobbing before the judge, saying she wanted to "sincerely and publicly apologize."

The judge responded that Hubbard committed "not only a serious but heinous offense. Because of your leadership role . . . I find your degree of culpability was great."

Johnson said she rejected Hubbard's contention that church officials directed their four-year campaign against the government because they believed that federal officials were harassing them.

Hubbard, after her conviction in 1979, originally received a conditional sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. But that sentence was never carried out, because a judge ordered an exhaustive study of her medical problems.

Ten other Church of Scientology officials received sentences ranging from one year to six years for their roles in the conspiracy. Hubbard said she retired from working for the church in 1981.

The conspiracy included stealing documents from the Internal Revenue Service, the Justice Department and the U.S. Attorney's office. As part of the plot, the Scientologists also bugged an IRS meeting about the church's tax-exempt status, planted spies in the Justice Department and the IRS and kidnaped a church member who decided to help the prosecutors.

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Scientology Founder's Wife Gets Prison Term

By Al Kamen
Washington Post Staff Writer

Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of the founder of the Church of Scientology, was sentenced in federal court here yesterday to four years in prison for her role in a conspiracy to plant church spies in government agencies, steal government documents and bug at least one government meeting.

Hubbard, whose husband, L. Ron Hubbard, founded the controversial organization about 30 years ago, sobbed as she told U.S. District Judge Norma Holloway Johnson that she "sincerely and publicly apologized" for her actions.

Johnson ordered Hubbard, who has been free pending appeal of her 1979 conviction in the case, to turn herself in to federal officials in three weeks to begin serving her sentence.

Hubbard's lawyer, Michael Madigan, urged that the 51-year-old Hubbard be sent to a halfway house facility rather than prison because she is ill and would not receive adequate treatment in prison. Johnson, while sentencing her to a minimum security prison, did so under a law that would permit Hubbard to be released at any time if the prison could not treat her ailments properly.

In papers filed with the court, Hubbard maintained that she and the church had been victims of government harassment. Assistant U.S. Attorney Raymond Banoun told Johnson that the "government absolutely and unquestionably rejects these allegations."

Johnson said that she did not know whether the government had harassed the church, but "even if I assume . . . there was harassment, I still cannot accept what you did" as excusable.

Hubbard, who lives in Los Angeles, is the last of 11 church leaders who were indicted in the conspiracy in August 1978 to go to prison. The indictments came after the FBI raided church headquarters here and in Los Angeles in 1977. The raids were said to be the largest ever conducted by the FBI.

Documents introduced in court by prosecutors in 1979 contended that operatives of the church initiated numerous break-ins at government offices here, including the Justice Department, and that they secretly placed a listening device in an Internal Revenue Service conference room—all in an apparent effort to combat what the church called government harassment.

Although church officials in 1979 condemned the 4-to-6-year sentences imposed by U.S. District Judge Charles R. Richey on several of the church leaders as too harsh, Madigan told Johnson before sentencing that Hubbard "believes she has been treated very fairly" by the judge. Church leaders in Washington could not be reached for comment.

Madigan said that Hubbard had resigned from the church in 1981, and would not engage in any activities connected with the church in the future.

The organization is engaged in an internal struggle over control of assets. Ronald E. De Wolf, son of the 71-year-old founder, has asked a court in California to have a trustee appointed for his father's estate on the grounds that his father, who has not been seen since March 1980, is either dead or possibly held captive by some members of the church.

De Wolf has contended in court that the present church leadership is misusing the estate, according to his attorney, Michael J. Flynn. A hearing has been set for April 18 in California to determine whether a trustee should be appointed because L. Ron Hubbard is a missing person.

MARY SUE HUBBARD to PRISON.

JAN 14, 1983

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Scientology founder's wife draws sentence of 4 years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of the founder of the Church of Scientology, was sentenced Friday to four years in prison for directing a conspiracy to steal government documents and plant spies in Federal offices.

U.S. District Judge Norma Holloway Johnson rejected Mary Sue Hubbard's request to be sent to a halfway house and imposed a \$10,000 fine as part of the sentence stemming from her 1979 conviction.

The 51-year-old is the wife of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, who developed Scientology as a blend

of Eastern religions, having the stated goal of freeing man from painful experiences in this life and previous lives.

The judge sent Mary Sue Hubbard to a minimum-security prison but said she could be released at any time if she could not receive proper care for several medical problems. She will be eligible for parole in 40 months.

Mary Sue Hubbard originally received a conditional sentence of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. That sentence was not carried out because a judge ordered an exhaustive study of her medical problems.

N.B. The sentence was made
Jan 7, 1983

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Britons: Hubbard has written album called 'Space Jazz'

British Scientologists dismiss reports from California that L. Ron Hubbard, who founded the religious sect, is dead or incapable of handling the fortune.

By TONY ALLEN-MILLS
Field News Service

LONDON — The founder of the Church of Scientology is not only alive but has written a musical album called "Space Jazz" and is sending personal greetings to his followers in Britain.

This is the claim made Thursday by senior Scientologists in Britain who dismiss reports from California that L. Ron Hubbard, the American millionaire founder of the worldwide religious sect, is either dead or mentally incapable of handling his fortune. He has not been seen in public since 1980.

The Church of Scientology is based in Clearwater.

Mystery over Hubbard's fate arose in December when his longestranged son, Ronald DeWolf, asked a California court to name him trustee of his father's estate, which is believed to be worth around \$60 million.

DeWolf, who fell out of favor with his father 23 years ago and changed his name, claims that Scientology officials have been forging his father's signature and looting his assets.

But British Scientologists have produced what they claim is documentary evidence showing that Hubbard is alive and well and, at age 71, in full command of his faculties. They say Hubbard values his privacy and sees no reason to emerge from his chosen seclusion simply because people think he is dead.

Anthony Bonning, a spokesman for the British branch of the church, displayed the transcript of a tape recording purportedly made by Hubbard in late December for transmission to his followers as a New Year's

Day message.

"I have heard thousands of Ron Hubbard tapes and I swear this is his voice," Bonning said. The transcript, entitled "Ron's Journal," begins, "Hello. The sun is in the sky. The stars are in the heavens. Life lives. And I am here to wish you a happy holiday season."

Hubbard is also said to have sent personal holiday greetings to hundreds of British Scientologists in the past few weeks. John White, of Stoneleigh, showed this reporter a letter he received from Hubbard signed "Love, Ron."

The letter was dated Dec. 26, but the envelope was postmarked Twickenham and dated Jan. 5. Scientology officials said this did not mean Hubbard was secretly living in Twickenham.

Mail addressed to him at the church's offices in London is forwarded to "somewhere" in America, church officials said, adding that answers are returned in bulk and then posted locally by Scientology officials.

Asked why it was necessary to go to such extremes to keep Hubbard's whereabouts secret, and particularly when a brief public appearance would end adverse speculation, Bonning replied that Hubbard has no intention of giving up his privacy to respond to "nonsensical" allegations.

Hubbard, who claims to be a blood brother of the Blackfoot Indians, made his fortune with series of books expounding his theory of "dianetics," a process said to eliminate the harmful effects of unpleasant experiences on the personality, thereby creating a better person.

According to his purported New Year's message, Hubbard has just finished a new book called "Battlefield Earth" and has recorded a modern music album called "Space Jazz" and claims that both are "selling in avalanches."

Hubbard concludes the message in a manner that seems curiously ambiguous, given the controversy over whether or not he is still alive. Urging his followers to take advantage of his teachings, he says, "I hope you do my friends. For if you don't, it will be very lonely in the sky."

Los Angeles Times

3 Sunday

Monday, January 17, 1983

MF/92 pages/Copyric

Struggle to Control Power, Money Splits Scientologists

By EVAN MAXWELL and RUSSELL CHANDLER, *Times Staff Writers*

The Church of Scientology, one of the wealthiest and most controversial religious organizations to be founded in the last 30 years, is being ripped by a power struggle between a small inner circle of youthful leaders and a large and growing number of disaffected former leaders and members.

The disaffected leaders, including the man who was once the church's highest officer, claim that these new leaders, most of them in their early 20s, are perpetuating a myth that Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, an eccentric science fiction writer, is still alive and in touch with them.

A court petition filed recently in Riverside County alleges that Hubbard is either dead or mentally incapable of handling his huge fortune. Hubbard has not been seen in public since 1980. The petition was filed by Hubbard's eldest son, Ron

DeWolf, who had a falling out with Hubbard 23 years ago.

Bill Franks, former chief executive officer of the church, said the young people are for the most part acolytes who served Hubbard aboard his 300-foot yacht and later at his retreats near Indio and Hemet. They must act as though Hubbard is alive in order to legitimize their control of the church and their hold on its vast wealth, he said.

Franks said that a year ago, before he was forced out of the church, he had personal control of \$150 million lodged in Scientology accounts in two Luxembourg banks. He estimated the total worth of the church at more than \$300 million.

"A lot of these kids are in it for the power and the money; I don't think they are in it for the religion," Franks said in a telephone inter-

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Los Angeles Times

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SPLIT: Power Struggle Rips Scientology

Continued from First Page
view from Clearwater, Fla.

"I think the church is going to burn itself out" because of the struggle over power and money, he added.

DeWolf has asked the court in Riverside to make him trustee of his father's estate. A trial is set for April 18.

Church officials say that Hubbard is alive and well at age 71 and that DeWolf is being used as a tool by other "enemies of the church" who are intent on obtaining money from the church through lawsuits.

Interviews with a number of former members of the church, some of them longtime leaders of Scientology missions, indicate that they believe Hubbard is no longer alive, or is no longer in charge of his affairs.

Scientology is based on Hubbard's concepts of mental health first propounded in a 1948 book called "Dianetics." Through the use of the so-called "E-Meter," an instrument that works somewhat like a lie detector, individuals are offered exercises and counseling aimed at eliminating negative mental images and achieving what Scientologists call the "clear" state.

\$100,000 Audit Sessions

Adherents may spend as much as \$100,000 achieving that state at "auditing" sessions offered at Scientology facilities around the world. Revenues from such sessions, as well as from Hubbard's writing, form the foundation of the Scientology financial empire.

The ruling young people, many of whom have known nothing but life within the Scientology inner circle, are ruthlessly expelling any potential challengers to their power and are demanding larger percentages of revenue from local Scientology missions, according to disaffected members.

"It just isn't being run the way he (Hubbard) used to run it. There seems to be no judgment involved," Bent Corydon said. Corydon headed the Riverside branch of the church until recently, when he and some of the members broke away to found a new organization. It has been joined by other dissident Scientologists in Kansas City and Omaha.

'It Wasn't Hubbard'

Probably the most intriguing picture of the inner workings of Scientology comes from former Executive Director Franks, 36, who was ousted by David Miscavige, 22, the "commander" and top manager of the new ruling body of Scientology. Franks said that he believes that Hubbard was probably dead in August, 1981, when Miscavige gave him a "dispatch" purportedly written by Hubbard.

"I'm sure that it wasn't (Hubbard)," Franks said. "I worked with him enough to know that."

Miscavige could not be reached for comment on Franks' allegations.

Franks said the church at that time had been spending as much as \$1 million a month on lawyers to

fight countless legal battles around the world. One such case involved federal charges that Mary Sue Hubbard, the writer's third wife, and 10 other Scientology leaders had conspired to infiltrate various government agencies, including the Internal Revenue Service.

Franks said that as a leader of the church he was aware that \$8 million was raised from church members on the basis of what he called "total lies" to the effect that there had been no conspiracy to infiltrate government offices and obtain documents. The money was spent on "high living" and "flying people all over the world" and only in part on legal fees, he said.

Franks said he was aware of what some disaffected Scientologists have called a "tax-washing" scheme in 1981. The purpose of that plan, he said, was to "save tax dollars" by shifting money from profit-making Scientology corporations to nonprofit and tax-exempt religious institutions.

Franks said he became executive director in an effort to reform the movement after Mary Sue Hubbard and the 10 other Scientology leaders were convicted in 1979 of burglarizing, bugging and infiltrating the government agencies, which Scientology leaders claimed had systematically harassed the church for decades.

Franks left the church after sharp disagreements with Miscavige and other members of the "Sea Org" cadre, a term drawn from the years when Hubbard lived aboard his yacht, the Apollo, and referred to himself as "the Commodore."

'Record Period of Expansion'

The disaffected Franks, who says that he still believes in the religious "technology" that Hubbard taught, thus joined a large number of former Scientologists, some of whom have been ousted by the church and others of whom left of their own volition. He estimated that at one time there were 2 million members of the church. But now, he says, that number has declined to perhaps 100,000 active Scientologists throughout the world.

The Rev. Heber Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, disagreed with those figures, saying in a recent letter to The Times that the church is "enjoying a record period of expansion with more than 6.5 million persons . . . making it the largest and perhaps the fastest-growing new religion in the world."

The negative mental images generated by recent internal strife seem to be taking their toll, however, both in morale and membership within the church.

"Disaffection is very deep," said Corydon, the former Riverside mission president. "A large number of Scientologists are disillusioned and are not supporting the organization. But they are being quiet in the hope something (in the current top management) might turn around."

"But even that hope seems to be waning," Corydon said.

Son of cult leader in a battle over \$1B estate

THE son of L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Church of Scientology, says he filed suit to gain control of his father's \$1 billion estate in an effort to find out whether he is dead or alive.

"No one outside the organization has seen or spoken to him for 2½ years, and I want to discover what happened to his fortune in cash and property," said Ronald DeWolf.

DeWolf, who changed his name from L. Ron Hubbard Jr. when he left the cult in 1959, says he believes that the only way to get to the bottom of the mystery is through the courts.

In the lawsuit, filed in Riverside, Calif., headquarters of the Scientologists, he asked the courts to appoint him receiver of his 71-year-old father's estate — believed to be worth \$1 billion.

"This seems to be the only way I can discover if he is alive or dead, or being held against his will by his followers," said DeWolf.

DeWolf, who now manages an apartment in Carson City, Nev., claimed the church is now being run by 22-year-old high school dropout David Miscavage.

He said that Miscavage and an-



Cult founder L. Ron Hubbard has not been heard from in 2½ years.

other Hubbard aide, James Isaacson, have control of the Scientologists. DeWolf claims Scientology officials are saying Hubbard is alive so they can maintain control of his assets.

A spokesman for the church refused to comment on the lawsuit.

▲ lot of these kids are in it for the power;
I don't think they are in it for the religion'

Scientology church wracked by dissention

By Evan Maxwell
and Russell Chandler
Los Angeles Times

The Church of Scientology, one of the wealthiest and most controversial religious organizations to be founded in the last 30 years, is being ripped by a power struggle between a small inner circle of youthful leaders and a large and growing number of disaffected former leaders and members.

Center to the dispute is the question of whether Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard is alive or dead. Hubbard has not been seen in public since 1980. The multimillionaire's eldest son, Ron DeWolf, believes his father is either dead or mentally ill. DeWolf has turned to the courts for help in clearing up the situation.

Meanwhile, the issue divides the church.

The church's new leaders, for the most part, are young acolytes who once served Hubbard aboard his 300-foot yacht and later at his retreats near Indio and Hemet in California. Most of these leaders are in their early 20s. They say Hubbard, 71, is alive and well and that they are in contact with him. They claim that DeWolf is being used as a tool by other "enemies of the church" who are intent on obtaining money from the church through lawsuits.

Interviews with a number of former members of the church, some of them longtime leaders of Scientology missions, indicate that they believe Hubbard is no longer alive.

Scientology's disaffected leaders, including the man who was once the church's highest officer, say the new leaders are perpetuating a myth. Disaffected members also accuse the new leadership of ruthlessly expelling any members who pose a challenge to their power.

Bill Franks, former executive director of the church, said the new leaders need to maintain a fiction that Hubbard is alive in order to legitimize their control of the church and their hold on its vast wealth, he said.

Franks said that a year ago, before he was forced out of the church, he



L. Ron Hubbard

had personal control of \$150 million lodged in Scientology accounts in two Luxembourg banks. He estimated the total worth of the church at more than \$300 million.

"A lot of these kids are in it for the power and the money; I don't think they are in it for the religion," Franks said in a telephone interview from Clearwater, Fla.

He said he thinks the church is going to burn itself out because of the struggle over power and money.

In addition to the internal struggle, the church faces forthcoming legal action. Hubbard's son is asking the Riverside County, Calif., court to make him trustee of his father's estate. In his petition, DeWolf charges that his father is either dead or mentally incapable of handling his huge fortune. A trial is set for April 18.

Scientology is based on Hubbard's concepts of mental health first propounded in a 1948 book called *Dianetics*. Adherents working to achieve what Scientologists call the "clear" state may spend as much as \$100,000 at "auditing" sessions offered at Scientology facilities around the world. Revenues from such sessions, as well as from Hubbard's writing, form the foundation of the Scientology financial empire.

Church of Scientology

Disaffected members also accuse the young church leaders of demanding larger percentages of revenue from local Scientology missions.

"It just isn't being run the way he (Hubbard) used to run it. There seems to be no judgment involved," Bent Corydon said.

Corydon headed the Riverside branch of the church until recently, when he and some of the members broke away to found a new organization. It has been joined by other dissident Scientologists in Kansas City, Mo., and Omaha, Neb.

Probably the most intriguing picture of the inner workings of Scientology comes from Franks, 36, who was ousted as executive director by David Miscavige, 22, the "commander" and top manager of the new ruling body of Scientology.

Franks said that he believes that Hubbard, the eccentric science-fiction writer and founder of Scientology, was probably dead in August 1981, when Miscavige gave him a "dispatch" purportedly written by Hubbard.

"I'm sure that it wasn't (Hubbard)," Franks said. "I worked with him enough to know that."

Miscavige could not be reached for comment on Frank's allegations.

Franks said the church at that time had been spending as much as \$1 million a month on legal fees to fight countless court battles around the world. One case involved federal charges that Mary Sue Hubbard, the writer's third wife, and 10 other Scientology leaders had conspired to infiltrate various government agencies, including the Internal Revenue Service.

Franks said \$8 million was raised from church members on the basis of what he called total lies about the nature of the federal charges. The

money was spent on high living and flying people all over the world and not on legitimate legal fees, he said.

Franks said he was privy to what has been called a tax-washing scheme in 1981. He said the purpose of that plan was to save tax dollars by shifting money from profit-making Scientology corporations to non-profit and tax-exempt religious institutions.

Franks said he became executive director in an effort to reform the movement after Mary Sue Hubbard and the 10 other Scientology leaders were convicted in 1979 of burglarizing, bugging and infiltrating the government agencies, which Scientology leaders claimed had systematically harassed the church for decades.

Franks left the church after sharp disagreements with Miscavige and other members of the "Sea Org" cadre, a term drawn from the years when Hubbard lived aboard his yacht, the Apollo, and referred to himself as "the Commodore."

Franks, who says that he still believes in the religious technology Hubbard taught, has joined a large number of former Scientologists, some of whom have been ousted by the church and others of whom left of their own volition.

He estimated that at one time there were 2 million members of the church. But he says the number has dwindled to perhaps 100,000 active Scientologists throughout the world.

The Rev. Heber Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, disagreed with those figures, saying in a recent letter to the *Los Angeles Times* that the church is "enjoying a record period of expansion with more than 6.5 million persons... making it the largest and perhaps the fastest-growing new religion in the world."

END



L. Ron Hubbard

Associated Press