

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER
Clearwater Sun

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Now it's time for action

THERE COMES a time in the history of a community when the talking has to stop and direct action has to start.

It seems to the Sun such a time has arrived for Clearwater, in its relation to the Church of Scientology.

The cult has been here four years. For a time, the possibility might have existed that a form of detente could be worked out between the Scientologists and the people of Clearwater. But the recent release of thousands of Scientology documents in Washington, D.C. has put such a possibility forever behind us.

These documents have indelibly stamped Scientology as an agency of vengeance and wrongdoing, of malice and mischief.

For years the Sun's editorial position has been that the cult of Scientology is bad for Clearwater and should leave this city.

Now it is time to act. Here is what we are doing:

✓AS OF today, the Clearwater Sun is ceasing all business contact with the Scientology organization. We have removed our vending machines from all cult-owned property, and we henceforth will refuse any advertising from the Scientologists.

prevent the full use of our pages as a forum on Scientology because some would-be writers will fear retaliation by the cult.

THESE ABOVE steps are for openers. There will be others. It is our passionate belief that Clearwater must rid itself of the offices of Scientology. Action must be taken, not merely by the Sun, and not on a short-term basis. But a start has to be made by someone.

The Sun is doing this because of our conviction that the following things are true:

1. Scientology is not a religion, as it claims to be, but rather a for-profit group that uses religion as a guise to escape taxes and separate credulous men and women of large sums of money in exchange for superficial training in mental and emotional disciplines.

2. Scientologists of both high and low rank have, in behalf of the cult, engaged in lying, theft, burglary, breaking and entering, conspiracy and illegal harassment of private citizens.

3. The presence of Scientology in Clearwater constitutes a clear and present danger to the continued prosperity of the community and its citizens.

✓ We are urging all Clearwater-area businesses to cut off trade with the Scientology organization. We do NOT advocate that businesses refuse to deal with individual members of the cult nor fail to honor contractual obligations, but we do encourage vendors and tradesmen to stop supplying goods and services to the cult, its buildings and property.

✓ Beginning today the Sun will not publish the name and address of any person who writes to us with criticism or adverse comments on Scientology. Letters still must be signed, but we will not reveal the writers' identities, to protect them from harassment by the Scientologists.

Some of these measures are distasteful to us, but the cult on Fort Harrison has shown it is more than deserving of distasteful actions. We particularly are concerned that we must allow our letter writers to resort to secrecy, but the documents in Washington show that Scientologists don't want our readers to have their say. They have compiled intelligence files on those who criticized the organization, even branding them as enemies to be investigated.

Normally the Sun requires proper identification to appear with any letter we print on our editorial pages. However, we are persuaded that continuation of this policy will

4. Despite the revelations found in the Washington documents and the recent adjudications of guilt of conspiracy by Scientology leaders, not one local Scientologist has publicly repudiated the wrongdoing evidenced in the cult's documents or the admissions of those leaders.

5. Individual Scientologists have repeatedly and over several years lied about their activities.

6. The weight of what has happened in the past four years is evidence, too strong to ignore, that Scientologists will resort to whatever means are required for them to survive and prosper. The Sun does not and cannot believe that Scientology will change. Therefore, it is a blight upon Clearwater.

OUR ACTIONS in connection with Scientology are not taken lightly.

We are especially concerned that our opposition to the cult not be taken as malice toward individual members. These men and women deserve pity, not hostility, and we exhort the citizens of Clearwater to behave legally and with moderation toward each cult member.

But the organization itself is large, rich and well able to defend its position. For that reason we cannot undertake these actions with a faint heart or while sounding an uncertain trumpet.

And we do not.