

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER  
**Clearwater Sun**

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# An empty gesture

**SOP: a piece of food, as bread, soaked in milk, gravy, etc.; something given by way of concession or appeasement; a bribe. —Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language.**

WE HAVE printed the above definition so that everyone in Clearwater will know what the Scientologists tossed our way Friday.

Scientology President Rev. Kenneth Whitman and cult attorneys announced they would pay \$125,000 in 1976 and 1977 tax bills to the county.

They said they might also contribute some money to the city of Clearwater to cover the cost of city services.

In short, the Scientologists are throwing us a sop.

Their offer is a sop because the cult already was on the ropes in its fight to escape paying the 1976 and 1977 taxes.

Lower courts have already ruled the cult must pay the taxes. The case has been appealed to the Florida Supreme Court. By paying up, the Scientologists will in effect terminate the case.

WE WONDER if Whitman and his colleagues really believe that Friday's vapid gesture will fool local citizens into believing the cult is mending its ways.

Whitman came into town from mother church headquarters in California. He hoped to negotiate a "cease-fire" in the tax battle.

He has been huddling with various city and county officials, trying to work out something that will calm the mood of Clearwater.

His long-range hope, we would suppose, is that everyone here will get off the back of Scientology. This would include the tax collector, the news media and the citizenry.

One day, the Scientologists may finally catch on to the idea that they are their own worst enemies.

They refuse to pay taxes or to furnish necessary information to county officials, so the tax collector gets after them.

They infiltrate and lie to newspapers, and then they wonder why the news media are critical.

They dress their members

AT ANY rate, the payment of \$125,000 is not likely to bankrupt the local branch of Scientology, which each year takes in several millions of dollars in fees from members who come to Clearwater for the removal of engrams (flaws, hang-ups, defects, neuroses) from their minds.

As for their offer to give the city of Clearwater some money, county property appraiser Ron Schultz said on Friday that any such funds would be viewed strictly as a gift, and not as a substitute for taxes due.

In other words, Schultz said you can romance the city but you've got to pay cash to me.

up as Nazis, and then seem shocked when Clearwater residents are outraged.

**FRIDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT** of the Scientologists' intention to pay off a fraction of their tax bill changes nothing in Clearwater.

It was a sop, an empty gesture, an act of appeasement.

Only one solution exists for the conflict between Scientology and Clearwater.

The Scientologists must leave. Neither payment of taxes, nor visits by Whitman, nor holding hands with city and county officials can excise the melanoma that is the cult's presence in our city.

The cult must go.

## Let's rally 'round

THE RALLY at Jack Russell at 3 p.m. today will give local folks an opportunity to learn more about Scientology, what it is and what it isn't.

Incidentally, some callers to the Sun have expressed concern that taxpayers' funds were being used to pay for extra police to be on hand.

It's money well worth it. Besides, extra police are used often throughout the year for

other special events such as parades and athletic contests.

The rally is scheduled to be a peaceful, orderly gathering of concerned citizens who want to learn more about what's going on. We think it's delightful that Clearwater residents are no longer afraid to stand up in public against Scientology. We hope the rally is a smashing success.

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### BIBLE THOUGHT

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I am become rich, I have found me out substance. Hosea 12:8.

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