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Clearwater Sun

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More fame for the cult

INSTANT FAME could be defined as what happens when the most popular television program in America devotes 20 minutes of its time to you or your organization.

Well, the cult of Scientology got a heavy dose of instant fame Sunday night on the CBS "60 Minutes" show, and it's unlikely the Scientologists are very happy about it.

With interviewer Mike Wallace bearing down on the question, "How could a 'religion' do these things?", millions of Americans became aware of what a distasteful, dangerous and powerful thing Scientology really is.

Any viewer who watched the program and still can regard Scientology as a church must have his head screwed on backwards.

know about all these things" or "We will do anything necessary to allow Scientology to survive."

THAT WORD "survival" kept popping up, as if Scientology were a terminal TB patient or a U.S. cavalry battalion surrounded by a thousand screaming Comanches.

Anyone familiar with Scientology knows this is not the case. The cult is enormously rich and prosperous. If the Fort Harrison Hotel were to process much more cash it would be declared an arm of the U.S. Mint.

As for what the Scientologists like to call persecution, the Scientologists always bring it on themselves —by lying, refusal to pay property taxes, breaking into

WALLACE DOCUMENT-
ED the cult's entry into Clearwater under an assumed name; the cult's harassment of former Clearwater mayor Gabe Cazares, his wife, and others; the conviction of nine Scientologists by a federal court late in 1979; and the history of the cult in striking back by legal or illegal means at anyone who opposes Scientology.

Many Sun readers saw little in the program that was new, but a couple of points stuck out.

One, the cult's high officials did not deny that Scientology is guilty of various crimes. They admitted that their members had done wrong. The most they could offer in atonement is "We will behave from now on."

Second, this lukewarm attitude of repentance is not shared by many of the cult's members. Their viewpoint seems to be "We didn't even

offices and apartments, hounding innocent persons or by other tacky, squalid actions.

If the cult's leaders were to just shut up and confine themselves to taking over the life savings of credulous members, Scientology would probably find life smooth as chocolate pudding.

This is unlikely to happen. L. Ron Hubbard's paranoid profiteers rejoice in two things—money, and fighting with real or imaginary enemies.

ON BALANCE, the TV program gave fresh hope that all of American society will one day learn what a bummer Scientology is.

Barring a Scientology equivalent of the Jonestown massacre, the only thing likely to kill off the cult is for its funds to dry up.

Sunday night, "60 Minutes" gave a vigorous twist to the process of turning off the spigot.