

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

# Clearwater Sun

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## Love, religion and softball

WE SHOULD love our neighbors, but we don't have to play softball with them.

That sums up the action by four local churches in refusing to play against the Scientology slowpitch softball team in the Clearwater church "A" league.

Tuesday night, the team from The Light of Christ Catholic Church simply refused to show up for its scheduled game against the cult's team.

Two other churches—Skycrest Baptist and Trinity Presbyterian—had earlier told the city's parks and recreation department they will not play the Scientologists.

One other church—Lakeside Community Chapel—has informed the Clearwater recreation softball league it, too, will refuse to play against the cult's team.

THE CHURCHES deserve the applause and support of the entire Clearwater community.

If the Mafia tried to enter a church softball league, the bona fide churches would be justified in saying, "We won't play that outfit. It's not a church."

If a team of legal secretaries or plumbers or Rotarians entered the church league, the church's response would rightfully be the same: "You're in the wrong place."

That's what the churches are saying to the Scientologists.

**CULT SPOKESMAN** Mitt Wolfe called the churches' ac-

tion "Religious bigotry." He implied that the boycott stems from the fact that Scientologists have been convicted of crimes.

Obviously, something has changed the churches' minds. During the past four years the churches competed against the cult, and the idea of boycotting the Scientologists was not seriously discussed.

But by last summer, the anti-cult rumblings began. Then, in the autumn, a federal court convicted nine Scientology leaders on various counts.

Reams of Scientology documents were entered as evidence, and the world got a further look at the illegal, unscrupulous and downright nasty things Scientologists will stoop to.

As Mike Wallace phrased in Sunday on "60 Minutes," "This is a church?"

The four bona fide churches in the "A" league have answered that question with a resounding "NO!"

WE AGREE. Scientology is never tire of repeating—is not a church. It is a profit-making institution.

If the churches won't play the Scientologists, let them join the men's league and see what happens. Perhaps a boycott will also arise there.

If so, so be it. Somehow, by whatever lawful means that can be employed, Clearwater must get its message across to the cult: "You are not wanted here. Depart. Now."