Applied Scholastics: A Testimony from Inside

Original posted letter and follow-up correspondence · 1995

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Date: Thu, 15 Jun 1995 12:09:38 -0400 (EDT)
From: "M. Council" <council@luna.cas.usf.edu>

The following is a statement in a letter dated 6/95, from a person who wishes to remain anonymous who now lives in Florida. Posted with permission.

SOME NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED BY THE POSTER.

My experience with Scientology was mostly through one of their Applied Scholastics schools. I was looking for something other than the public school system and found an Applied Scholastics school that claimed to be non-denominational, a sane environemnt, and an individual self-paced academic program for the student. I was told that it was based on the breakthrough study technology of the great "educator" L. Ron Hubbard. I didn't really know anything about LRH being the founder of Scientology at the time, and once I found out, I didn't know anything about Scientology anyway except for the fact that John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Tom Cruise and other "successful" Hollywood actors were members.

The claim that the school was non-denominational was a bold-faced lie. Everything was Scientology. Knowledge reports were kept on students, Q & A upon admissions which were kept in files and used to smear students who "blew", stat charts, study courses and the comm course (which being under the Tax Exempt umbrella makes them "religious" courses), ethics policies, success stories, Friday graduation and wins sharing and applause, etc., etc.

As for the sane environment, that was a joke. Everything always depended on the mood of the ED, who, while a "clear" was extrememly reactive and moody. It was common when students would come in to timidly ask me "What mood is Joan in today?" If she lost control of the courseroom she would literally start stamping her feet and banging her fists on the tables and screaming till her face turned red. She would stick her face two inches away from a student's face and freak out on them. She really managed to have the students intimidated. Of course when she wasn't around they would imitate her and laugh about what a basket case she was. If anyone dropped a piece of clay from the clay table she would start screaming for knowledge reports and run around waving her arms screaming "who did this, who did this." But when she would talk with the parents, she would be Miss mellow smiles and calm, tender voice, and say how much she cared about their children and she was there to help them. Then whenever any of the students would try to tell their parents what was going on, the parents wouldn't believe them. One thing I decided while being there and seeing all of this, is I would rather believe my child in a lie than to disbelieve him in the truth. Of course neither of these options are desirable. But I have seen the trust taken away between a parent and their child when the parent pooh poohs the child coming to them with something upsetting them that is true. I learned my lesson, and I learned that I will not sit by and let lies and emotional abuse go on anymore without speaking up.

Regarding Applied Scholastics promises and the "credible evidence" it produces. They say that with the Learning Book and/or the Basic Study Manual (Learning How to Learn for younger children) that once the student takes the course all the problems they had in school with learning are "handled." They make a big deal about misunderstood words, which to a point is true. I do believe the dictionary should be used in public schools much more than it is now. But these kids had real learning problems. After the "study courses" they still had them, but in an environment where results can be manipulated, they seem to have been eliminated. Then comes the time when the person gets back in the real world without the "Scientology" support and control system, and they are no better off than before, and in

some cases depending upon the alienation from the real world, they are worse off. Of course they say even learning disabilities are just MUs, and when the child looks up the word and understands it everything is fine.

I don't know if any of you were in any part of an org where you had to report to LA on the org's stats each Thursday, but if you were I'm sure you saw how stats can be "inflated" and manipulated [poster's note: MMMMmmm! Tastes just like Allstate!]. These are the same stats Applied Scholastics uses to advertise how wonderful they are.

There are stats for student points that each student has to keep for each day. Also there were different stats for courses completed by each of the students that week as well. You understand the different conditions Power, Affluence, Liability, etc., I hope. These are determined by the weekly graphing of your stats. The school I worked at manipulated these by inflating student points. They would take students off of the courses they really needed to get a standard academic education, such as math, history, etc. which take a lot of work and time to get the course completions. Then they would be put on some really educationally benign program of drawing a picture, calling each picture an art course, counting it as a completion, plus taking the points for it. If they were far behind the previous weeks completions and points, all of the students would draw several pictures, taking an art "completion" for each one and the points that go with it. Also, they would be given silly drills to do that they could complete rapidly and do them over and over and over and take 75 points each time the drill was done and that brought up the student points rapidly. That way going by how many points the studnets were completing each week made it seem like they were doing a lot of work, but the thing is, it was quantity work and NOT quality work. All of these many completions and student points looked really great on paper. My, how much work it appeared the students were doing. HA!! Of course the work was useless as far as what really needed to be done for the students legitimate high school studies.

So any proof of anything can be manipulated, and believe me it's not just the CoS that does this with all their programs. Of course all of the students from this school have high GPAs when they transfer out of her shcool or "graduate." But what people don't realize is that the school doesn't give anybody a grade lower than a B. A or B is the lowest grades you can get, unles you transfer out without taking an exam on the course in question to test what you have really learned. In that case she will give you a C. I worked with the "examiner" and when the student takes the exam at the end of the course, the examiner goes over all the questions they missed with the student and will try to lead them to the correct answer. If they can get them to remember the proper answer the first time around, even if they originally missed several questions, they get an A. If they can't remember, they are given the questions they missed on the test on a pink sheet and told what part of the book to look over to get the answers, and then they retake the questions they missed. Then, if they still miss the questions, the process is repeated for those questions until the student finally memorizes the answers to all the qeustions they missed. Even if they missed 70% of the test the first time, then 40% of the questions the second time, then 20% the third, and finally get those right on the fourth try, they would still be given a B for that course. Now is that a dream come true for someone who wants a high GPA...to go to a school that you know the lowest grade you can make is a B! Now I know why colleges want the SAT tests to be taken before a student can enter their college and not just go by graduating GPAs alone. If they come from a private school such as the Applied Scholastics school I worked at, the students look good, but they didn't really learn, and the GPAs are not fair in comparison to people who went to schools where you didn't get the opportunity time after time after time to do the same questions over and over on the same test until you get it right and get a B. In most schools if you get a C, D or F on your exams the first time you get a C, D or F, period.

Now I can't say if all Applied Scholastics schools all over the country work this same way. I do know that the ED (who was also the director and teacher for the "high school" level) at this school trained at Delphi in Oregon, and True School in Clearwater.

Another thing about the high school I forgot to mention. The courses they did were not high school courses for the most part. The English courses they did were from workbooks for middle school, and even from a workbook for grades 5 and 6. She had several students doing courses in math from 7th and 8th grade workbooks. When they would transfer out, she would put down on their transcripts for English courses either English I, II or III on their transcript, give them credit for the course, and of course the A or B grade. THESE KIDS NEVER HAD ANY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH! I even witnessed her give credit for courses that the students never even took! When they transferred back to public schools they had trouble keeping up, had to have extra tutoring, etc. Some of the kids couldn't even get their credits accepted, and were told they would have to start over again in the 9th grade. The few who did manage to have some of their credits accepted really had to work hard to catch up.

The ED was a clear, and I must admit she was the most reactive person I've ever met (I guess she may have had her engrams removed but just had a very bad case of "Body Thetans"). She was also an experienced auditor. She would get the parents and/or student back alone in her office and would run procesing on them and they didn't even know

what was happening. They would come out and say to me, "I can't believe the things I told her about myself (or my family)." or, "Gee, I went in to talk about one thing, and she ended up making me talk about something else."

Since I only worked at the one Scientology Applied Scholastics school I can't say if my experience was typical or isolated. I can say that we regularly had L.A. telling us what to do, and that they were always checking up on us. When some representatives came from Clearwater to evaluate the school, their main concern was that there wasn't a picture or a bust of LRH in reception, and that there should have had more CoS materials on display. So now I ask you, does that say to you what their main priority was?

From what I have seen, LRH Tech with its checks and balances works perfectly for church courses because that will be the environment most people stay in once they start up the "bridge." But when you apply this to the "secular" world where it's not for the mindless absorption of Scientology but must be used practically in other circumstances, it didn't really work. All the things these students learned, once they got back out into the real world, were not the promised panacea. The one thing that did make a difference was they did learn to use a dictionary and to make sure they understood the words in the courses they were studying. Yes this is an excellent practice but you don't need the church or LRH to learn that. The use of dictionaries was in existence long before LRH was born and using dictionaries was a practice used before he ever had a brain to think it up. But who knows, maybe he was Daniel Webster in one of his many adventurous past lives.

I still remember the school I worked at, the Scientologists were always taking about the "Wall of Fire" and different OT states and that the material you handle is so volatile that it can cause you to either go insane or commit suicide. Of course if you get through it you are at a new state of "spiritual enlightenment." I know if something has that effect on a person it isn't because they are learning something cosmically revealing, but because they are opening and giving their mind to influences they shouldn't be.

Here is what I find so nonsensical about the statement that Scientology is a "religion:" A religion supposedly deals with things dealing with the human spirit or soul, etc.; i.e. spiritual matters. If you look at Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hindi, etc., they teach the path of spiritual enlightenment freely. As a matter of fact, they strive to teach as many people as possible to go as far as they possibly can in their religion FREELY. Spiritual levels are attained by how much time and heart you put into seeking that knowledge, not by your ability to PAY. No other "religion" is on a "per pay" basis. Everything they have to offer on the road up the bridge is only attained through money or in a few circumstances by becoming a "slave' for the org and trading your life for it. All their magazines and brochures always have to do with "buy" this and "buy" that. When you give something by insisting on payment, and the public cannot attain that "spiritual" enlightenment other than by payment [also known as "donation"], you are SELLING. When you sell, you are a business, and when you are as diversified as CoS is, you are a corporation.

Scientology says it is a religion. If they copyright all their spiritual beliefs and make them available by payment [donation] only, then that is SELLING. An organization that makes profit by selling is a business or corporation, not a "religion." Maybe Texaco, IBM, Microsoft and AT&T should call themselves a "religion" also. Then, they won't have to pay taxes on their profits either.

Scientology officials say they are for free speech, and that is the truth. They just left out the part about being for free speech for THEMSELVES, and not for OTHERS. Well, it's about time they learned that people aren't going to sit around and let that happen.

This has been a letter, posted with permission, from someone with no net access who lives in Florida now. Some names were changed.

They're learning. They just keep making the mistake of underestimating people and overestimating themselves...

----------m. council, human being
Hell, if you understood
everything I say, you'd council@luna.cas.usf.edu
be me. -Miles Davis

((The following is from follow-up e-mails with Maggie. It has been slightly edited to protect the source, the end-product was submitted for review. Some inaccuracies were connected later. Tilman))

From: "M. Council" <council@luna.cas.usf.edu>
Subject: ok, more about schools!

I spoke with my contact who sent me the information about the Applied Scholastics school she worked for in ((deleted)). Points from the notes I took during our conversation:

Yes, they do use E-Meters at those schools! Just not on wog kids; when they are used, they are not called e-meters [which allows them to deny it without losing conscience]. They're called "learning accelerators."

Yes, you do have to write success stories or you won't pass the class! If you write one they don't like, you do it again until they do like it. She related a story of one ((deleted)) kid who drew a picture [sometimes pictures were okay instead of written success stories] of genitalia as his success story [he later quit the school].

Success stories were required to name the class or course taken, say how wonderful it was, and how much you learned. Better stories told of applications of the new 'knowledge'.

It's so easy to open a school! Private schools are businesses. That's why ((deleted)) could open one with just a ((non pedagogical credential deleted)) ! You need an occupational license, and that's it, in ((deleted)). Also, and this is verrrrrry important, accrediting agencies are not always what they appear to be.

Deceptive curriculum: I was told that there was one outdated Chemistry book that supplied all the material for three courses in Chemistry.

KRs: Admissions form had no tests, no academic questions. It read like a sec check! and the answers were kept in the file. All learning disabilities are really M/Us ((misunderstood words)) anyway, according to ((name of the directress deleted)). Eventually, says my source, a few kids rightfully removed the KR's from their KR file. When they were led to write KR's they did not realize these would be kept on file for permanant reference. They also removed KR's from their friends KR files as well. When a few left the school they were Fair Gamed. My source was outraged by this, and it was part of her decision to leave the school.

Child neglect: Not every kid there was a scientologist; many were not. You could really tell the difference betweent the scientology kids and the others, though. The Scientology kids were hungry, dirty, scabies, "pathetic", inadequate clothing, etc. HRS ((Health and Rehabilitative Services, an agency looking for neglected children)) had checked into some of the children.

My source has lots of stuff documented. She may be willing to go to authorities soon on this; I hate to push her because ((reason deleted)). Apparantly they've already suffered a bit of fair gaming themselves.

>
> I hope that concerned citizens will tell that it is a clam school.
>

Concerned citizens [e.g., former students, parents of same, etc.] are all frightened of the threats that were made to them. No one has spoken out.

>
> Is this post public or "eyes only" ? I'd like to add it to the previous
> post about that school on my page.
>

It's public as long as her name and the name of the town, the school, and the school's owner, ((deleted)), are nowhere in the material.

----------m. council, human being
"How come your ashtray didn't stand up by itself?"
-from Arnie's Favorite Questions for 'Dangerous' Oatees
----------KoX------SP3----------

Newsgroups: alt.religion.scientology
Subject: Re: Some [legitimate!] questions about Scn
From: "M. Council" <council@luna.cas.usf.edu>
Date: Fri, 20 Oct 1995 13:48:08 -0400

On 16 Oct 1995 jamesc@utdallas.edu wrote:

[snip]
> This brings up something that I've been considering for a while. What,
> exactly, does the Church have to say about disorders like ADD, dyslexia,

> and others?

According to an ex-employee of a private school licensed by Applied Scholastics [scientology<tm>], the Hubman thought ALL learning disabilities were the product of M/Us, or "misunderstood words." That's why his whole educational philosophy revolves around looking words up in the dictionary; hardly a new or unique idea.

Apparantly, there was little else: when the school moved after 3 years, four of the students were "grandfathered" back into high school. They did have to catch up because they were behind. Other students who had not been in high school prior were told they would have to go back grades. Others simply got their GED.

What's really sick is that the owners / operators of this school were never forced to close it down; instead, they just moved it to another location, and they are now bilking a new generation of parents out of their childrens' education, as well as their money.

----------m. council, human being
Hell, if you understood
everything I say, you'd council@luna.cas.usf.edu
be me. -Miles Davis
----------SP4-KoX---------