



CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY INTERNATIONAL

1 June 2010

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL & FIRST CLASS MAIL

Joe Childs & Tom Tobin
St. Petersburg Times
490 First Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

Dear Mr. Childs and Mr. Tobin:

I have received your letter of May 11, 2010 concerning the Sea Organization and children. My response is set forth in this letter and in the enclosed responses to your specific questions and statements.

Intrinsic to the Scientology religion is the deepest respect for the family and for family life. Procreation and the rearing of children is a part of life—it is one of the eight dynamic urges to exist that manifest themselves in all people. The eight dynamics are fully explained at www.scientology.org under the “Beliefs and Practices” section.

All Scientologists, staff and parishioners alike, are free to make the decision whether to have a family. This includes such personal matters as birth control and abortion, which the Church does not take a position on. That said, the Church does not advocate abortion to Church staff or parishioners. Anyone claiming to have done so on behalf of the Church, or alleging they did so in conformance with some alleged policy (written or “unwritten”) is either lying or did so in contravention of the Church’s view on the matter. At no time has any Church staff member been “forced” to obtain an abortion.

THE SEA ORGANIZATION THE RELIGIOUS ORDER OF THE SCIENTOLOGY RELIGION

The Sea Organization (commonly referred to as the Sea Org) is the fraternal religious order of the Scientology religion and is composed of the most dedicated Scientologists in the world—individuals who have devoted their lives in voluntary service to their religion.

The core of every great world religion in history has been a group of individuals dedicated to achieving the goals of the religion. In Scientology, these individuals are part of the Sea Org. Numbering approximately 6,000 worldwide, its members play a crucial role in virtually every aspect of the ministry and expansion of the Scientology religion. And like their counterparts in other faiths, Sea Org members occupy the most essential and trusted positions in the senior Churches in the Scientology ecclesiastical hierarchy. Sea Org members sign a religious covenant committing themselves to one billion years in service of the religion as a symbol of their commitment to their faith. No other Scientologist signs such a covenant. There are thousands of Sea Org members, tens of thousands of Church staff members and millions of Scientologists.

CHILDREN AND THE SEA ORG

Unlike other religious orders in which members take vows of celibacy, men and women in the Sea Org may marry. Since 1986, however, it has been the policy that Sea Org members wishing to have children may only do so outside the Sea Org. This has been the unwavering policy of the Church for nearly a quarter of a century. The policy only applies to members of the Sea Org and specifically does not apply to other Church staff members or parishioners. Sea Org members are well aware of this policy, as is anyone contemplating joining the Sea Org.

Virtually every Scientologist in the world knows that members of the Sea Org do not have children. In joining the Sea Org one agrees to a lifetime commitment to the Church – a commitment that includes the forbearance of

having children. This is similar to the commitment members of other religious orders make upon joining their order, such as vows of celibacy, poverty, or seclusion. As in these other religious orders, members of the Sea Org know what they are agreeing to well in advance of joining the religious order.

Individuals who join the Sea Org and later determine they want to have children, may then leave the Sea Org. They receive assistance from the Church, including immediate pre-natal care, medical care, financial assistance and even help in finding housing and employment upon departure from the Sea Org.

Departure from the Sea Org in such circumstances does not mean that the individual is no longer a member of the Church. The individual simply carries on as a public Scientologist with whatever their chosen career may be. Once their children are grown or of age where they can choose to join the Sea Org themselves, the parents are welcome to return to the Sea Org.

This policy evolved out of respect for families and deference to children. Over the more than four decades of the Sea Org's existence, the Church has tried to balance the needs of families with the realities of life within a religious order. Many occupations are not conducive to raising families and organizations have evolved different solutions. Some religious orders forbid sex and marriage outright. The military disciplines couples who become pregnant in a combat zone. The Sea Org has developed a policy that is fair to the individuals concerned, as well as to the religious order as a whole.

THE HISTORY OF CHILDREN IN THE SEA ORG

The Sea Org was founded in 1967 at sea. In 1968, on board Flagship Apollo (known then as the Royal Scotman), there were approximately forty children of Sea Org members. The whole forward area of the ship was set aside for the children to be looked after. L. Ron Hubbard saw to their schooling and education, as well as their recreation, under a trained staff. Mr. Hubbard regularly received reports on the welfare and educational progress of the youth aboard the ship.

It soon became clear that having children on the ship was not fair to the children, to their parents, or to the other Sea Org members aboard. There was limited opportunity for the parents to spend time with their families. Moreover, in some ports visited by the ship, such as some of the more untamed areas of North Africa, children had to remain aboard for their own safety. Yet, having to be confined aboard ship when the ship was in port was not fair to the children. In short, it was impractical to have children aboard the Royal Scotman, so parents with children were sent ashore to land-based Sea Org facilities.

By the mid-1980's, however, even at such land-based facilities, experience was teaching that the long and demanding working hours required of Sea Org members and the need for Sea Org parents to be able to go to any remote area of the world on a moment's notice were obstacles to parents properly raising their children. Thus, a policy was implemented requiring that any Sea Org couples desiring to have children do so outside the Sea Org. The policy was not retroactive, so at the same time the facilities provided for the children of Sea Org members were greatly expanded to fully provide for their schooling, care and recreation.

As this was nearly 25 years ago, all of these children have since grown up and the Church no longer needs to maintain the same facilities. A great many of the children raised in the Sea Org have gone on to pursue very successful careers in the Church and are happy, productive members of society who appreciate the environment in which they were raised.

Turning to your questions, it is evident that your sources are claiming that they made choices regarding their pregnancies which they now appear to regret, each with their own seemingly "electrifying account" of these incidents. There is no truth to the allegation that *any* of these people were *forced* to have abortions at any time or were made to make these decisions against their own volition. In fact, it is actually impossible to "*force*" someone to do what is alleged.

There is a standard procedure for someone to end his/her relationship with the Sea Org, which every Sea Org member knows. That anyone claims that instead of simply leaving, she became pregnant without informing her husband is outrageous. It is difficult to imagine the effect this would have on a child if he/she were to discover—such as by reading it in the newspaper—that a mother claims the only reason they were conceived was as an excuse to abandon career and/or spouse. For you to print that such an act was undertaken because of the Church or the Sea Org is offensive to anyone—especially to your sources and their children—regardless of the falsity of the allegation.

Beyond that, the Church will not comment on what your sources claim other women may or may not have told them about their own experiences. To do so would be an egregious violation of their rights to privacy, something we refuse to do. Your attempt to publicize the very personal and private choices of these women is offensive in the extreme but typical of the blind bias that guides the *Times* any time it reports on the Church of Scientology.

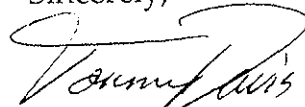
This is not the first time malicious allegations such as those you are basing your proposed report on have been spread about the Church and the Sea Org. Certain former members of the Sea Org, aware of false allegations such as these, voluntarily provided the enclosed declarations in order to set the record straight regarding their experiences in becoming pregnant and departing the Sea Org. They amply demonstrate the manner in which the Sea Org handles staff pregnancies. Contrary to the versions from your sources, these people uniformly state they were treated with compassion and understanding.

Finally, your letter, and from all indications the story that will result, once again, ignores the real story of Scientology. The Church of Scientology is a globally recognized supporter of some of the most successful social betterment programs on Earth. We have over 8,500 Churches, Missions and affiliated groups, with millions of members in 165 countries. Just since the first of the year, we have opened new Churches of Scientology in Brussels, Quebec, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, with more new Churches scheduled to open in the coming weeks. Our humanitarian initiatives and social betterment programs continue to salvage people the world over in the fields of drug abuse prevention, literacy,

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criminal reform and disaster relief. This is our mission. Activities such as these are what members of the Sea Org have dedicated their lives to forwarding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tommy Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tommy Davis
Church of Scientology
International

Enclosures