

Opinion

Sunday, November 16, 1980

Scientology ad

IN TODAY'S Sun the Church of Scientology of California has purchased an eight-column advertisement titled: "Dear Citizens of Clearwater."

We would have preferred not to run this ad. We continue to believe that the so-called Church serves no meaningful public purpose and represents a grave threat to the health and wellbeing of the Clearwater area.

Nevertheless, Sun readers have a right to know and, we hope, to understand why the Sun feels compelled to publish this advertisement.

The Sun has the absolute legal right to decide what it shall and shall not publish both in terms of news stories and advertising. This right is brought to bear in those situations that demand that some form of censorship or editorial control be imposed.

This usually occurs as editing of news stories, where we eliminate pure propaganda, distortions and untruths. This is designed to insure greater accuracy in our reporting and presenting of the news.

Sometimes we edit because there are only so many inches of space in our newspaper. In all cases, we try to make an honest exercise of editorial judgment.

PAID ADVERTISING space presents different circumstances. In the usual con-

text, readers expect advertisers to present themselves, their products and their institutions in the best possible light. Therefore our advertising acceptability standards permit censorship only insofar as is necessary to comply with the laws of defamation, to uphold standards of good taste and to prevent known fraudulent offers.

The Sun respects our readers' ability to accept or reject the claims made in commercial advertising messages. That is especially true with the Scientology ad in today's Sun. The Sun has intensively covered Scientology so that our readers can draw their own conclusions.

Today's Scientology ad does meet our impartially applied standards of advertising acceptability. Therefore we believe the Scientologists are entitled to purchase this advertising space and print their own version of the facts.

THE SUN shall never knowingly become a pawn of the Scientologists and we shall continue, on our editorial page, to raise a vigorous voice against the Scientology movement.

We believe even more strongly, however, that what readers resent most, if they detect it, is a failure of their newspaper to play fair by not allowing both sides of this or any other controversial matter to be heard.

BIBLE THOUGHT

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. Prov. 25:19.