

RELIGION

Court puzzles over Scientology

Theologians and academics clashed Friday in a French court over whether the Church of Scientology is a sect or a religion as church members went on trial on charges ranging from fraud to manslaughter.

"Scientology may not be the biggest of sects, but it's the most dangerous because of its national and international power," said Jacques Troussard, a Roman Catholic priest who has been campaigning against cults for 15 years.

"Scientology is an intellectual construction invented solely to avoid the law," the French priest told the court in the central city of Lyon where the trial began Monday.

Twenty-three Scientologists are on trial on charges including manslaughter, embezzlement, fraud and complicity in a trial prompted by the 1988 suicide of a church follower in Lyon and a later crackdown on cults by the French government.

The Church provided a string of

academics to argue it was a religion. By winning recognition as a religion, the church would defuse some of the charges because it would have a legal right to appeal to its members for funds.

Massimo Introvigni, an Italian sociologist from Turin University arguing for the church, said "there are no doubt more suicides in the French police than among Scientologists, or any other religious movement."

Bryan Wilson, a sociologist from Oxford in Britain, also said that "changes in society give rise to new forms of religious expression which are ill accepted by leaders of older religions and are criticised, especially by the media."

And American theologian Franck Flynn, from Washington University, said church practices resembled those of other religions. He said the church had won previous court cases defending itself as a religion.

Prosecutors accuse the church of "exploiting the good faith and gullibility of its victims for commercial profit, through pseudo-scientific and paramedical means.

The trial was prompted by the suicide of industrial designer and former Scientology follower Patrice Vic, 30, who killed himself by throwing himself out of a window in 1988.

His widow Nelly said the church drove him to suicide by pressing him to take costly church courses for which he lacked the money.

The religion, founded in 1954 by the late American science-fiction novelist L. Ron Hubbard, claims more than eight million adherents worldwide, including 4,000 in France.

Members include Hollywood film stars Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, John Travolta, Kirstie Alley and Lisa Marie Presley.

The trial is expected to end Tuesday.

Helping dual-faith families cope

With the surge in intermarriage rates in recent years, members of Jewish/Christian families, seeing a growing need, are working hard to create written resources to help themselves and others like them.

The November 1, 1996 release of Bubbe & Gram: My Two Grandmothers (ISBN 0-9651284-2-3, \$12.95) marks the first full-color picture book written specifically for young children who have one Jewish parent and one Christian parent. This book describes how a child loves and learns from her two very different grandmothers.

"I hope that Bubbe and Gram will help children of Jewish/Christian heritage—and their extended families—to realize the joys and the opportunities that come from having the richness of two religious traditions in one family," says author Joan C. Hawxhurst, who

wrote the book to honor her own two-year-old daughter's two religiously different grandmothers.

Another helpful children's resource, Hanukkah and Christmas at My House (ISBN 0-9630934-0-1, \$6.95), written and illustrated by interfaith mother Susan Enid Gertz, has been hailed by Child magazine as "a sensitive account of how to observe both holidays while preserving the integrity of each." Hanukkah and Christmas shares the message that families of all religions love their children and their traditions, and the joy of the holidays comes from that love.

Adults in interfaith families will appreciate the honest advice and gentle humor of Stanley and Mary Rosenbaum, authors of Celebrating Our Differences: Living Two Faiths in One Marriage (ISBN 0-942507-69-9, \$19.95). The Rosenbaums,

who have been intermarried for over 32 years, address topics from weddings to funerals, from children and sex to holidays and culture.

Interfaith Wedding Ceremonies: Samples and Sources provides practical advice and ceremony solutions to engaged couples from different faiths—Jewish and Christian. It gives couples a basis from which to create a spiritually meaningful ceremony drawing from both faiths without disrespect to either.

All of these books are available through Interfaith Family Resources (IFR), a consortium of companies offering products and services to interfaith couples, their families, and their friends. IFR is an independent group not affiliated with any religious institution.

For more information or to order, call 800-530-1596.

Evangelist Billy Graham announces October 1997 crusade

Over 400 local clergy and lay leaders met at the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel to launch plans for Evangelist Billy Graham to return to the Bay Area for a major crusade, October 1997.

Rev. John Butrin, Pastor, Sequoyah Community Church, Oakland, presided over today's gathering. Rev. Karl Overbeek, San Jose; Rev. Donald E. Green, San Francisco; and Rev. Frank Jackson, Oakland, introduced crusade leadership to pastors and church leaders from the Bay Area.

Dr. Sterling W. Huston, Director of North American Ministries for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), responded to the invitation by reading the following statement from the evangelist:

"I am honored to accept the invitation of the churches and community leaders in the Bay Area to hold a crusade in October of 1997. Our team will be coming with the singular desire to serve the churches by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and calling people to a life of discipleship. We want to be your partners in this great mission, and we

are deeply dependent upon your prayers that God will bless every part of this witness to the San Francisco Bay Area."

The Rev. Cliff Barrows, Music and Program Director for Billy Graham crusades and associate in ministry for more than 50 years, told those present that San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose have grown in many ways since the last crusade. He said that the greatest need today is to renew the spiritual foundations upon which this area was built. He also noted that the message Billy Graham and the crusade team will be bringing has the power to change individual lives, churches and communities; and that Mr. Graham and the team will be praying with them for a spiritual awakening throughout Northern California and the Bay Area.

Other participants in the launching included Dr. P. T. Mammen, Pastor, New Life Church of the Nazarene, San Francisco; Mrs. Elaine Rhodes, University Baptist Church, Santa Cruz; Rev. Paul Hoffman, Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran, South Bay; and Rev. Ron Kenoly, Guest Soloist, Jubilee Christian Center, San Jose.

For the last several years, pastors and church leaders in the Bay Area have been urging Billy Graham to return to conduct another crusade here. Support for this return visit is

history of bringing pastors, churches and people together who perhaps would never meet. His ministry breaks down denominational, cultural and life style barriers. We wel-

come this proven messenger of God to bring the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ," said Dr. Donald Green, Pastor, San Francisco Christian Center.

"The Bay Area is ripe for revival," said Rev. Frank Jackson, Pastor, Faith Presbyterian Church, Oakland. "The Billy Graham crusade opens a rare window of opportunity for believers in the Bay Area to unite, and under

the guidance of the Spirit, advance God's kingdom with a 'two legged' Gospel... a 'good news' that comes packaged in both word and deed... that speaks clearly to both body and soul. Billy Graham is a uniquely qualified and credible witness—across denominational lines—to declare that kind of Gospel. He is relentless in proclaiming the love of God through Christ that crosses racial, economic, age and gender barriers... at the same time the crusade ministry of 'Love In Action', which targets specific material needs of a particular community, is love in work clothes."

"My desire is to see Christian unity across the Bay Area," said Ledene Johnson, Chair, South Bay General Crusade Committee. "Great strides are already being made in the areas of prayer and reconciliation, but there is much more to do. I am excited Billy Graham has agreed to come to our area for I believe this crusade will be the fire that will ignite us and unify us in the love of Jesus Christ for the betterment of our communities."

Rev. Karl Overbeek, Pastor, Church of the Chimes, San Jose, said, "I am convinced that Dr. Billy Graham is the one person who can help unite us as Christians and a community. I am thrilled by his acceptance of our invitation to bring our hope to reality."

In addition to coming to the Bay Area, Mr. Graham has announced that he will be holding crusade meetings in April 1997 in San Antonio, Texas.

A BGEA Christmas Television Project in December and January is expected to reach people in 150 countries with the Gospel message.

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—Dr. Donald Green, Pastor, San Francisco Christian Center.

widespread and broadly representative of the Christian groups in the area, including evangelical and mainline denominations. The evangelist's last crusade in the Bay Area, held in San Jose, September 27-October 4, 1981, was attended by over 197,000 people.

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Tracey Harris: Keep On Believin'



Tracey Harris

Some dreams die hard, and Tracey Harris was determined not to see her moment pass her by. With one of the finest voices in contemporary R&B and Gospel, faith in the lord and unyielding perseverance, Tracey emerges on her debut album, Keep On Believin', as one of the brightest new stars in the Gospel firmament.

Born and raised in Portland, Oregon, headquarters of her new label, Pamplin Music, Tracey was introduced to a Christian way of life by a girlfriend who was a pastor's daughter. Her mother, Shirley Nanette, is a popular jazz singer in Portland, and all kinds of music from pop to R&B, jazz and Gospel were heard in her family home.

Tracey had a natural talent to sing which her mother nurtured, though never pushing her daughter to follow in her footsteps. Solos in high school choir and a jazz vocal group built the young Tracey's confidence as she also began performing at weddings and community functions.

"Stevie and Gladys especially taught me about singing from the

heart," says Tracey. "As I got older, I began to pay more attention to the technical aspects of singers' voices, but intensity and emotions are what's always meant the most to me."

Tracey didn't get serious about music as a career until her early 20's, when she began getting work singing commercial jingles and doing occasional band work in her hometown. She met the man who would become her husband and producer/songwriter, Zachary Harris, when he was attending college in Portland. Zachary was a native of Connecticut, where

he returned every summer to work in his brother's recording studio.

A visit to Connecticut one summer proved auspicious for Tracey, as Zach's brother was producing the first album on star-to-be, Najee, and Tracey was asked to sing some backup vocals.

"That's when the music bug really bit me," Tracey recalls. "I thought, 'Boy this is fun...and you even get paid for it!, there were a lot of opportunities that presented themselves after that, but nothing ever quite worked out."

Tracey finally got a break when she received an introduction from her pastor to the executive producer of Motown Comes Home, a Grammy nominated album then in the works which was to feature Motown celebrities performing Gospel music. Tracey gave Motown a tape and was subsequently offered a slot, billed as Tracey Harris, singing, ironically, "Just When You Think It's Over," written by members of her production team, the APDA Group, during the height of the couple's despair.

After a short lull had passed in the wake of Motown Comes Home, which was nominated for a Grammy,

Tracey came to the attention of Pamplin Music and she soon had her long-awaited record deal.

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