

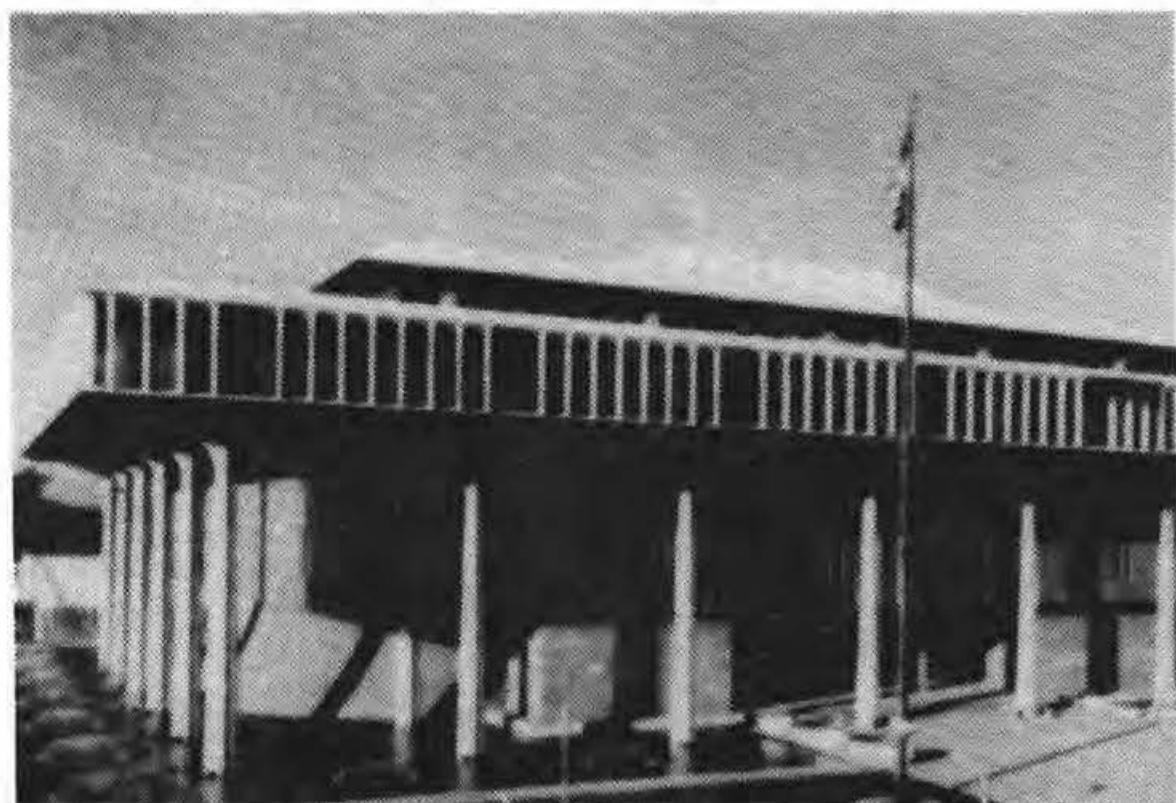
Children's Healthcare Is a Legal Duty, Inc.

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Number 1, 1992

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Hawaii Statehouse

Victory in Hawaii

In June, Hawaii enacted a law making it the second state in the nation to remove all religious exemptions from the duty to care for a sick child. The first state was South Dakota which repealed its exemptions in 1990.

In August, 1991, we received a call from Debbie Lee of the Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS). She said that the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) had ruled Hawaii out of compliance for federal child abuse funds because its laws implicitly provided a religious exemption from reporting. She asked for information about what other states had done and the merits of different types of statutes.

CHILD Inc. provided a wealth of information and urged the Department to sponsor a straight repeal rather than just a modification of the statute.

The next we heard from Hawaii was in early

February. Lori Nishimura of the Honolulu County Prosecutor's Office called and asked for information about court rulings on religiously-based medical neglect. She was preparing testimony in support of a bill sponsored by DHS that did indeed remove religious exemptions from the definitions of child abuse and neglect.

CHILD faxed her a complete list of 40 prosecutions and their dispositions over the past decade. It demonstrated that parents have no constitutional right to withhold medical care on religious grounds.

Christian Science position answered

At the Senate hearing the Christian Science lobbyist Robert Herlinger cited the case of Kathleen and William McKown, Christian Scientists who let Mrs. McKown's son, Ian Lundman, die of untreated diabetes. The Minnesota courts dismissed manslaughter charges against them in rulings which Herlinger claimed were based on religious freedom rights.

Thanks to material we had provided about the case, Nishimura was ready for it. "I can't

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believe he would cite the McKown case as one for their side," she said. She explained that the rulings were not based on First Amendment rights, but due process rights because the Minnesota legislature had provided a religious exemption to criminal neglect. "What we need to be concerned about is whether the same thing could happen here," she said. The disposition of the McKown case illustrated the importance of removing religious exemptions, she argued.

The chairman of Senate Judiciary cut Herlinger off and bluntly told him he did not agree with his conception of children's rights. The bill sailed through the Senate with a strong recommendation from Senate Judiciary.

Challenge in Hawaii house

The House Judiciary, however, held a hearing on the bill without its chairman or representatives of organizations endorsing it. There Herlinger professed his willingness to accept what he labelled "the Illinois model." An organization known as Victims of Child Abuse Laws (VOCAL) had made inroads with some members of the committee, who were inclined to believe that the DHS was too intrusive in the lives of families.

Debby Lee told us that DHS had been frequently criticized by those legislators on several different fronts and had been virtually ordered to accept the Christian Science church's "compromise." She said her director had decided to capitulate. She faxed us the church's proposal.

CHILD critiques church's proposal

The next day we sent Lee a five-page fax setting forth the shortcomings of the church's proposal.

Two weeks later we received word from Lee that the director had reversed herself and decided to stand firm for the original repeal bill.

House Judiciary held another hearing on the bill. The chairman pointed out that the church's proposal was so confusing that reporters of child abuse and neglect would not know whether sick Christian Science children were supposed to be reported or not. He cited tort liability for failure to report and urged a clear standard.

The chairman did tell Herlinger that he

would be happy to consider another proposal agreeable to the church if it included appropriate protection for children.

As far as we have been able to determine, the church did not return with another proposal.

CHILD member lobbied for victory

CHILD member Lisa Collinsworth of Honolulu wrote to many legislators and Governor Waihee in support of the bill. She was raised in Christian Science and now runs a day care center; her letters were strong and lucid on the endangerment of children by Christian Science.

The bill passed the House unanimously.

It was a joy to work with Hawaiian advocates for the bill. From the beginning, Nishimura was upbeat. "The women's caucus is our strongest special interest group," she said. "The bills for women and children are the ones surest to get through the legislature."

What kind of a state is this?, I thought. There is a state where women are the strongest special interest group? Our society could learn a lot from the gentle Polynesian culture of our youngest state.

Lundman's daughter now in Hawaii

This victory in Hawaii was especially precious because Ian Lundman's sister, Whitney, now lives there. Their father Doug is not a Christian Scientist. He returned to Minnesota to be close to Whitney after Ian's death. He incurred heavy legal expenses fighting for her custody, but the court ruled against him and also let the McKowns move her to Hawaii to live with them.

The court has ordered them to provide her with needed medical care. But Hawaii's new statutes will give her an extra level of protection.

Dissent may split Christian Science church

Massive high-level resignations at Christian Science headquarters in Boston are the latest sign of turmoil over the church's media ventures and publication of a book on founder Mary Baker Eddy and church doctrine.

Several members have called it the most serious crisis the church has faced since the death of Eddy in 1910. Three Christian Science teachers have circulated a 342-page document calling for the resignation of the board. They have said the church "cannot afford" another year or even "another month like recent ones." They have accused the directors of encouraging "developing schisms in our church" and risking "the possible loss of Christian Science."

Book rejected in 1948

The book in question is entitled *Destiny of The Mother Church* and was written by Bliss Knapp, a prominent early member. He submitted his manuscript to the church for publication. In 1948 the board of directors refused to publish it because it elevates Mary Baker Eddy to a virtual goddess and the equal of Christ. Knapp then published the book privately.

Publication tied to will

Knapp's widow Eloise and sister-in-law Bella Mabury bequeathed their estate to the Mother Church (the denominational headquarters) on condition that the church publish the book as an official statement of church doctrine.

If the church did not comply with the terms by May, 1993, the will provided that the money, now more than \$98 million, go to Stanford University and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

In the fall of 1991, the church board of directors reversed its 1948 decision, published Knapp's book, and directed church reading rooms to sell it.

The book has provoked a storm of controversy because of its presentation of Eddy as another Christ. Dissenting Christian Science teachers have stated that Knapp's book contradicts Eddy's own statements and is "undoing more than a century of work" by the church's Committees on Publication "to correct just such misconceptions."

CHILD Inc. sees the book's publication as a desperate grasp for money needed to pay for church broadcasting projects and sees the

broadcasting as a public relations ploy to counter media coverage of deaths of Christian Science children. Consider the following shifts in church attitudes.

Church scholars worked to demystify Eddy

In the 1960s, Christian Science scholars Robert Peel and Stephen Gottschalk, with doctorates from Harvard and Berkley respectively, began publishing books on the place of Christian Science in the history of American religion.

Peel wrote a scholarly three-volume biography of Eddy. Both Peel and Gottschalk expended great energy to demystify Eddy, promote the intellectual credibility of her and her theology, and show historical and doctrinal ties to mainstream Christianity. They argued at great length that Christian Scientists do not worship Mary Baker Eddy and that she herself did not want to be worshipped.

Dividends of public relations efforts

Their work helped build a good public image for Christian Scientists as reasonable, cultured, well-educated people. That image, in turn, has helped Christian Science lobbyists win a massive array of religious exemptions from child health care requirements. Legislators did not comprehend that these attractive people with their smooth public relations skills were asking for the right to allow preventable deaths of children.

In 1978 Rita and Doug Swan, who later founded CHILD, decided to speak publicly about the death of their son Matthew because of Christian Science. They spent a year soliciting print media coverage, but the newspapers and magazines all refused to cover it. We suspect the cowardice of the print media was partly due to journalists' respect for *The Christian Science Monitor*.

In the fall of 1979, the Phil Donahue program gave the Swans an hour on national television to tell about their son's death. We believe, in all modesty, that the program changed the status of the Christian Science church irrevocably.

Church opposed broadcasting in 1979

The church decided to build broadcast media facilities. The decision startled the membership because the church had repeatedly said that television was not an appropriate vehicle for promoting Christian Science doctrine. In May of 1979, for example, the board of directors complained about "radio preachers and television evangelists," who use "modern-day electronic wizardry" and make religion a commercial product. "Mrs. Eddy," said the board, "did not favor attempts to saturate the public with publicity about Christian Science or to gain massive exposure." See "Church in Action," *The Christian Science Journal* 97 (May 1979): 320-1.

The board asked the members to spend more time in quiet study of Eddy's writings and to listen for the "'still small voice' of God heard by Elijah after all the storms had passed," instead of wishing for an "electronic church" presentation.

"Now is not the time," said the board, "to embark upon any general participation in radio and TV in the form of a series or regular schedule of broadcasting."

TV broadcast to rebut Swans

Within two years, however, it became time to do so. First came a television program responding to the Swans' appearance on *Donahue*, which churches got local stations around the country to air. Then Monitor Radio was created. It produced a "regular schedule" of news programs, which were first given and then sold to radio stations, many of whom receive public funds. Then the church built short-wave radio transmitters capable of beaming its programs around the world.

Late in 1986 the church bought Channel 68, a television station in Boston. According to David Morse, president of the Christian Science Monitor Syndicate, the church "wanted to recapture" its "voice in the [Boston] market." We note that the death of local Christian Science toddler Robyn Twitchell was then being investigated by the Boston police and Suffolk County District Attorney.

Later the church developed *World Monitor*, a

daily television news program that aired on the Discovery channel throughout the country.

Why?

Most expensive of all is a cable television channel called Monitor Channel, which became operational in 1991. Reportedly, it cost the church \$8 million a month.

Why has the church spent such enormous sums of money on a media empire it formerly disparaged? The official reason given was that the church wanted to "bless all mankind" with Christian Science, that the world was hungry for the church's perspective, and modern technology would enable them to reach a much wider audience.

TV expenses force downsizing of newspaper

In 1983 Katherine Fanning was brought in as editor-in-chief of *The Christian Science Monitor*, the church's newspaper. She had won a Pulitzer prize for a series published in the *Anchorage Daily News*. At the *Monitor* she won several honors, including honorary doctorates from Harvard University and Smith College. She was the first woman to be president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

On Thursday, November 10, 1988, the California Supreme Court ruled that Christian Science mother Laurie Walker must stand trial for letting her daughter die of untreated meningitis. The ruling also meant that two other California Christian Science couples who had been indicted for letting their children die without medical care would have to stand trial.

On Monday, November 14, 1988, Fanning and her two top editors, David Anable and David Winder, resigned because the board had decided to cut the *Monitor* staff by 25 to 50%, reduce the size of the paper from about 30 to 16 pages, and pour hundreds of millions of dollars into broadcasting.

We believe the two events are connected though we cannot prove it. The board of directors may have thought public outrage over the dead children could be deflected by its mass media ventures.

Quest for respectability

John Hart, a non-church member who anchored *World Monitor*, said the church was willing to pour such vast amounts of money into television because "it gets a presence. It gets the name Christian Science around the world in a very respectable way."

Respectability has always been a high priority of this upper crust church. CHILD members can cite dozens of examples of the church's Pharisaical emphasis on the superficial trappings, on making clean the outside of the cup and platter.

Furthermore, the church's attempt to create its own media empire is typical of how it has long dealt with the unnecessary deaths caused by its belief system.

Responds only on its own terms

The church has repeatedly refused to face the Swans in the broadcast media. But it responds with its own presentation, completely shielded from inconvenient questions of objective interviewers. First, it produced its own half-hour television program to answer the Swans and got it carried by hundreds of stations. Then it solicited testimonies about healings of children by Christian Science for Robert Peel's book, *Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age*, which is admittedly designed to answer the Swans.

Five weeks after Rita Swan spoke at a child abuse conference in San Diego, Nathan Talbot, manager of the Christian Science Committees on Publication (i. e. lobbying and public relations), sent a three-page letter with personal inside address and a 127-page book to all the conference attendees. The letter claimed that Talbot was just like them, working toward "our common goal of protecting the health and well-being of children." The postage alone was \$2.56



Mother Church interior, credit Boston Globe

per packet, and the packets were sent to about 600 people.

Control of members' news

The church's leap into television offered far more possibilities for creating its own version of the news. Members could get all their news from church-owned media. The bad news about injuries to children could be ignored or reprocessed. Holding that the material body and world are unreal, Christian Science theology itself makes it easy to block out inconvenient information. The prestige and influence of *The Christian Science Monitor* upon print journalism could be transferred to broadcast journalism.

But the church, as *Boston Globe* writer Ed Siegel pointed out, did not understand or respect television adequately. To show members that this expensive venture was an evangelical outreach, programming included daily readings of church lesson sermons. Such "sermons" consist only of passages from the Bible and the doctrinal textbook *Science and Health*, which take about 45 minutes to read. No commentary or illustration is allowed; those are prohibited as mere human opinion. Members read the same set of passages

six days a week and then go to church to hear them read on Sunday.

Another program on the church's network consisted of reading *The Christian Science Monitor* of fifty years ago.

Yet another program was Mrs. Talbot interviewing Mr. Talbot. A viewer reports that Mrs. Talbot did not come off as a liberated woman capable of posing challenging questions.

Funds plundered

And the price tag was very high. Some church employees have told the press that the church has spent \$500 million on its media operations since 1984.

Though the church had more than \$100 million in unrestricted funds in 1985, it reportedly exhausted them in 1991.

It then began taking money from restricted funds. In two months it borrowed \$41.5 million from the employees' pension fund of \$115 million. It also borrowed \$5 million from Eddy's trust fund and \$20 million from an endowment fund set up just a decade ago to subsidize losses on the newspaper.

After *The Boston Globe* disclosed these borrowings, church officials claimed they were covered by some \$250 million invested in their cable channel as an asset on the books. The church's former legal counsel Brooks Wilder pointed out that the church was, in essence, covering bills with its own junk bonds.

The directors stubbornly ignored warnings from external auditors and an internal Finance Committee over the past three years. Indeed, one warning from the auditors was deleted from the final copy of a report. The directors hid the staggering deficits from their members by transferring them from the Monitor Channel to the church Publishing Society.

The directors also ignored all financial projections, industry experts, and media research. Many had pointed out that the technology for adding more channels to cable systems is not even in place yet. Regardless of the quality of the church's programming, many cable companies can not add another channel.

Critics charge that the directors needed the

\$98 million Knapp-Mabury estate to subsidize the media losses and were willing to change church theology to get it.

Dissent and democracy unwelcome

In the past few months church directors have been tightening the screws against internal dissent over the Knapp book. Last fall a special issue of *The Christian Science Sentinel* urged an end to opposition or even discussion of the issues.

Nathan Talbot reminded members that Eddy had put church government in the hands of a self-perpetuating board of directors. She did not provide, he said, "for many commonly accepted human ways and means, such as church conference debates and membership votes, political pressures, the marshaling of human opinions, personal position papers and organized dissent."

Eddy expects members to "unite in prayer and go forward in unity," he said.

Resignations follow

A source in the church said Elaine Natale, associate editor of the church's religious periodicals, was suspended by the board after she refused to write an editorial justifying publication of Knapp's book.

On February 25, the editor and the three associate editors of the religious periodicals resigned, saying they were unable to serve as editors under present board policies. The four are also Christian Science teachers responsible for the training of spiritual healers. Such teachers have hundreds of students affiliated with them for life. If the board strips the editors of their accreditation as healers and teachers, their students will have to be retaught by teachers loyal to the board in order to have status within the church.

Other resigning editors were denied access to information on their computers and were escorted from the church center by security guards. Sources say the directors are now requiring new practitioners and Mother Church employees to take oaths pledging their support for the broadcast operations, the Knapp book, and the board of directors.

Eighteen of the 21 editorial employees of the

religious publishing division have resigned. Kurt Stark, a past president of the Mother Church, was fired from the committee which draws up the lesson-sermons for all Christian Science churches because of his support for the dissenters.

Loyal replacements installed

Talbot was appointed the new editor of the religious periodicals. Al Carnescioli, who has been Committee on Publication (COP) for southern California, replaced Talbot as the new manager of all the Committees.

Board chairman resigns

On March 7, Harvey Wood, chairman of the Mother Church board of directors, resigned. The directors picked Carnescioli to replace Wood and brought Victor Westberg, COP for northern California, in to be the next manager of the COPs.

Talbot left his new post as editor of the religious periodicals and became the new president of the Mother Church.

Other high level resignations include those of the treasurer Donald Bowersock and the architects of the television projects, Annetta Douglass and John Hoagland.

Decision to cut broadcasting losses

Also on March 7 the church announced that it was putting its cable channel up for sale and would shut down the operation if no buyer was found by June 15. A few weeks later the church decided to shut it down on April 15.

But that decision does not solve all the church's financial problems because it will cost over \$40 million to close down the cable channel. Hoagland promised a year's severance pay to all the channel's 400 employees; the church also still owes several million dollars in other contractual obligations associated with the Monitor Channel.

The severance packages angered many church members because most church employees were receiving only one week's severance pay for every year of service. Most of the television employees were not Christian Scientists, had

worked for the church only a few years, and yet received far more generous severance pay.

More sales announced

Having failed to obtain a buyer for its cable channel, the church can recoup losses only through a "fire sale" of equipment, which the church estimated could net \$20 million.

The church has also announced its intention to sell Channel 68, which it purchased for \$7.5 million and then, according to a church source, invested between \$40 and \$50 million in it. Internal documents indicate the church hopes to be able to sell the station for \$1 million.

Sources expect the church to drop an additional media project to cut losses. The most likely choice is its monthly *World Monitor* magazine, which has lost \$7.6 million over the past ten months.

The church has promised the members it will reduce expenditures for the current fiscal year to its projected annual income of \$70 million.

Future theology flip-flops proposed

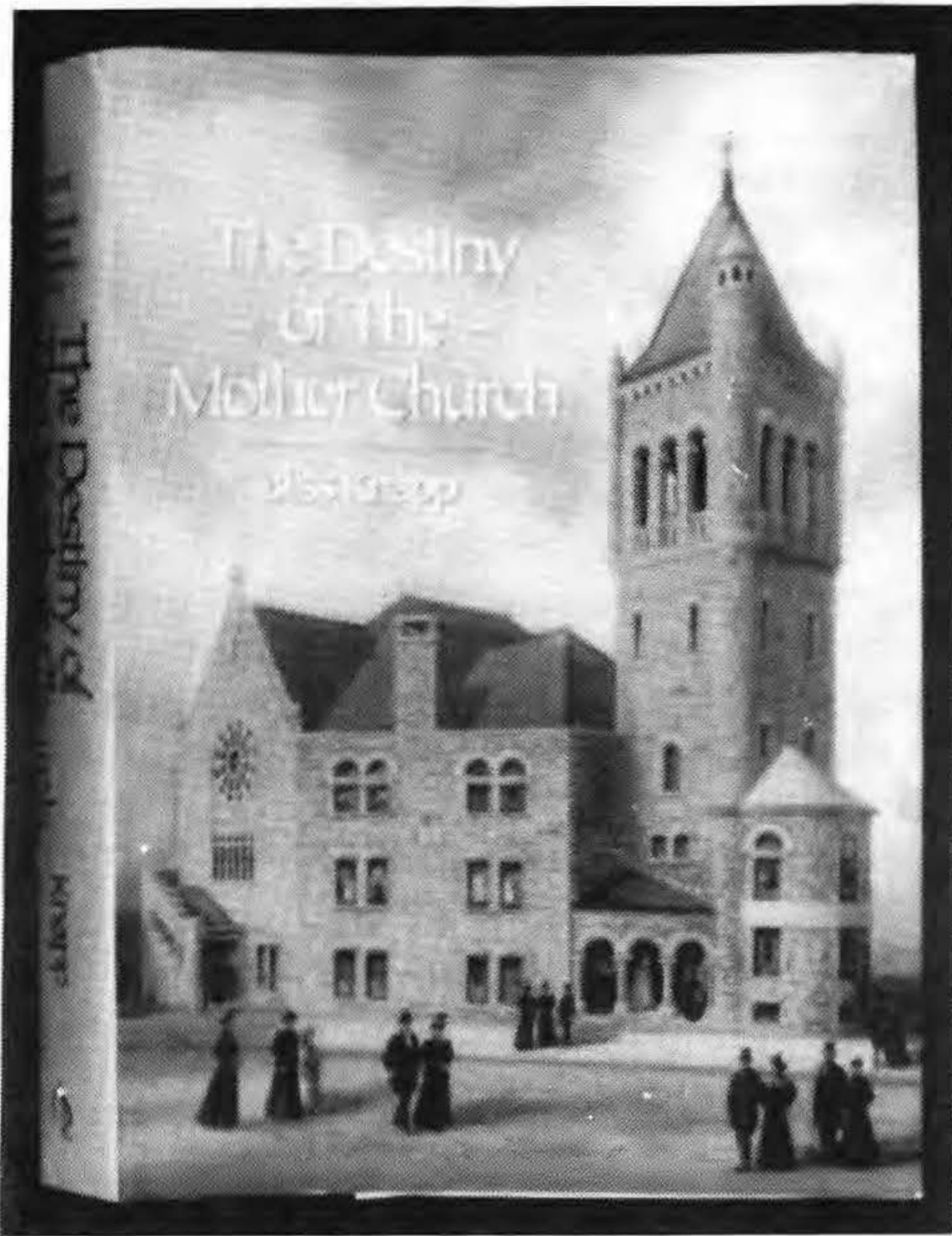
A more startling concession to members' concerns were hints that the board may withdraw the Knapp book. The hints were reported shortly before the church's Annual Meeting for the membership opened on June 8.

A senior church official told the *Boston Globe* on May 28 that John Selover, one of the directors, has discussed downplaying the book.

"Since the need for the bequest was no longer critical, Selover said the church might pull back on efforts to obtain the bequest for now and at some future time press forward to obtain the larger part of the bequest, using tactics of wearing opposition down through legal maneuverings," the official said.

The statement is a candid admission that the content of Christian Science theology is being decided by weighing the need for money against the intensity of members' concerns.

Taken in part from *The Boston Globe*, 26 February ff.; *Time*, 14 October 1991; *Forbes*, 17 September 1990; *The Washington Post*, 4 April 1991; and the *Boston Business Journal*, 29 June 1987.



Will new theology get Mother Church \$98 million?

The Christian Science church's publication of a book threatens to tear the denomination apart. It is ironically entitled *The Destiny of The Mother Church* and was written by Bliss Knapp, a prominent official in the denomination's early history and associate of church founder Mary Baker Eddy.

Knapp submitted the manuscript to the church for publication. In the 1940s the board of directors refused to publish it because it elevates Mary Baker Eddy to a virtual goddess and equal to Christ. Knapp then published the book privately.

Knapp married into the Mabury family, who amassed a fortune in California agriculture, real estate, and oil. His wife Eloise Knapp and sister-in-law Bella Mabury bequeathed their estate to the Mother Church (the denominational headquarters) on condition that the church publish the book as an "authorized and official"

statement of church doctrine and have it be "prominently displayed in substantially all Christian Science reading rooms."

If the church did not comply with the terms by May, 1993, the will provided that the money, now more than \$98 million, would go to Stanford University and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

In the fall of 1991, the church board of directors reversed its earlier decision, published Knapp's book, and directed church reading rooms to sell it.

Knapp's explication of prophecy

In the book Knapp describes Jesus and Eddy as God's two witnesses, "two Great Lights. . . [who] appeared on the fourth day of creation," "two great rulers in the heavenly kingdom," he "over the foundations" and "Mrs. Eddy ruler over the gates by which we enter the Holy City." Eddy's "work or assignment was complementary to that of Christ Jesus," Knapp says.

Knapp claims that Eddy's arrival on earth was foretold by the biblical prophet Isaiah in verses such as "Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." He speaks of Eddy's "mission as a ruler in Israel." Knapp discusses the prophecy in the last chapter of Daniel about the Book of Truth containing the names of all God's people that was to remain sealed until the end of time. In the Bible account, an angel says the end will occur in three and a half years; the angel also mentions 1290 days and 1335 days.

Knapp claims that the dates are a cryptic way of referring to 1866, when Eddy "discovered" Christian Science; 1896, an important year in Eddy's development of the church *Manual*; and 1941, when the world would fully acknowledge Eddy's role as Leader. In other words, Knapp thought the public in the 1940s was ready for his book on her role.

Knapp also identifies Eddy as "the Woman" in Jesus' parable about the three measures of meal. He calls her "the original Woman" through whom "the second appearing of Christ in the flesh" has come.

He tells of Eddy resurrecting a servant who had supposedly died. "Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Jesus, Peter, and Paul all overcame death through

their understanding of the Fatherhood of God," Knapp says. "Now that the Motherhood of God has been revealed to us through Christian Science, experience has proved that women as well as men can defeat the last enemy and raise the dead."

He also contends that Eddy is the woman described in the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation. The woman has the moon under her feet, puts her feet on both earth and sea to show her domination of both, gives birth to a male child (Christian Science), and triumphs over a dragon.

Act of pluralism?

Many Christian Science teachers, practitioners, and scholars have protested publication of the book and charged that the board was motivated by the money in the Knapp/Mabury estate. But John Hoagland, director of church media operations, claimed that publishing Knapp's book was just "an act of pluralism."

Netty Douglass, a manager of the media operations, claimed that the church's respect for "intellectual freedom" had motivated the publication.

Indeed, the church did attempt to package the book in that vein. The church issued it as part of a series of "biographies" of Mary Baker Eddy and added an ambivalent preface.

Are terms of will met?

That is not good enough for the lawyers representing Stanford University and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. They charge that the church has not fulfilled the terms of the bequest. Many reading rooms have not displayed the book and church officials have denied the book is "authorized and official literature," say the lawyers.

Furthermore, the lawyers point out, the preface added by the church "contains an effective disclaimer as to the doctrinal correctness of the book." Although 115 of the book's 260 pages are "patently doctrinal in nature," the preface by church officials says the book "is to be considered only a biography" and that readers "may find 'differing interpretations of events or

concepts' in the book," the lawyers point out.

This is a far cry from the absolutism that has characterized the church's "authorized literature" in the past. As Rosalie White, a Christian Science practitioner in Hallandale, Florida, said, "Any literature you see about the Mother Church has to be authenticated by the Mother Church. If it's not true, it can't have any value to it. What comes from the Mother Church is true."

For the Christian Scientist, the term "authorized literature" has the authority a papal bull would have for a Catholic. It is not one of several optional interpretations.

Lawyers for Stanford and the museum have won delays in disbursement of the estate so that the courts can study whether the church has complied with the terms of the will. The next hearing on the estate will occur August 31 in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Some members are glad to have Knapp's doctrines published. A Dallas group calling itself The Gethsemene Foundation has issued a statement praising the board for purging Boston of "the intellectuals." It asserts that those who object to Knapp's imagery of Eddy as appearing on the fourth day of creation with Jesus and guarding gates to the Holy City are being "handled by projected Romanism." In other words, those sinister Roman Catholics are projecting errors to infiltrate the critics' thinking.

Taken in part from *The Miami Herald*, 11 October 1991; *The Boston Globe*, 26 February 1991 ff.; *Time*, 14 October 1991; and *What Did Mrs. Eddy Say?* by Paul Smillie n.d..

On priorities

The Christian Science church has been rife with internal conflict since about 1975 when dissident Reginald Kerry distributed his letters to the membership. A long succession of heroes barely get themselves established before they fall in disgrace.

Points of conflict include secularization, as represented by the broadcasting activities; how Eddy should be regarded, the board's alleged lack

of obedience to Eddy, misuse of money, inadequate antipathy to Roman Catholicism, and inadequate vigilance in purging the church of homosexuals.

No concern about medical care for children

Never have we at CHILD Inc. heard one word of debate among church members about deaths and injuries to children because of Christian Science. We are not aware of any Christian Scientist who has suggested that maybe they should take sick kids to a doctor.

The discovery of insulin, antibiotics, the new meningitis vaccine, seven indictments in five years—none of these ruffle the Christian Scientists. Questions about the interests of children are not even asked, let alone discussed.

Consider the following characters in the power struggle within the church.

Katherine Fanning

The press loved Katherine Fanning, the newspaper editor who resigned rather than allow cuts in staff and coverage. But in 1985 when *Family Circle* magazine had committed to print an article about the Swans and CHILD Inc., Fanning took it upon herself to call the magazine editors and badger them into cancelling publication of the article. Freedom of the press and dead children were less important to her than being a good soldier for the church in 1985.

Allison Phinney

He resigned as editor of the church's religious periodicals apparently in protest over the church's commitment to broadcasting and Bliss Knapp's book deifying founder Mary Baker Eddy. A fellow Christian Science teacher called him "a man of incredible integrity, honesty, and dignity."

In contrast, we have seen his persona as cynical. He referred to the devout Carolyn Poole and fellow ex-Christian Scientists of her Christian Way ministry as "so-called Christians." He told the membership that the Swans' "attacks" on the church "come not because we're doing something wrong, but because we're doing something right."

It is, he said, "because the true idea of Church is being demonstrated with new power that the carnal mind is stirred to such heights of opposition." In other words, the Swans' motive was not the death of their son, but jealousy of church healings.

Elaine Natale

She resigned as associate editor of the church's religious periodicals because, a source said, she refused to write an editorial defending the Knapp book. In 1988 she appeared on ABC's *Good Morning, America* to defend her church's determination to withhold medical care from children. She refused to appear on the program if Rita Swan were present, so ABC cancelled its second invitation to Swan. (The first invitation was cancelled after the Swans had already flown to New York to appear on the program.)

Judge Thomas Griesa

He is a U. S. District Judge in Brooklyn who has circulated memos to fellow church members warning about the costs and risks of the board's expansion into broadcasting. But Griesa was willing to use the prestige of his position as a federal judge to write the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1985 and "vigorously urge" that the government allow Christian Scientists to withhold medical care from children. "It is inconceivable that this should be associated in the slightest degree with 'child neglect,'" he said.

Stephen Gottschalk

He resigned as a church editor and consultant and later protested the investment in broadcasting as a secular diversion. But Gottschalk has no reservations about withholding medical care from children. In a *Christian Century* article, he dismissed the painful death of Christian Science toddler Robyn Twitchell with a shrug: "The death of a child under any circumstances or method of care is jarring." Two years later in *The Los Angeles Times* he urged the public to discount "isolated failures" such as Robyn's death and focus on "the *real* news—that consistent spiritual healing goes on happening."

Robert Peel

He too protested the broadcasting activities as worldly contamination and urged a return to pious study. In his book *Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age*, he referred to "the shocking incidence of child deaths in several belligerent faith-healing groups," while simultaneously defending the right of Christian Scientists to withhold medical care from children. He reported "several typical examples" of Christian Science healings of meningitis because, he said, of publicity given to Matthew Swan's death from meningitis. This is the church's typical zero sum approach: one "healing" blots out one failure.

The Crosby Kempers

Crosby Kemper, chairman of the board of United Missouri Bank, has called upon the Mother Church board of directors to resign for "shooting dice" with the church's assets and secularizing its mission. He said he has given more than \$1 million to the church.

In October, 1991, Rita Swan spoke about deaths of Christian Science children at a Kansas University Medical Center conference on children, medicine, and religion. The Christian Science church was invited to present its point of view and did send a speaker.

According to conference organizers, Mrs. Crosby Kemper was indignant that K. U. allowed Swan to speak and threatened to withdraw her donations from the university. The conference planning committee had to provide the vice-chancellor with documentation about its intentions in inviting Swan. Finally, a still unhappy Kemper withdrew her threat.

Earle Armstrong

Armstrong has complained of the board's fiscal mismanagement and secrecy and urged members to demand changes in board leadership. He is a Christian Science teacher in Sarasota, Florida, the city where seven-year-old Amy Hermanson died of untreated diabetes because of her parents' reliance on Christian Science.

Armstrong also lost his own son Bruce at age 11 in 1955. The death certificate lists the cause of death as a cerebral hemorrhage caused by a ball hitting his head. The boy died in a hospital.

Did Armstrong first rely on Christian Science to heal his son and finally dash to the hospital? Or did he take his son to the hospital immediately? What does he tell his students to do for their children in similar circumstances?

In the July, 1977, issue of *The Christian Science Journal* Armstrong wrote an article mentioning that his "younger son was lost in an accident." But, he says, "this trying experience, far from driving [him and his wife] from Christian Science, literally bound us to Science and compelled us to dig deeper into its study. . . ." He quotes Eddy's claim that "any material evidence of death is false" and says that through their study he and his wife "erased progressively from memory the false pictures of accident and loss."

Joy Tupper

She has also complained about the board's fiscal mismanagement. Her son, Marshall Kent Tupper, died of diabetic acidosis, at age 17 in 1971. The death certificate cites a hospital as the place of death, but a physician also states that he "never" attended the deceased.

Four months after the Swans' first appearance on television about their son's death because of Christian Science, Tupper's testimony appeared in the March, 1980, issue of *The Christian Science Journal*. In the statement Tupper expresses gratitude that Christian Science healed her of "the incipient symptoms of diabetes" when she was a child and later of grief over her son's death. She does not mention that her son died of untreated diabetes.

A few months after the testimony was published, Tupper was listed as a church-accredited practitioner, making her living by encouraging others to rely on the methods that killed her son.

What about dead kids?

Where is the conscience of these people? They are incensed about money matters, but not bothered by unnecessary deaths and injuries of children. Indeed, some of them have even been determined to prevent the deaths from coming to public attention.

For those of us who have lost loved ones because of Christian Science, it is insulting to

hear that the Knapp book and the depletion of the church treasury are the most serious crisis the church has faced in the past eighty years.

Mississippi parents and pastor indicted in faith death

In December, 1991, parents and a pastor in Athens, Mississippi, were charged with manslaughter in the death of a 13-year-old girl.

Rebecca Lynn Davis died May 16, 1991, at her home. An autopsy report showed that she was diabetic, but the cause of death was listed as suffocation due to breathing in vomit, which in turn was caused by overfilling of the stomach.

The entire congregation to which the Davises belonged had been on a fast for three weeks before her death as a ritual for restoring the minister's health. Apparently, Rebecca's health deteriorated so much during the fast that her parents, David and Ann Davis, finally decided to give her inordinate amounts of food.

Church relies exclusively on prayer

Their church was Grace Baptist Church. Its pastor, Richard Vaden, had split with the Southern Baptist denomination and formed an independent church, which believed in relying exclusively on prayer, fasting, and anointing for healing disease.

According to a source, twelve church members, including Vaden and his wife, were in the Davis home when Rebecca died. The source also claims that, during Rebecca's final hours, Davis made such statements as, "She was borned by c-section and that was wrong" and "I've got six more I'll bury before I would call a doctor."

Just before Rebecca lapsed into a coma, he called the pastor of Trinity Church in Columbus, Mississippi, and asked him to come anoint Rebecca with oil because she was very sick.

Minister attacks parents

Davis owned and operated a cabinet shop. All his employees were members of Grace Baptist. Reportedly, they worked about 65 hours

a week at substandard wages. Davis gave Pastor Vaden a substantial percentage of his income.

After Rebecca's death, Vaden reportedly preached a sermon criticizing the Davises. The Davises then left Grace Baptist Church and lost their work force. Vaden and the congregation set up a rival cabinetry business.

Vaden had elaborate regulations for the women who belonged to his church. He had a list of thirteen household chores they were supposed to do daily, including cleaning the oven and removing mildew. Spider webs had to be removed bi-weekly. He had other lists of weekly and monthly chores. Women who were pregnant, sick, helping the sick, or "on a God-ordained rest" could have "exceptions to the rules."

Defector tells of life in Vaden's church

A young woman in Hamilton, Mississippi, Amanda Blanton, has written of her experiences and observations as a member of Grace Baptist Church, whose pastor discouraged his congregation from use of medicine. What follows is a condensed version of her unpublished manuscript.

People often ask, "How could a grown man or woman get that caught up in a cult like Vaden's?"

But he didn't start out the way he is now. It was a gradual process over a period of years. When my family first started attending Grace Baptist Church, I was only thirteen years old. Richard Vaden had just left Southside Baptist Church because of his belief in Predestination and Election. A few of the families from Southside left with him to form his new church.

Then he differed with Southern Baptists only on Predestination and Election. Next came Sunday School curriculum. He said it was wrong because it was written by men. So for both hours on Sunday morning he became the teacher.

He preached against women working, wearing makeup and jewelry, and wearing pants. But he didn't demand that you do what he preached. He allowed the Holy Spirit to convict the members.

Started unaccredited school

He soon started the Christian School that still operates today. At first he said it was state accredited. Any graduate would be able to attend college. Later I learned there was no record of the school in Jackson. Some of the teachers happened to be licensed, but others were not even high school graduates.

The girls were eventually allowed to complete only the eighth grade because they just needed to learn how to be housewives.

Soon we stopped singing out of the regular Baptist hymnals and started singing psalms. Then Vaden did away with the piano. He said it had no place in the church. Of course, he was always backing himself up with scriptures.

Next he preached on women's dresses. They should be loose (no waistline) and an acceptable length. We should wear nothing to bring attention to our bodies.

He also preached against Christmas, Easter, and all holidays, calling them pagan. We could not celebrate birthdays.

Watching television, listening to the radio, and reading magazines were also terrible sins. He taught that birth control was wrong because it took reproduction out of God's hands. God knew how many children you needed. Sex should be for procreation only.

Teachings divided families

One may well imagine how these teachings caused much turmoil and divisions in families like my own who didn't follow Vaden's teachings. Vaden realized this and used scriptures like Matthew 10: 34-42, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. *And a man's foes shall be those of his own household.*" He told us to obey Matthew 19:29, which calls upon Christians to forsake their families. He said those who were of God would be persecuted and despised by their families and friends.

At this time all the members were at varying degrees of obedience to his teachings. Then he preached a real turning-point sermon. He said,

"Do you believe I am a man of God? If you didn't, you wouldn't be here listening to me preach. So since I am, the Holy Spirit leads me and gives me the words to preach and you should do them." He cited Hebrews 13: 17, "Obey them that have the rule over you (i. e. ministers) and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls."

Preached against medical care

Next came his sermon on doctors and medicines. At first it was all right to go to the doctor to set broken bones and have babies, but not for medication. He cited James 5: 14-15 calling for prayer and anointing when members are sick.

Next it became a sin to even visit the sick in a hospital. It destroyed your witness because those who saw you go to the hospital might think you were getting medical treatment. Even getting blood tests for marriage became a sin. Therefore, those who got married at Vaden's church were not legally married according to the State of Mississippi.

Shunning to enforce obedience

To enforce obedience, Vaden started having the Lord's Supper every time the church met. He wouldn't serve you communion if you were not following all of his rules. Vaden would shun or withdraw fellowship from any member who did not practice all his teachings. That was the deepest humiliation of all because if you were not a part of the church, you were all alone.

At this time my elderly grandfather was very ill. He was in and out of the hospital often. I and other family members took turns sitting with him at the hospital. That was one thing none of us could give up. In February of 1984 Vaden withdrew fellowship from us. My Aunt Dot was eventually drawn back in to Grace Baptist and agreed to stop her visits to the hospital.

Use of fear explained

You have to understand the fear that was placed upon us. Vaden took scriptures like Luke 9: 62, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God," and Luke 17:2 that one should rather be cast into

the sea with a millstone around his neck than offend his brothers in Christ.

If we stopped where we were and left the church, we would fit in nowhere and be all alone. We would have to face the wrath of God. He would surely "destroy us and that without remedy" as Proverbs 29:1 says.

We really had no choice but to keep marching on or be destroyed.

After we were disfellowshipped, my parents tried to make me see where Vaden had gone wrong. But I just wanted to be one with that church. Nothing else mattered. At that time I strongly believed all Vaden's teaching and was striving to do them. Only that wasn't good enough. You had to be in all the way or you were out.

My daddy finally decided he could not put up with this anymore. He said that if I came home with one more thing that I couldn't do, he would not allow me to go back.

Isolated from church and family

I was in a predicament. I didn't believe in women working so I couldn't support myself. I was living at home with my parents, but had completely separated myself from them. I stayed in my room except to eat and do my chores around the house. Now the church had withdrawn fellowship from me. The worst scenario had happened.

I called Vaden and Aunt Dot when my parents were not around. Aunt Dot told me I had lost my zeal for the Lord. But I believed with all my heart that I was on fire for Him and following all of Vaden's rules. I continued to do so for about six months after my attendance was stopped.

... to save people from further harm

Slowly I began to realize that I had to start functioning in this world again. The church was not there for me anymore.

I strongly believe that I was brainwashed by Richard Vaden. The members are all good people who have been grossly misled. But for the grace of God and the wisdom of my parents, I could easily be in their place.

I am writing this in an effort to save people

from further harm. I only hope that the authorities will stop the man behind this madness, Richard Vaden.

Slavery case settled in Oregon

Seven members of Ecclesia Athletic Association pleaded guilty January 17, 1992, in Portland, Oregon, to conspiracy to deny the civil rights of children by subjecting them to involuntary servitude. Sentences ranged from 27 to 97 months in the federal penitentiary without parole.

In February, 1991, the U. S. Attorney's Office charged Ecclesia founder Eldridge Broussard, Jr., and seven adult members with conspiracy and 29 counts of slavery. Broussard died at age 38 before the case was settled.

Assistant U. S. Attorney Stephen Peifer called the Ecclesia case "the largest mass child abuse case in Oregon and the largest child slavery case in the history of the United States."



*Broussard and daughter Dayna
credit Portland Oregonian*

Girl's death started investigation

Investigation into Ecclesia began after the brutal beating death of Broussard's daughter, Dayna Lorae, in October, 1988. Two members were convicted of manslaughter for her death.

The federal indictment charged that members of Ecclesia entered into a conspiracy to market children as a superior athletic "exhibition team" in order to gain corporate sponsors. It further charged that the defendants conspired to force the children to engage in rigorous exercise, and deprive them of an adequate diet, clothing, housing and schooling.

The indictment also described a pattern of coercion and abuse: "The children who did not want to perform, who made mistakes and who did not fully comply with the defendants' orders were struck with long wooden paddles and whipped with razor straps, braided cords and rubber hoses. The children repeatedly were threatened with physical punishment and frequently were forced to watch other children being whipped and beaten."

Legal significance of federal cases

The federal cases were important in upholding rights of children that are not widely known. Slavery charges involving children are rare. The last one led to the conviction of William Lewis, leader of the House of Judah in South Haven, Michigan, and several of his disciples in 1987. John Yarbough, age 12, died of beatings at House of Judah. The U. S. Attorney's Office charged its leaders with a pattern of coercion, deprivation, punishment, and involuntary servitude similar to that at Ecclesia.

The House of Judah defendants argued the Thirteenth Amendment's prohibition of slavery does not apply to children. The Ecclesia defendants argued that all adults in the commune were guardians of the children and therefore could not be accused of slavery. But the government's success in both cases demonstrated that parents cannot allow others to enslave their children.

The Ecclesia case was also an important test of the Victims' Rights Act passed by Congress in 1990. One portion of the act is designed to minimize the trauma to children of testifying in court. Among other features, it protected the

children from having their names published in any court records. Both the defendants and *The Oregonian* opposed that provision. The defendants argued that the act did not apply to the facts of their case and was intended to apply only to "traditional" child abuse cases. U. S. District Judge Malcolm Marsh ruled that the act was constitutional and applicable to the case.

Peifer was pleased that the plea agreement saved the children from having to testify in court.

Abused children returned to parents

The present situation of the children is far from ideal, however. After the state of Oregon spent more than \$500,000 in taking custody of the Ecclesia children and maintaining them, the juvenile court relinquished jurisdiction of them. Nearly all have been returned to their parents. Many of these parents still live communally in the group established by Broussard. After Dayna's death, he renamed it Eternal Life Fellowship. The initials EL from the new name were intended to refer to Broussard, who was reverently called "Big El" by his followers.

The recent riots in Los Angeles remind us of the deprivations in America's inner cities, which enhance the attraction of leaders like Broussard and will continue to do so. Broussard looked like a classic cult leader in the media with his shrill paranoia, callousness, and zeal. He expressed no remorse or even curiosity about his daughter's death, which occurred while he was away from the commune.

Broussard sided with daughter's killers

Aligning himself with the defendants, he told the press "emphatically" that Dayna "was not beaten to death." But witnesses testified that Dayna was struck hundreds of times with a rubber hose, plastic pipe, electrical cord, etc. A sock was stuffed in her mouth and a radio turned up to drown her screams. She was slammed against the wall, thrown on the floor, bitten, and spat on. In the last minutes of her life she was hung out of a window.

Broussard tried to become the legal guardian of one of the women convicted of killing his daughter and repeatedly blamed the media for Dayna's death.

Broussard's motives

But however distorted or bizarre, Broussard's evolution must be looked at in terms of the ghetto he grew up in. Broussard always wanted the adulation of the crowd. He also wanted to save children from the waste and degradation of ghetto culture.

His life was shaped by a series of powerful dreams. The first was to become a professional basketball player. He was cut twice by the Portland Trail Blazers team and returned to Los Angeles.

Then he planned to enter the ministry and work with youth. In 1976 his father ordained him. The next year he became a television evangelist preaching the "believe and receive" message of positive confession theology. It encourages people to expect God to give them anything they ask for.

In 1978 Broussard radically switched directions again. After failing to resurrect a child from the dead, Broussard abandoned his public ministry and met in homes of a small core of believers around him for Bible study. He began advocating an austere lifestyle and rejection of contemporary materialism.

Programs for inner-city youth

When gang violence escalated around them, he moved the group into the Watts Christian Center, a huge three-story building incorporated as a church. By his forceful personality, he rid the nearby park of drugs and violence. Los Angeles County turned control of the park and its gym over to Broussard. He founded Ecclesia Athletic Association, which set up a 32-team basketball league. He received praise from politicians for his work and large donations.

In 1987, Broussard moved between 70 to 100 children and adults to a farm near Sandy, Oregon, to establish an athletic training camp. The dark side of his dreams became steadily more apparent. Children were forced through grueling physical exercises and endless hours of Bible recitation. They were severely malnourished because Broussard could not or did not

provide enough food for the camp.

Dayna's death did not shake Broussard's faith in his dream. "Our program was on the rise," he said. It would have been "an effective alternative to drugs and gangs."

He also called himself "a legitimate, under-contract, international sports figure that is attempting to bring the Olympics to Africa by 2000."

Both William Lewis and Eldridge Broussard had dreams of rescuing black people from drugs and urban violence through discipline. Their crimes are inexcusable, but, given American social structure, there will be more of these charismatic visionaries.

Taken in part from *Cult Awareness Network News*, March 1991 and February 1992; *Baltimore Sun*, 12 December 1988; *Oregonian*, 6 September 1991; *Willamette Week*, 10 November 1988; and conversations with the prosecutor.

Girl abandoned for refusing suicide pact

A Woodbridge, Virginia, couple abandoned their 11-year-old daughter by the side of an interstate highway after she refused to join them in committing suicide to be with God, police said.

The girl was picked up by a minister who saw her on the highway. Her parents, Lorne and Cassandra Cooper, were later arrested. They were charged with child abandonment and being fugitives from justice on March 21.

The girl was released to relatives in South Carolina; her brother, 5, was handed over to the county human services department.

The Coopers asked their daughter "if she would go to heaven with them, but she said no. Immediately before they put her out, she says they told her they were going to the mountains to do away with themselves to be with the Lord," a Virginia state trooper reported.

Taken from *The Des Moines Register*, 23 March 1992.