

# Scientology

## Introduction

With the recent popularization of the religious cult termed "Scientology," by such notable celebrities as Tom Cruise, John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Anne Archer, Chick Corea, Mimi Rogers, Lisa Marie Presley, and others; it has been deemed appropriate to issue this brief summary of its history and primary doctrines that are in major conflict with God's Word. The reader should always keep in mind that Christianity is not religion, religion being man's attempt to achieve through self-effort the approbation (approval) of God. Christianity is a union (relationship) with a Person, Jesus Christ, who is the unique and only begotten Son of God.

## History

The Church of Scientology was founded by the late Lafayette Ronald Hubbard. He was born in Tilden, Nebraska, in 1911. His upbringing and education, as reported by him, have been called into question by various cultic authorities and because they are incidental to the purpose of this study, they will not be reiterated herein. But as an adult, Hubbard became a prolific author, producing numerous novels (over 200) as well as nonfiction works, the most popular being Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health (published in 1950).

During Hubbard's later years he apparently went into seclusion and facts relating to his life at that time are obscure. He suffered a stroke (cerebral vascular hemorrhage) on January 24, 1986.

Scientology is considered a very eclectic (from various sources) religion. Hubbard once described it as "the Western Anglicized continuance of many earlier forms of wisdom," which include, but are not limited to, the following religious and philosophical belief systems: Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Gnosticism, the teachings of Jesus, and the writings of intellectuals, such as William James, Sigmund Freud, and Friedrich Nietzsche.

Scientology promotes self-empowerment and self-improvement. According to Hubbard, it "is a religious philosophy containing pastoral counseling procedures intended to assist an individual to gain greater knowledge of self'-a religion that changes behavior and intelligence that equips a person to handle conditions considered hopeless and assists in the study of life.

Though drawing upon the wisdom of some 50,000 years, Scientology is a new religion, one which has isolated fundamental laws of life and, for the first time, developed a workable technology that can be applied to help one achieve a happier and more spiritual existence. ("Scientology: Its Backgrounds and Origins," Scientology website)

Hubbard's first major discovery, as advanced in his book, *Dianetics*, was man's "most advanced school of the mind"-a method for alleviating unwanted sensations and emotions, irrational fears, and psychosomatic illnesses (illnesses caused or aggravated by mental stress). After the release of *Dianetics*, Hubbard immersed himself for approximately 20 years in the study of the human spirit rather than just the mind. Over time he codified his findings into the philosophy known as Scientology, which enabled man to ultimately develop his mind and advance him on the road of "Total Freedom."

Hubbard's findings were inherently religious claiming that man was neither body nor mind, but a spiritual being; therefore, his followers viewed themselves as students of a "new religion." Scientology claims to be a religion "by its basic tenets, practice, historical background, and by the definition of the word *religion* itself." It is said to have the qualities important to religion—a view of salvation, a preservation of "orthodoxy," an ethical and moral code, a healing element, and a system for members to overcome personal problems.

The "Mother Church" for Scientology is located in Los Angeles, California. It supervises Scientology churches (approximately 3,000) around the world, which calls to mind a structure like that of the Roman Catholic Church.

It allegedly is composed of more than 8 million people in 100 countries who speak 30 languages. Its churches are open seven days a week and conduct such rituals as weddings, christenings, and funeral services. Sunday sermons generally focus on its primary teachings.

## **Doctrine**

Scientology claims its teachings are not enforced-that "only those things which one finds true for himself are true. If you learn to think for yourself-it is a voyage of self-discovery." According to Scientology no attempts are made to change anyone's beliefs or to persuade them away from their present religion. However, in practice, Scientology, which considers Hubbard's books as Scripture, purports specific doctrines, which conflict with their published position.

### **Major doctrinal issues of Scientology follow:**

#### **1. Thetan-man's true identity.**

Every human's true identity is a "thetan" (pronounced "thay-tn"), an immortal spirit, not a limited and morally fallen body and ego. His fundamental nature is essentially good and divine, but he is ignorant of his own perfection. His only "fall" was into matter, not sin.

In his work on cults, Richard Abanes summarizes how the human condition came about:

*Trillions of years ago, long before anything as we know it existed, there were countless immortal beings known as "thetans," who found themselves bored with eternal life. In an effort to rid themselves of the doldrums, they decided to collectively create the universe and everything in it. Their hope was to have a realm in which to play the "Game of Life" and pass the time. But the thetans soon faced a problem on which they had not planned. As "spiritual" beings, they could not function within their "physical" creation. The thetans solved this dilemma by building bodies for themselves, the human form being only one of many different appearances. (Cults, New Religious Movements, and Your Family, Crossway Books, 1998)*

#### **2. Engrams-man's enslavement (bondage).**

Over time the thetans became so engrossed in their creation that they lost awareness of their true identity as immortal and began to think of themselves as merely physical beings. They became so preoccupied in their creation that they became "stuck" in it-especially in "man" and "MEST" (matter, energy, space, and time), which is the physical universe. They even forgot that they were the creators. And contributing to that demarcation they were subject to reincarnation, returning through multiple lives and inhabiting different bodies.

Each new body they inhabited exposed them to "engrams" (*sensory impressions stored in the mind* that cause various emotional and physical symptoms) from past lives-emotional and physical baggage that increasingly caused more problems with each new reincarnation. Each new body continued the enslavement to materiality, but even more, accumulated damage occurred from additional engrams. Thetans have now accumulated countless engrams throughout the trillions of years of their existence. Engrams are counterproductive to man's survival, which is man's basic goal according to Scientology. Engrams are stored in one part of, according to Scientology, a person's two-part mind. These parts are known as the 1) *analytic* mind and 2) *reactive* mind, and they function as follows:

*Analytic-man's* conscious and rational mind that thinks and processes data.

*Reactive-man's* storeroom of engrams, which are sensory impressions (memories) of painful experiences in life. The reactive mind is active below the level of consciousness.

The recorded sensory impressions (engrams) cause emotional and counter-productive pain and behavior in life. They lay dormant in the reactive mind until they become stimulated by a similar incident, which causes a

counter-productive stimulus-response of pain and action. These responses occur when engrams are stimulated even though no threat actually exists, which thereby cause bad or inappropriate behavior.

Engrams accumulate from past lives; therefore, a person is conditioned to respond in a variety of inappropriate ways and to experience painful emotions when there is no need for them. Human beings are therefore in *bondage* to an "aberrational" (reactive) mind. To the Scientologist an aberration is "any departure from rationality." Therefore, man needs to be set free from this bondage.

### 3. Auditing-man's salvation.

Man's bondage to his reactive mind and his slavery to MEST (matter-energy-space-time physical universe) continued until. Ronald Hubbard uncovered man's true nature and devised a solution called *auditing*, which is a process of discovering and neutralizing engrams that is accomplished with assistance from an *auditor*-a minister or minister-in-training of the Church of Scientology who applies Scientology technology to another individual.

The process of auditing exposes and expunges (erases) engrams contained in the reactive mind so that a person becomes *clear* of them. A person who is not yet clear is a *preclear*. A person who is clear is in control of his behavior instead of being influenced and controlled by engrams-a person who can think independently and experience life unencumbered by the past. He can *act* rather than *react*.

The auditing process is composed of a series of specific questions that enables the *preclear* to discover and improve his condition. L. Ronald Hubbard was responsible for isolating these specific questions that through the process brings improvement to the individual.

The auditor is assisted in the auditing process by his use of the *EJectro-psychometer* (E-Meter)-a hand-held "religious instrument" composed of metal cylinders attached to wires that emits the flow of a current of about 1.5 volts into the preclear's body and back into the E-Meter. Only a trained auditor is able to properly use the E-meter, which indicates bodily changes in electrical resistance by the flux of a needle on a scale. According to Hubbard, the E-Meter indicates the preclear's state-of-mind when thinking on any particular subject.

Once an area of charge or upset (engram) is located by the E-Meter, the auditor can then provide directions on how the preclear can examine and discharge the harmful energy associated with it. The exposed incident (engram) is thereby erased from the reactive mind and it no longer becomes a negative factor or effect in the preclear's life. As the preclear continues to expose and eliminate specific engrams; he gradually becomes more aware of who he is, what has happened to him, and of his true potentials and abilities.

This, then, is "salvation" in the religion of Scientology-the increasing attainment of spiritual awareness. Eventually, the initiate is able, through auditing, to recognize his true identity as a thetan, an immortal spirit that is separate from his MEST body; and even more, to eventually control the MEST universe around him by the power of the mind. Since the material universe is only a mental projection of the thetans, it can be controlled by the mental power of an enlightened (clear) thetan.

- The auditing process is supplemented by a series of training courses supplied by Scientology, which allows the initiate to remain free. Such courses range from introductory (ones basic principles) to the advanced that train professional auditors-including courses that teach the "eight dynamics of life" (*self, creativity, group survival, species, life forms, physical universe, spiritual dynamic, and a Supreme Being*). These courses are expensive- a 1990 "Los Angeles Times" article estimated that to go from the initial free test to the Operating Thetan 8 level costs between \$200,000 and \$400,000,

### 4. God-man's creation.

Scientology claims that it does not set forth a specific dogma regarding God; individuals are free to interpret God as they wish. Yet the church refers to God in various nebulous terms like "Nature," "Infinity," the "Eighth Dynamic," and "All Theta," There is no worship of a deity in Scientology-no worship or supplication or veneration of any divine being.

Jesus is hardly mentioned in Scientology literature. Hubbard once said that neither Buddha nor Jesus were Operating Thetans; they were just a shade above "clear." An *Operating Thetan* is one who possesses complete spiritual ability, freedom, independence, and serenity, having attained "full" awareness; and, who have the ability to project themselves out of their bodies. Yet Scientology does claim to share Christ's goals for humanity's attainment of "wisdom, good health, and immortality,"

### **Christianity vs. Scientology-Doctrine**

The doctrines of Scientology and Christianity are quite divergent. It is important to immediately clarify specific terms that are incompatible between them, such as:

<b>TERM</b>	<b>SCIENTOLOGY</b>	<b>CHRISTIAN</b>
Scripture	L. Ron Hubbard's writings	Bible
God	"All Theta," "Eighth	Personal Triune Creator
Jesus	A shade above "clear"	God-the Messiah
Man	Thetan (immortal spirit)	Finite creature
Sin	None (man is basically	Disobedience to God/man is
Salvation	Increasing self-awareness	In Christ alone by faith alone
Reincarnation	Yes	No
Universe	Mentally emanated by	Created by God

### **Christianity and Scientology are divergent as to the following:**

They disagree over what constitutes the basis of authority of one's beliefs. Christianity accepts only those writings inspired by the living God, the 66 books of the Holy Bible. Scientology views the writings of L. Ron Hubbard to be Scripture. Because of this there is a sharp contrast in their doctrines, a sampling follows:

- Scientology accepts reincarnation; Christianity rejects it (Hebrews 9:27) and holds to the resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:5, 13).
- Scientology says man is basically good; Christianity teaches that man is plagued by original sin (Romans 5:12)
- Scientology dismisses the reality of hell; Christianity accepts it as the final destination of all who reject Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:10-14).
- Scientology rejects the divinity of Jesus Christ. Christianity believes Jesus is absolute deity (John 1:1), the divine Messiah who is the unique only begotten Son of God and Savior of mankind (John 3:16; Titus 2:13-14).
- Scientology accepts occult "out-of-body" experiences; Christianity condemns all forms of occultism (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

When considering the many thousands of existing and unexplainably accurate manuscripts of the Bible, the many hundreds of fulfilled prophecies contained in the Bible, and the existence of over 25,000 supportive archaeological discoveries of the Bible, as compared to the highly dubious writings of L. Ron Hubbard; there is no question to the intelligent mind that the Bible is the only *credible* and *divine* Word for man.

They disagree over the concept of God. The Bible declares there is one true God, the Creator of the universe and all that is therein. He is knowable and personal by His creation. He transcends (is outside of) both time and space. He is sovereign over all creation (Psalms 135:6; Ephesians 1:11), and there is no god beside Him (Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 44:6; 46:9). Even though He is both righteous and just, He is portrayed in Scripture as compassionately toward His people (Exodus 3:7, 8; Job 34:28; Psalms 81:10, 91:14-15; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Philippians 4:6-7). He is a loving God toward all mankind (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9). God, not thetans, created the universe-which is real (not an illusion)-Genesis 1:31. Man is also real, having been made from the dust of the earth.

Contrary to Scientology's portrayal of man as a powerful immortal spirit who has self-imposed limitation by the MEST, he is intrinsically weak, helpless, and dependent on God. He is absolutely finite (Psalms 100:3) and who is puny in comparison to the matchless and incomparable one true God. Contrary to the prideful view that man is an immortal thetan, the fact of his true position before God should lead man to a sense of humility and engender worship before the one true God.

They disagree regarding the condition of man. Man did not fall in "materiality." He fell by and into sin, which caused his alienation from God (Genesis 3:6-24). Every human being is born with the Adamic nature and is prone to and will in fact sin (Romans 5:12). Unlike Scientology's belief in the "clearing" of engrams, sin can never be eradicated in this life (Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:16-17; 1 John 1:10)-but only in the next life (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 22:15).

Whereas sin caused estrangement and enmity between God and man, Jesus Christ, through His sacrifice on the cross where He paid the penalty-price for man's sin, brought the grace-gift of eternal salvation to man, which included reconciliation (Colossians 1:20), peace (Romans 5:1), and the restoration of fellowship with God (Ephesians 2:13). And all of this is *totally free* (Ephesians 2:8-9; Revelation 21:6) to anyone who will only exercise non-meritorious faith in Christ alone, unlike the huge expense of courses offered to those within Scientology who wish to be eventually delivered from themselves.

### Science and Scientology

It goes beyond the scope of this study to delve within the many differences between true science and Scientology. The legitimacy of the E-Meter, for example, is a dubious device. Scientology has also been called into question by experts in the mental health field-stating that the claims by Hubbard in his "Dianetics" are not supported by empirical evidence of the sort required for the establishment of scientific generalizations." But in all fairness, the scientific world holds various differences with the views of Christianity. But a close examination of the Bible will reveal that there are no conflicts between it and true science.

### Conclusion

There is little to nothing in common between Christianity and the cult of Scientology. It is suggested that instead of engaging into a full-blown debate with a Scientologist, the Christian should simply share his testimony of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone with him, while depending solely upon the power of the Holy Spirit to make it efficacious.