

SCIENTOLOGY

Introduction: Most people could not tell you what Scientology is, but I dare say that it has touched the lives of most American citizens. Perhaps you've noticed a little booklet in your doctor's office entitled "The Way to Happiness-A Common Sense Guide to Better Living." It may be that your doctor has even sent you a free copy. No? Well, have you seen that slick TV advertisement for the book Dianetics by L. Ron Hubbard or noticed the book prominently displayed in your favorite bookstore? Never? Then you are probably in the minority, for many Americans have noticed these things. In 1950 and again in 1986, "Dianetics" appeared in the top ten on the New York Times best seller list. It has also appeared on best seller lists in Mexico, Italy and elsewhere. The shocker is that Dianetics is in essence the bible of the Church of Scientology!

Point of Origin

The Church of Scientology was founded by L Ron Hubbard in 1954. To understand Scientology it would doubtless be helpful to know something about the life of this man who founded it and served as its head for three decades. Unfortunately, factual information is hard to come by.

The claims made by Scientologists about the life of their founder contradict documented facts of history. For instance, Hubbard is supposed to have grown upon a ranch in Montana, where he found the life of a young rancher very enjoyable and spent long days 'riding, breaking broncos, hunting coyote and taking his first steps as an explorer.' (Miller). The truth is that the early life of L. Ron Hubbard was spent in a succession of rented apartments (Miller). Hubbard claims to have a working knowledge of nuclear physics, but records show that his only experience with that area of knowledge consisted of taking "a college course in molecular and atomic physics, which he flunked. (Methvin, 1980). It is alleged that Hubbard traveled "extensively throughout Asia and the Pacific" gaining firsthand knowledge of Far Eastern philosophies and that "he was also befriended by a student of Sigmund Freud" who imparted to him "the meager amount of knowledge that existed in the Western school of mental healing" (Hubbard, 1985). None of this can be substantiated. But of all the contradictions between the claims of Scientology and the facts, the most significant is probably L. Ron Hubbard's assertion that he was wounded while serving in the Navy during World War II and labeled "fully and permanently" disabled, but that he completely recovered in 1947 by applying a therapy of the mind which he developed through his own research. (Meldal-Johnsen). This therapy is the basis of Dianetics. However, "Navy records do not indicate he ever saw combat or was ever wounded. He was discharged and later given a forty percent disability pension because of an ulcer, arthritis and other ailments." (Methvin, 1980). In 1947, he wrote a letter requesting help to the Veterans Administration in which he complained that his mind had been "seriously affected" and that he was suffering from "long periods of moroseness and suicidal inclinations." (Methvin, 1980, Behar 1966).

It is true that well before 'Dianetics' was published, L. Ron Hubbard had established himself as a fairly successful science fiction writer. In 1949, addressing a writer's convention, Hubbard declared, "Writing for a penny a word is ridiculous. If a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion." (Methvin 1980, Behar 1986). In 1954 Hubbard did just that. Eventually, he made much more than a million dollars. In 1986 Scientology was included among "Forbes 400" top money makers "with assets estimated at \$1 billion" which included massive estates, hotels, and hospitals in the U.S. and abroad (Behar, 1986). At its peak, the cult claimed a membership of 15 million world wide, with an estimated weekly gross income in the U.S. of \$1.4 million. (Malko, 1970). Celebrities such as John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, Jenna Elfman, Priscilla Presley, Karen Black, John Brodie and Torn Cruise are among its many devotees.

Fundamental Points of Belief for Scientologists

1. **Scientology means "knowing how to know."** It is "an applied religious philosophy and technology" which helps people resolve their problems and "Survive." It is based upon L. Ron Hubbard's discoveries in Dianetics, the name for his "science of the mind." Dianetics literally means "through the soul." "It is a system for the analysis, control and development of human thought" which helps people lead fully functioning lives while freeing

them from the psychological problems and psychosomatic ills (Hubbard, 1965).

2. **Man's true eternal spirit is the "theta."** An individual spirit is known as a "thetan." A thetan has the ability to manipulate and create "matter, energy", "space" and "time" (or MEST). Each Thetan has existed for millions of years and has inhabited many bodies, entering the body in infancy and leaving at death (Malko, 1970).

3. **The engram is the single source of aberrations (mental and emotional problems) and psychosomatic ills."** An engram is a detailed mental record of some physical or emotional pain which is made in what is called the "reactive mind" (subconscious) (Hubbard, 1985). Each person has many engrams. These painful experiences may have been recorded either "in this life or in former incarnations" (Methvin, 1980).

4. **Through Scientology, one can be cleared of his engrams.** In Dianetic therapy, engrams are detected by means of an "audit" (engram interview) usually with the use of an E-meter (a device used to detect stress, much like a simplified lie detector). Only by confronting an engram in this way can one be cleared of it. A person freed from engrams is therefore called "the clear." "Clear is the goal in Dianetics therapy" (Hubbard, 1985). Three progressive levels of the clear are a pre-clear, a clear, and an operating thetan. At this last and highest level, a thetan can have out of body experiences and actually manipulate MEST without the use of the body.

Basic Religious Practices

The primary work done in the Church of Scientology focuses on seeking new prospects (called "raw meat" by Scientologists) to submit to Dianetic processing. This is done in various ways. For instance, the 1986 commemorative edition of "Dianetics" which I used for research includes a section on "How to Find a Dianetics Auditor." It states, "If you would like more information about Dianetics processing or want to learn more about processing others, contact your nearest Scientology church or organization today." Then it lists the addresses of 39 church locations in the U.S. and several in foreign countries. Scientology also recruits by offering free online "personality tests" (at www.scientology.org) or low cost "communication workshops" through which individuals are lured into auditing sessions; these auditing sessions can cost "from \$200 to more than \$1000 an hour..special training courses go for \$12,000 and up" (Behar, 1986). Some converts who cannot pay these sums are encouraged to become "field staff members" who recruit others on a commission basis (usually 10%) to pay for their own Scientology services. A field staff member might watch the local newspapers for victims of accidents, illness or death and then call to offer "therapy" sessions; one such victim in Vancouver, Washington "soon found himself fleeced of his \$7,000 accident insurance settlement" (Methvin, 1980). Other newcomers to Scientology give their lives over to the church by joining its staff on a full-time basis. They receive "free auditing, room and board, a controlled environment, and a small allowance - less than \$25 per week in the early 1980's -in return for labor that can average as much as 15 hours per day" (Behar, 1986).

Cross-points

Listed below are various points of difference between Scientology and the Bible. Many more contradictions could be given.

Scientology

1. **VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY:** Scientologists define Scientology as "an applied religious philosophy" (Hubbard, 1987). Hubbard has said that the goal of a religious philosophy such as Scientology is "the freeing of the soul by wisdom" (Malko, 1970). The beginning of the "true story of Scientology" was that "a "philosopher develop(ed) a philosophy about life and death." (Hubbard, 1965, p.17).

2. **CAUSE OF HUMAN MISERY:** "The engram is the single and sole source of aberration and

The Bible

1. **VIEW OF PHILOSOPHY:** "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8). "...the world through its wisdom did not know God." (I Corinthians 1:21). "That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." (I Corinthians 2:5).

2. **CAUSE OF HUMAN MISERY:** "death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12b). "His

psychosomatic illness” (Hubbard, 1985, p. 78). An engram contains “a real or fancied threat to survival” (Hubbard, 1985, p.460).

3. GOOD AND EVIL. “right and wrong, good and evil. Definitions of these is inherent in Dianetics: by these definitions a correct solution can be readied with regard to any action or action of man” (Hubbard, 1985, p. 429).

4. EVOLUTION AND THE NATURE OF MAN: “It is fairly well accepted in these times that life in all forms evolved from the basic building blocks: the virus and the cell.” “The proposition on which Dianetics was originally entered was evolution. “Man is a structure of cells which are seeking to survive and only survive.” (Hubbard, 1985, p. 58).

5. PAST LIVES: Hubbard wrote, “Past lives we incredible only to those who dare not confront them. In others, the fact of a former existence can be quickly established...” (Meldal-Johnsen, 1980, p. 103).

own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.” (Proverbs 5:22).

3. GOOD AND EVIL ‘All Scripture...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work’ (2 Timothy 3:16-17). By using “the word of righteousness” individuals “have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (cf. Hebrews 5:13-14)

4. EVOLUTION AND THE NATURE OF MAN: ”And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the oath according to its kind...” “SO God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”(Genesis 1:25, 21; cf. Psalm 8).

5. PAST LIVES: “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” (Hebrews 9:27).

Weak Points of Scientology

1. Hypocrisy of Its founder and other Church of Scientology leaders. L. Ron Hubbard wrote a chapter entitled “On Marriage” in one of his books about Scientology (Hubbard 1965). In it, he gives guidance on how to have “marital success.” Hubbard had divorced twice and was on his third wife when he wrote those words. More damaging is the practice versus preaching of Scientology concerning illegal activities. In “The Way to Happiness” Hubbard advised, “Don’t do anything illegal” and “Do not steal” (p. 27 & 43). In the early 1980’s Hubbard was convicted (in absentia) of criminal fraud charges in France (Methvin, 1981). Hubbard’s wife, along with 10 other top Scientology officials were convicted in the United States of conspiracy, burglary, and theft of secret documents from U.S. government offices (Methvin, 1981, Saar, 1983). Besides these incidents, the Church of Scientology has continually been found as either plaintiff or defendant in civil court, and has constantly been at odds with the IRS over payment of taxes.

2. Ineffectiveness of Scientology’s auditing process. While faithful Scientologists would disagree, many people have not been helped or have actually been harmed by Scientology’s attempts to clear them of their engrams through auditing. The following accounts, taken from a Reader’s Digest article entitled “Scientology: The Sickness Spreads” illustrate this point: In Australia, a woman subjected to more than 60 hours of Scientology processing had to be committed to a mental institution. In Germany, a young man who struggled for two years to free himself from the cult’s hold left his parents’ home on Christmas Day and lay down in front of a train. A young man in Paris who underwent the cult’s processing quit his job, closeted himself and slashed his veins. As he bled to death, he scrawled on a memo pad: “Go to Scientology and you will understand all!”

3. Tactics of mind control and fear are used to keep Church members in line. There is documented testimony of dungeon detention and far worse in order to keep Church members in line with L. Ron Hubbard’s “ethics” (Corydon, 1987). “In these sadistic detention programs, staff members would be coerced into performing hard labor, eating leftovers out of buckets and sleeping on floors.” (Behar, 1986). Those who defect from Scientology are routinely labeled as “fair game” which means they “may be deprived of property or injured by any means by any

Scientologist” and they “may be tricked, sued, or lied to, or destroyed.” (Malko, 1970, p. 160). Many have been. One former Church “finance ethics officer” by the name of Don Larson admits to being responsible “for all sort of Gestapo-type stuff” (Behar, 1986). The former head of a Scientology mission in Calgary, Alberta, Canada described Scientology as a “cult” which practices “psychological coercion...under the cover of religion” (Methvin, 1981). One must ask why these tactics are necessary if Scientology truly leads to personal happiness.

4. **Scientology sometimes claims its teachings are religious, while at other times it denies this.** In the past years, attempts by the Church of Scientology to take full advantage of the tax-exempt status of religious organizations in the U.S. have frequently caused problems with the IRS. One church official said, “Hubbard told me at one time the biggest mistake we made was going religious and that we should have kept it straight as a business... That would have avoided all the trouble with the IRS.” (Behar, 1986). So now, “The Way to Happiness” booklet, which contains the same emphasis on the importance of “survival” as “Dianetics,” carries this disclaimer: “This may be the first non-religious moral code... It was written by L. Ron Hubbard as an individual work and is not a part of any religious doctrine... It is therefore admissible for government departments and employees to distribute it as a non-religious activity” (Hubbard, 1981).

Review Questions over Scientology

1. Who is the father of Scientology and what was the title of his best selling book on which Scientology is based? _____

2. What does the word Scientology mean? _____

3. What is an “engram?” Compare and contrast the Scientologist’s idea of an “engram” with the Biblical description of “sin.” _____

4. What is a “theta?” Compare and contrast the Scientologist’s idea of the “Theta” with the Biblical description of the “soul.” _____

5. In your opinion, what is the main goal of the Church of Scientology? _____

6. Give at least five points of contradiction between the teaching of Scientology and the Bible. _____

7. What do you believe to be the biggest weakness of Scientology? _____

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Resources on the Web

An Introduction to Scientology from a Critical Perspective — <http://www.modemac.com/cos1>

Operation Clambake: The fight against the church of Scientology on the net — <http://www.xenu.net/>

Scientology Lies — <http://www.scientology-lies.com/>

Religious Tolerance – <http://www.religioustolerance.org/scientol.htm>

Official Scientology Web-site — <http://www.scientology.org>