Scientology

Scientology is a body of religious beliefs and practices invented in May 1952 by American author L. Ron Hubbard (1911–86). Hubbard initially developed a program of ideas called Dianetics, which was distributed through the Dianetics Foundation. The foundation soon entered bankruptcy, and Hubbard lost the rights to his seminal publication *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* in 1952. He then recharacterized the subject as a religion and renamed it Scientology,[2][3][4] retaining the terminology, doctrines, the E-meter, and the practice of auditing.[5][6] Within a year, he regained the rights to Dianetics and retained both subjects under the umbrella of the Church of Scientology.[13]

The Scientology symbol is composed of the letter S, which stands for Scientology, and the ARC and KRC triangles, two important concepts in Scientology.[1]

The Church of Scientology says that a human is an immortal, spiritual being (thetan) that is resident in a physical body. The thetan has had innumerable past lives and it is observed in advanced Scientology texts that lives preceding the thetan's arrival on Earth were lived in extraterrestrial cultures. Based on case studies at advanced levels, it is predicted that any Scientologist undergoing auditing will eventually come across and recount a common series of events.

Hubbard describes the etymology of the word "Scientology" as coming from the Latin word *scio*, meaning know or distinguish, and the Greek word *logos*, meaning "the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and made known". Hubbard writes, "thus, Scientology means knowing about knowing, or science of knowledge".[14]

Hubbard's groups have encountered considerable opposition and controversy.[15] In January 1951, the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners brought proceedings against Dianetics Foundation on the charge of teaching medicine without a license.[16] During the 1970s Hubbard's followers engaged in a program of criminal infiltration of the U.S. government.[17][18] Hubbard-inspired organizations and their classification are often a point of contention. Germany classifies Scientology groups as an "anti-constitutional sect",[19][20] while in France they have been classified as a dangerous cult by parliamentary reports.[21][22]

Contents

History

L. Ron Hubbard

L. Ron Hubbard (1911–1986) was the only child of Harry Ross Hubbard, a United States Navy officer, and his wife, Ledora Waterbury. Hubbard spent three semesters at George Washington University but was placed on probation in September 1931. He failed to return for the fall 1932 semester.[23]


L. Ron Hubbard and Thomas S. Moulton in Portland, Oregon in 1943

In July 1941, Hubbard was commissioned as a Lieutenant (junior grade) in the U.S. Naval Reserve. On May 18, 1943, his subchaser left Portland. That night, Hubbard ordered his crew to fire 35 depth charges and a number of gun rounds at what he believed were Japanese submarines.[24] His ship sustained minor damage and three crew were injured. Having run out of depth charges and with the presence of a submarine still unconfirmed by other ships, Hubbard's ship was ordered back to port. A navy report concluded that "there was no submarine in the area." A decade later, Hubbard claimed in his Scientology lectures that he had sunk a Japanese submarine.[25]

On June 28, 1943, Hubbard ordered his crew to fire on the Coronado Islands. Hubbard apparently did not realize that the islands belonged to US-allied Mexico, nor that he had taken his vessel into Mexican territorial waters.[26] He was reprimanded and removed from command on July 7.[26] After reassignment to a naval facility in Monterey, California, Hubbard became depressed and fell ill. Reporting stomach pains in April 1945, he spent the remainder of the war as a patient in Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland, California.[27] According to his later teachings, during this time Hubbard made scientific "breakthroughs" by use of "endocrine experiments".[28]

On October 15, 1947, Hubbard wrote a letter to the Veterans Administration formally requesting psychiatric treatment, but admitted that he was unable to afford it.[3] Within a few years, Hubbard would condemn psychiatry as evil, which would grow into a major theme in Scientology.

Excalibur and Babalon Working

In April 1938, Hubbard reportedly reacted to a drug used in a dental procedure. According to his account, this triggered a revelatory near-death experience. Allegedly inspired by this experience, Hubbard composed a manuscript, which was never published, with the working titles of "The One Command" or *Excalibur*.[29][30] The contents of *Excalibur* formed the basis for some of his later publications.[31]

Arthur J. Burks, who read the work in 1938, later recalled it discussed the "one command": to survive. This theme would be revisited in Dianetics, the set of ideas and practices regarding the metaphysical relationship between the mind and body which became the central philosophy of Scientology.[32] Hubbard later cited *Excalibur* as an early version of Dianetics.[33]

In August 1945, Hubbard moved into the Pasadena mansion of John "Jack" Whiteside Parsons, an avid occultist and Thelemite, follower of the English ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley and leader of a lodge of Crowley's magical order, Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO).[34][35] Parsons and Hubbard collaborated on the "Babalon Working", a sex magic ritual intended to summon an incarnation of Babalon, the supreme Thelemite Goddess.[17] In 1969, The Church of Scientology admitted to Hubbard's involvement with Parsons while claiming that Hubbard, a US Navy Officer, was "sent in to handle the situation".[36][37]

In the late 1940s, Hubbard practiced as a hypnotist and he worked in Hollywood posing as a swami.[38][39] The Church says that Hubbard's experience with hypnosis led him to create Dianetics.[40]

Dianetics

In May 1950, Hubbard's *Dianetics: The Evolution of a Science* was published by pulp magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*.[41][42][43][44] In the same year, he published the book-length *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, considered the seminal event of the century by Scientologists.[45] Scientologists sometimes use a dating system based on the book's publication; for example, "A.D. 25" does not stand for *Anno Domini*, but "After Dianetics".[46]


L. Ron Hubbard in 1950

Dianetics uses a counseling technique known as auditing in which an auditor assists a subject in conscious recall of traumatic events in the individual's past.[47] It was originally intended to be a new psychotherapy and was not expected to become the foundation for a new religion.[48][49] Hubbard variously defined Dianetics as a spiritual healing technology and an organized science of thought.[50] The stated intent is to free individuals of the influence of past traumas by systematic exposure and removal of the engrams (painful memories) these events have left behind, a process called *clearing*.[50] Rutgers scholar Beryl Satter says that "there was little that was original in Hubbard's approach", with much of the theory having origins in popular conceptions of psychology.[51] Satter observes that in "keeping with the typical 1950s distrust of emotion, Hubbard promised that Dianetic treatment would release and erase psychosomatic ills and painful emotions, thereby leaving individuals with increased powers of rationality."[51][52] According to Gallagher and Ashcraft, in contrast to psychotherapy, Hubbard stated that Dianetics "was more accessible to the average person, promised practitioners more immediate progress, and placed them in control of the therapy process." Hubbard's thought was parallel with the trend of humanist psychology at that time, which also came about in the 1950s.[51] Passas and Castillo write that the appeal of Dianetics was based on its consistency with prevailing values.[53] Shortly after the introduction of Dianetics, Hubbard introduced the concept of the "thetan" (or soul) which he claimed to have discovered. Dianetics was organized and centralized to consolidate power under Hubbard, and groups that were previously recruited were no longer permitted to organize autonomously.[54]

Two of Hubbard's key supporters at the time were John W. Campbell Jr., the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, and Campbell's brother-in-law, physician Joseph A. Winter.[55] Dr. Winter, hoping to have Dianetics accepted in the medical community, submitted papers outlining the principles and methodology of Dianetic therapy to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *American Journal of Psychiatry* in 1949, but these were rejected.[56][57]

Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health spent six months on the *New York Times* bestseller list.[16][58][59] According to religious studies professor Paul Gutjahr, Dianetics is the bestselling non-Christian religious book of the century.[46] Publisher's Weekly gave a posthumous plaque to Hubbard to commemorate Dianetics' appearance on its list of bestsellers for one hundred weeks. Studies that address the topic of the origins of the work and its significance to Scientology as a whole include Peter Rowley's *New Gods in America*, Omar V. Garrison's *The Hidden Story of Scientology*, and Albert I. Berger's *Towards a Science of the Nuclear Mind: Science-fiction Origins of Dianetics*. More complex studies include Roy Wallis's *The Road to Total Freedom*.[46]

Dianetics appealed to a broad range of people who used instructions from the book and applied the method to each other, becoming practitioners themselves.[44][60] Dianetics soon met with criticism. Morris Fishbein, the editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and well known at the time as a debunker of quack medicine, dismissed Hubbard's book.[61][62] An article in Newsweek stated that "the Dianetics concept is unscientific and unworthy of discussion or review".[63] Hubbard asserted that Dianetics is "an organized science of thought built on definite axioms: statements of natural laws on the order of those of the physical sciences."[64]

Hubbard became the leader of a growing Dianetics movement.[44] He became a popular lecturer and established the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where he trained his first Dianetics counselors or *auditors*.[44][60]

Some practitioners of Dianetics reported experiences which they believed had occurred in past lives, or previous incarnations.[60] In early 1951, reincarnation became a subject of intense debate within the Dianetics community.[65] Hubbard took the reports of past life events seriously and introduced the concept of the *thetan*, an immortal being analogous to the soul.[60] This was an important factor in the transition from secular Dianetics to the religion of Scientology. Sociologists Roy Wallis and Steve Bruce suggest that Dianetics, which set each person as his or her own authority, was about to fail due to its inherent individualism, and that Hubbard started Scientology as a religion to establish himself as the overarching authority.[66][54]

Also in 1951, Hubbard incorporated the *electropsychometer* (E-meter for short), a kind of electrodermal activity meter, as an auditing aid.[65] Based on a design by Volney Mathison, the device is held by Scientologists to be a useful tool in detecting changes in a person's state of mind.[65] The global spread of Scientology at the latter half of the 1950s was culminated with the opening of churches in Johannesburg and Paris, while world headquarters transferred to England in Saint Hill, a rural estate. Hubbard lived there for the next seven years.[67]

Dianetics is different from Scientology in that Scientology is a religion while Dianetics is not. The purpose of Dianetics is the improvement of the individual, the individual or "self" being only one of eight "dynamics."[68] "According to Hugh B. Urban, Hubbard's early science of Dianetics would be best comprehended as a "bricolage that brought together his various explorations in psychology, hypnosis, and science fiction." If Dianetics is understood as a bricolage, then Scientology is "an even more ambitious sort of religious bricolage adapted to the new religious marketplace of 1950s America," continues Urban.

According to Roy Wallis, "Scientology emerged as a religious commodity eminently suited to the contemporary market of postwar America." L. Ron Hubbard Jr. said in an interview that the spiritual bricolage of Scientology, as written by Hugh B. Urban, "seemed to be uniquely suited to the individualism and quick-fix mentality of 1950s America: just by doing a few assignments, "one can become a god."[2]

Harlan Ellison has told a story of seeing Hubbard at a gathering of the Hydra Club in 1953 or 1954. Hubbard was complaining of not being able to make a living on what he was being paid as a science fiction writer. Ellison says that Lester del Rey told Hubbard that what he needed to do to get rich was start a religion.[69]

Church of Scientology

In January 1951, the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners began proceedings against the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation for teaching medicine without a license, which eventually led to that foundation's bankruptcy.[70][71][72] In December 1952, the Hubbard Dianetic Foundation filed for bankruptcy, and Hubbard lost control of the Dianetics trademark and copyrights to financier Don Purcell.[73] Author Russell Miller argues that Scientology "was a development of undeniable expedience, since it ensured that he would be able to stay in business even if the courts eventually awarded control of Dianetics and its valuable copyrights to ... Purcell".[74][75]

Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C.

L. Ron Hubbard originally intended for Scientology to be considered a science, as stated in his writings. In May 1952, Scientology was organized to put this intended science into practice, and in the same year, Hubbard published a new set of teachings as *Scientology, a religious philosophy.*[76] Marco Frenschkowski quotes Hubbard in a letter written in 1953, to show that he never denied that his original approach was not a religious one: "Probably the greatest discovery of Scientology and its most forceful contribution to mankind has been the isolation, description and handling of the human spirit, accomplished in July 1951, in Phoenix, Arizona. I established, along scientific rather than religious or humanitarian lines that the thing which is the person, the personality, is separable from the body and the mind at will and without causing bodily death or derangement. (Hubbard 1983: 55)."[77]

In April 1953, Hubbard wrote a letter proposing that Scientology should be transformed into a religion.[78] As membership declined and finances grew tighter, Hubbard had reversed the hostility to religion he voiced in *Dianetics*.[79] His letter discussed the legal and financial benefits of religious status.[79] Hubbard outlined plans for setting up a chain of "Spiritual Guidance Centers" charging customers $500 for twenty-four hours of auditing ("That is real money ... Charge enough and we'd be swamped."). He wrote:

> I await your reaction on the religion angle. In my opinion, we couldn't get worse public opinion than we have had or have less customers with what we've got to sell. A religious charter would be necessary in Pennsylvania or NJ to make it stick. But I sure could make it stick.[80]

In December 1953, Hubbard incorporated three churches – a "Church of American Science", a "Church of Scientology" and a "Church of Spiritual Engineering" – in Camden, New Jersey.[81] On February 18, 1954, with Hubbard's blessing, some of his followers set up the first local Church of Scientology, the Church of Scientology of California, adopting the "aims, purposes, principles and creed of the Church of American Science, as founded by L. Ron Hubbard."[81][82] The movement spread quickly through the United States and to other English-speaking countries such as Britain, Ireland, South Africa and Australia.[83] The second local Church of Scientology to be set up, after the one in California, was in Auckland, New Zealand.[83] In 1955, Hubbard established the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C..[60] The group declared that the Founding Church, as written in the certificate of incorporation for the Founding Church of Scientology in the District of Columbia, was to "act as a parent church for the religious faith known as 'Scientology' and to act as a church for the religious worship of the faith."[84]

The Church experienced further challenges. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) began an investigation concerning the claims the Church of Scientology made in connection with its E-meters.[61] On January 4, 1963, FDA agents raided offices of the Church of Scientology, seizing hundreds of E-meters as illegal medical devices and tons of literature that they accused of making false medical claims.[85] The original suit by the FDA to condemn the literature and E-meters did not succeed,[86] but the Court ordered the Church to label every meter with a disclaimer that it is purely religious artifact,[87] to post a $20,000 bond of compliance, and to pay the FDA's legal expenses.[88]

In the course of developing Scientology, Hubbard presented rapidly changing teachings that some have seen as often self-contradictory.[89][90] According to Lindholm, for the inner cadre of Scientologists in that period, involvement depended not so much on belief in a particular doctrine but on unquestioning faith in Hubbard.[89]

In 1966, Hubbard purportedly stepped down as executive director of Scientology to devote himself to research and writing.[60][91] The following year, he formed the ship-based Sea Organization or Sea Org which operated three ships: the *Diana*, the *Athena*, and the flagship the *Apollo*.[60][92] One month after the establishment of the Sea Org, Hubbard announced that he had made a breakthrough discovery, the result of which were the "OT III" materials purporting to provide a method for overcoming factors inhibiting spiritual progress.[92] These materials were first disseminated on the ships, and then propagated by Sea Org members reassigned to staff Advanced Organizations on land.[92]

Hubbard in hiding, death, and aftermath

In 1972, facing criminal charges in France, Hubbard returned to the United States and began living in an apartment in Queens, New York.[93] When faced with possible indictment in the United States, Hubbard went into hiding in April 1979. He hid first in an apartment in Hemet, California, where his only contact with the outside world was via ten trusted Messengers. He cut contact with everyone else, even his wife, whom he saw for the last time in August 1979.[94] In February 1980 he disappeared into deep cover in the company of two trusted Messengers, Pat and Anne Broeker.[95][96]

In 1979, as a result of FBI raids during Operation Snow White, eleven senior people in the church's Guardian's Office were convicted of obstructing justice, burglary of government offices, and theft of documents and government property. In 1981, Scientology took the German government to court for the first time.[97]

On January 24, 1986, L. Ron Hubbard died at his ranch in Creston, California.[98] David Miscavige emerged as the new head of the organization.

Splinter groups: Independent Scientology, Freezone, and Miscavige's RTC

While *Scientology* generally refers to Miscavige-led Church of Scientology, other groups practice Scientology. These groups, collectively known as Independent Scientologists, consist of former members of the official Church of Scientology as well as entirely new members.

In 1950, founding member Joseph Winter cut ties with Hubbard and set up a private Dianetics practice in New York.[99] In 1965, a longtime Church member and "Doctor of Scientology" Jack Horner (born 1927), dissatisfied with the Church's "ethics" program, developed Dianology.[100] Capt. Bill Robertson, a former Sea Org member, was a primary instigator of the movement in the early 1980s.[101] The church labels these groups "squirrels" (Scientology jargon) and often subjects them to considerable legal and social pressure.[102][103][104]

On January 1, 1982, Miscavige established the Religious Technology Center (RTC).[105] On November 11, 1982, the Free Zone was established by top Scientologists in disagreement with RTC.[106] The Free Zone Association was founded and registered under the laws of Germany, and espouses the doctrine that the official Church of Scientology led by David Miscavige has departed from Hubbard's original philosophy.[107]

The Advanced Ability Center was established by Hubbard's personal auditor David Mayo after February 1983 – a time when some of Scientology's upper and middle management split with Miscavige's organization.[108]

More recently, high-profile defectors Mark Rathbun and Mike Rinder have championed the cause of Independent Scientologists wishing to practice Scientology outside of the Church.[109][110]

Beliefs and practices

According to Scientology, its beliefs and practices are based on rigorous research, and its doctrines are accorded a significance equivalent to scientific laws.[111] Scientology cosmology is, however, at odds with modern science, with claims of memories going back "76 trillion years":[112] much longer than the age of the universe. Blind belief is held to be of lesser significance than the practical application of Scientologist methods.[111] Adherents are encouraged to validate the practices through their personal experience.[111] Hubbard put it this way: "For a Scientologist, the final test of any knowledge he has gained is, 'did the data and the use of it in life actually improve conditions or didn't it?'"[111] He defined Scientology's aims as: "A civilization without insanity, without criminals and without war; where the world can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where man is free to rise to greater heights, are the aims of Scientology."[113][114] He described Scientology as an "applied religious philosophy" because, according to him, it consists of a metaphysical doctrine, a theory of psychology, and teachings in morality.[115] The core of Scientology teaching lies in the belief that "each human has a reactive mind that responds to life's traumas, clouding the analytic mind and keeping us from experiencing reality." Scientologists undergo auditing to discover sources of this trauma, believing that re-experiencing it neutralizes it and reinforces the ascendancy of the analytic mind, with the final goal believed to be achieving a spiritual state that Scientology calls "clear."[116]

Theological doctrine

Scientology does not preach or impose a particular idea of God on Scientologists. Rather, people are expected to discover the truth through their own observations as their awareness advances.

> ... the Church of Scientology has no set dogma concerning God that it imposes on its members. As with all its tenets, Scientology does not ask individuals to accept anything on faith alone. Rather, as one's level of spiritual awareness increases through participation in Scientology *auditing* and *training*, one attains his own certainty of every dynamic. Accordingly, only when the Seventh Dynamic (spiritual) is reached in its entirety will one discover and come to a full understanding of the Eighth Dynamic (infinity) and one's relationship to the Supreme Being.[117]

Many Scientologists avoid using the words "belief" or "faith" to describe how Hubbard's teachings impacts their lives. They perceive that Scientology is based on verifiable technologies, speaking to Hubbard's original scientific objectives for Dianetics, based on the quantifiability of auditing on the E-meter. Scientologists call Dianetics and Scientology as technologies because of their claim of their scientific precision and workability.[118]

Reactive mind, traumatic memories, and auditing

Scientology presents two major divisions of the mind.[119] The *reactive mind* is thought to record all pain and emotional trauma, while the *analytical mind* is a rational mechanism that serves consciousness.[120][121] The reactive mind stores mental images which are not readily available to the analytical (conscious) mind; these are referred to as *engrams*.[122] According to Scientology, engrams are painful and debilitating; as they accumulate, people move further away from their true identity.[123] To avoid this fate is Scientology's basic goal.[123] Some engrams are taught by Hubbard to happen by accident while others are inflicted by "thetans who have gone bad and want power," as described by the Los Angeles Times. These engrams are named Implants in the doctrine of Scientology. Hubbard said, "Implants result in all varieties of illness, apathy, degradation, neurosis and insanity and are the principal cause of these in man."[124]

A Scientologist introduces the E-meter to a potential student

L. Ron Hubbard described the analytical mind in terms of a computer: "the analytical mind is not just a good computer, it is a perfect computer." According to him it makes the best decisions based on available data. Errors are made based on erroneous data and is not the error of the analytical mind.[118]

Dianetic auditing is one way by which the Scientologist may progress toward the *Clear* state, winning gradual freedom from the reactive mind's engrams and acquiring certainty of his or her reality as a thetan.[125] David V. Barrett, a sociologist of religion who has written widely about the subject, says that according to Scientology, the "first major goal is to go Clear." Clearing was described to represent "the attainment of Man's dreams through the ages of attaining a new and higher state of existence and freedom from the endless cycle of birth, death, birth … Clear is the total erasure of the reactive mind from which stems all the anxieties and problems the individual has."[126]

Scientology asserts that people have hidden abilities which have not yet been fully realized.[127] It teaches that increased spiritual awareness and physical benefits are accomplished through counseling sessions referred to as *auditing*.[128] Through auditing, people can solve their problems and free themselves of engrams.[129] This restores them to their natural condition as thetans and enables them to be *at cause* in their daily lives, responding rationally and creatively to life events rather than reacting to them under the direction of stored engrams.[130] Accordingly, those who study Scientology materials and receive auditing sessions advance from a status of *Preclear* to *Clear* and *Operating Thetan*.[131] Scientology's utopian aim is to "clear the planet", that is, clear all people in the world of their engrams.[132]

Auditing is a one-on-one session with a Scientology counselor or *auditor*.[133] It is similar to confession or pastoral counseling, but the auditor records and stores all information received and does not dispense forgiveness or advice as a pastor or priest of another religion might do.[133] Instead, the auditor's task is to help a person discover and understand the universal principles of affinity, reality, and communication (ARC).[133] Most auditing requires an E-meter, a device that measures minute changes in electrical resistance through the body when a person holds electrodes (metal "cans"), and a small current is passed through them.[129][133]

Scientology teaches that the E-meter helps to locate spiritual difficulties.[133] Once an area of concern has been identified, the auditor asks the individual specific questions about it to help him or her eliminate the difficulty, and uses the E-meter to confirm that the "charge" has been dissipated.[133] As the individual progresses up the "Bridge to Total Freedom", the focus of auditing moves from simple engrams to engrams of increasing complexity and other difficulties.[133] At the more advanced OT levels, Scientologists act as their own auditors ("solo auditors").[133]

Douglas E. Cowan writes that the e-meter "provides an external, material locus for the legitimation of [Scientology] practice." Scientologists depend on the "appearance of objectivity or empirical validity" of the e-meter rather than simply trusting an auditor's abstract interpretation of a participant's statements. He also states that without the e-meter, "Scientology could not have achieved whatever status it enjoys as a new religious movement." He also argues that without it, the Church may not have survived the early years when Dianetics was just formed.[134]

Emotional Tone Scale and survival

Scientology uses an emotional classification system called the *tone scale*.[135] The tone scale is a tool used in auditing; Scientologists maintain that knowing a person's place on the scale makes it easier to predict his or her actions and assists in bettering his or her condition.[136]

Scientology emphasizes the importance of *survival*, which it subdivides into eight classifications that are referred to as *"dynamics"*.[137][138] An individual's desire to survive is considered to be the first dynamic, while the second dynamic relates to procreation and family.[137][139] The remaining dynamics encompass wider fields of action, involving groups, mankind, all life, the physical universe, the spirit, and infinity, often associated with the Supreme Being.[137] The optimum solution to any problem is held to be the one that brings the greatest benefit to the greatest number of dynamics.[137]

Toxins and purification

The Purification Rundown[140] is a controversial "detoxification" program used by the Church of Scientology as an introductory service.[140][141] It features high-dose dietary supplements and extended time in a sauna (up to five hours a day for five weeks).[142] Scientology claims it is the only effective way to deal with the long-term effects of drug abuse or toxic exposure.[141]

Narconon is a "drug education and rehabilitation program" founded on Hubbard's beliefs about "toxins" and "purification".[143][144] Narconon is offered in the United States, Canada and a number of European countries; its *Purification Program* also uses high-dose vitamins and extended sauna sessions, combined with auditing and study.[143][144]

Introspection Rundown

The Introspection Rundown is a controversial Church of Scientology auditing process that is intended to handle a psychotic episode or complete mental breakdown. Introspection is defined for the purpose of this rundown as a condition where the person is "looking into one's own mind, feelings, reactions, etc."[145] The Introspection Rundown came under public scrutiny after the death of Lisa McPherson in 1995.[146]

Rejection of psychology and psychiatry

Scientology is vehemently opposed to psychiatry and psychology.[147][148][149] Psychiatry rejected Hubbard's theories in the early 1950s and in 1951, Hubbard's wife Sara consulted doctors who recommended he "be committed to a private sanatorium for psychiatric observation and treatment of a mental ailment known as paranoid schizophrenia."[150][151] Thereafter, Hubbard criticized psychiatry as a "barbaric and corrupt profession".[152]

Scientologists on an anti-psychiatry demonstration

Hubbard taught that psychiatrists were responsible for a great many wrongs in the world, saying that psychiatry has at various times offered itself as a tool of political suppression and "that psychiatry spawned the ideology which fired Hitler's mania, turned the Nazis into mass murderers, and created the Holocaust."[150][152] Hubbard created the anti-psychiatry organization Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), which operates Psychiatry: An Industry of Death, an anti-psychiatry museum.[150][152]

From 1969, CCHR has campaigned in opposition to psychiatric treatments, electroconvulsive shock therapy, lobotomy, and drugs such as Ritalin and Prozac.[153] According to the official church website, "the effects of medical and psychiatric drugs, whether painkillers, tranquilizers or 'antidepressants', are as disastrous" as illegal drugs.[116]

Body and thetan

Scientology beliefs revolve around the immortal soul, the *thetan*.[120][123][154] Scientology teaches that the thetan is the true identity of a person – an intrinsically good, omniscient, non-material core capable of unlimited creativity.[120][123]

Hubbard taught that thetans brought the material universe into being largely for their own pleasure.[123] The universe has no independent reality but derives its apparent reality from the fact that thetans agree it exists.[120] Thetans fell from grace when they began to identify with their creation rather than their original state of spiritual purity.[123] Eventually they lost their memory of their true nature, along with the associated spiritual and creative powers. As a result, thetans came to think of themselves as nothing but embodied beings.[120][125]

Thetans are reborn time and time again in new bodies through a process called "assumption", which is analogous to reincarnation.[123] Scientology posits a causal relationship between the experiences of earlier incarnations and one's present life, and with each rebirth, the effects of the *MEST* universe (MEST here stands for matter, energy, space, and time) on the thetan become stronger.[123]

Space opera and the Wall of Fire

The Church of Scientology holds that at the higher levels of initiation ("OT levels"), mystical teachings are imparted that may be harmful to unprepared readers. These teachings are kept secret from members who have not reached these levels. The church says that the secrecy is warranted to keep its materials' use in context and to protect its members from being exposed to materials they are not yet prepared for.[129]


Xenu as depicted by *Panorama*

These are the OT levels, the levels above *Clear*, whose contents are guarded within Scientology. The OT level teachings include accounts of various cosmic catastrophes that befell the thetans.[155] Hubbard described these early events collectively as "space opera".

In the OT levels, Hubbard explains how to reverse the effects of past-life trauma patterns that supposedly extend millions of years into the past.[156] Among these advanced teachings is the story of Xenu (sometimes Xemu), introduced as the tyrant ruler of the "Galactic Confederacy". According to this story, 75 million years ago Xenu brought billions of people to Earth in spacecraft resembling Douglas DC-8 airliners, stacked them around volcanoes and detonated hydrogen bombs in the volcanoes. The thetans then clustered together, stuck to the bodies of the living, and continue to do this today. Scientologists at advanced levels place considerable emphasis on isolating body thetans and neutralizing their ill effects.[157]

Excerpts and descriptions of OT materials were published online by a former member in 1995 and then circulated in mainstream media. This occurred after the teachings were submitted as evidence in court cases involving Scientology, thus becoming a matter of public record.[156][158] There are eight publicly known OT levels, OT I to VIII.[159] The highest level, OT VIII, is disclosed only at sea on the Scientology cruise ship *Freewinds*.[159] It has been rumored that additional OT levels, said to be based on material written by Hubbard long ago, will be released at some appropriate point in the future.[160]

A large Church of Spiritual Technology symbol carved into the ground at Scientology's Trementina Base is visible from the air.[161] Washington Post reporter Richard Leiby wrote, "Former Scientologists familiar with Hubbard's teachings on reincarnation say the symbol marks a 'return point' so loyal staff members know where they can find the founder's works when they travel here in the future from other places in the universe."[162]

Ethics, suppressives, and disconnection


Scientology cruise ship *Freewinds*

The *Ethics* system regulates member behavior,[163][164] and *Ethics officers* are present in every Scientology organization. *Ethics* officers ensure "correct application of Scientology technology" and deal with "behavior adversely affecting a Scientology organization's performance", ranging from "Errors" and "Misdemeanors" to "Crimes" and "Suppressive Acts", as those terms defined by Scientology.[165]

Scientology asserts some people are truly malevolent, and Hubbard taught 20 percent of the population were *suppressive persons*, which includes some hopelessly antisocial personalities who are the truly dangerous individuals in humanity: "the Adolf Hitlers and the Genghis Khans, the unrepentant murderers and the drug lords."[166][167] Scientology disconnection policy prohibits most contact with Suppressive Persons.[166][167] The church denies that a disconnection policy exists, and quotes Hubbard's definition of disconnection as "a self-determined decision made by an individual that he is not going to be connected to another."[168]

A Scientologist who communicates with a suppressive person risks being declared a *Potential Trouble Source*.[169][170] Defectors who turn into critics of the movement are declared suppressive persons,[171][172][173][174] and the Church of Scientology has a reputation for moving aggressively against such detractors.[175]

Fair game

The term *Fair Game* is used to describe policies and practices carried out against people the Church perceives as its enemies. Hubbard established the policy in the 1950s, in response to criticism both from within and outside his organization.[17][18] Individuals or groups who are "Fair Game" are judged to be a threat to the Church and, according to the policy, can be punished and harassed using any and all means possible.[17][18]

Hubbard and his followers targeted many individuals as well as government officials and agencies, including a program of illegal infiltration of the IRS and other U.S. government agencies during the 1970s.[17][18] They also conducted private investigations, character assassination and legal action against the Church's critics in the media.[17] The policy remains in effect and has been defended by the Church of Scientology as a core religious practice.[176][177][178]

Scientology ceremonies

In Scientology, ceremonies for events such as weddings, child naming, and funerals are observed.[123] Friday services are held to commemorate the completion of a person's religious services during the prior week.[123] Ordained Scientology ministers may perform such rites.[123] However, these services and the clergy who perform them play only a minor role in Scientologists' religious lives.[179]

The arts

Hubbard theorized in 1951 that the "aesthetic mind" is a phase of mental activity that "deals with the nebulous field of art and creation." In August 1965, Hubbard published the book *Art* that defines art as "a word which summarizes the quality of communication." He also claimed that art is "the least codified of human endeavors and the most misunderstood." The book is used as a textbook for art courses in Scientology.[180]

Church of Scientology organization

The internal structure of Scientology organizations is strongly bureaucratic with a focus on statistics-based management.[163] Organizational operating budgets are performance-related and subject to frequent reviews.[163]

According to a Church account, the Scientology cross represent the spirit "rising triumphantly, ultimately transcending the turmoil of the physical universe to achieve salvation".[181]

Membership statistics

A 2001 survey estimated that 55,000 people in the United States claimed to be Scientologists. Worldwide estimates of Scientology's core practicing membership ranges between 100,000 and 200,000, mostly in the U.S., Europe, South Africa and Australia.[129] The 2008 American Religious Identification Survey found that the number of American Scientologists had dropped to 25,000.[182][183][184][185] A 2008 Trinity College survey concluded there were only 25,000 American Scientologists.[186] Scientology is also declining in the United Kingdom.[187][183] In 2011, high-level defector Jeff Hawkins estimated there were 40,000 Scientologists worldwide.[183]

Although the Church of Scientology claims to be the fastest growing religious movement on Earth, the church's estimates of its membership numbers are reportedly significantly exaggerated.[188][189][190]

The incomplete Super Power Building of the FLAG Scientology complex in Clearwater, Florida

Sea Org

The highest ranking people in the Scientology hierarchy are the members of the Sea Organization, or Sea Org.[163] The organization includes some 5,000 of Scientology's most dedicated adherents, who work for low pay, and sign a billion-year contract.[163][191]

Rehabilitation Project Force

The Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF) is a controversial part of the Scientology "justice" system.[165] When Sea Org members are found guilty of a violation, they are assigned to the RPF.[165] The RPF involves a daily regimen of five hours of auditing or studying, eight hours of work, often physical labor, such as building renovation, and at least seven hours of sleep.[165]

Douglas E. Cowan and David G. Bromley state that scholars and observers have come to radically different conclusions about the RPF and whether it is "voluntary or coercive, therapeutic or punitive".[165]

Scientology center in New York City

Office of Special Affairs

The Office of Special Affairs or *OSA* (formerly the *Guardian's Office*) is a department of the Church of Scientology which has been characterized as a non-state intelligence agency.[192][193][194] It has targeted critics of the Church for "dead agent" operations, which is mounting character assassination operations against perceived enemies.[195]

A 1990 article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported that in the 1980s the church more commonly used private investigators, including former and current Los Angeles police officers, to give themselves a layer of protection in case embarrassing tactics were used and became public.[196]

Church of Spiritual Technology

The Church of Spiritual Technology (CST) has been described as "most secret organization in all of Scientology."[197] The organization owns the copyrights to all Scientology materials and the bulk of Hubbard's estate. CST licenses this intellectual property to the Religious Technology Center who then sub-licenses it to Church of Scientology International.


The Church of Spiritual Technology ranch in Creston, California, where Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard spent his last days. A Scientology-related symbol is visible within a racetrack.

The organization also operates the Scientology archiving project, which aims to preserve the works of Hubbard on stainless steel tablets, encased in titanium capsules in specially constructed vaults throughout the world.

Shelly Miscavige, wife of leader David Miscavige, who hasn't been seen in public since 2007, is said to be held at a CST compound in Twin Peaks, California.[198][199]

Franchises and advanced organizations

Many Scientologists' first contact with Scientology is through local informal groups and field auditors practicing Dianetics counseling.[200] In addition to these, Scientology operates hundreds of Churches and Missions around the world.[143] This is where Scientologists receive introductory training, and it is at this local level that most Scientologists participate.[143] Churches and Missions are licensed franchises; they may offer services for a fee provided they contribute a proportion of their income and comply with the Religious Technology Center (RTC) and its standards.[143][201][202]

Operating Thetan levels are offered only at Scientology's Advanced Organizations (Los Angeles, Sydney, East Grinstead and Copenhagen).[203] The Flag Service Organization in Clearwater, Florida offers OT levels VI and VII. The Scientology ship *Freewinds* offers OT VIII.[204]

Celebrity Centers

In 1955, Hubbard created a list of 63 celebrities targeted for conversion to Scientology.[205] In a church policy letter in 1973, L. Ron Hubbard wrote, "The purpose of [the] Celebrity Centre is, to forward the expansion and popularization of Scientology through the arts."[206]

Scientology operates eight churches that are designated *Celebrity Centres*, designed to minister to celebrity Scientologists.[207] The largest of these is in Hollywood, California, called *Church of Scientology Celebrity Centre International*.[207] The Celebrity Centre International was the first one that was opened in 1969 and its opening is celebrated the first week of August each year in an evening gala.[208]

Former silent-screen star Gloria Swanson and actors Tom Cruise and John Travolta have spoken publicly about their commitment to Scientology, as has actress and musician Juliette Lewis.[205][209][210]

Scientology tech in jails and prisons, schools, and management

Several Scientology organizations promote the use of Scientology practices as a means to solve social problems. Scientology began to focus on these issues in the early 1970s, led by Hubbard. The church developed outreach programs to fight drug addiction, illiteracy, learning disabilities and criminal behavior. These have been presented to schools, businesses and communities as secular techniques based on Hubbard's writings.[211] The Association for Better Living and Education (ABLE) acts as an umbrella organization for these efforts.[212] Notable examples include:

Church of Scientology of Tampa, Florida

- Narconon is a Scientology organization promoting the theories of founder L. Ron Hubbard regarding substance abuse treatment and addiction.
- Criminon, an offshoot of Narconon, introduces Scientology practices to criminal offenders.[143][144]
- Applied Scholastics, founded in 1972, teaches Scientology "study tech" to K-12 students.[213] Delphi Schools operates numerous private schools throughout the United States, including the flagship academy The Delphian School in Yamhill County, Oregon.
- The World Institute of Scientology Enterprises (WISE) applies Scientology practices to business management.[213] The most prominent training supplier to make use of Hubbard's technology is Sterling Management Systems.[213]
- The Way to Happiness Foundation promotes a moral code written by Hubbard, to date translated into more than 40 languages.[213]

Volunteer ministers

The Church of Scientology began its "Volunteer Ministers" program as a way to participate in community outreach projects. Volunteer Ministers sometimes travel to the scenes of major disasters in order to provide assistance with relief efforts. According to critics, these relief efforts consist of passing out copies of a pamphlet authored by Hubbard entitled *The Way to Happiness*, and engaging in a method said to calm panicked or injured individuals known in Scientology as a "touch assist." Accounts of the Volunteer Ministers' effectiveness have been mixed, and touch assists are not supported by scientific evidence.[214][215][216]

Other entities

Other Scientology-related organizations include:

- International Association of Scientologists (IAS) - Scientology membership organization.
- The National Commission on Law Enforcement and Social Justice - Opposes what it describes as abusive practices by government and police agencies, especially Interpol.[150][217]
- Scientologists Taking Action Against Discrimination (STAND) - Organization which does public relations for Scientology and Scientologists.[218]

Assets

According to leaked tax documents, the Church of Scientology International and Church of Spiritual Technology in the US had a combined $1.7 Billion in assets in 2012, in addition to annual revenues estimated at $200 million a year.[219] This does not include assets and revenue of International Association of Scientologists.

Controversies

The Church of Scientology is one of the most controversial religious organizations. A first point of controversy was its challenge of the psychotherapeutic establishment. Another was a 1991 *Time* magazine article that attacked the church, which responded with a major lawsuit that was rejected by the court as baseless early in 1992. And a third is its religious status in the United States, formalized when the IRS granted the organization tax-exempt status in 1993.[222]

It has been in conflict with the governments and police forces of many countries (including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada,[223] France[224] and Germany).[7][225][226][227][228] It has been one of the most litigious religious movements in history, filing countless lawsuits against governments, organizations and individuals.[229]

Reports and allegations have been made, by journalists, courts, and governmental bodies of several countries, that the Church of Scientology is an unscrupulous commercial enterprise that harasses its critics and brutally exploits its members.[226][227] A considerable amount of investigation has been aimed at the church, by groups ranging from the media to governmental agencies.[226][227]

The controversies involving the church and its critics, some of them ongoing, include:

- Criminal behavior by members of the Church, including the infiltration of the US Government.[225]
- Organized harassment of people perceived as enemies of the Church.[225]

- Scientology's disconnection policy, in which some members are required to shun friends or family members who are "antagonistic" to the Church.[187][230]
- The death of Scientologist Lisa McPherson while in the care of the church. (Robert Minton sponsored the multimillion-dollar lawsuit against Scientology for the death of McPherson. In May 2004, McPherson's estate and the Church of Scientology reached a confidential settlement.)[231]
- Attempts to legally force search engines to censor information critical of the Church.[232]
- Allegations the Church leader David Miscavige beats and demoralizes staff, and that physical violence by superiors towards staff working for them is a common occurrence in the church.[233][234] Scientology spokesman Tommy Davis denied these claims and provided witnesses to rebut them.[233]

Official German information leaflets from the Bavarian Office for the Protection of the Constitution on (from left to right) Islamic extremism, Scientology, and organized crime.[220][221] "Several states published pamphlets about Scientology (and other religious groups) that detailed the Church's ideology and practices. States defended the practice by noting their responsibility to respond to citizens' requests for information about Scientology as well as other subjects. While many of the pamphlets were factual and relatively unbiased, some warned of alleged dangers posed by Scientology to the political order, to the free market economic system, and to the mental and financial well being of individuals. Beyond the Government's actions, the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church have been public opponents of Scientology. Evangelical 'Commissioners for Religious and Ideological Issues' have been particularly active in this regard."

Scientology social programs such as drug and criminal rehabilitation have likewise drawn both support and criticism.[235][236][237][238]

Stephen A. Kent, a professor of sociology, has said that "Scientologists see themselves as possessors of doctrines and skills that can save the world, if not the galaxy."[239] As stated in Scientology doctrine: "The whole agonized future of this planet, every man, woman and child on it, and your own destiny for the next endless trillions of years depend on what you do here and now with and in Scientology."[240] Kent has described Scientology's ethics system as "a peculiar brand of morality that uniquely benefited [the Church of Scientology] ... In plain English, the purpose of Scientology ethics is to eliminate opponents, then eliminate people's interests in things other than Scientology."[241]

Many former members have come forward to speak out about the Church and the negative effects its teachings have had on them, including celebrities such as Leah Remini. Remini spoke about her split from the Church, saying that she still has friends within the organization who she is no longer able to speak to.[242]

Criminal behavior

Much of the controversy surrounding Scientology stems from the criminal convictions of core members of the Scientology organization.

In 1978, a number of Scientologists, including L. Ron Hubbard's wife Mary Sue Hubbard (who was second in command in the organization at the time), were convicted of perpetrating what was at the time the largest incident of domestic espionage in the history of the United States, called "Operation Snow White". This involved infiltrating, wiretapping, and stealing documents from the offices of Federal attorneys and the Internal Revenue Service.[243] L. Ron Hubbard was convicted *in absentia* by French

authorities of engaging in fraud and sentenced to four years in prison.[244] The head of the French Church of Scientology was convicted at the same trial and given a suspended one-year prison sentence.[245]

An FBI raid on the Church's headquarters revealed documentation that detailed Scientology's criminal actions against various critics of the organization. In "Operation Freakout", agents of the church attempted to destroy Paulette Cooper, author of *The Scandal of Scientology*, an early book that had been critical of the movement.[246] Among these documents was a plan to frame Gabe Cazares, the mayor of Clearwater, Florida, with a staged hit-and-run accident. Nine individuals related to the case were prosecuted on charges of theft, burglary, conspiracy, and other crimes.

Author Paulette Cooper was indicted for making bomb threats after she was framed by agents of the Church of Scientology.

In 1988, Scientology president Heber Jentzsch and ten other members of the organization were arrested in Spain on various charges including illicit association, coercion, fraud, and labor law violations.[247]

In October 2009, the Church of Scientology was found guilty of organized fraud in France.[248] The sentence was confirmed by appeal court in February 2012.[249]

In 2012, Belgian prosecutors indicted Scientology as a criminal organization engaged in fraud and extortion.[250][251][252] On March 2016, the Church of Scientology was acquitted of all charges, and demands to close its Belgian branch and European headquarters were dismissed.[253]

Organized harassment

Scientology has historically engaged in hostile action toward its critics; executives within the organization have proclaimed that Scientology is "not a turn-the-other-cheek religion".[254] Journalists, politicians, former Scientologists and various anti-cult groups have made accusations of wrongdoing against Scientology since the 1960s, and Scientology has targeted these critics – almost without exception – for retaliation, in the form of lawsuits and public counter-accusations of personal wrongdoing. Many of Scientology's critics have also reported they were subject to threats and harassment in their private lives.[255][256]

According to a 1990 *Los Angeles Times* article, Scientology had largely switched from using church members to using private investigators, including former and current Los Angeles police officers, as this gives the church a layer of protection in case investigators use tactics embarrassing to the church. In one case, the church described their tactics as "LAPD sanctioned," which was energetically disputed by Police Chief Daryl Gates. The officer involved in this particular case of surveillance and harassment was suspended for six months.[196]

Journalist John Sweeney reported that "While making our BBC Panorama film *Scientology and Me* I have been shouted at, spied on, had my hotel invaded at midnight, denounced as a 'bigot' by star Scientologists, brain-washed—that is how it felt to me—in a mock up of a Nazi-style torture chamber and chased round the streets of Los Angeles by sinister strangers".[257]

Violation of auditing confidentiality

During the auditing process, the auditor collects and records personal information from the client.[258][259]

Scientology E-Meter

While the Church of Scientology claims to protect the confidentiality of auditing records, the Church has a history of attacking and psychologically abusing former members using information culled from the records.[259] For example, a December 16, 1969, a Guardian's Office order (G. O. 121669) by Mary Sue Hubbard explicitly authorized the use of auditing records for purposes of "internal security."[260] Former members report having participated in combing through information obtained in auditing sessions to see if it could be used for smear campaigns against critics.[261][262]

Disconnection

The practice of shunning in Scientology is termed "disconnection". Members can disconnect from any person they already know, including existing family members. Many examples of this policy's application have been established in court.[263][264][265] Failure to disconnect from a Suppressive Person is itself labeled a Suppressive act.[266]

Allegation of coerced abortions

The Sea Org originally operated on vessels at sea where it was understood that it was not permitted to raise children on board the ships.[241] Pregnant women in the Sea Org have reported been pressured to undergo abortions.[241] Sea Org members were reportedly shown secret writings by L. Ron Hubbard to convince them that having an abortion was not against Scientology practices.[267]

Protester against Scientology, holding a sign which reads: "What kind of church makes its staff have abortions"

In 2003, *The Times of India* reported "Forced abortions, beatings, starvation are considered tools of discipline in this church."[268]

A former high-ranking source reports that "some 1,500 abortions" have been "carried out by women in the Sea Organization since the implementation of a rule in the late 80s that members could not remain in the organization if they decided to have children." The source noted that "And if members who have been in the Sea Organization for, say, 10 years do decide to have kids, they are dismissed with no more than $1,000" as a severance package.[269]

Many former members have claimed they were pressured to undergo abortion.

Longtime member Astra Woodcraft reportedly "left Scientology for good when the church tried to pressure her to have an abortion".[270][271] Former Sea Org member Karen Pressley recounted that she was often asked by fellow Scientologists for loans so that they could get an abortion and remain in the Sea Org.[272][273][274] Scientology employee Claire Headley has claimed she "was forced to have (two)

abortions to keep her job and was subjected to violations of personal rights and liberties for the purpose of obtaining forced labor."[275] Laura Ann DeCrescenzo reported she was "coerced to have an abortion" as a minor.[276]

A protester holds a sign which reads: "C[hurch] o[f] $[cientology] forces its female members to get abortions" (February 10, 2008)

In March 2009, Maureen Bolstad reported that women who worked at Scientology's headquarters were forced to have abortions, or faced being declared a "Suppressive Person" by the organization's management.[277] In March 2010, former Scientologist Janette Lang stated that at age 20 she became pregnant by her boyfriend while in the organization,[278] and her boyfriend's Scientology supervisors "coerced them into terminating the pregnancy".[279] "We fought for a week, I was devastated, I felt abused, I was lost and eventually I gave in. It was my baby, my body and my choice, and all of that was taken away from me by Scientology," said Lang.[279][280]

Australian Senator Nick Xenophon gave a speech to the Australian Parliament in November 2009, about statements he had received from former Scientologists.[281] He said that he had been told members of the organization had coerced pregnant female employees to have abortions.[281] "I am deeply concerned about this organisation and the devastating impact it can have on its followers," said Senator Xenophon, and he requested that the Australian Senate begin an investigation into Scientology.[281] According to the letters presented by Senator Xenophon, the organization was involved in "ordering" its members to have abortions.[282] Former Scientologist Aaron Saxton sent a letter to Senator Xenophon stating he had participated in coercing pregnant women within the organization to have abortions.[283] "Aaron says women who fell pregnant were taken to offices and bullied to have an abortion. If they refused, they faced demotion and hard labour. Aaron says one staff member used a coat hanger and self-aborted her child for fear of punishment," said Senator Xenophon.[284] Carmel Underwood, another former Scientologist, said she had been put under "extreme pressure" to have an abortion,[285] and that she was placed into a "disappearing programme", after refusing.[286] Underwood was the executive director of Scientology's branch in Sydney, Australia.[284]

Scientology spokesman Tommy Davis dismissed such claims as "utterly meritless".[275] Mike Ferriss, the head of Scientology in New Zealand, told media that "There are no forced abortions in Scientology".[287] Scientology spokesperson Virginia Stewart likewise rejected the claims and asserted "The Church of Scientology considers the family unit and children to be of the utmost importance and does not condone nor force anyone to undertake any medical procedure whatsoever."[288]

Scientology, litigation, and the Internet

In the 1990s, Miscavige's organization took action against increased criticism of Scientology on the Internet and online distribution of Scientology-related documents.[289]

Starting in 1991, Scientology filed fifty lawsuits against Scientology-critic Cult Awareness Network (CAN).[290] Many of the suits were dismissed, but one resulted in $2 million in losses, bankrupting the network.[290] At bankruptcy, CAN's name and logo were obtained by a Scientologist.[290][291] A New Cult Awareness Network was set up with Scientology backing, which operates as an information and networking center for non-traditional religions, referring callers to academics and other experts.[292][293]

In a 1993 U.S. lawsuit brought by the Church of Scientology against Steven Fishman, a former member of the Church, Fishman made a court declaration which included several dozen pages of formerly secret esoterica detailing aspects of Scientologist cosmogony.[294] As a result of the litigation, this material, normally strictly safeguarded and used only in Scientology's more advanced "OT levels", found its way onto the Internet.[294] This resulted in a battle between the Church of Scientology and its online critics over the right to disclose this material, or safeguard its confidentiality.[294] The Church of Scientology was forced to issue a press release acknowledging the existence of this cosmogony, rather than allow its critics "to distort and misuse this information for their own purposes."[294] Even so, the material, notably the story of Xenu, has since been widely disseminated and used to caricature Scientology, despite the Church's vigorous program of copyright litigation.[294]

In January 1995, church lawyer Helena Kobrin attempted to shut down the newsgroup alt.religion.scientology by sending a control message instructing Usenet servers to delete the group.[295] In practice, this rmgroup message had little effect, since most Usenet servers are configured to disregard such messages when sent to groups that receive substantial traffic, and newgroup messages were quickly issued to recreate the group on those servers that did not do so. However, the issuance of the message led to a great deal of public criticism by free-speech advocates.[296][297] Among the criticisms raised, one suggestion is that Scientology's true motive is to suppress the free speech of its critics.[298][299]

The Church also began filing lawsuits against those who posted copyrighted texts on the newsgroup and the World Wide Web, and lobbied for tighter restrictions on copyrights in general. The Church supported the controversial Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act as well as the even more controversial Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA). Some of the DMCA's provisions (notably the Online Copyright Infringement Liability Limitation Act) were heavily influenced by Church litigation against US Internet service providers over copyrighted Scientology materials that had been posted or uploaded through their servers.

An Internet-based group which refers to itself as 'Anonymous' held protests outside Scientology centers in cities around the world in February 2008 as part of Project Chanology. Issues they protested ranged from alleged abuse of followers to the validity of its claims to qualify as a state-sponsored religion.[300]

Beginning in the middle of 1996 and ensuing for several years, the newsgroup was attacked by anonymous parties using a tactic dubbed *sporgery* by some, in the form of hundreds of thousands of forged spam messages posted on the group. Some investigators said that some spam had been traced to church members.[301][302] Former Scientologist Tory Christman later asserted that the Office of Special Affairs had undertaken a concerted effort to destroy alt.religion.scientology through these means; the effort failed.[303]

On January 14, 2008, a video produced by the Church of Scientology featuring an interview with Tom Cruise was leaked to the Internet and uploaded to YouTube.[304][305][306] The Church of Scientology issued a copyright violation claim against YouTube requesting the removal of the video.[307] Subsequently, the group Anonymous voiced its criticism of Scientology and began attacking the Church.[308] Calling the action by the Church of Scientology a form of Internet censorship, participants of Anonymous coordinated Project Chanology, consisting a series of denial-of-service attacks against Scientology websites, prank calls, and black faxes to Scientology centers.[309][310][311][312][313] On January 21, 2008, Anonymous announced its intentions via a video posted to YouTube entitled "Message

to Scientology", and a press release declaring a "war" against the Church of Scientology and the Religious Technology Center.[312][314] In the press release, the group stated that the attacks against the Church of Scientology would continue in order to protect the freedom of speech, and end what they saw as the financial exploitation of church members.[315]

On January 28, 2008, an Anonymous video appeared on YouTube calling for protests outside Church of Scientology centers on February 10, 2008.[316][317] According to a letter Anonymous e-mailed to the press, about 7,000 people protested in more than 90 cities worldwide.[318] Many protesters wore masks based on the character V from *V for Vendetta* (who was influenced by Guy Fawkes) or otherwise disguised their identities, in part to protect themselves from reprisals from the Church of Scientology.[319][320] Many further protests have followed since then in cities around the world.[321]

A protester criticizes Scientology

The Arbitration Committee of the Wikipedia internet encyclopedia decided in May 2009 to restrict access to its site from Church of Scientology IP addresses, to prevent self-serving edits by Scientologists.[322][323] A "host of anti-Scientologist editors" were topic-banned as well.[322][323] The committee concluded that both sides had "gamed policy" and resorted to "battlefield tactics", with articles on living persons being the "worst casualties".[322]

Disputes over legal status

The legal status of Scientology or Scientology-related organizations differs between jurisdictions.[324] Scientology was legally recognized as a tax-exempt religion in South Africa,[325] Australia,[326] Sweden,[327] New Zealand,[328][329] Portugal,[330] and Spain.[331] Scientology was granted tax-exempt status in the United States in 1993.[332][333][334][335] The organization is considered a cult in Chile and an "anticonstitutional sect" in Germany,[19] and is considered a cult (French *secte*) by some French public authorities.[20]

The church argues that Scientology is a genuine religious movement that has been misrepresented, maligned, and persecuted.[336][337] The Church of Scientology has pursued an extensive public relations campaign for the recognition of Scientology as a tax-exempt religion in the various countries in which it exists.[338][339][340]

A Scientology Center on Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California

Scientology has often encountered opposition due to its strong-arm tactics directed against critics and members wishing to leave the organization.[172] A number of governments regard the Church as a religious organization entitled to tax-exempt status, while governments variously classify it as a business, cult, pseudoreligion, or criminal organization.[189][341][342]

In 1957, the Church of Scientology of California was granted tax-exempt status by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and so, for a time, were other local churches.[61][343] In 1958 however, the IRS started a review of the appropriateness of this status.[61] In 1959, Hubbard moved to England,

remaining there until the mid-1960s.[60]

In the mid-sixties, the Church of Scientology was banned in several Australian states, starting with Victoria in 1965.[344] The ban was based on the Anderson Report, which found that the auditing process involved "command" hypnosis, in which the hypnotist assumes "positive authoritative control" over the patient. On this point the report stated,

> It is the firm conclusion of this Board that most scientology and dianetic techniques are those of authoritative hypnosis and as such are dangerous ... the scientific evidence which the Board heard from several expert witnesses of the highest repute ... leads to the inescapable conclusion that it is only in name that there is any difference between authoritative hypnosis and most of the techniques of scientology. Many scientology techniques are in fact hypnotic techniques, and Hubbard has not changed their nature by changing their names.[345]

The Australian Church was forced to operate under the name of the "Church of the New Faith" as a result, the name and practice of Scientology having become illegal in the relevant states.[344] Several years of court proceedings aimed at overturning the ban followed.[344] In 1973, state laws banning Scientology were overturned in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. In 1983 the High Court of Australia ruled in a unanimous decision that the Church of Scientology was "undoubtedly a religion and deserving of tax exemption.".[346]

In 1967, the IRS removed Scientology's tax-exempt status, asserting that its activities were commercial and operated for the benefit of Hubbard, rather than for charitable or religious purposes.[343] The decision resulted in a process of litigation that was settled in the Church's favor a quarter of a century later, the longest case of litigation in IRS history.[61]

Scientology as a religion

Scientology is officially recognized as a religion in the United States.[332][333][334][335] Recognition came in 1993,[347] when the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) stated that "[Scientology is] operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes."[348][349] Scientology was again recognized as a religion by the U.S. courts when the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment in *Headley v. Church of Scientology International* in 2012.[350]

The *New York Times* noted in this connection that the Church of Scientology had funded a campaign which included a whistle-blower organization to publicly attack the IRS, as well as hiring of private investigators to look into the private lives of IRS officials.[343] In 1991, Miscavige, the highest-ranking Scientology leader, arranged a meeting with Fred T. Goldberg Jr., the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service at the time.[351] The meeting was an "opportunity for the church to offer to end its long dispute with the agency, including the dozens of suits brought against the IRS." The committee met several times with the Scientology legal team and "was persuaded that those involved in the Snow White crimes had been purged, that church money was devoted to tax-exempt purposes and that, with Mr. Hubbard's death, no one was getting rich from Scientology."[343] In August 1993, a settlement was reached; the church would receive its tax-exempt status and end its legal actions against the IRS and its personnel. The church was required only to resubmit new applications for exemption to the IRS Exempt Organizations (EO) division, which was told "not to consider any substantive matters" because those issues had been resolved by the committee.[343] The secret agreement was announced on October 13,

1993, with the IRS refusing to disclose any of the terms or the reasoning behind the decision.[343] Both the IRS and Scientology rejected any allegations that foul play or undue pressure had been used on IRS officials, insisting that the decision had been based on the merits of the case.[352] IRS officials "insisted that Scientology's tactics had not affected the decision" and that "ultimately the decision was made on a legal basis".[343] Miscavige claims that the IRS's examination of Scientology was the most exhaustive review of any non-profit organization in history.[353]

Elsewhere, Scientology is recognized as a religion in Australia,[333][354] Portugal,[355] Spain,[356] Slovenia,[357] Sweden,[357][358][359] Croatia,[357] Hungary[357] and Kyrgyzstan.[360] In New Zealand, the Inland Revenue Department classified the Church of Scientology as a charitable organization and stated that its income would be tax exempt.[361] It has gained judicial recognition in Italy,[362] and Scientology officials have won the right to perform marriages in South Africa.[363]

Scientology is not recognized as a religion in Canada.[363] In the UK, the Charity Commission for England and Wales ruled in 1999 that Scientology was not a religion and refused to register the Church as a charity, although a year later, it was recognized as a not-for-profit body in a separate proceeding by the UK Revenue and Customs and exempted from UK value added tax.[363][364] In December 2013, the United Kingdom's highest court officially recognized Scientology as a religion. The ruling ended a five-year legal battle by Scientologist Louisa Hodkin, who sought the legal right to marry at the Church of Scientology chapel in central London. The opinion by five supreme court justices redefined religion in law, rendering the 1970 definition "out of date" in restricting religious worship to "reverence or veneration of God or of a Supreme Being."[365][366][367]

Viewed as a commercial enterprise

Scientology has been accused of being "a business, often given to criminal acts, and sometimes masquerading as a religion."[179][368]


Scientology desk near the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin

In conjunction with the Church of Scientology's request to be officially recognized as a religion in Germany, around 1996 the German state Baden-Württemberg conducted a thorough investigation of the group's activities within Germany.[369] The results of this investigation indicated that at the time of publication, Scientology's main sources of revenue ("Haupteinnahmequellen der SO") were from course offerings and sales of their various publications. Course offerings ranged from (German Marks) DM 182.50 to about DM 30,000 – the equivalent today of approximately $119 to US$19,560. Revenue from monthly, bi-monthly, and other membership offerings could not be estimated in the report, but was nevertheless placed in the millions. Defending its practices against accusations of profiteering, the Church has countered critics by drawing analogies to other religious groups who have established practices such as tithing, or require members to make donations for specific religious services.[370]

Since 1997 Germany has considered Scientology to be in conflict with the principles of the nation's constitution. It is seen as an anticonstitutional sect and a new version of political extremism and because there is "evidence for intentions against the free democratic basic order" it is observed by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution.[371][372] In 1997, an open letter to then-German Chancellor,

Helmut Kohl, published as a newspaper advertisement in the *International Herald Tribune*, drew parallels between the "organized oppression" of Scientologists in Germany and the treatment of Jews in 1930s' Nazi Germany.[373][374] The letter was signed by Dustin Hoffman, Goldie Hawn and a number of other Hollywood celebrities and executives.[374][375] Commenting on the matter, a spokesman for the U.S. Department of State said that Scientologists were discriminated against in Germany, but condemned the comparisons to the Nazis' treatment of Jews as extremely inappropriate, as did a United Nations Special Rapporteur.[375][376] Based on the IRS exemptions, the U.S. State Department formally criticized Germany for discriminating against Scientologists and began to note Scientologists' complaints of harassment in its annual human rights reports,[343] as well as the annual International Religious Freedom Reports it has released from 1999 onwards.[377] Germany will continue to monitor Scientology's activities in the country, despite continued objection from Scientology which cites such monitoring as abuse of freedom of religion.[378]

France and Belgium have not recognized Scientology as a religion, and Stephen A. Kent, writing in 2001, noted that recognition had not been obtained in Ireland, Luxembourg, Israel or Mexico either.[379] Although the Belgian State Prosecution Service recommended that various individuals and organizations associated with Scientology should be prosecuted,[380][381] the Belgian courts finally decided in March 2016 that Scientology is not a criminal organization.[382]

In Greece, Scientology is not recognized as a religion by the Greek government, and multiple applications for religious status have been denied, notably in 2000 and 2003.[383]

In the Netherlands, Scientology was granted tax exempt status in October 2013.[384] The status was revoked in October 2015. The court ruled that because auditing fees and course costs were more expensive than most commercial education institutions, Scientology appeared to be aimed at making a profit.[385][386]

Scientology maintains strict control over the use of its symbols, icons, and names. It claims copyright and trademark over its "Scientology cross", and its lawyers have threatened lawsuits against individuals and organizations who have published the image in books and on Web sites. Because of this, it is very difficult for individual groups to attempt to publicly practice Scientology on their own, independent of the official Church of Scientology. Scientology has filed suit against a number of individuals who have attempted to set up their own auditing practices, using copyright and trademark law to shut these groups down.[387]

The Church of Scientology and its many related organizations have amassed considerable real estate holdings worldwide, likely in the hundreds of millions of dollars.[225] Scientology encourages existing members to "sell" Scientology to others by paying a commission to those who recruit new members.[225] Scientology franchises, or missions, must pay the Church of Scientology roughly 10% of their gross income.[388] On that basis, it is likened to a pyramid selling scheme.[389] While introductory courses do not cost much, courses at the higher levels may cost several thousand dollars each.[390] As a rule, the great majority of members proceeds up the bridge in a steady rate commensurate with their income. Most recently the Italian Supreme Court agreed with the American IRS that the church's financial system is analogous to the practices of other groups and not out of line with its religious purposes.[391]

In November 2009, Australian Senator Nick Xenophon used a speech in Federal Parliament to allege that the Church of Scientology is a criminal organization. Based on letters from former followers of the religion, he said that there were "allegations of forced imprisonment, coerced abortions, and

embezzlement of church funds, of physical violence and intimidation, blackmail and the widespread and deliberate abuse of information obtained by the organization".[392]

Scientology in religious studies

Describing the available scholarship on Scientology, David G. Bromley and Douglas E. Cowan stated in 2006 that "most scholars have concluded that Scientology falls within the category of religion for the purposes of academic study, and a number have defended the Church in judicial and political proceedings on this basis."[179] Hugh B. Urban writes that "Scientology's efforts to get itself defined as a religion make it an ideal case study for thinking about how we understand and define religion."[393] Toward the second decade of the 2000s, a new interest for Scientology emerged among scholars, bringing the subject from obscurity.[394]

According to the *Encyclopedia of Religious Controversies in the United States*, "even as Scientology raises questions about how and who gets to define religion, most scholars recognize it as a religion, one that emerges from and builds on American individualism and the spiritual marketplace that dominated 1950s America."[395] David G. Bromley comments that Scientology "could gain strength by adding to the new perspective on existence, the hope and human meaning that only a transcendent creed can give."[396]

Bromley and Cowan noted in 2008 that Scientology's attempts "to gain favor with new religion scholars" had often been problematic.[339] According to Religious Studies professor Mary Farrell Benarowski, Scientology describes itself as drawing on science, religion, psychology and philosophy but "had been claimed by none of them and repudiated, for the most part, by all."[397]

Regis Dericquesbourg writes about the efficacy of Scientology in imparting knowledge: "Scientology indeed not only brings knowledge, it also brings personal introspection through auditing, and transmission in upper levels is not merely reading texts: what is transmitted is experienced through a solo or duo auditing experience." He compared it to psychoanalysis.[398]

Frank K. Flinn, adjunct professor of religious studies at Washington University in St. Louis wrote, "it is abundantly clear that Scientology has both the typical forms of ceremonial and celebratory worship and its own unique form of spiritual life."[399] Flinn further states that religion requires "beliefs in something transcendental or ultimate, practices (rites and codes of behavior) that re-inforce those beliefs and, a community that is sustained by both the beliefs and practices", all of which are present within Scientology.[189] Similarly, *World Religions in America* states that "Scientology contains the same elements of most other religions, including myths, scriptures, doctrines, worship, sacred practices and rituals, moral and ethical expectations, a community of believers, clergy, and ecclesiastic organizations."[400]

While acknowledging that a number of his colleagues accept Scientology as a religion, sociologist Stephen A. Kent writes: "Rather than struggling over whether or not to label Scientology as a religion, I find it far more helpful to view it as a multifaceted transnational corporation, only *one* element of which is religious" [emphasis in the original].[401][402]

Donna Batten in the *Gale Encyclopedia of American Law* writes, "A belief does not need to be stated in traditional terms to fall within First Amendment protection. For example, Scientology—a system of beliefs that a human being is essentially a free and immortal spirit who merely inhabits a body—does not

propound the existence of a supreme being, but it qualifies as a religion under the broad definition propounded by the Supreme Court."[403]

J. Gordon Melton asserts that while the debate over definitions of religion will continue, "scholars will probably continue in the future to adopt a broad definition, thus including Scientology in a wider religious field."[404]

The material contained in the OT levels has been characterized as bad science fiction by critics, while others claim it bears structural similarities to gnostic thought and ancient Hindu beliefs of creation and cosmic struggle.[155][405] Melton suggests that these elements of the OT levels may never have been intended as descriptions of historical events and that, like other religious mythology, they may have their truth in the realities of the body and mind which they symbolize.[155] He adds that on whatever level Scientologists might have received this mythology, they seem to have found it useful in their spiritual quest.[155]

Scholar Luigi Berzano of the University of Turin listed five religious characteristics of Scientology: a set of doctrines leading to a spiritual goal, a community of believers, an authority figure (Hubbard), ritual practices, and "an ethical-moral view of life."[406]

Hubbard's motives

During his lifetime, Hubbard was accused of using religion as a façade for Scientology to maintain tax-exempt status and avoid prosecution for false medical claims.[368] The IRS cited a statement frequently attributed to Hubbard that the way to get rich was to found a religion.[81][407] Though some claim the statement is unsubstantiated, many of Hubbard's science fiction colleagues, including Sam Merwin, Lloyd Arthur Eshbach and Sam Moscowitz, recall Hubbard raising the topic in conversation.[407][408][409]

Hubbard grew up in a climate that was very critical of organized religion, and frequently quoted anti-religious sentiments in his early lectures.[410] The scholar Marco Frenschkowski (University of Mainz) has stated that it was not easy for Hubbard "to come to terms with the spiritual side of his own movement. Hubbard did not want to found a religion: he discovered that what he was talking about in fact was religion. This mainly happened when he had to deal with apparent memories from former lives. He had to defend himself about this to his friends."[410] Frenschkowski allows that there were practical concerns in the question of "how to present Scientology to the outside world", but dismisses the notion that the religious format was just an expedient pretense; Frenschkowski points to many passages in Hubbard's works that document his struggle with this question.[410] Frenschkowski suggests that it was a biographical mistake to suggest that Hubbard only became interested in Scientology as a religion in 1954. He notes that Hubbard discussed religion and the concept of God even in the years leading up to the emergence of Scientology, and that he did not "rush into religion" but rather, "discovered it through the development of his work with pre-clears."[77]

Drawing parallels to similar struggles for identity in other religious movements such as Theosophy and Transcendental Meditation, Frenschkowski sees in Hubbard's lectures "the case of a man whose background was non-religious and who nevertheless discovers that his ideas somehow oscillate between 'science' (in a very popular sense), 'religion' and 'philosophy', and that these ideas somehow fascinate so many people that they start to form a separate movement." Hubbard experiments with traditional religious language in a short piece written in 1953 called "The Factors", "a basic expression of Scientologist cosmology and metaphysics", reprinted in current Scientology literature. Frenschkowski

observes that the text is partly biblical in structure and that this development is a component of Scientology's metamorphosis into a religion, written at a point when the nature of the new movement was unclear.[411]

The Church of Scientology denounces the idea of Hubbard starting a religion for personal gain as an unfounded rumor.[412] The Church also suggests that the origin of the rumor was a remark by George Orwell which had been misattributed to Hubbard.[413] Robert Vaughn Young, who left the Church in 1989 after being its spokesman for 20 years, suggested that reports of Hubbard making such a statement could be explained as a misattribution, despite having encountered three of Hubbard's associates from his science fiction days who remembered Hubbard making statements of that sort in person.[226] It was Young who by a stroke of luck came up with the "Orwell quote": "but I have always thought there might be a lot of cash in starting a new religion, and we'll talk it over some time". It appears in a letter by Eric Blair (known the world as George Orwell) to his friend, Jack Common, dated 16-February-38 (February 16, 1938), and was published in *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, vol. 1.[414] In 2006, *Rolling Stone*'s Janet Reitman also attributed the statement to Hubbard, as a remark to science fiction writer Lloyd Eshbach and recorded in Eshbach's autobiography.[415]

Scientology as a UFO religion

Scientology can be seen as a UFO religion in which the existence of extraterrestrial entities operating unidentified flying objects (UFOs) are an element of belief. In this context, it is discussed in *UFO Religions* by Christopher Partridge,[416] and *The Encyclopedic Sourcebook of UFO Religions* by James R. Lewis,[417] while Susan Palmer draws several parallels with Raelianism.[418] Gregory Reece, in his book *UFO Religion: Inside flying saucer cults and culture*, writes:

> Scientology is unique within the UFO culture because of this secretiveness, as well as because of the capitalist format under which they operate. Scientology is also difficult to categorize. While it bears strong similarities to the Ashtar Command or the Aetherius Society, its emphasis upon the Xenu event as the central message of the group seems to place them within the ancient astronaut tradition. Either way, Scientology is perhaps most different from other UFO groups in their attempt to keep all of the space opera stuff under wraps. They really would have preferred the rest of us not to know about Xenu and the galactic federation. Alas, such secrets are hard to keep[419]

Regardless of such statements by critics, Hubbard wrote and lectured openly about the material he himself called "space opera." In 1952, Hubbard published a book (*What to Audit / A History of Man*[420]) on space opera and other material that may be encountered when auditing preclears.[421][422]

According to David G. Bromley, Scientology is "part therapy, part religion, part UFO group. It's a mix of things unlike any other religious group out there."[116] Scholar Andreas Grunschlo writes that as a ufogical religion, Scientology "conceives of earthly human beings primarily as extraterrestrial spirits ('Thetans') which have now to put on their 'bridge to freedom' again —a soul conception which is paralleled by the typical ufogical 'star seeds' or 'walk-ins' planted on this earthly 'garden' for spiritual growth."[423]

Influences

The general orientation of Hubbard's philosophy owes much to Will Durant, author of the popular 1926 classic *The Story of Philosophy*; *Dianetics* is dedicated to Durant.[424] Hubbard's view of a mechanically functioning mind in particular finds close parallels in Durant's work on Spinoza.[424] According to Hubbard himself, Scientology is "the Western anglicized continuance of many early forms of wisdom."[425] Ankerberg and Weldon mention the sources of Scientology to include "the Vedas, Buddhism, Judaism, Gnosticism, Taoism, early Greek civilization and the teachings of Jesus, Nietzsche and Freud."[426] Hubbard asserted that Freudian thought was a "major precursor" to Scientology. W. Vaughn Mccall, Professor and Chairman of the Georgia Regents University writes, "Both Freudian theory and Hubbard assume that there are unconscious mental processes that may be shaped by early life experiences, and that these influence later behavior and thought." Both schools of thought propose a "tripartite structure of the mind."[427] Sigmund Freud's psychology, popularized in the 1930s and 1940s, was a key contributor to the Dianetics therapy model, and was acknowledged unreservedly as such by Hubbard in his early works.[428] Hubbard never forgot, when he was 12 years old, meeting Cmdr. Joseph Cheesman Thompson, a U.S. Navy officer who had studied with Freud[429] and when writing to the American Psychological Association in 1949, he stated that he was conducting research based on the "early work of Freud".[430]

In *Dianetics*, Hubbard cites Hegel as a negative influence — an object lesson in "confusing" writing.[431] According to Mary A. Mann, Scientology is considered nondenominational, accepting all people regardless of their religions background, ethnicity, or educational attainment.[432] Another major influence was Alfred Korzybski's General Semantics.[428] Hubbard was friends with fellow science fiction writer A. E. van Vogt, who explored the implications of Korzybski's non-Aristotelian logic in works such as *The World of Null-A*, and Hubbard's view of the *reactive mind* has clear and acknowledged parallels with Korzybski's thought; in fact, Korzybski's "anthropometer" may have been what inspired Hubbard's invention of the E-meter.[428]

Beyond that, Hubbard himself named a great many other influences in his own writing – in *Scientology 8-8008*, for example, these include philosophers from Anaxagoras and Aristotle to Herbert Spencer and Voltaire, physicists and mathematicians like Euclid and Isaac Newton, as well as founders of religions such as Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and Mohammed – but there is little evidence in Hubbard's writings that he studied these figures to any great depth.[428]

As noted, elements of the Eastern religions are evident in Scientology,[430] in particular the concept of karma found in Hinduism and Jainism.[433][434] In addition to the links to Hindu texts, Scientology draws from Taoism and Buddhism.[435] According to the *Encyclopedia of Community*, Scientology "shows affinities with Buddhism and a remarkable similarity to first-century Gnosticism."[436][437]

In the 1940s, Hubbard was in contact with Jack Parsons, a rocket scientist and member of the Ordo Templi Orientis then led by Aleister Crowley, and there have been suggestions that this connection influenced some of the ideas and symbols of Scientology.[438][439] Religious scholars Gerald Willms and J. Gordon Melton have stated that Crowley's teachings bear little if any resemblance to Scientology doctrine.[438][439]

J. Gordon Melton writes that Scientology has its roots in Esoteric thought. He cited the significance of understanding Scientology's appeal as aligned with Esoteric tradition. The Church is a "significant revision" and "meaningful revitalization" within the esoteric tradition. Melton states that Scientology can also be traced back to Gnosticism, Manicheanism, Freemasonry and Theosophy.[440]

According to James R. Lewis, Scientology is in the same lineage of supernatural religious movements such as New Thought. Scientology goes beyond this and refers to their religio-therapeutic practices as religious technology. Lewis wrote, "Scientology sees their psycho-spiritual technology as supplying the missing ingredient in existing technologies—namely, the therapeutic engineering of the human psyche."[441]

Scientology and hypnosis

Hubbard was said to be an accomplished hypnotist, and close acquaintances such as Forrest Ackerman (Hubbard's literary agent) and A. E. van Vogt (an early supporter of Dianetics) witnessed repeated demonstrations of his hypnotic skills.[81] Scientology literature states that L. Ron Hubbard expertise in hypnosis led to the discovery of the Dianetic engram.[442][443] However, Hubbard wrote that hypnosis is a "wild variable", and compared parlor hypnosis to an atom bomb.[444] He also wrote:

> Hypnotism plants, by positive suggestion, one or another form of insanity. It is usually a temporary planting, but sometimes the hypnotic suggestion will not "lift" or remove in a way desirable to the hypnotist.[445]

Etymology of the word scientology and earlier usage

The word *Scientology*, as coined by L. Ron Hubbard, is a derivation from the Latin word *scientia* ("knowledge", "skill"), which comes from the verb *scīre* ("to know"), with the suffix -ology, from the Greek λόγος *lógos* ("word" or "account [of]").[446][447] Scientology is further defined as "the study and handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, universes, and other life."[448]

The term scientology had been used in published works at least twice before Hubbard. In *The New Word* (1901) poet and lawyer Allen Upward first used scientology to mean blind, unthinking acceptance of scientific doctrine (compare scientism).[449] In 1934, philosopher Anastasius Nordenholz published *Scientology: Science of the Constitution and Usefulness of Knowledge*, which used the term to mean the science of science.[450] It is unknown whether Hubbard was aware of either prior usage of the word.[451][452]

ARC and KRC triangles

The ARC and KRC triangles are concept maps which show a relationship between three concepts to form another concept. These two triangles are present in the Scientology symbol. The lower triangle, the ARC triangle, is a summary representation of the knowledge the Scientologist strives for.[123] It encompasses ***A**ffinity* (affection, love or liking), ***R**eality* (consensual reality) and ***C**ommunication* (the exchange of ideas).[123] Scientology teaches that improving one of the three aspects of the triangle "increases the level" of the other two, but Communication is held to be the most important.[453] The upper triangle is the KRC triangle, the letters KRC positing a similar relationship between ***K**nowledge*, ***R**esponsibility* and ***C**ontrol*.[454]

Among Scientologists, the letters ARC are used as an affectionate greeting in personal communication, for example at the end of a letter.[455] Social problems are ascribed to breakdowns in ARC – in other words, a lack of agreement on reality, a failure to communicate effectively, or a failure to develop affinity.[166] These can take the form of *overts* – harmful acts against another, either intentionally or by

omission – which are usually followed by *withholds* – efforts to conceal the wrongdoing, which further increase the level of tension in the relationship.[166]

The Scientology symbol is composed of the letter S, which stands for Scientology, and the ARC and KRC triangles, two important concepts in Scientology.

Bridge to Total Freedom

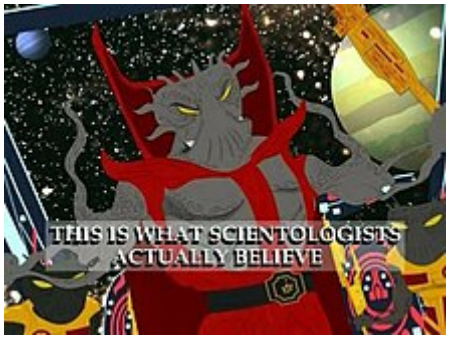
Scientologists seek to attain spiritual development through study of Scientology materials and auditing. The subject (called *Technology* or *Tech* in Scientology jargon) is structured in a series of levels (or *gradients*) of gradually increasing complexity. The sequence of study ("training") and auditing ("processing") levels is termed the "Bridge to Total Freedom", or simply "the Bridge".[453][456] Training concerns primarily the principles and techniques of auditing.[456] Processing is personal development through participation in auditing sessions.[456]

The Church of Scientology teaches the principle of reciprocity, involving give-and-take in every human transaction.[457] Accordingly, members are required to make donations for study courses and auditing as they move up the Bridge, the amounts increasing as higher levels are reached.[457] Participation in higher-level courses on the Bridge may cost several thousand dollars, and Scientologists usually move up the Bridge at a rate governed by their income.[457]

According to David G. Bromley, religious studies professor, working toward being an "Operating Thetan" means moving up the Bridge to Total Freedom, "which at the highest level transcends material law." He further emphasizes this belief of Scientologists: "You occasionally come across people in Scientology who say they can change the material world with their mind."[116]

Scientology in popular culture

The 2005 *South Park* episode "Trapped in the Closet" publicized the story of Xenu, based directly on the actual Scientology Operating Thetan III document,[458] and accompanied by an onscreen caption reading "This is what Scientologists actually believe". After explaining these beliefs, the character representing the church's president ultimately reveals to Stan that the church is in reality a money-making scam.



Xenu as depicted in *South Park*

Paul Thomas Anderson's 2012 film *The Master* features a religious organization called "The Cause" that has many similarities to Scientology.[459][460][461] Also, the character of Lancaster Dodd, played by Philip Seymour Hoffman, shares a physical resemblance to Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.[462]

In April 2015, following the recent release of *Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief*, *Saturday Night Live* aired a music video featuring the "Church of Neurotology", a parody of Scientology's 1990 music video "We Stand Tall".[463][464]

In November 2016, cable network A&E began airing *Leah Remini: Scientology and the Aftermath*, a documentary series. Remini, a TV actress and star, was a member of the Church of Scientology for over 30 years and a public proponent of Scientology for years before a public falling out in 2013. She is an executive producer of the series. The series follows Remini as she explores the history and workings of the Church, discusses her experiences and interviews ex-members willing to speak out about alleged abuses of the Church. The initial episode drew 2.1 million viewers.[465]

See also

- List of Scientology organizations
- Scientology and other religions
- Scientology and sexual orientation
- Space opera in Scientology
- Scientology and the occult
- List of Scientologists

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External links

- Church of Scientology homepage (https://www.scientology.org/)
- Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR List of Scientology articles) (http://www.cesnur.org/testi/se_scientology.htm)
- Scientology – Is This a Religion? by Stephen A. Kent (https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/Library/Shelf/kent/religion.html)
- A Short Study of the Scientology Religion by J. Gordon Melton (https://web.archive.org/web/20131110083319/http://neuereligion.de/ENG/melton/page01.htm)
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