

# Church of Scientology

By Kurt Van Gorden

---

**Founder:** Lafayette Ronald Hubbard; a.k.a., L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986)

**Current Leader:** David Miscavige, Chairman of the Board for the Religious Technology Center.

**Founding Date:** 1953

**Official Publications:** All of L. Ron Hubbard's books, publications, and audio messages that were produced under the auspices of Dianetics and Scientology have been officially proclaimed as scripture in the Church of Scientology.

**Organization Structure:** Scientology church members belong to the International Association of Scientologists. The Continental Liaison Offices oversee the local missions and churches, also referred to as Ideal Churches or Ideal Orgs (organizations). The supreme church corporation is the Church of Scientology International headquarters in Los Angeles, California. Scientology's new spiritual headquarters is located in Clearwater, Florida. Known as the Flag Building, it also serves as a land base for the highest staff positions, the maritime Sea Org, whose members wear naval-style uniforms with officer ranks.

**Other Organizational Names:** Scientology Celebrity Centers, Citizens Commission on Human Rights, Association for Better Living and Education—ABLE, Applied Scholastics, Bridge Publications, Criminon, Narconon, Foundation for Religious Tolerance, Sterling Management, Worldwide Institute of Scientology Enterprises—WISE, and The Way to Happiness Campaign.

**Unique Terms:** Dianetics (through the mind or soul), Scientology (knowing how to know), Thetan, Engram, Auditing, Clear, E-Meter, and Operating Thetan (OT).

## HISTORY

---

L. Ron Hubbard was a successful science fiction writer who published over 15,000,000 words between 1932 and 1950 under 20 pen names. Some critics believe that Hubbard may have predicted his forthcoming church. While speaking at a 1949 New Jersey science fiction convention, Hubbard reportedly stated, "Writing for a penny a word is ridiculous. If a man really wanted to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion."<sup>1</sup>

Hubbard developed what he called a new science of the mind, psychology, philosophy, and religion. By claiming self-healing of internal and external wounds from WWII, Hubbard began promoting his research called Dianetics. It was first published in *Astounding Science Fiction* (May 1950). The book, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, (Hermitage House, 1950), was simultaneously released that same month. Homespun Dianetic groups became a fad, which prompted Time magazine to observe that "a new cult" was smoldering in America.<sup>2</sup>

Hubbard organized these groups into the Hubbard Dianetics Research Foundation. He shortly added his Scientology research to the Dianetic therapy. In December 15, 1953, he decided to incorporate as a church, in Camden, New Jersey, but it never got off the ground. The first functioning Church of Scientology was incorporated in California on February 18, 1954, which became the mother church for all operations. The church has fought with governmental agencies worldwide over their religious status, which they have won in most cases. However, they have not always been the innocent party in their legal battles, such as when the church leadership operated a covert scheme to infiltrate over 130 governmental offices and critical organizations in 30 countries to steal documents. This resulted in seven high ranking Scientologists being sent to prison, including Hubbard's wife, Mary Sue Hubbard. Twenty-five others, including L. Ron Hubbard, were named as conspirators in the theft.<sup>3</sup>

L. Ron Hubbard is no less controversial than his church. Several authors have exposed alleged dishonesty concerning his personal history. Hubbard's claims were challenged with hard facts by his son, L. Ron Hubbard, Jr., and former Scientologists, like Bent Corydon, Gerry

Armstrong, and Jon Atack.<sup>4</sup> These biographers documented that Hubbard had strong connections with occult practitioners, like Aleister Crowley.<sup>5</sup> This should be no surprise, since Hubbard wrote that some of his sources for his new religion were “the medicine man of the Goldi people of Manchuria, the shamans of North Borneo, Sioux medicine men, the cults of Los Angeles, and modern psychology . . . a magician . . . and a Hindu who could hypnotize cats. Dabbles had been made in mysticism, data had been studied from mythology to spiritualism.”<sup>6</sup>

David Miscavige, the second leader of Scientology, appears to be a strong leader, but according to some critics, he is too authoritarian and lacks self-restraint in his verbal abuse and physical violence toward fellow staffers.<sup>7</sup> Miscavige’s brother, Ronald, left Scientology in 2000, who was followed by his daughter Jenna’s “harrowing escape” five years later. She condemned church practices and Miscavige’s abusive leadership in her autobiography.<sup>8</sup>

## **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

---

Most of Hubbard’s Scientological writings concern self-improvement rather than theology proper. Therefore, a person can read numerous Scientology books without running into the words God, Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. Each book is on a graduated scale from the lowest to the most advanced. The language and theories learned in one book becomes the prerequisite for the next level so that the student follows a linear path.

In *Dianetics*, Hubbard concluded from his decades of research that “the basic nature of man is discovered...to be good.”<sup>9</sup> Mankind is driven by the urge for “survival.”<sup>10</sup> Evil, psychosomatic illnesses, pain, aberrations and irrationality are examples of obstructions to survival.<sup>11</sup> These obstacles, called engrams, must be removed.<sup>12</sup> The key to understanding how to eradicate these engrams is to first understand how the mind works.

The human mind is divided into three major divisions. The Analytical Mind, similar to the conscious mind, works like a perfect computer and analyzes data. It is what a person means with the pronoun “I.”<sup>13</sup> The Reactive Mind is the “portion of the mind which works on a totally stimulus-response basis.” It is the entire source of aberration and irrational behavior.<sup>14</sup> This is similar to the sub-conscious mind. The third division is the Somatic Mind, which is directed by the Analytical and Reactive Minds. It places solutions into effect on the physical plane.<sup>15</sup> This, similar to the autonomic nervous system, keeps the body functioning and regulated.

The analytical mind acts as the control center that commands the human being. This is called the fully “conscious” person. Seldom does the analytical mind use its full potential, because the reactive mind is always interfering with it. When the awareness of the analytical mind is reduced through pain, emotional shock, or a similar event, then the reactive mind takes over. This becomes a moment of “unconsciousness.”<sup>16</sup> During these moments of partial unconscious, the person receives complete picture-like images of his immediate surroundings. This is called an “engram.”<sup>17</sup> The reactive mind stores engrams like files.

Engrams are adverse to survival. They are the root cause of all of our aberrations. They make us “mad, ineffective and ill.”<sup>18</sup> The Dianetic student, also called a pre-clear, has the goal to clear every engram from his life through a process called auditing. This is performed by a counselor who asks multiple questions called commands. The engram is detected by the pre-clear’s reaction to the question. When there is no longer any reaction, then the engram is said to be cleared. Once the pre-clear’s lifetime engrams are removed, he arrives at the state of “Clear.”<sup>19</sup> *Dianetics* portrays the Clear individual with superhuman abilities. Being Clear raises your IQ, cures the common cold, provides complete recall, speeds mental computations 120 times faster, corrects poor eyesight, stops ringing ears, and saves marriages.<sup>20</sup>

Hubbard met Volney Mathison, a Dianetics student who invented a galvanometer device to assist in Dianetic auditing, which is called an E-meter. The device operates by the pre-clear holding two tin cans that are connected to electrodes while he listens to commands from the auditor. The auditor watches the response on the meter from the opposite side. The needle registers reactions to the slightest physical or mental stimulus, which supposedly indicates an engram. In *Dianetics*, the auditor’s goal is to assist the pre-clear in erasing all of the engrams back to their prenatal existence. In Scientology, prenatal recall was superseded by past lives or reincarnation. The past lives were not limited to Earth. They go back at least 300 trillion years on other planets. The state of Clear can take years of auditing and thousands of dollars.

Scientology redefines man by claiming that you are not your body, but you are a Thetan (spirit). The Thetan is a timeless entity that is reincarnated through various interplanetary habitations. Thetans become burdened with the engrams from cyclic reincarnation.

Everything in the universe, including your body, is called MEST (for Matter, Energy, Space, and Time). In order for a Scientologist to become a free Thetan, he must learn to control MEST by surviving through the eight dynamics of life. These dynamics are self, sex, group, mankind, other life forms, MEST, spirits, and a Supreme Being. Scientology offers courses on each of these dynamics. Once a Scientologist reaches Clear, then he is free from MEST as an Operating Thetan (OT), yet “Total Freedom” requires an additional fifteen OT courses.

Some of Hubbard’s secret OT III material became public through court cases. He wrote of past life on other planets that Scientologists need to audit out before proceeding to the next level. Former Scientologist Jon Attack summarized the OT III material in his book:

Hubbard asserted that some 70 million years ago, our planet, then called Teegeeack, had been one of the 76 planets of the Galactic Confederation. The Confederation was badly overpopulated, with hundreds of billions on each planet. Xenu,...the president of the Confederation, ruled that the excess population should be sent to Teegeeack [Earth], put alongside volcanoes and subjected to nuclear explosions. The spirits, or Thetans, of the victims were then “implanted” with religious and technological images for 36 days. They were then sent to either Hawaii or Las Palmas to be stuck together into clusters. Human beings, so Hubbard said, are actually a collection of Thetans, a cluster of “Body Thetans.” Xenu was rounded up six years after the event and imprisoned in a mountain.<sup>21</sup>

Recalling past lives becomes subjective proof to the Scientologist that “Scientology works.” Another routine is called “exteriorization.”<sup>22</sup> An auditor commands the person, “Be three feet in back of your head.” Similar to astral-projection, the Scientologist is convinced that they can leave their body at will as proof of control over their MEST body. That subjective experience becomes self-convincing that Scientology is valid, yet the experience is not objectively testable since they are still acting through their body while claiming to be outside of it.

## **DOCTRINE**

---

Hubbard claimed that Scientology fulfilled an ancient Buddhist prophecy about the Maitreya. He wrote, “truth of the matter is that you are studying an extension of the work of Gauthama Siddhartha, begun about 2,500 years ago...Buddha predicted that in 2,500 years the entire job would be finished in the West ... Well, we finished it!”<sup>23</sup>

Hubbard wrote disparaging opinions about God and Christianity, “For a long while, some people have been cross with me for my lack of cooperation in believing in a Christian Heaven, God, and Christ. I have never said I didn’t disbelieve in a Big Thetan but there was certainly something very corny about Heaven *et al.*”<sup>24</sup> He later acknowledged that Scientology allows for both God and gods, “There are gods above all other gods....there is no argument here against the existence of a Supreme Being or any devaluation intended. It is that amongst the gods, there are many false gods elected to power and position...There are gods above other gods, and gods beyond the gods of the universes.”<sup>25</sup>

Jesus Christ is just one of many messiahs, “Now the Hebrew definition of Messiah is one Who Brings Wisdom—a Teacher. Messiah is from ‘messenger’. . . . Now here we have a great teacher in Moses. We have other Messiahs, and we then arrive with Christ...”<sup>26</sup> Jesus and Buddha reached “Clear” without Scientology, as Hubbard stated it, “Neither Lord Buddha nor Jesus Christ were OT, according to the evidence. They were just a shade above clear.”<sup>27</sup>

In contrast, Hubbard also said that there was no Christ, “Somebody, somewhere on this planet, back about 600 BC, found some pieces of R6 [reactive mind].... and it became what is known as Christianity. Uh, the man on the cross, there was no Christ, but the man on a cross is shown as every man and so each PC [pre-clear] person seeing a crucified man has an immediate feeling of sympathy for this MEST. Therefore, you get many PCs [pre-clears] who says (sic) they are Christ.”<sup>28</sup> Scientology holds an inconsistent view of God and Christ.

*Dianteics* defined man as basically good. Hubbard later ranted about the Christian view of sin in these words, “It is despicable and utterly beneath contempt to tell a man he must repent, that he is evil.”<sup>29</sup> Further, he said, “Sin is composed of lies and hidden actions, and is therefore untruth.”<sup>30</sup> There is no need for a savior outside of yourself in Scientology, as seen in Hubbard’s oft-quoted axiom, “Know thyself—and the truth shall set you free.”

Salvation is defined in one sense as the release from the endless cycle of birth and rebirth—reincarnation. Their reincarnation is different from most other religions, since it includes interplanetary existence. Hubbard sends Scientologists on a journey to find proof of

their preexistent lives, “Gravestones, ancient vital statistics, old diplomas and medals will verify in every detail the validity of ‘many lives.’ Your E-Meter will tell you.”<sup>31</sup>

## CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

The biblical answer to Dianetics and Scientology comes back to the basic gospel message. Man is separated from God by his sinful nature (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23). Hubbard renounced those who call for repentance, yet Jesus did so in Matthew 4:17, or who say that man is evil, as Jesus did in Matthew 7:11. Hubbard vacillated between one God and many gods. The Bible, however, clearly presents monotheism, that only one God exists (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 44:8) and that all other gods are false (1 Corinthians 8:5-6).

Jesus, as God incarnate (John 1:1, 14), did not need to be “a shade above clear,” since he was sinless at birth (1 John 5:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). Hubbard was wrong on the meaning of Messiah. It is not from “messenger,” but it is from the Hebrew word “mashiah” for “anointed.” Jesus is, in fact, “the Christ” (Greek for the anointed one). Hubbard’s denial that Jesus is “the Christ” is answered in 1 John 2:22, “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. He is the anti-Christ who denies the Father and the Son.”

Jesus also rejected reincarnation as a solution to sin. He taught that He alone is from above (John 8:23) and that we are from this world. We are not from other planets, but from this world. He taught that all humans die one time (Luke 20:36) and that there is no return to earth after death (Luke 16:27-29). The book of Hebrews (9:27) explicitly declares, “It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment.”

Scientologists need the genuine, loving gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to tell them how they can turn from works and self-salvation to the grace of Jesus Christ. Scripture triumphantly tells us, “For by grace ye have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, *not of works*, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

### Notes

- 1 Staff, “Religion: A Sci-Fi Faith,” *Time*, April 5, 1976, 57.
- 2 Staff, “Medicine: Of Two Minds,” *Time*, July 24, 1950, 64. Time magazine later stated, “the cult of Dianetics...has some of the features of a new religion” (Staff, “Medicine: Departure in Dianetics,” *Time*, September 3, 1951, 51).
- 3 Craig Branch, “The Ultimate Spin Doctor: L. Ron Hubbard - The Man and His Myth” *Watchman Expositor*, Watchman Fellowship, Inc., Arlington, Texas, Vol. 13, no. 6, 1996 <http://www.watchman.org/articles/scientology/the-ultimate-spin-doctor-l-ron-hubbard--the-man-and-his-myth/> (accessed November 24, 2014).
- 4 Hubbard’s son, L. Ron Hubbard, Jr. (Ron DeWolf) collaborated with Bent Corydon to expose much of Hubbard’s past in *L. Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman* (Stuart, 1987), which was followed by Gerry Armstrong’s documentation in Russell Miller’s *Bare Faced Messiah: The True Story of L. Ron Hubbard* (Joseph, 1987), and Jon Atack’s *A Piece of Blue Sky: Scientology, Dianetics and L. Ron Hubbard Exposed* (Stuart, 1990). These relied upon irrefutable source material, much of it in Hubbard’s handwriting.
- 5 For more information on Aleister Crowley see, James Walker, “Aleister Crowley” *Profile* Watchman Fellowship, Inc. Arlington, Texas, 2010, <http://www.watchman.org/profiles/pdf/aleistercrowleyprofile.pdf> (accessed November 24, 2014).
- 6 L. Ron Hubbard, “Dianetics, the Evolution of a Science,” *Astounding Science Fiction* (May 1950): 48.
- 7 Two of the best investigative reports were published by the St. Petersburg Times, which conducted a six-hour interview with David Miscavige, and the four-year series by the Tampa Bay Times. See <http://www.sptimes.com/TampaBay/102598/scientologypart1.html> (accessed November 1, 2014) and <http://www.tampabay.com/specials/2009/reports/project/> (accessed November 1, 2014).
- 8 Jenna Miscavige Hill, *Beyond Belief: My Secret Life Inside Scientology and My Harrowing Escape* (New York: Marrow, 2013)
- 9 L. Ron Hubbard, *Dianetics: A Modern Science Of Mental Health* (Los Angeles: Bridge Publications, Inc., 1986), 26.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 29.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 26, 56, 81.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 577.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 61-62.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 577.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 82.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 83.
- 18 *Ibid.* 221.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 17, 18, 122, 125, 228, 411.
- 21 Atack, *op. cit.*, 32-33. OT III material was also published by Hubbard, Jr. and Corydon, *op. cit.*, 364-365.
- 22 Hubbard, *Dianetics*, 115.
- 23 L. Ron Hubbard, *Advance!*, December, 1974, 5
- 24 L. Ron Hubbard, “Heaven,” *Hubbard Communication Office Bulletin* (May 11, 1963), 1.
- 25 L. Ron Hubbard, *Scientology 8 - 8008* (Los Angeles: American St. Hill Organization, 1967), 73.
- 26 L. Ron Hubbard, *The Phoenix Lectures* (Los Angeles: American St. Hill Organization, 1968), 26-27.
- 27 L. Ron Hubbard, “Clearing: Some Facts,” *Ability*, no. 81, n.d., 1958, 6.
- 28 L. Ron Hubbard, audio message, Class VIII Auditor Course Lectures, 1968.
- 29 L. Ron Hubbard, “Plan of Auditing,” *Professional Auditor’s Bulletin*, July 23, 1954, 1.
- 30 L. Ron Hubbard, *Volunteer Minister’s Handbook* (Los Angeles: Church of Scientology, 1976), 551.
- 31 L. Ron Hubbard, *Scientology: A History of Man* (Los Angeles: American St. Hill Org, 1952), 8.



**Profile** is a regular publication of Watchman Fellowship, Inc. Readers are encouraged to begin their own religious research notebooks using these articles. Profiles are published by Watchman Fellowship approximately 6 times per year, covering subjects such as new religious movements, counterfeit Christianity, the occult, New Age Spirituality, and related doctrines and practices. Complete Profile Notebooks containing all Profiles published to date are available. Please contact Watchman Fellowship for current pricing and availability. Copyright © 2014 by Watchman Fellowship. All rights reserved.