

**Pastor/Leader Briefing
November 2017**

Evangelicals, the Gospel, and Scientology

Scientology and Christianity are incompatible. A person can be a Scientologist, or they can be a Christian, or they can be neither, but they cannot be both. If one properly understands these worldviews the conclusion that they are mutually exclusive, incompatible viewpoints is inescapable. Yet, the “Church” of Scientology (COS) maintains they are compatible.

Many of those who enter Scientology claim a Christian background and many will contend that they can be both a Scientologist and a Christian. Christian pastors and leaders bear the responsibility to educate their congregation and protect them from false teaching. Scientology does not acknowledge one true God, it does not seek to glorify God, it denies the lordship of Jesus Christ, it promises a false hope not rooted in the gospel, and it has created a system of abuse and oppression that hurts and deceives people. For these reasons and more, Christian pastors should accept the responsibility to oppose and expose this dangerous cult and equip their people to think biblically and respond wisely to the threat it represents.

History of Scientology and Clearwater

- L. Ron Hubbard founded scientology. In 1950 he wrote a book entitled *Dianetics*. Previously Hubbard had written prolifically as a science fiction writer. In *Dianetics* he espoused a philosophy that he claimed had helped and even healed him. The book took off and became a best seller and soon Hubbard was setting up an organization to help people practice the principles of the book. Eventually he established *Scientology* as a religion. Many believe he established it as a religion because he realized the broad freedoms that religious liberty would afford him and it would protect his practices from government interference.
- Scientology has a long, contentious, and controversial presence in Clearwater. They arrived in the 1970’s planning a takeover of the city of Clearwater in a project known as “Project Normandy.” They purchased the downtown Ft. Harrison Hotel under the name “United Churches of Florida.” When then mayor Gabe Cazares raised questions and tried to stop the takeover, operatives from the COS tried to frame him in a staged hit and run accident and planted false marriage documents in Tijuana, Mexico to make it appear Cazares was a bigamist.¹
- In 2016 the COS attempted to purchase a 1.4 acre lot downtown to continue their expansion after promising city officials that they had no further plans for expansion. The City Council had already agreed to purchase the lot from the Clearwater Marine Aquarium for \$4.25 million. The COS offered the aquarium \$15 million for the property and undertook a massive effort to convince the city to pull out of the deal and allow the COS to acquire the property. They revealed plans for revitalizing the downtown area and brought community and city leaders to Scientology headquarters to reveal their plans. They did not allow the public or press to see their development plans. They promised to invest millions into the revitalization effort as long as the city allowed them to purchase the coveted parcel. The City Council rejected the COS proposal and voted to purchase the property from the aquarium after which the COS launched a campaign to vilify aquarium leaders.
- Recently the Tampa Bay Times reported that a government agency known as The Downtown Development Board might well end up with a majority of the board being practicing members of the COS. However the election on October 10 did not result in that dynamic

¹ Going Clear, Lawrence Wright, pg. 198

although presently 2 of the 7 persons belong to the church with the potential election of a 3rd.

Beliefs and Practices of Scientology

- Scientologists believe that man is basically a spiritual being, like a soul. They use the word “thetan” to describe this spiritual being. The thetan is a spiritual being trapped in a physical body. A thetan passes from one body to the next through numerous reincarnations. The thetan has both an analytical mind and a reactive mind. The reactive mind is full of painful memories known as engrams. Scientology seeks to help the thetan become clear of these engrams through a long process of learning and auditing. Each Scientologist seeks to become “clear” which frees the reactive mind of engrams and allows them to live in a state of freedom and power. After a Scientologist becomes clear he or she can then begin to ascend a ladder of courses and function as an “Operating Thetan” or OT. There are presently 8 levels of OT training, which represent the highest levels in Scientology currently available, although additional levels have long been promised. This ascending ladder of courses is known as the “bridge to total freedom.”
- Scientologists practice auditing and take many classes in the hopes of advancing up the ladder toward the state of clear and then further up to OT VIII. Auditing is a practice where a person meets with a trained auditor who then asks a series of questions while the person being audited holds an e-meter. The e-meter is a type of lie detector. Through a series of questions an auditor helps the individual uncover painful memories, habits, and beliefs. It is a type of confessional. It is required to move upward in Scientology and it can become very expensive.
- Scientologists believe the path to salvation is found in the bridge to freedom. The aim of Scientology is to live clear. They often state that their aim is “a civilization without insanity, without criminals, and without war, where the able can prosper and honest beings can have rights, and where Man is free to rise to greater heights.” Scientology believes it has the technology (beliefs and practices) to allow a person to achieve this freedom and then by vigorously advocating for Scientology eventually “clear the planet.” It is a works based salvation where a person working the plan laid out by the church can achieve the best life and help others do the same.

Accusations of Abuse and Oppression

The COS has always been controversial, not simply because of its bizarre truth claims, but because of its abusive practices. There is a long history of nefarious conduct and many accusations have been alleged and documented. Many people in our area feel threatened, even terrorized by the reputation that the COS has earned through their aggressive attacks on anyone who dares to criticize them or stand in their way. While the accusations are too numerous to present in this briefing there are several areas where the practices of the church tend to draw the most criticism.

- The Sea Org (short for organization) is essentially the “professional” arm for the COS. In some ways it equates to the “clergy” in other religious organizations. The church aggressively recruits people, including underage children, to commit to the Sea Org where they will spend their lives serving the church for the purpose of “clearing the planet.” They are notoriously asked to sign a “billion year contract”, meaning they commit their life to the Sea Org and many subsequent lives as well. It is important to understand that many people who participate in Scientology are not part of the Sea Org, and that many of the conditions and abuses described by those who have escaped or left the Sea Org have never been experienced by members of the church.

Once people sign up for the Sea Org they are in effect “owned” by the church. They are usually provided housing and meals, but very low pay. They are forced to work extraordinary hours and multiple stories have come from those who have left the Sea Org alleging abuse, imprisonment, and mental anguish. The COS claims that anyone can leave the Sea Org at anytime and that they provide an organized way for people to leave on good terms. In reality people face extreme pressure, mental coercion, and if they do leave they are presented with a “free loaders” debt for all the “services” the church has provided that a person is required to pay back. Using this financial system the church can place extraordinary pressure on people and exert control. Many in the Sea Org do not have a formal education and have had very little contact with the outside world (known as “wog”) and thus do not know where they would go or what they would do even if they left. The COS can claim that each person of the Sea Org has volunteered and is there voluntarily, but in actuality they have created a system where people are in effect enslaved and often abused.

- The church practices an extreme form of “ex-communication” known as disconnection. The COS practice of disconnection has resulted in numerous stories of parents separating from children (and vice versa), spouses divorcing, extended families separating, and lifelong friends totally disconnecting and never speaking again. The COS infamously denies this policy, but it is clear that it continues to be practiced. Once the COS labels a person as a “suppressive person” (a critic and thus an enemy of the COS) people within Scientology are instructed to completely disconnect. There is no communication and no outreach, just complete, total permanent disconnection.
- Some of the most troubling allegations of late deal with the COS attitude toward children. In COS “theology”, children are simply thetans in a small body. For many years COS actively recruited underage children to sign billion year contracts for the Sea Org and then used those children for labor. In many cases, it is alleged, that these children were withdrawn from formal education, suffered neglect, and have even endured sexual abuse as well. The COS view of children creates opportunities that are ripe for human rights issues.

The “spiritual” Roots of Scientology

- The occult connection:

In the 1940’s Hubbard moved into a home with a man named Jack Parsons. Parsons has been described by some as the “James Dean of the occult”. Parsons was a rocket scientist who had been greatly influenced by Aleister Crowley, the famous British writer and provocateur who has been described as a Satanist. Crowley described himself as the “Great Beast.” Crowley’s portrait hung in the stairwell of a home Parsons acquired in California. Hubbard would later mention Crowley in a lecture calling him “my good friend.”

Parsons turned the mansion into the headquarters of the Agape Lodge, a branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis, a secret fraternal organization dedicated to witchcraft and sexual “magik”. He opened his home and invited artists, anarchists, and musicians---the more Bohemian the better. He posted an ad that said, “must not believe in God.”

Hubbard moved in with Parsons and engaged in all manner of witchcraft activity and philosophy including prolific sexual immorality. Parsons would later write a letter to Crowley about Hubbard in which he described a spirit being Hubbard had described to him. The being was described as an “Angel...a beautiful winged woman with red hair whom he calls the Empress and who has guided him through his life and saved him many times.”²

² Wright, pg. 78

- Hubbard’s eldest son and namesake L. Ron Hubbard, Jr. (who would later change his name to Ronald DeWolf) claimed that his father developed a lifelong allegiance to black magic. “What a lot of people don’t realize is that Scientology is black magic just spread out over a long time period,” he contended. “Black magic is the inner core of Scientology—and it is probably the only part of Scientology that really works.”³
- The COS does not deny that Hubbard was involved with Parsons, but claims that he was on a secret mission for naval intelligence. They claim he “broke up black magic in America.”
- According to a document entitled “Course 1” Hubbard himself wrote, “I believe in my gods and spiritual things. That my magical word is powerful and effective.” This document was produced against the wishes of the COS by Gerald Armstrong in a 1984 suit and was read into court record.
- In 1993 documents were produced in a court case *Church of Scientology International v. Fishman and Geertz* that revealed certain COS documents. The COS objected to these documents and then later denied their authenticity. According to some sources the following quotation came from documents released in that court case and is part of the highly secretive OT VIII training and is attributed directly to Hubbard. According to the document Hubbard wrote,

*“No doubt you are familiar with the Revelations section of the Bible where various events are predicted. Also mentioned is a brief period of time in which an arch-enemy of Christ, referred to as the anti-Christ, will reign and his opinions will have sway. All this makes for very fantastic, entertaining reading but there is truth in it. This anti-Christ represents the forces of Lucifer (literally, the “light bearer” or “light bringer”), Lucifer being a mythical representation of the forces of enlightenment, the Galactic Confederacy. **My mission could be said to fulfill the Biblical promise represented by this brief anti- Christ period.** During this period there is a fleeting opportunity for the whole scenario to be effectively derailed, which would make it impossible for the mass Marcabian landing (Second Coming) to take place. The Second Coming is designed, among other things, to trigger a rapid series of destructive events.*

With the exception of the original Buddhism, virtually all religions of any consequence on this planet, mono- and pantheistic alike, have been instruments to speed the progress of this “evolution of consciousness” and bring about the eventual enslavement of mankind.

For those of you whose Christian toes I may have stepped on, let me take the opportunity to disabuse you of some lovely myths. For instance, the historic Jesus was not nearly the sainted figure has been made out to be. In addition to being a lover of young boys and men, he was given to uncontrollable bursts of temper and hatred that belied the general message of love, understanding... You have only to look at the history his teachings inspired to see where it all inevitably leads. It is historic fact and yet man still clings to the ideal, so deep and insidious is the biologic implanting. ⁴

³ Wright, pg. 79

⁴ This quote comes from documents released in the Fishman case. The COS denies the authenticity of these documents and Fishman himself was later indicated for fraud and many of his claims are debatable. The allegation was that the quote came from original OT VIII training. Other sources claim that this is no longer in OT VIII training and the COS maintains that it never was and that it is a complete forgery. In using this quote one should use caution. It is impossible with the current information to be certain of its authenticity, the COS will absolutely deny it, and any Scientologists you may speak with would likely be unfamiliar with it or dispute its authenticity. However, there are other sources besides Fishman who claim the quote is authentic and was part of the original OT VIII training written by L. Ron Hubbard whether or not it is still a part of OT VIII training.

- Here is a recording of Hubbard in his own voice saying, “there is no Christ.” He claims that crucifixion is a type of implant or previous life memory and this accounts for its powerful appeal.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfNHHn410M&t=8s>

- Here is a link where L. Ron Hubbard’s son L. Ron Hubbard Jr. speaks about his father and accuses him of extensive criminal activity and occult practices.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcPoSo49dYU>

Christianity and Scientology: Irreconcilable Differences

- **Nature of man**

COS: Man is a type of god. He is an immortal soul (thetan) who is trapped in a body. He will be reincarnated and live again and again. Collectively thetans created the universe but were sent to earth as a kind of prison due to a conflict with an evil cosmic being named Xenu.

Christianity teaches that man is made in the image of God. We are created to know and serve God and find our greatest fulfillment and freedom in Him. Death is a result of our sin and we will face God in judgment. God however loves us and offers us forgiveness and eternal life in and through His Son Jesus Christ.

- **Nature of Christ**

COS: Jesus Christ was simply another historically significant person who in actuality was a thetan who had lived before and undoubtedly lived again in other people. He did not even ascend to the level of OT, but was “just a shade above clear.”⁵

Christianity teaches that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, fully equal with God the Father, who came to earth to save mankind from its sins. He died on the cross in our place for our sins as an act of sacrificial love and rose again to triumph over sin and death. He is exalted above all. He is the Lord and is worthy to receive our highest worship.

- **Road to Salvation**

COS: “Salvation” is found by becoming clear and ascending up the bridge to total freedom through taking classes, studying and applying the writings of L. Ron Hubbard and through extensive auditing.

Christianity: Salvation is found by trusting in Jesus Christ for forgiveness. We are saved by God’s grace alone.

- **Reincarnation**

⁵ An editorial in a 1958 issue of Scientology magazine *Ability* states “neither Buddha nor Jesus Christ was OTs according to the evidence. They were just a shade above Clear.”

COS: Reincarnation is a reality. Thetans have lived many lives before and will live many lives in the future. Your children in this lifetime could have been your mother or father in another. This is just one life among many.

Christianity: It is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment. We are made in the image of God and will give an account to God after we die. Reincarnation is a false idea.

- **Ethics**

COS: Scientologists speak of ethics and high ethical ideals, however the COS has endorsed ruthless treatment of its critics and enemies in its “Fair Game” policies. The end justifies the means and for Scientologists the end is “clearing the planet.” Therefore, Scientologists routinely justify the most unethical behavior including harassment, belligerence, abuse, and lying.

Christianity: We believe God is just and Jesus Christ is the only one who has ever lived a perfectly righteous life. While we acknowledge that all are sinners, those who follow Christ seek to live according to God’s commands, biblical principles, and the teaching and example of Jesus. We are taught to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute and abuse us.

- **Works/Grace**

COS: A person becomes clear through their works, the works of the COS and through enormous sums of money paid for auditing and courses.

Christianity: God’s grace is freely offered and can be freely received. We cannot earn or deserve God’s love or forgiveness. He paid the ultimate price through His Son so that we can be redeemed and in so doing discover life’s greatest meaning and purpose.

How Scientologists Respond to Critics: Fair Game

- The COS has historically practiced what is has called “Fair Game.” Writing in his blog Tony Ortega explains, “

“Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard first announced a “Fair Game Law” in 1965 at a time when he was writing policies to crack down on splinter groups that infuriated him. In 1967, Hubbard gave his most notorious definition of what he meant by the policy, writing that Scientology’s enemies may be “deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologist. May be tricked, sued or lied to or destroyed.”

Scientology denies that it engages in Fair Game today. It says that the Fair Game policy was canceled by Hubbard in 1968. But...Hubbard actually said, “The practice of declaring people FAIR GAME will cease. FAIR GAME may not appear on any Ethics Order. It causes bad public relations. This does not cancel any policy on the treatment or handling of an SP.” (When the church decides someone is an enemy, it labels them a “suppressive person” or SP.)

In other words, the policy of ruining SPs utterly and destroying people would continue, so long as the words “Fair Game” weren’t involved.⁶

⁶ <https://tonyortega.org/2016/12/08/leah-remini-told-you-about-scientologys-fair-game-and-heres-the-worst-example/>

The COS believes the end justifies the means, and the goal is “clearing the planet.” Therefore, enemies of Scientology must be identified and opposed. The COS has a long history of litigious conduct. They have numerous lawyers and will spend enormous sums of money even on nuisance lawsuits, simply to harass and intimidate opponents. They use information about people’s sins and weaknesses to intimidate them into silence. They will attack the weaknesses of children in order to embarrass parents into silence. They have been accused of harming pets, destroying property, practicing intense surveillance, sometimes simply to harass and intimidate. They aggressively attack critics believing they can bully people into silence or compliance. While the COS denies this practice, even though it was clearly advocated by Hubbard, it is clear that it continues to be practiced today.

- Anyone criticizing the COS publicly or online needs to be prepared for possible attacks. This is unpleasant but it should not deter Christian pastors from speaking out on behalf of the truth and on behalf of the many people who are being harmed by the COS. Christian leaders have historically paid a great price for speaking the truth and we should not be surprised or dismayed if we are required to do the same.

Scientology: A Gospel Response

- Not our enemy

Gospel churches do not have an “enemies” list. Jesus specifically taught us to pray for our enemies, for those who persecute us and treat us badly. Individual Scientologists are not our enemy they are our mission field. They are neighbors and are loved by God. Many of them have taken a few Scientology courses and may not be aware of what is happening at the higher levels of Scientology. Many have found help in some of the courses in Scientology and view an attack on their religion as an attack on them personally. We should be able to understand that. For those who have a favorable view of Scientology we need to be willing to invest time in relationships, listening and seeking to understand. As trust and mutual respect are established we may be able to ask open-ended questions that encourage them to look more closely at their religion and begin to question some things for themselves. They will need caring friends and it will likely take multiple conversations to help them begin to see the deception of Scientology. If we find people disillusioned with Scientology we need to show concern and compassion and understand how they may continue to have a fear or reluctance toward any religion or religious institutions. We should not hesitate to agree that religious institutions can indeed become corrupt. Look for opportunities to introduce them to Jesus and invite them to investigate His life. Pray that they will find there is a great difference between knowing and loving Jesus and practicing religion.

- What can your church do?

We can pray over the strongholds in our area. Pray that God will bring the truth to light. “No life can live forever” (Thomas Carlyle). Pray that God will give us wisdom in speaking and relating to Scientology. Pray that our churches will be places of light and truth. Pray for those who have been abused and oppressed by the COS. Pray.

Speak and inform your people. Our people are curious and since so much about Scientology is secretive, many remain ignorant about what they believe and what they practice. Pastors should be emboldened to speak out, educate and inform our people.

Resources:

Books:

A Piece of Blue Sky, Jon Atack

Going Clear, Lawrence Wright

The Church of Scientology, Hugh Urban

Troublemaker, Leah Remini

Ruthless, Ron Miscavige

Escaping Scientology, Karen Pressley

Bare Faced Messiah, Russell Miller

Beyond Belief: My Secret Life Inside Scientology and My Harrowing Escape, Jenna Miscavige Hill

Blogs:

Mikerindersblog.org

Tonyortega.org

TV/ Documentaries:

- *Scientology: The Aftermath*, with Leah Remini and Mike Rinder, A&E Network
- *Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief*, produced by HBO