

***Pastor's Forum
January 10, 2018***

***A Christian Response to Scientology:
Why Scientology is a Cult that Should be Exposed and Opposed***

In the 1970's a shadowy group, most people had never heard of, began planning takeover of Clearwater, Florida. Their aim was to buy property, establish a world headquarters, and begin exerting influence over civic life and city government and yet their ambition was greater still. They spoke of "clearing the planet" which was their language for exerting the influence of their philosophy, practices and beliefs across the globe.

They created a shell organizations and using the created name "The United Churches of Florida", the group purchased the historic downtown hotel *The Fort Harrison* and soon began purchasing other properties as well. Soon residents across Clearwater would learn that the group in the shadows was the "Church of Scientology." The FBI would later discover secret plans for the Church of Scientology (COS) to take over Clearwater. The plan was called "Project Normandy." The stated purpose was to "obtain enough data on the Clearwater area to be able to determine what groups and individuals [we] will need to penetrate and handle in order to establish area control." ¹

Now, 40 years later, the COS owns more than a quarter billion dollars worth of property in downtown Clearwater and is the largest single landowner in the downtown area. The Fort Harrison hotel has become an international headquarters for the COS. It is called Flag Land Base and Scientologists from all over the world come to study and learn the principles of Scientology, including some of their most famous celebrities.

The COS is now well known in our city but in some ways the secrecy is as great as ever and the distrust and suspicion aroused by COS has not abated. Indeed, the COS is more controversial than ever. Critics have written books, posted blogs and produced documentaries that detail outrageous abuses. Activities that push the boundaries, and indeed cross the boundaries, of legality have been chronicled. The most

¹ www.fsunews.com/story/life/2017/03/19/history-scientology-clearwater-florida/99381438

damning evidence has come from those inside the movement, many of whom have chronicled their harrowing escapes from horrific conditions and treatment. It is almost too incredible to believe. 40 years later few people in Clearwater, outside of Scientology, respect or trust the church, though many truly fear it. 40 years later questions remain.

What is Scientology? Why are they here? What do they believe? While most religious organizations can give fairly straightforward answers to such obvious questions that is not the case with the COS. Such simple questions are hard to answer from a group that still practices secrecy and insulates themselves from the broader community.

Other questions are more troubling. Why are so many citizens afraid, intimidated, even terrorized by this group? Why are they the subject of so many books and documentaries detailing strange, abusive, and quite possibly, even illegal, activity? Such questions get whispered throughout the community for fear of reprisal if objections or complaints are voiced too loudly or too publicly.

As Christians, we have our own set of questions. How do the beliefs of Scientology compare with historic Christianity? Can a person be a Scientologist and a Christian has the COS often claims? How do we who highly value religious liberty, defend the rights of religious liberty, while not condoning unethical or perhaps illegal activity? How do we respond to this organization and to the individuals whom we meet, interact with, and do business with? What is our gospel centered, biblically grounded, Christian response to the COS? And specifically as members of Calvary we ask, "What is our responsibility as Clearwater's oldest church?"

Why Should We as Christians Address This?

Some may ask why we believe we have a responsibility to speak out. Why not just stay focused on the gospel, our mission and not worry about the Church of Scientology? My answer is that the gospel and our mission demand that we speak out. I would give three reasons,

First we are a people of convictions. We are a people who believe in truth. We believe in absolute, transcendent truth. Not your truth, or my truth, but truth truth, or as the late Francis Schaeffer said, "with a capital T". Truth matters to us and the truth claims of Scientology

should be contrasted with the truth claims of Jesus and the historic Christian message. When two messages are diametrically opposed they cannot both be right. We care about the truth and we believe there are consequences for rejecting God's truth as revealed in Christ.

Second, we are a people of context. We live in Clearwater. This is our community and our home. Ministry in this context means we must address the issue of Scientology and contrast what we believe are differences between its message and our own. Moreover, we are concerned about human rights and human justice issues. To serve the purposes of God in our city and to be the church in our city means we cannot ignore this major presence in our community. The church must answer.

Finally, people are confused. I believe this confusion is intentional. The COS has historically called themselves a church, used a type of cross as their symbol and consistently claimed that someone can be a Christian and a Scientologist. People are confused. They call themselves a church and we call ourselves a church. Is there a difference? Many people have believed the claim that Christianity and Scientology are compatible and that a person can embrace both world-views. We reject this view and believe people in and out of the church deserve to know the vast and irreconcilable differences.

How did we get here? A brief history of Scientology and their presence in Clearwater

L. Ron Hubbard

No history of Scientology is possible without a brief discussion of its founder L. (Lafayette) Ron Hubbard. Hubbard's own past is the subject of much confusion and controversy. The COS has published narratives that paint Hubbard to be a kind of Christ or Superman. Scientologists friends might object to the word "worship" but he is venerated in such a way that it is difficult for us to describe it as anything other than worship. His picture hangs in almost every Scientology building. His birthday, March 13, is venerated a major holiday. They sing songs to him, cheer his name, and residencies are still maintained for him in the belief that he will return from the dead.

The COS propagates narratives that make Hubbard out to be a genius, who heroically served his country as a decorated war veteran of the US Navy. In COS authorized biographies he is a brilliant and inquisitive young man looking for answers in life. He travels broadly studying Eastern religions and encountering magicians and holy men. According the COS narrative he is preoccupied with a central question, “Why was man, with all his ancient wisdom and knowledge accumulated in learned texts and temples, unable to solve such basic problems as war, insanity and unhappiness?”

The COS narratives claim he suffered grave injuries after his heroic war career and then using the techniques that would later become the foundation of Dianetics and Scientology, he healed himself. He became a Science Fiction writer and few would dispute that he possessed the ability to produce an incredible volume of writings. He would write about alien galaxies, intergalactic battles and foreign words and wrote, by some counts, more than 500 books or published pieces.

He continued exploring the answers to life’s mysteries and developing his own insights about the spiritual nature of man and in 1950 he wrote a book entitled *Dianetics* which comes from two Greek words and means “through the mind”, or as Scientologists might say “What the mind is doing to the body.” The book became a best seller and it has sold millions of copies. It obviously hit a cultural nerve as a kind of pop-psychology, a kind of do it yourself guide to spiritual health and personal development. Later the idea developed to establish a religion around his views and he gave it the name *Scientology*.

The truth is that much about Hubbard’s official biographies is false or cannot be substantiated. He was not a decorated war hero and there is no record that indicates he was injured in battle. Researchers have examined war records produced by the COS and determined them to be forgeries. Copies of medals provided by the COS have also determined to be forgeries. There is no record of LRH receiving for instance a Purple Heart as claimed. When the COS sent author Lawrence Wright a supposed copy of the medals, a close examination determined them to be fakes, and two of the medals shown weren’t even created until after Hubbard left service.

After *Dianetics* became popular many believe that the idea to found Scientology as a religion came because he realized that if he established a religion he would enjoy the broad freedoms that religious liberty affords and would protect his practices and business enterprises

from government interference. Once the religion was established Hubbard used his considerable writing skills to draft church organization, policy and doctrine. He wrote constantly and it is his writing and philosophy that are the foundation and focus of *Scientology* today.

In reality Hubbard appears to have been a deeply disturbed man. In a case that landed before the California Supreme Court in 1984 a trial judge wrote, "The organization (COS) clearly is schizophrenic and paranoid, and this bizarre combination seems to be a reflection of its founder, LRH. The evidence portrays a man who has been virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements." (Church of Scientology v. Armstrong, California Supreme Court, 1984).

He would father 7 children by 3 women. He abandoned his first wife, Margaret Louise Grubb (Polly) and their two children in 1941. He would write about having many affairs including one with a woman named Helen that he said "would have lasted had Polly not found out." He eventually married a second wife Sara, who had been the lover of his friend Jack Parson, while he was still technically married to his first wife. She gave birth to their 3rd child. She would divorce him in 1951 accusing him of "systematic torture, beatings, strangulations and scientific torture experiments." She also accused him of kidnapping their daughter Alexis. He married his 3rd wife Mary Sue Hubbard who bore him 4 children. She would be indicted in 1978 for crimes she and other Scientologists committed and she would serve 1 year of a 4-year prison term. One of Hubbard's son committed suicide, another L. Ron Hubbard turned against him and publicly denounced him. Mary Sue and L. Ron essentially lived estranged until he died and then she was kept out of public eye for the remainder of her life.

Clearwater

When Scientology arrived in Clearwater under an assumed name controversy immediately followed and has continued more or less for over 40 years. The FBI obtained files that confirmed operations in the 1970's to frame Clearwater Mayor Gabe Cazares and ruin his political career. They framed a hit and run event in Washington D.C. and later planted false evidence in Tijuana, Mexico to make it appear Cazares was a bigamist who had married a second women.

During their 4 decades in Clearwater they have continued a pattern of buying downtown property and using it for training and auditing people from around the world. Today they are the largest landowner in downtown Clearwater with over 250 million dollars worth of property.

Despite their public claims to the contrary they have continued expanding in downtown Clearwater and recent reports suggest that they are consolidating more of their central organization and administration to Clearwater. According to recent reports their most famous celebrity Tom Cruise is planning a luxury condo to allow him to stay in the area. The condo at the Skyview Condo will encompass the 9th and 10th floor and feature a personal elevator just for Cruise's cars.

In 2016 in a well-publicized skirmish with local leaders they attempted to purchase a 1.4 acre lot downtown, that ironically had once been owned by Calvary Baptist Church. 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. They paraded their cadre of celebrities to try to influence city leaders however, 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.

Why Clearwater? Hubbard wanted a coastal city, because the headquarters of Scientology was located on a ship that sailed around the world. This would allow them to come and go as necessary. They needed a base and a city they thought they could control and Clearwater was probably about the right size to fit that description and also located not far from a major international airport. Many believe the name "Clearwater" itself may have attracted Hubbard, since one of the aims of Scientology is to achieve a state of being known as "clear".

Today Scientology owns many properties around the world, but Clearwater may well be considered its central headquarters and most important base. Many Scientologists around the world visit Clearwater for training and many move into the area permanently in order to be

located near the Land Flag Base. Today members of our church interact with Scientologist in business and civic life. Many have friends, neighbors and even family members who may be associated with COS. They have a major presence in our city and community and that is not likely to change in the very near future so for members of our church, as well as our larger community, understanding more about the COS and how to respond to friends and neighbors who are a part of that church becomes very important.

The Beliefs and Practices of Scientology

So what do Scientologists believe? That isn't as easy to answer as one might think. Whereas most religions and churches have well articulated statements of faith that they hope and desire people will read and study, the COS operates very differently. In the first place they don't possess a systematized doctrinal statement like most of us think of such things. Secondly they are very secretive and protective of what they teach at the higher levels of Scientology training. In fact they have frequently gone to court to battle the release of documents detailing their beliefs. Clearly, they don't want the uninitiated to know everything they teach and believe. Finally, COS leaders justify deception and dishonesty, in that they will deny that they teach certain things even though they know they do. They justify this in the belief that revealing certain doctrines can actually harm an individual not ready to receive them and impede their overall work of "clearing the planet", a way of speaking about saving mankind. All of this makes it hard for even the most serious scholar to ascertain all the doctrines and practices of Scientology.

However, there have been numerous defections and the rise of the internet has allowed for the worldwide proliferation of information such that even the COS cannot stop it. Today we do know more than ever about the "secret" doctrines of the church, and someone doing some basic study and research may even know more than some people who are actually in the COS who haven't yet reached the higher levels of training. In other words, you may talk to a practicing Scientologist, perhaps a friend, about the teachings of Scientology and they may respond that they have never heard such nonsense and they may be telling you the truth.

Let's attempt to do the nearly impossible and summarize and clarify the basic world-view tenets of the COS, based on material that is widely available to the public on the Internet and is available numerous books, blogs and broadcasts.

Scientologists believe in a spiritual world. Man is essentially a soul, or in their terminology "thetan". A thetan is a spiritual soul trapped in matter, energy and space and time (MEST). A thetan is said to pass from one body to the next through countless reincarnations spanning trillions of years. Though they don't like to use the word, Scientologists most definitely believe in reincarnation, and believe you have lived past lives and will live countless more.

The thetan has two types of mind: an analytical mind and a reactive mind. The former thinks logically. It is the mind that we are conscious of, memories that can be recalled. The reactive mind is where we store memories of painful or unpleasant events. This is called an engram. An engram is described by the church as "a recording made by the reactive mind when a person is unconscious." These engrams are basically the source of our troubles. They are what is keeping us from a healthy, happy successful life. The aim is to become free of these 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."

Thus the "practice" of Scientology basically consists of learning new concepts in classes or training and auditing. It is important to remember that Scientology is primarily based on particular *practices*, rather than beliefs. Scientologists, at least at the beginning, will claim to believe any number of things, including Christianity, but *practice* Scientology. 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 that measures responses to various questions. Through a series of questions an auditor helps the individual uncover painful memories, habits, and beliefs. It is part confessional, part therapy, and part pseudo-psychology.

Scientologists believe the path to salvation is found in the bridge to freedom. 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 process that they believe will help a person achieve their best life, fullest happiness and help others do the same.

What is the appeal?

People are not drawn into Scientology because they are attracted to a bizarre belief system or authoritarian structure. Scientology begins by identifying problem areas in people’s lives and then offers classes or training designed to teach life skills to help people overcome their problems and find success and happiness. Evidently many people have found some help in these courses. Scientologists speak of finding help in gaining self-confidence, communication skills, business success and more. Gradually people not only are drawn into more and more courses and training, but to a network of people who become their community, their friends.

It is over time that people are indoctrinated and even trapped into the belief systems and structure of Scientology. As they progress in Scientology more and more personal information becomes known. The COS becomes aware of each person’s secrets and this information can and has been used to manipulate and coerce people in silence or greater involvement in the COS. Some people practice Scientology by attending occasional courses and engaging in a practice known as auditing and still seem to live fairly normal lives, interacting regularly with those outside the COS. However, the COS is designed to draw people further

and further into a labyrinth of financial commitments, irrational belief systems, church responsibilities and commitments, and authoritarian relationships that make it an oppressive religious imprisonment.

The Creation Myth

Some of their philosophy comes together in what could be called the Scientology “creation myth”. This material is presented to this day in OT III. It was a closely guarded secret for many years and it became public only after the COS lost a vigorous court battle to keep it secret. Hubbard maintained that this information if prematurely released could kill a person. He said, “the material involved in this sector is so vicious, that it is carefully arranged to kill anyone if he discovers the exact truth of it. So in January and February of this year (1967) I became very ill, almost lost this body, and somehow or another bought it off, and obtained the materials, and was able to live through it. I am very sure that I was the first one that ever did live through it. I am very sure that I was the first one that ever did live through any attempt to attain the material.”

Ultimately they failed and today with the internet being what it is the information is today widely available and has been verified by multiple corroborating accounts.

Even today, multiple people testify, that when a Scientologist prepares to receive the material in OT III, it is treated as a very important step in their journey and there is a heightened sense of expectancy and secrecy surrounding the material.

The information they receive in OT III is this:

Seventy-five million years ago a tyrant named Xenu (pronounced Zee-new) ruled the Galactic Confederation, an alliance of 76 planets, including Earth, then called Teegeeck.

To control overpopulation and solidify his power, Xenu instructed his loyal officers to capture beings of all shapes and sizes from the various planets, freeze them in a compound of alcohol and glycol and fly them by the billions to Earth in planes resembling DC-8s. Some of the beings were captured after they were duped into showing up for a phony tax investigation.

The beings were deposited or chained near 10 volcanoes scattered around the planet. After hydrogen bombs were dropped on them, their thetans were captured by Xenu's forces and implanted with sexual perversion, religion and other notions to obscure their memory of what Xenu had done.

Thetans then roam the planet in a disembodied state waiting for a human to be born and then they attach themselves to living people because they no longer have free will. Auditing for Scientologists at OT III and above focuses on eliminating the body thetans that stand in the way of spiritual progress.

The Occult and Scientology

These beliefs, understandably, strike most people as bizarre and not rooted in any kind of rational thought. Even Scientologists who have advanced to OT III have questioned that rationality of such ideas. One Scientologist who read the material for the first time thought it might be a trick, a kind of sanity test as if, if you really believe this they will kick you out.

But where do these ideas come from and are they harmless beliefs or do they help form the core of a doctrine that can be used to steal, kill and destroy?

Those who undervalue the importance of spirituality and/or theology often overlook one of the most troubling episodes of Hubbard's early life.

In the 1940's Hubbard's wanderings took him to Southern California where he connected with a man named John Whiteside Parsons, known as Jack.

Parsons has been described by some as the "James Dean of the occult". He was a brilliant man in some ways. He was literally a "rocket scientist" who worked at what would later be known as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California.

Parsons was also actively involved in what we would call "The Occult", Satanism or witchcraft. Parsons 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." His writings had influenced many people who identified as Satanists. Crowley's portrait hung in the stairwell of a home Parsons

acquired in California. By the way, Hubbard would later mention Crowley in a lecture calling him “my good friend.”

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

Hubbard was introduced to Parsons by a friend and soon moved in with Parsons. Parsons engaged in elaborate rituals that involved spiritism, black magik, Satanic rituals and sexual immorality. One visitor observed and described parties where “women in diaphanous gowns would dance around a pot of fire, surrounded by coffins topped with candles.”

There is evidence that Hubbard was an active participant in these rituals and bought into these occultist beliefs. Parsons would later write a letter to Crowley about Hubbard in which he stated the following:

“Although he has no formal training in Magick, he has an extraordinary amount of experience and understanding in the field. From some of his experiences I deduced that he is in direct touch with some higher intelligence, possibly his Guardian Angel. He describes the Angel as 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

Parsons and Hubbard engaged in Satanic rituals designed by Crowley including one called “Babalon Working.” In this ritual Parsons and Hubbard invoked the spirit world in a quest to summon up a “Scarlet Woman”, a spiritual female companion. The ceremony required Hubbard to channel the female deity of Babalon as Parsons performed sexual acts.

Some time later an actual woman, named Marjorie Cameron, did show up. They believed she had been supernaturally sent to them. She, Cameron, claimed she came because she was interested in the stories of naked women jumping over fires in the garden. In any case she participated in these Satanic rituals with the hopes of producing a child who would become the anti-christ. In the ritual the room was lit with

² Wright, pg. 78

candles while Hubbard dressed in a hooded white robe, and carrying a lamp intoned, "Display thyself to Our Lady; dedicate they organs to her, dedicate they heart to her, dedicate thy soul to her, for she shall absorb thee, and thou shalt become living flame before she incarnates."

Whereupon Parsons and Cameron responded, "Glory unto the Scarlet Woman, Babalon, the Mother of Abominations, that rideth upon the Beast." Then, as Hubbard continued the incantation, Parsons and Cameron consummated the ceremony on the altar." This same ritual went on for three nights in a row.

Cameron did become pregnant, but she later got an abortion, so what the ceremony produced in uncertain. Parsons however asserted that the ritual had been a success. He wrote, "Babalon is incarnate upon the earth today, awaiting the proper hour for her manifestation." Within a decade Hubbard would found the church of Scientology.

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." There is no evidence that Hubbard ever worked for naval intelligence.

Others dismiss the episode as insignificant and suggest it was just a strange phase in a troubled young man's life and that it has little to do with the founding of Scientology. But there are many reasons to suggest that the ideas of the occult did have great influence on the teachings and practice of Scientology.

The similarities between Crowley's views and Hubbard's are striking. It was Crowley who wrote "spiritual progress did not depend on religious or moral codes, but was like any other science."

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

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

³ Wright, pg. 79

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

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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfNHHn410M&t=8s)

When one considers the background of Scientology, we might then look at their doctrines and practices in an even more troubling light. Consider that the great cosmic power in their creation story is not good but evil, those aliens (we might say angels) who rebel against him are not evil but good, human beings are not created in the image of God, but are imprisoned and brainwashed by Xenu who is evil, and our salvation is not in worshiping God, but in self-actualization and self-fulfillment. The aim is to even achieve god-like powers. Is this not the first lie whispered in the ears of men, “You shall be as gods”?

Scientology is not then some aberrational theology that differs from Christianity by a few degrees of some imaginary continuum. It is a complete and utter repudiation of the message of Jesus and the Christian gospel. It is a 180-degree difference. It is the opposite of Christianity.

Christianity and Scientology: Irreconcilable Differences

Contrary to what the COS claims one cannot be a Christian and a Scientologist. The two world-views are mutually exclusive. You can be a Christian, or you can be a Scientologist, or you can be neither, but you cannot be both. If someone thinks they can be both they either misunderstand Scientology, misunderstand Christianity, or they misunderstand both, or they are being dishonest. Here are just some of

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.

the differences in the theological convictions, world-view of historic biblical Christianity and Scientology.

- **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

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.”

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**

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. Vengeance belongs to God not 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.

Why you gotta be so mean? The Abusive practices of Scientology and why they are rightly mistrusted

Despite all of that deeply troubling doctrine, it is not even the beliefs of the COS that causes the most concern for most people, it is their behavior. If this were simply a crazy group, believing crazy things, those of us who value theology and truth would be concerned, but honestly, most people wouldn't pay much attention. After all plenty of people believe crazy things and plenty of people think what we believe is crazy. I like to say that at least we lead with our crazy story!

It is not the beliefs, but the abusive practices of the COS that alarms most people and unites people of many faiths, backgrounds, and even people of no faith in deep concern and opposition to Scientology. In the words of the great theologian Taylor Swift, "why you gotta' be so mean?"

Abuse and Oppression

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 presentation there are several areas where the practices of the church tend to draw the most criticism and much of the abuse is against their own people.

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. Historically, the church aggressively recruited people, including minors, 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. It is also worth noting that according to some reports the COS no longer recruits minors to the Sea Org, although others say they can still participate with parental consent.

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. Many accusations have surfaced against the church alleging human trafficking and violations of labor laws.

Another cruel form of abuse is the practice known as of 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 may be instructed to

completely disconnect. There is no communication and no outreach, just complete, total permanent disconnection. Many people have been faced with the inhumane choice of disconnecting from certain members of their family or risk being disconnected from others. Parents have had to choose between children. Children have had to abandon parents, and there are parents who have left Scientology who haven't seen or heard from their children in years. This practice goes far beyond normal organizations enforcing codes of membership or even churches practicing some form of excommunication. Disconnection is a heartbreaking practice that has destroyed many families and friendships.

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. Several stories have been presented in the recent A&E series *Scientology the Aftermath* of children who have been sexually violated and abused, only to have the crimes covered up by COS leaders.

Fair Game

Few things however have shown the viciousness of the COS like their "Fair Game" policy. "Fair Game" is a policy instituted by Hubbard himself in the 1960's to target, intimidate and even destroy critics of the church. In essence it is the opposite of Jesus' command to love your enemies and turn the other cheek. Anyone who attacks Scientology is "Fair Game."

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." He even created an entire department in Scientology devoted to silencing these enemies.

Hubbard's writing contain the following phrases for advice on dealing with enemies, "costing the person his job", "embarrass or discredit them", "attack never defend", "always find or manufacture a threat against them to cause them to sue for peace", and "when people attack Scientology I never forget it, always even the score." They have bulletins that detail how to cost a person his job and how to create false rumors and lies.

In the 1970's, as we already noted, Clearwater Mayor Gabe Cazares was framed in a phone hit and run accident. Author Paulette Cooper, who wrote on of the earliest books critical of Scientology, was framed for an elaborate bomb threat. Stationary that had her finger prints on it was used to send the threat to set her up for arrest.

The official position of the COS is that the "Fair Game" policy was rescinded. This is deceptive. What Hubbard actually wrote in the policy that cancelled "Fair Game" was "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." An SP is a "Suppressive Person", which is their designation for any person who is deemed an enemy or critic of Scientology.

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

So please note the truth. The only reason "Fair Game" was cancelled is it was "bad publicity" and secondly, it hasn't been cancelled for those the church labels SP's.

As Hubbard said in another document entitled "Critics of Scientology", "those who try to make life hard for us are at once at risk.

So in reality Fair Game has not been rescinded and there is abundant evidence that it continues to be practiced with a ferocious ruthlessness to this day. The allegations and stories are too numerous to mention here but they include, covert operations, spying, rifling through

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

garbage, frames, nuisance lawsuits, hiring of private investigators, harming pets and property and so much more.

In 1979 11 highly placed church executives, including Mary Sue Hubbard were convicted of various crimes including wire-tapping, infiltration, and theft of government documents. The operation was known as the Snow White Operation and was developed by LRH himself in a secret order dating from 1973. COS sought to infiltrate world governments that they saw as hostile to the COS. Within the next few years as many as 5000 Scientologists were covertly placed in government agencies worldwide. They infiltrated government offices in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Belgium, and Italy as well as the US and UK. In the US they infiltrated the IRS, Justice, Treasury, Labor, Federal Trade Commission, and DEA as well as foreign consulates and embassies. They also infiltrated the St. Petersburg Times, Clearwater Sun and Washington Post. They stole files from the Los Angeles IRS office containing information on the California governor and Los Angeles mayor. Author Lawrence Wright said, "Nothing in American history can compare with the scale of the domestic espionage of Operation Snow White."

Scientology operatives are schooled in finding a spot of vulnerability, maybe a sin, a past scandal, a family weakness, whatever an exploiting that in order to silence their critics. We have been told that they have surveillance equipment that can rival major governments. Stories abound of spies who infiltrate local churches to gather information.

Are we afraid?

Speaking out about Scientology carries a great risk. Many people have been bullied into silence knowing that the church can release information, split their family, or ruin their reputations and even cost them their jobs. This is the intent of their *Fair Game* operations and it has been effective to a point.

As followers of Christ we cannot allow the fear of reprisal to bully us into silence. We trust in the sovereign hand of God who can protect, or strengthen us in suffering, or use our hardship for His glory. We must trust God more than we fear men. What can man do to us outside the

providence of God? Like so many of our forefathers through the centuries we must dare to speak the truth and we must dare to confront evil where it rises and trust the consequences to God.

Even to wrestle with such issues raises the question, “What kind of organization engages in tactics like this?” Doesn’t that say everything we need to know? Those who say that they have never seen or participated in such activities but still support and maintain membership in Scientology are without excuse. The celebrities and business leaders who support this movement with their millions are actively funding and supporting an oppressive regime that oppresses, abuses and destroys peoples lives.

Our Gospel Response to Scientology

So how do we respond? Biblical Christians we have several mandates that guide us as we respond to the COS.

We must courageously speak the truth

The truth matters. Scientology is not the truth. It deceives about God, about man, about the dilemma of life and the solution to the ills of mankind. It offers a false message, a false Messiah and a false hope. As Christians, especially here in Clearwater, we must be bold in testifying to the truth of the gospel in Christ and exposing the deception and abuses of Scientology.

We must love our neighbors

Scientologists are not our enemy. The scripture makes clear that our enemy is not flesh and blood, but spiritual forces that deceive and destroy mankind. Our call is to love our neighbors as ourselves and many of our neighbors in the Clearwater area are Scientologists.

We should seek to befriend Scientologists, to hear their stories, to build real friendships with the hopes that we can demonstrate the love of Christ. We will not debate many people out of Scientology but we may be able to build loving relationships that can become gospel bridges when people become disillusioned or when the Holy Spirit works in their lives in some way to cause them to see the lie they have

believed. Let us be the ones they know they can turn to for help when help is needed.

We must love those who persecute us

As we have noted the COS has a well deserved reputation for attacking its critics. As we have also observed this is the opposite of what Jesus taught. We do not fight fire with fire; we fight hate with love and darkness with light. We are not the church that hires private investigators to spy on people, that rifles through their garbage, the sues its critics, that attempts to silence its defectors, that attacks people's personal character and reveals their embarrassing secrets. We are called to be different because our Savior, Jesus, is so very different than their Savior L. Ron Hubbard.

We must continue to share the gospel

The great mission of the Church is to share the good news that God loves us and has sent His one and only Son to save us. The message of Jesus is the message that can save and transform. The message of Scientology is one of self-fulfillment and achievement. It appeals to those who long for spiritual answers and hope to find meaning without God. But there is no hope without God. He made us. He loves us and He will forgive those who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus. His love is a transforming love that stands in complete contrasts to the message of Scientology. The gospel is true. Jesus is alive, Jesus is Lord and our God saves. Let the deception that blinds so many in our area, grieve our heart and renew within us a passion to make sure every one knows about the God who so loved the world He sent His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

We must pray

Spiritual battles must be fought in spiritual ways. We should pray for spiritual strongholds in our area to be broken. We must pray for families that have been destroyed by this false doctrine. Pray that disconnected families would be reconciled and healed by love. We must pray for those imprisoned literally and figuratively by spiritual lies. We must pray that the corruption and abuses perpetrated in the name of

religion by the COS would continue to be exposed as the deeds of darkness they are. Pray that just as Paul was gloriously saved from his opposition to spiritual truth and became a mighty preacher of the gospel, that God will save more and more who come out of Scientology and that they will be empowered to preach the truth to many others also.

The call for Christians is to speak the truth in love. We are to be full of truth and full of love. Thus we must speak the truth about the false doctrine of Scientology and yet we must love those who have been trapped by its deception. Scientology will fall. As Thomas Carlyle once said, "No lie can live forever." Scientology's days are numbered, whether we see its fall in our lifetime or not. Many believe it is even now imploding, but regardless of God's timetable we can rest assured that this false doctrine with its false Messiahs offering a false hope will one day, like all lies, collapse. It is God's truth that will endure and the kingdom of our Lord, which will last forever. Let us renew our commitment to that Kingdom, grounded in God's eternal truth with our eyes firmly fixed upon Jesus our Savior who alone is the bridge to true and total freedom.