

Scientology

Major Cults
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Lafayette Ronald Hubbard, son of Harry Ross Hubbard and Ledor May Waterbury, was born on March 13, 1911 in Tilden Nebraska. The family moved frequently across the US since Harry was a naval officer. L. Ron showed his skills as a writer early, writing articles for his school newspaper, and eventually becoming an editor. Exploration and travel fed much of his writing with trips to Hawaii, Japan, China, the Philippines, Guam, the Caribbean and the West Indies (Melton 2; Martin 371).

At George Washington University, he learned how to fly and sail. He also continued his writing, even winning a GWU Literary Award for a play. After two years of study, he left the University, and began his writing career (Melton 2 - 3).

Hubbard was a very speedy typist, and this propelled his writing career. Even though he never mastered touch typing, Hubbard was able to type 90 words per minute with his special typewriter with buttons for frequent words (Martin 372). He wrote for the pulps, a genre of the 1920's and 30's that earned its name from the inexpensive paper it was printed on and because the content was often graphically violent and sexual. Hubbard wrote many different kinds of stories, but he eventually became well-known as a science fiction writer (Melton 4).

Exploration drew him away from his writing again in 1940 when he became a member of the Explorers Club. He quickly moved up the ranks and that summer, he headed a six month expedition to Alaska for the U.S. Navy Hydrographic Office. He had an opportunity to test new radio navigation methods and observe the Alaskan natives. At the end of the year he received a "Master of Steam and Motor Vessels" license from the U.S. Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation. That spring, he was also awarded a "Master of Sail Vessels" license for any ocean (Melton 5).

In June, the U.S. Naval reserve commissioned Hubbard as a lieutenant. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hubbard was assigned to active duty in the Philippines. He was later assigned to Australia as an intelligence officer when the Philippines came under Japanese control.

In the winter of 1945, the war was over, but Hubbard was still on active duty. Hubbard joined the occult magic club Ordo Templi Orientis. The OTO's secret rituals involved raising magical energies by using sex. Hubbard and Scientology claim he was investigating the organization as part of his official duties with naval intelligence, but the critics claim it was part of his ongoing fascination with the occult (Melton 6-7).

The leader of the OTO was Alexander Crowley, the self-proclaimed "Great Beast" and "Beast 666" (Coryden 50). Even though Hubbard referred to Crowley as "my friend," Hubbard only knew him from his writings, as they never met (Melton 67).

After the war, Hubbard began a search for spiritual meaning. In 1948, he released his first book on the subject, *The Original Thesis*. This focused mostly on human failings and how they could be resolved and improved through counselling (Melton 8).

This book was received well and in the spring of 1950, Hubbard's next book, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, was published. It enjoyed immediate success. Hubbard toured the country, presenting his ideas and started the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation where he trained counsellors (Melton 9).

The next year he published two more books about Dianetics and developed the electropsychometer, or E-Meter. It is a device electrically similar to a lie-detector, but its purpose is somewhat different (Melton 10, 68). The device did not come into its own until Dianetics was eclipsed by Scientology.

It did not take long for people to take Hubbard's Dianetics books and run in slightly different directions. This splintering came to a head with the discussion of reincarnation. When some members of the board wanted to ban the discussion, it was clear that Hubbard was losing control (Melton 10).

In 1952, Hubbard created the Hubbard Association of Scientologists and the *Journal of Scientology*. There were slight differences between Scientology and Dianetics, but most followers of Dianetics realigned themselves with Hubbard and in 1954, the first Church of Scientology was started (Melton 11).

Since the first church was in Washington, D.C., Scientology quickly ran into trouble with the federal government. The FDA investigated the church for using the E-Meter as a medical device, and the IRS investigated whether Scientology was eligible for tax exemption as a religion (Melton 13).

The FDA investigation keyed off some of the issues raised by the IRS investigation and finally took action in 1963. All the E-Meters were seized along with books (Melton 13-14). The government claimed that the E-Meters were being used to diagnose and treat such things as schizophrenia, arthritis, cancer and radiation burns, and to improve the IQ. It was alleged that Scientology's claims were "false and misleading" (Malko 76).

After a long investigation and two appeals, in 1969 the courts ruled that unless it was proven that Scientology was not a religion, then the articles that were seized are protected by the first amendment (Malko 77).

In this same time period, Scientology created the Guardian's Office. It was a special group that would be in charge of all legal and public relations. This office was involved in implementing Hubbard's Fair Game policy. This policy, even after it was officially abandoned, has been used to stifle public comment and debate on anything unflattering to Scientology. Anyone that challenged the church was to be "lied to, cheated and destroyed." This has ignited free-speech advocates against the church to this day. In 1983, this organization was renamed the Office of Special Affairs (Coryden 397; Melton 35-35, 72-73).

Hubbard had been making changes in Scientology for several years to transform it into a religion. His explanation to a reporter is quite telling: "To some this seems mere opportunism, to some it would seem that Scientology is simply making itself bulletproof in the eyes of the law, and to some it might appear that any association with religion is a reduction of the ethics and purposes of Scientology itself." He went on to claim that the real reason was that places like prisons and hospitals are more accessible for clergy (Malko 64-65).

As a result of the FDA's legal action, changes were made to Scientology's claims about the E-Meter. In the second edition (1985) of Hubbard's *Dianetics*, the copyright page now includes this note:

The Hubbard® Electrometer, or E-Meter™, is a device sometimes used in Dianetics technology. In itself, the E-Meter does nothing. It is not intended or effective for the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of any disease, or for the improvement of health or any bodily function.

The following disclaimer is on the copyright page of *What is Scientology?*:

The Hubbard® Electrometer is a religious artifact used in the Church confessional. It in itself does nothing, and is used by ministers only, to assist parishioners in locating areas of spiritual distress or travail.

This second quote is quite a change from the previous wording of Scientology. They have appropriated the language of the Catholic Church to explain their practices to western audiences. One has to wonder, though, if the E-Meter really "does nothing," then why does Scientology continue to use it?

The other major governmental hurdle Scientology faced was the challenges to its tax-exempt status as a church. When churches were first being set up, they received tax-exemption with out any problem. In 1958, the IRS began investigating (Melton 13).

The first church to encounter difficulties was in California. It had been granted exemption in 1957, but in 1967 it received a retroactive revocation of that status. Soon churches in other cities were receiving similar court judgements (Malko 84-85).

Scientology churches in other nations were challenged as well. In 1965, Scientology was outlawed in Australia. Scientology reorganized as the Church of the New Faith and challenged the law in court (Melton 14). In 1968, the UK health minister made it illegal for non-citizens to come into the country to study at Scientology's training center at Saint Hill (Melton 15).

Germany has been the most proactive against Scientology. A full-time office dedicated to opposing the church was set up in Hamburg. In 1997, the German government officially placed them under surveillance. As a part of this surveillance notice, Germany's Interior Minister, Manfred Kanther, claimed that Scientology was "a threat to democracy." Germany's largest political party, the Christian Democratic Union has

organized successful boycotts of movies by Tom Cruise and John Travolta, both prominent Scientology members (Melton 62).

Perhaps the biggest reason for all these legal troubles is Scientology's appearance as a money-making racket that preys on naive. Hubbard is quoted as saying, "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," at a Science fiction convention in New Jersey (Martin 371). However, this quote probably came from a letter written by George Orwell and can be found on page 304 of *The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell* (Melton 74).

Even if this quote cannot be attributed to Hubbard, Scientology is still very expensive. If one were to rise through the Operating Thetan levels as quickly and efficiently as possible, it would still cost about \$370,000 just to get to OT VIII (Heldal-Lund, "Prices up to OT8 and beyond"). Since there is an annual membership fee, if one does not have that money up front, the total cost would be higher (Heldal-Lund, "The Cost of Scientology").

In 1993, the IRS' challenge of Scientology's tax status was finally resolved. They ruled that Scientology was eligible for 501 (c)(3) tax exemption (Melton 63).

In 1997, the Italian Supreme Court decided that Scientology was a religion. It addressed each of the five major objections that the critics brought. First the court ruled that the syncretistic nature of Scientology is not relevant, since there are many religions with this characteristic (Melton 76).

The court also ruled that the church's claim as scientific did not make it less religious. They said that Christian theology has claimed to be scientific at least as long ago as Thomas Aquinas (Melton 76).

Third, they ruled that just because disgruntled ex-members claimed Scientology was a front for criminal activities did not make it so. There had also been ex-members who defended Scientology (Melton 76-77).

Fourth, the court ruled that even though Scientology seemed to have an "excessive" interest in fund-raising, this was not much different than the Medieval Catholic Church selling indulgences. They also noted that in the recent past, Italian Catholic churches had a list of services and their corresponding costs posted on the door. The court decided that the ultimate goal of "selling Dianetics and Scientology" was "proselytization," which is a very religious activity (Melton 77).

The final point of the ruling was that any illegal activity such as "fraudulent sales techniques" or taking advantage of naive people should be prosecuted but that there was no evidence of any pattern that could be extrapolated for the whole organization (Melton 77-78).

Scientology has not yet published anything that states their beliefs in an organized and comprehensive fashion (Melton 72), but there are some basic ideas that come out from Hubbard's writing.

There are two layers of Scientology literature. The first is public. Hubbard has written many books on Dianetics and Scientology. These only cover the most basic beliefs and are composed in a very friendly way. These books are available from any of the normal outlets.

The second layer is the secret internal literature. This includes all the successive levels of Operating Thetan materials. Scientology has used every available means to keep these documents confidential. They claim copyright on the material which would allow for fair use (United States Code). So they also claim that these documents are a trade secret. In spite of these claims, many of these documents have been placed on the internet, in newsgroups and in court documents (Melton 69).

One such court document is The Fishman Affidavit. A large portion of each of the first eight OT documents is included. The Dutch courts have ruled that it is legal to display the court documents online, so the entire document can be found in several places online (Fishman). The Church of Scientology has disputed that OT VIII is authentic, but it has also claimed that it was their material in court (Spaink).

The central teaching of Scientology is survival. They believe that this is the driving force behind each decision and they claim to help people make better decisions in life by giving them the tools to recognize when they are doing things that impede their own survival.

This teaching has not changed since Hubbard first taught it within Dianetics. Today, Scientology says, "The goal of life can be considered to be *infinite survival*" (Church of Scientology International 60). Dianetics said, "The dynamic principle of existence is survival" (Hubbard, *Dianetics* 43). "The dynamic principle of existence" was Hubbard's way of expressing the concept that we understand as "the goal of life."

Dianetics and Scientology also teach that there are two parts of the mind. The reactive mind and the analytical mind. The analytical mind is the part that is used during normal conscious activity to think, observe and remember. During times of intense emotion or pain, the analytical mind ceases to function and the reactive mind begins working. The reactive mind records all the things going on around this stressful incident. The memory of this group of perceptions is called an engram. It can be restimulated by future events and cause subconscious emotions and psychosomatic illnesses and cause the analytical mind to make poor decisions (Church of Scientology International 61-64).

Through auditing (a counselling methodology developed by Hubbard), Dianetics and Scientology claim to be able to remove all engrams. A Clear is an individual who is free

from all engrams and the problems they cause (Church of Scientology International 64-65).

The goal of Dianetics was merely to reach the Clear state. Scientology seeks to raise spiritual awareness through the concept of the thetan. "A thetan is the person himself" (Church of Scientology International 66). The thetan uses the mind and the body to interact with the physical world (Church of Scientology International 68).

The basic goal of survival for both Dianetics and Scientology is divided into dynamics, or groups. Originally, there were only four (Hubbard, *Dianetics* 44-45), but Hubbard expanded them to eight when he started Scientology. The eight groups were self, sex, group, mankind, animal, spirituality, universe and infinity (Hubbard, *Fundamentals of Thought* 33-35). A few of them have been renamed by modern Scientology. The sex dynamic is now creativity; mankind is now species; and animal is now life forms. As members progress, they will learn how to master each dynamic. In Scientology jargon, these arenas of survival are sometimes just mentioned by number (Church of Scientology International 69-71).

Scientology has levels of spiritual awareness. After Clear, there are the Operating Thetan (OT) levels I through XV. Each of these levels must be reached in sequence through completing successful auditing sessions. As one is moving up the "Bridge to Total Freedom" through these OT levels, it is expected that they will take training to become auditors themselves. There are grades of auditors as well, Class 0 through XII (Church of Scientology International 96-98).

This introductory material is very sparse on details, since they are all contained in the higher-level training documents. Scientology claims that one cannot advance to these levels immediately without dire consequences because you will not be ready to accept them. I believe the truth is more like this: unless you are already persuaded that Scientology is always right, you will see the error in any but the most abstract teaching and reject Scientology altogether.

Hubbard had some very strange thoughts on a wide variety of topics. Here are just a few.

Hubbard on Jesus:

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 [*sic*] 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 (Fishman/Hubbard, "OT VIII" 130).

The symbol of the crucified Christ is very apt indeed. It's the symbol of a thetan betrayed (Hubbard, "HCO Bulletin of May 11, AD13").

Hubbard's concept of Jesus is very warped. It denies the sinlessness and deity of Christ that the New Testament speaks of frequently. Christ was not betrayed at the cross. He went there of his own free will.

Hubbard on Satan:

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 bearers" 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 (Fishman/Hubbard, "OT VIII" 130).

Hubbard believed he was the Anti-Christ and the one Crowley (the Beast) was speaking of when he wrote, "[I]n these runes are mysteries that no Beast shall devine [sic]. Let him not seek to try: But one cometh after him ... who shall discover the key to it all" (Coryden 50).

Hubbard on Heaven:

Well, I have been to Heaven.
And I've found that Scientologists have been to Heaven.
And that everybody has evidently been to Heaven.
The Goals Problem Mass implants, which are the apparent basic source of aberration and human travail, which begin with the goal To Forget, were cynically done "in Heaven".
[T]here was certainly something very corny about Heaven et al. Now I have to apologize. There was a Heaven. Not too unlike, in cruel betrayal, the heaven of the Assassins in the 12th Century who, like everyone else, dramatized the whole track implants - if a bit more so.
Before you went to Heaven you were not really very bad or very good, but you didn't think you had lived only once and you had a good memory and knew who you were and enjoyed life.
I imagine when we finally manage to communicate with beetle under rocks and free them, we'll no doubt find the Creator of Heaven who 43 + Trillion years ago designed and built the Pearly Gates and entrapped us all.
The place, by implant and inference, was supposed to be in the sky like a floating island. Actually it was simply a high place in the mountains of a planet and the gates pathway falls away into a gorge, very eroded and bare (Hubbard, "HCO Bulletin of May 11, AD13").

The "Assassins" is a reference to the Catholic Church and the Crusades, but the heaven of Catholic Church and the Bible is far different than what Hubbard is describing.

This quote also speaks of reincarnation. Scientologists do not believe in transmigration. A person will always be reincarnated as another person (Melton 74). Hubbard also said, "I know with certainty where I was and who I was in the last 80 trillion years" (Corydon 38).

Hubbard on God:

For a long time, people have been cross with me for my lack of co-operation in believing in a Christian Heaven, God and Christ. I have never said I didn't disbelieve in a Big Thetan (Hubbard, "HCO Bulletin of May 11, AD13").

You may think that "Big Thetan" is Hubbard's corny way of saying God. It's not. Hubbard believes that the world was created when the Big Thetan was split into many thetans, and these thetans created the world, lost their identity and memory (in heaven) and then came to earth to inhabit human bodies (Fishman/Hubbard, "OT III").

It is quite plain from these few quotes that Scientology is no orthodox religion. It easily falls into its cult category, even though a few would like to place it entirely outside of religion.

Hubbard died on January 24, 1986, but his legacy has continued. Each church still maintains a fully furnished office for him (Melton 23).

Bibliography

Because of the litigious and secretive nature of the Church of Scientology, many sources for anyone who wishes to study the church cannot be cited properly. Many things have been published on the internet, in newsgroups (under the fair-use provision of copyright law) and entered as evidence in court. The church rarely comments on the accuracy of this information, but rather tries every means available to suppress it. These sources are cited in as complete fashion as possible.

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Dave Touretzky's copy:

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