

## Study on Cults Lesson 4: Scientology

We move to our most bizarre and removed cult of our study as we conclude our series on the cults with Scientology. To be frank, I have never met a scientologist that I know of and that is precisely because they do not typically exist amongst the “common people”. Typically, scientology is a cult reserved for the elite and this is the reason why a cult that is relatively small in number (estimated at under 40,000 currently) can still be visible. Scientologists tend to be celebrities (John Travolta, Tom Cruise, Greta Van Sustern, etc.) which means the cult has a disproportionate visibility to its size.

### 1. Founding

- a. The founder of Scientology was L. Ron Hubbard
- b. Hubbard was well known for his science fiction writing and this informs the bizarre nature of his religious system!
- c. Hubbard was an enigmatic figure who mysteriously disappeared in the late 1970's but was not reported as deceased until 1986
- d. The man was steeped in psychological theories and eastern mysticism and he sought to reconcile each of these views with other prominent religions, most notably Christianity

### 2. Core Beliefs

- a. Eradication of evil and the myth of sin
  - i. Scientologists claim “the Scientologist arrives at the state of Clear, defined as having erased the reactive mind. A Clear is believed to no longer have a reactive mind, and once gone, that element of his or her mind will not return. This condition brings with it a variety of benefits, including the erasure of pain and negative emotions (which should have occurred gradually during the process of reaching Clear), and the basic goodness of the person comes to the fore.”
  - ii. One can see that there are two, fundamental assumptions that clearly contradict biblical Christianity
    1. First, we see a belief that evil is psychologically constructed
      - a. Essentially, Scientologists assert that evil is the product of wrong thinking
      - b. While they do not deny the existence of pain and suffering per se, they do assert that these things are not objectively present, they are the product of poor, uneducated thought
      - c. One can see why this kind of faith system thrives with the immensely wealthy as a denial of objective pain, suffering and evil is far easier to stomach from the gated community!
      - d. Nevertheless, this idea is clearly refuted in Scripture which clearly teaches that evil is real and an inescapable reality

for all men and that its eradication has been initiated by Christ and will be fulfilled in total upon His return

2. Second, we see a belief that all men are intrinsically good
  - a. The idea that man just needs to cultivate the “basic goodness” of his person is fundamental to scientologists outlook. These claims are parroted by many celebrities and famous “counselors” in our culture today
  - b. However, the Bible is clear that man is fundamentally sinful from birth (Jeremiah 17:9) and this means that we do not need to clean ourselves up, we need One to totally regenerate our lifeless, depraved souls

b. The path to salvation

- i. Hubbard wrote, “personal salvation in one lifetime is freedom from the cycle of birth and death... religious practice of all faiths is the universal way to wisdom, understanding and/or salvation”
  1. The idea is clear enough to follow... Hubbard teaches a universal, syncretistic system of salvation which equates every faith system and every supposed prophet as equally valid and reliable
  2. The problems with this assertion are numerous
    - a. First, these faiths contradict one another! If Buddhism is right, then Nirvana is the goal of all creatures and the idea of a personal Savior who died to redeem us from sin and secure our standing before God in heaven is frivolous and absurd.
    - b. Second, Jesus clearly taught an exclusive way to salvation which means He is either to be trusted or refused!

c. Eternal Punishment

- i. Hubbard taught that hell was a repugnant doctrine saying “hell is a total myth, an invention just to make people very unhappy and is a vicious lie”
- ii. This means that Hubbard flatly refuses to embrace the necessity of repentance for salvation saying “it is despicable and utterly beneath contempt to tell a man that he must repent, that he is evil”
- iii. Ironically, this means that Hubbard is rejecting one of the faith systems he claims leads to wisdom!
- iv. Nevertheless, we know that God stands as ultimate judge over all things, that man is guilty of sin before Him and DESERVES death and hell and that the only way to achieve pardon is through repentance from sin and faith in the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice on behalf of sinful men