

## Study: Church of Scientology

### HISTORY AND BEGINNINGS

1. The Church of Scientology is the largest organization to practice and promote the scientology belief system
  - a. The Church of Scientology International is their parent organization
  - b. Responsible for the overall ecclesiastical management, dissemination and propagation of Scientology
2. Every Church of Scientology is separately incorporated and has its own local board of directors and executives responsible for its own activities and well-being, both corporate and ecclesiastical
3. The first Scientology church was incorporated in December 1953 in [Camden, New Jersey](#) by [L. Ron Hubbard](#), his wife [Mary Sue Hubbard](#), John Galusha and a few other early [Dianeticists](#), although the Hubbard Association of Scientologists International (HASI) had already been operating since 1952
  - a. Hubbard had been selling Scientology books and other items. Soon after, he explained the religious nature of Scientology in a bulletin to all Scientologists, stressing its relation to the [Dharma](#). Dharma is the teachings of Buddah. The first Church of Scientology opened in 1954 in Los Angeles.
  - b. Hubbard's stated "Aims of Scientology" were to be "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, are the aims of Scientology."
  - c. Hubbard had official control of the organization until 1966 when this function was transferred to a group of executives. Though Hubbard maintained no formal relationship to Scientology's management he remained firmly in control of the organization and its affiliated organizations.
  - d. In May 1987 [David Miscavige](#), one of Hubbard's former personal assistants, assumed the position of Chairman of the Board of [Religious Technology Center](#) (RTC), a non-profit corporation that administers the trademarked names and symbols of Dianetics and Scientology. Although RTC is a separate corporation from the [Church of Scientology International](#).

### DIANETICS, CYBERNETICS AND GENERAL SEMANTICS

1. **Dianetics** is a set of ideas and practices regarding the relationship between the spirit, mind and body that were developed by science fiction writer [L. Ron Hubbard](#), and practiced by followers of [Scientology](#). Hubbard coined *Dianetics* from the [Greek](#) stems *dia*, meaning through, and *nous*, meaning [mind](#).

a. Dianetics posits the existence of a mind with three parts: the conscious "analytical mind," the subconscious "reactive mind," and the somatic mind. The goal of Dianetics is to remove the so-called "reactive mind" that scientologists believe prevents people from becoming more ethical, more aware, happier and saner. The Dianetics procedure to achieve this is called "auditing".

b. Auditing is a process whereby a series of questions are asked by the Scientology auditor, in an attempt to rid the auditee of the painful experiences of the past which scientologists believe to be the cause of the "reactive mind".

c. Dianetics grew out of Hubbard's personal experiences and experiments and has been described as a mix of "Western technology and Oriental philosophy". Hubbard stated that Dianetics "forms a bridge between" [cybernetics](#) and [General Semantics](#), a set of ideas about education originated by [Alfred Korzybski](#) that was receiving much attention in the science fiction world in the 1940s. Hubbard claimed that Dianetics can increase intelligence, eliminate unwanted emotions and alleviate a wide range of illnesses he believed to be [psychosomatic](#). Among the conditions purportedly treated against

are arthritis, allergies, asthma, some coronary difficulties, eye trouble, ulcers, migraine headaches, and sex deviations.

d. **Cybernetics** is the interdisciplinary study of the [structure](#) of [regulatory systems](#). Cybernetics is preeminent when the system under scrutiny is involved in a closed signal loop, where action by the system in an environment causes some change in the environment and that change is manifest to the system via information / feedback that causes the system to adapt to new conditions: the system changes its behaviour. This "circular causal" relationship is necessary and sufficient for a cybernetic perspective

e. **General semantics** is a [discipline](#) created by [Alfred Korzybski](#). The name technically refers to the study of what Korzybski called "semantic reactions", or reactions of the whole human organism within the environment to some event — any event, not just perceiving a human-made symbol — with respect to the meaning of that event. However, people most commonly use the name to mean the particular system of semantic reactions that Korzybski called the most useful for human survival, that is to say delayed reactions as opposed to "signal reactions" (immediate, unthinking ones).

## **BASIC BELIEF SYSTEM**

1. Scientology teaches that people are immortal spiritual beings who have forgotten their true nature. Its method of spiritual rehabilitation is a type of counseling known as auditing, in which practitioners aim to consciously re-experience painful or traumatic events in their past, in order to free themselves of their limiting effects.

a. Study materials and auditing courses are made available to members in return for specified donations.

b. Scientology is legally recognized as a tax-exempt religion in the United States and other countries, and the Church of Scientology emphasizes this as proof that it is a bona fide religion.

2. Scientology describes itself as the study and handling of the [spirit](#) in relationship to itself, others, and all of life. One purpose of Scientology, as stated by the Church of Scientology, is to become certain of one's spiritual existence and one's relationship to God, or the "Supreme Being."

a. One belief of Scientology is that a human is an immortal alien spiritual being, termed a [thetan](#) that is trapped on planet Earth in a physical body. Hubbard described these "thetans" in "[The Space Opera](#)" cosmogony.

b. The [science fiction](#) term [space opera](#) describes what Hubbard said were actual [extraterrestrial civilizations](#) and alien interventions in [past lives](#). Upon Hubbard's death in 1986, the [Church of Scientology](#) announced that he had discarded his physical body and was now "on a planet a galaxy away."

c. It is a basic belief of Scientology that a [human being](#) is actually an immortal spiritual being, termed a [thetan](#), that is presently trapped on planet [Earth](#) in a "meat body." The thetan has had innumerable past lives and it is accepted in Scientology that lives antedating the thetan's arrival on Earth lived in extraterrestrial cultures. Descriptions of space opera [incidents](#) are seen as nonfiction in the [beliefs of Scientology](#); they appeared in the online Glossary for Dianetics and Scientology, although they were later removed from it.

d. Hubbard said that the modern-day [science fiction](#) genre of space opera is merely an [unconscious recollection](#) of real events that took place [millions](#) of years ago. These events include the story of [Xenu](#), the ruler of the Galactic Confederacy who brought [billions](#) of frozen people to Earth 75 million years ago, stacked them around [volcanoes](#) and blew them up with [hydrogen bombs](#), creating swarms of disembodied alien souls known as [Body Thetans](#). Xenu is only one element of Scientologist beliefs in alien civilizations. Such doctrines have existed in Scientology virtually since its beginning in the

1950s Hubbard wrote and lectured about civilizations such as [Helatrobis](#), Espinol and [Arslychus](#), and in the 1960s he introduced Xenu's Galactic Confederacy. He described repeated instances of their using brainwashing [implants](#) on hapless beings. He also spoke of alien invasions of Earth, such as that carried out around 6235 BC by the Fifth Invader Force, who were "very strange insect-like creature[s] with unthinkably horrible hands.

e. Scientologists believe that an individual should discover for himself that Scientology works by personally applying its principles and observing or experiencing desirable results. Scientology claims that its practices provide methods by which a person can achieve greater spiritual awareness. They do this by "Auditing" and "Training" Within Scientology, progression from level to level is often called [The Bridge to Total Freedom](#) Scientologists progress from "Preclear", to "[Clear](#)", and ultimately "[Operating Thetan](#)". Scientologists also believe that humans have hidden abilities which can be unlocked.

## **CONTROVERSY: CHURCH OR BUSINESS**

1. Though it has attained some credibility as a religion, Scientology has also been described by some as both a [cult](#) and a commercial enterprise. Some of the Church's actions also brought scrutiny from the press and law enforcement. For example, it has been noted to engage in harassment and abuse of civil courts to silence its critics. In 1979, several Scientology members were convicted for [illegal activities](#), including the largest theft of government documents in U.S. history.

2. Under the Guardian's Office (now renamed the [Office of Special Affairs](#) or OSA), Church members organized and committed the largest penetration of United States federal agencies by an organization not affiliated with a foreign government, such as the [KGB](#).

a. This was known as [Operation Snow White](#). In the trial which followed discovery of these activities the prosecution described their actions thus:

b. "The crime committed by these defendants is of a breadth and scope previously unheard of. No building, office, desk, or file was safe from their snooping and prying. No individual or organization was free from their despicable conspiratorial minds. The tools of their trade were miniature transmitters, lock picks, secret codes, forged credentials and any other device they found necessary to carry out their conspiratorial schemes."

3. The Church has also in the past made use of aggressive tactics in addressing those it sees as trying to suppress them, known as [Suppressive Persons](#) (SPs) first outlined by L. Ron Hubbard as part of a policy called [fair game](#). It was under this policy that [Paulette Cooper](#) was targeted for having authored [The Scandal of Scientology](#), a 1970 exposé book about the Church and its founder. This action was known as [Operation Freakout](#).

a. Using blank paper known to have been handled by Cooper, Scientologists forged bomb threats in her name. When fingerprints on them matched hers, the Justice Department began prosecution, which could have sent Cooper to prison for a lengthy term.

b. The Church's plan was discovered at the same time as its Operation Snow White actions were revealed. All charges against Cooper were dismissed, though she had spent more than \$20,000 on legal fees for her defense.

c. Yet it has continued to aggressively target people it deems suppressive. In 1998, regarding its announcement that it had hired a private investigator to look into the background of a [Boston Herald](#) writer who had written a series on the church, Robert W. Thornburg, dean of Marsh Chapel at [Boston University](#), said, "No one I know goes so far as to hire outsiders to harass or try to get intimidating data on critics. Scientology is the only crowd that does that." It has apparently continued as recently as 2006 when [BBC](#) journalist [John Sweeney](#) was making [Scientology and Me](#), an investigative report about the Church and was the subject of harassment: In LA, the moment our hire car left the airport we realised we were being followed by two cars. In our hotel a weird stranger spent every breakfast listening to us.

## A. Members Health and Safety:

a. The death of some Scientologists has brought attention to the Church both due to the circumstances of their demise and their relationship with Scientology possibly being a factor. In 1995, Lisa McPherson was involved in a minor automobile accident while driving on a [Clearwater, Florida](#) street. Following the collision, she exited her vehicle, stripped naked and showed further signs of mental instability. Hospital staff agreed that she was unharmed, but recommended keeping her overnight for observation. Following intervention by fellow Scientologists, McPherson refused [psychiatric](#) observation or admission at the hospital and checked herself out after a short evaluation. She was taken to the [Fort Harrison Hotel](#), a Scientology retreat, to receive a Church sanctioned treatment called [Introspection Rundown](#). When she later died, the state of Florida pursued criminal charges against the Church. These charges attracted press coverage and sparked lawsuits.

1. The Introspection [Rundown](#) is a controversial [Church of Scientology](#) procedure that is intended to handle a psychotic episode or complete mental breakdown. Introspection is defined for the purpose of this rundown as a condition where the person is "looking into one's own mind, feelings, reactions, etc." The end result is "the person extroverted, no longer looking inward worriedly continuously without end

b. Eight years later Elli Perkins, another adherent to Scientology's beliefs regarding [psychiatry](#), was stabbed to death by her mentally disturbed son. Though Elli Perkins's son had begun to show symptoms of [schizophrenia](#) as early as 2001, the Perkins family chose not to seek psychiatric help for him and opted instead for remedies sanctioned by Scientology. The death of Elli Perkins at the hands of a disturbed family member, one whose disease could have been treated by methods and medications banned by Scientology, again raised questions in the media about the Church's methods.

4. Members of the public entering a Scientology center or mission are offered a "free personality test" called the [Oxford Capacity Analysis](#) by Scientology literature. The test, despite its name and the claims of Scientology literature, has no connection to Oxford University or any other research body. Scientific research into three test results came to the conclusion that "we are forced to a position of skepticism about the test's status as a reliable psychometric device" and called its "scientific value," "negligible".

5. Recent legal actions involving Scientology's relationship with its members have caused the organization to publish extensive legal documents that cover the rights granted to followers. It has become standard practice within the organization for members to sign lengthy legal contracts and waivers before engaging in Scientology services, a practice that contrasts greatly with almost every mainstream religious organization. In 2003, a series of media reports examined the legal contracts required by Scientology, which state, among other things, that followers deny any psychiatric care their doctors may prescribe to them.

6. In addition, the Church has been implicated in kidnapping members who have recently left the church. In 2007, Martine Boublil was kidnapped and held for several weeks against her will in Sardinia by four Scientologists. She was found on the 22 January 2008, clothed only in a shirt. The room she was imprisoned in contained refuse and an insect infested mattress.

a. On Friday 28 March 2008, Kaja Bordevich Ballo, daughter of a Norwegian parliament member took a Church of Scientology [personality test](#) while studying in [Nice](#). Her friends and co-inhabitants claim she was in good spirits and showed no signs of a mental breakdown, but the report from the Church of Scientology said she was "depressed, irresponsible, hyper-critical and lacking in harmony". A few hours later she committed suicide by jumping from her balcony at her dorm room leaving a note telling her family she was sorry for not "being good for anything".

7. It is difficult to obtain reliable membership statistics for Scientology. The International Association of Scientologists (IAS) maintains a list of Scientologists worldwide. However, not every active Scientologist is a member of the International Association of Scientologists. The organization itself issues only vague figures (without breaking them down by region or country) and isn't clear about

what these numbers represent. Some public [censuses](#) have only recently included questions about religious affiliations though the [United States Census Bureau](#) states that it is not the source for information on religion.

a. As best as anyone can figure from reports from individual countries and the organization itself, there are anywhere from 8 million to 15 million members world wide.

## **FINANCES**

The Church of Scientology and its large network of corporations, non-profits and other legal entities are estimated to make around half a billion dollars in annual revenue.

This money is raised in a variety of ways:

1. Scientologists are expected to attend classes, exercises or counseling sessions, for a set range of fees (or "fixed donations"). Charges for auditing and other church-related courses run from hundreds to thousands of dollars.

2. A wide variety of entry-level courses, representing 8 to 16 hours study, cost under \$100 (US). More advanced courses require membership in the [International Association of Scientologists](#) (IAS), have to be taken at higher level Orgs, and have higher fees. Membership without courses or auditing is possible, but the higher levels cannot be reached this way. According to a sociological report entitled "Scientology: To Be Perfectly Clear", progression between levels above "clear" status cost \$15,760.03 in 1980 (without including additional special treatments). Scientologists can choose to be audited by a fellow Scientologist rather than by a staff member.

3. Scientologists are frequently encouraged to become Professional Auditors as a way of earning their way up the Bridge. As a Field Auditor, auditors can receive commissions on people referred to Organizations and a 15% commission on completed services.

Critics say it is improper to fix a donation for religious service; therefore the activity is non-religious. Scientology points out many classes, exercises and counseling may also be traded for "in kind" or performed cooperatively by students for no cost, and members of its most devoted orders can make use of services without any donations bar that of their time. A central tenet of Scientology is its [Doctrine of Exchange](#), which dictates that each time a person receives something, he or she must give something back. By doing so, a Scientologist maintains "inflow" and "outflow", avoiding spiritual decline.

## **INTERNATIONAL OPINION**

Australia: In 1960 Scientology was legally banned. Since then the church has successfully gotten these bans repealed.

Belgium: In September of 2007, the Belgian Chief Prosecutor concluded an investigation of Scientology and indicated he would bring charges. An administrative court is currently deciding whether claims by the church that this statement prejudiced the case and whether it can be heard.

France: a parliamentary report classified Scientology as a dangerous cult. On November 22, 1996, the leader of the [Lyons](#) Church of Scientology, Jean-Jacques Mazier, was convicted of fraud and involuntary homicide and sentenced to eighteen months in prison for his role in the death of a member who committed suicide after going deeply into debt to pay for [Scientology auditing](#) sessions. Fourteen others were convicted of fraud as well. As of 2009, members of the church are also being sued for fraud and practicing pharmacology without a license.

Germany: official views of Scientology are particularly skeptical. In Germany it is seen as a totalitarian organization and is under observation by national security organizations due, among other

reasons, to suspicion of violating the human rights of its members granted by the [German Constitution](#).

Ireland: As in most European countries, the Church of Scientology is not officially recognized in [Ireland](#) as a charitable organization, but it is free to promote Scientology beliefs.

Israel: according to Israeli professor of psychology Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "in various organizational forms, Scientology has been active among Israelis for more than thirty years, but those in charge not only never claimed the religion label, but resisted any such suggestion or implication. It has always presented itself as a secular, self-improvement, tax-paying business.

Russia: The [European Court of Human Rights](#) ruled in [April 2007](#) that Russia's denial to register the Church of Scientology as a religious community was a violation of Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (freedom of assembly and association) read in the light of Article 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion)". In July 2007, the [St. Petersburg City Court](#) closed down that city's Scientology center for violating its charter.

Spain: On 31 October 2007, the National Court in Madrid issued a decision recognizing that the National Church of Scientology of Spain should be entered in the Registry of Religious Entities. The administrative tribunal of Madrid's High Court ruled that a 2005 justice ministry decision to scrap the church from the register was "against the law."

United Kingdom: Foreign Scientologists were banned from entering the United Kingdom between 1968 – 1980 but were allowed later on. In 1999, an application by Scientology for charitable status was rejected after the authorities decided its activities were not of general public benefit. The United Kingdom [Charity Commission](#) does not class Scientology as a religion on financial grounds.

United States: In 1979 Hubbard's wife, [Mary Sue Hubbard](#), along with ten other highly placed Scientology executives were convicted in United States federal court regarding [Operation Snow White](#), and served time in an American federal prison. Operation Snow White involved infiltration, wiretapping and theft of documents in government offices, most notably those of the United States [Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS).

In 1993, however, the United States IRS recognized Scientology as a "non-profit charitable organization," and gave it the same legal protections and favorable tax treatment extended to other non-profit charitable organizations. A [New York Times](#) article says that Scientologists paid private investigators to obtain compromising material on the IRS commissioner and blackmailed the IRS into submission.

"The following actions will be considered to be a material breach by the Service: ... The issuance of a Regulation, Revenue Ruling or other pronouncement of general applicability providing that fixed donations to a religious organization other than a church of Scientology are fully deductible unless the Service has issued previously or issues contemporaneously a similar pronouncement that provides for consistent and uniform principles for determining the deductibility of fixed donations for all churches including the Church of Scientology".

In a 2001 legal case involving a married couple attempting to obtain the same deduction for charity to a Jewish school, it was stated by Judge Silverman:

"An IRS closing agreement cannot overrule Congress and the Supreme Court. If the IRS does, in fact, give preferential treatment to members of the Church of Scientology—allowing them a special right to claim deductions that are contrary to law and rightly disallowed to everybody else—then the proper course of action is a lawsuit to put a stop to *that* policy."

To date (2008) such a suit is not known to have been filed. In further appeal in 2006, the US Tax Court again rejected couple's deduction, stating "We conclude that the agreement reached between

the Internal Revenue Service and the Church of Scientology in 1993 does not affect the result in this case."

However, this matter is still ongoing. On February 8, 2008, three judges in the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals "expressed deep skepticism" over the IRS's position that treatment of Scientology is "irrelevant to the deductions the Orthodox Jews, Michael and Marla Sklar, took for part of their children's day school tuition and for after-school classes in Jewish law.