

[The Church of] **Scientology**
“*Cult of Greed- from Science Fiction to Space Age Religion*”

One of the most intriguing and controversial items found in today's religious marketplace is The Church of Scientology. The church was founded by Lafayette Ronald Hubbard (1911-1986) in California in the 1950s as an extension of his earlier nonreligious, psychological theory of Dianetics. Dianetics is believed to deal with mind and body; Scientology with the human spirit, although they necessarily overlap in places.

Drawing on ideas from Buddhist and Hindu religious philosophy, science fiction, and Western concepts in psychology and science, L. Ron Hubbard produced a religion that sees all human beings as immortal spirits (“thetans”) who have forgotten their identity and become deceived by the very universe they mentally emanated in order to amuse themselves. Scientology claims it can free the *thetan* to realize his or her true nature and powers through certain controversial procedures that allegedly heal the mind and free the spirit.

According to Scientology, the *thetan* within each person has been so damaged by *engrams* that he has forgotten that he is immortal and even forgotten he is a thetan. Thetans have absolute control over their bodies, but, sadly, they think they *are* bodies (a terrible fate) and hence are bound by the M.E.S.T. (matter, energy, space, time) universe. Each time a body dies, the thetan must enter another body (reincarnation), but this brings with it all of its trillions of years' accumulation of engrams. Thetans thus are no longer free, but are in bondage to the material universe. Scientology claims it can free the thetan.

So What's the Difference- what do they believe?

1. **God** – Does not define God or a Supreme Being and rejects Biblical description. Everyone is “thetan”, a reincarnated, immortal spirit with unlimited powers over its own universe (pantheistic worldview), but most people are unaware of this possibility. The universe was invented by ancestral thetans.
2. **Jesus Christ** – Jesus is rarely, if ever, mentioned. He is not even acknowledged as an “operating thetan” (someone who is in control of supernatural powers and *cleared* from mental defects).
3. **Man and sin** – No sin or need for repentance. Scientology maintains that in his true nature, man is not the limited and pitiful body and ego he mistakenly imagines himself to be. He is a thetan whose fundamental nature is basically good and divine. He is not morally fallen; rather he is simply ignorant of his own perfection. *Romans 3:23*
4. **Salvation** – is freedom from reincarnation. One must work with an auditor/counselor on his *engrams* (negative memories and hang-ups from the past) to achieve a state of “*clear*”, then progress up the “bridge of total freedom”. There are eight rungs on this ladder, the higher the rung, the greater the power. Each advancement requires expensive sessions with an auditor.
5. **Heaven and hell** – Does not believe in a heaven or a hell. *Matthew 25:46, Revelation 20:13-15*. People who get “clear” of engrams, become operating thetans. Death is just a part of the cycle of reincarnation.
6. **The Bible** – Does **not** acknowledge that the Bible is the Word of God. “Sacred” writings include *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* and *The Way to Happiness* by Hubbard.

Note: Today Scientology boasts over 700 centers in 65 countries and is one of the wealthiest of the new religions. Celebrities such as Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes, John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Patrick Swayze are only a few of the Hollywood faithful who actively endorse Scientology. But this new religion also has its critics, as still-circulated, years-old issues of Readers Digest (May 1980, September 1981) and Time magazine (May 6, 1991 – *Scientology, Cult of Greed*) reveal.

Scientology constitutes an appealing and powerful organization with an educated class of people, most of whom have been recruited from “Christian” churches (40% Protestant, 26% Catholic). And yet the response of Christianity to this situation has been almost nonexistent. Just as the Scientologist who considers him or herself a Christian does not recognize the inconsistency of that position, the Christian church has not yet recognized the risk Scientology poses to its own fold.