

World Religions and False Cults

Part 9 - Scientology

The History of Scientology

L. Ron Hubbard was born to a U.S. Naval family in 1911. World travels introduced him to eastern philosophies and religions, influencing many of his views and stirring within him a fascination with the mind. He first gained popularity as a science fiction writer. Hubbard later claimed to have a near-fatal injury during WWII, but said his injuries and depression were overcome through specific techniques, which he explained in his book *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* (1950). The book became a best seller, leading to the formation of the Church of Scientology. However, Hubbard's injury claim was disputed as no military record proved such an incident occurred. Such controversy would follow the "church" as continual legal battles with the IRS and ex-members would arise. Regardless, some wealthy individuals embraced Hubbard's teaching, helping promote it to the 500,000 (approx.) followers it has today.

Core Beliefs of Scientology

Each person's soul (the true self or "thetan") is plagued by countless "engrams" (unconscious mental images from childhood or previous lives that negatively affect our thinking). They can be detected through an "e-meter" machine and removed through "auditing" (special counseling, dianetics). These issues originated with Xenu (an evil galactic warlord) who sent 13.5 trillion "body thetans" to earth who have implanted false ideas in our minds.

- God: There is not much of a focus on a god. A Supreme Being is referenced to on occasion, but an understanding of who or what that is ultimately is left up to the individual.
- Mankind: We are basically good. Our only problem is engrams that keep us from happiness and fulfillment. Eliminating these through auditing (though expensive) is key.
- Salvation: Progressing through stages of increased mental clarity purges all trauma, depression, (etc.). The goal is a god-like state over all matter, energy, space and time.

Keys for Evangelism

- Understand that many followers may be involved only on a surface level. Expose the history and core beliefs in detail.
- Address our true problem (sin) and the dilemma it has created between us and God. Point to Christ as the answer.