

Out of Scientology's Labyrinth

By Karen Schless Pressley

Tom Cruise's recent anti-psychiatry, pro-Scientology, converting-Katie-Holmes-to-Scientology media blitzes prompted me to respond to his antics with this commentary. But, writing this article is about more than that. This also marks my seventh and sixth anniversaries—seven years since I found the way out of Scientology's labyrinth July 31, 1998, and six years since I answered the door to Christ's knock and He took residence in my heart.

When I hear Cruise's everything-is-great statements about life in Scientology, my stomach churns at the remembrance of the early 1980's when I felt the same way. Now, nearly 25 years later, the sun never sets on a day that I don't think about the Scientology-driven life I left behind, and give thanks for my freedom from that trap. Now, instead of despising my moment-to-moment existence as I did during twelve years of bondage in Scientology's "elite corps" of slave-labor staff called the "Sea Organization", I live free in Christ with an "attitude of gratitude" for God's miraculous deliverance from Scientology, and for the new life He has given me. I'm thankful for the past seven years of healing, for the ongoing personal growth that comes from facing my past and learning from my mistakes, and for the God-given opportunities to build a new life as His plan for me unfolds.

Since freed from Scientology, I rejoice in the growing number of people who had the courage to break free of Scientology's grip or leave the confines of staff life, but it has grieved me to hear about ex-members involved in angry, vindictive, or vengeful acts

against Scientology. The inability to forgive the group for its spiritual betrayal and totalitarian control that appeared to ruin lives, will keep ex-members in emotional bondage. The *only* way I've been able to forgive and break free from their emotional and mental holds was by learning about and experiencing the ultimate forgiveness—the unconditional love offered by God who forgave me for worshipping false gods during my Scientology years, and for living like a rebel in enmity with Him. I had looked for truth in all the wrong places while walking Scientology's path to “total spiritual freedom” and instead ended up on a bridge to “total spiritual bondage.”

Fortunately, God caught me one night in 1998 while I was on the edge of a spiritual chasm—desperate and knowing I needed to get out of Scientology's trap but not knowing how—by reaching out His hand to me like a lifeline, washing me with peace and filling me with love. He rescued me from further ruin, and led me to new life in Him. That experience preceded my final departure from Scientology, and opened the gate to being able to find Him. His forgiving me continues to be the reason I'm able to forgive others.

I've wondered how anyone can leave a cult and create a new, sane, freed life again without coming to know the love of Jesus Christ. To me, it seems impossible. I've learned that many former Scientologists or their families resort to de-programming to get freed from Scientology's grip and re-adjust to life again. I can say with total certainty that the *only* reason I have become “sane” again, and am able to experience life with joy and happiness again, is because of my life in Christ.

Life as a Scientologist is about discovering one's knowledge, powers and divinity, becoming total “cause” or fully responsible and in control of life, thought, matter, energy,

space, time, and form. It's no wonder why Scientology attracts celebrities, people in the arts and entertainment fields, sports and business. People like my (former) husband and I, who desired high levels of success, get tricked into forgetting that by living through God's strength in us, we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. We were deceived into believing that we must do everything on our own strength and knowledge—even earning our own “immortality.” Scientology is in the business of selling immortality, to the extent that they groom you to believe that L. Ron Hubbard's spiritual technology holds the keys to your eternity.

Ironically, they sell and promise “total spiritual freedom” but the results are contrary: total spiritual dependence! Anyone who believes they must pay for Scientology services to “go free,” is dependent on humans (the counselors, the supervisors) and the ways of the Scientology world for their very “freedom.” A greater story has never been sold.

It was God's Word that transformed my mind, and helped to free me from regret about my past mistakes: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:16)

Now, as a national speaker in churches, conferences, and educational institutions, the most commonly asked questions of me are, why and how did you first get involved in Scientology? How could an intelligent person like you fall for Scientology's lies? Why did you give up your lifestyle and career as a fashion designer and being in the music business to sell your soul and sign a billion year contract to the Church of Scientology? What lures people, especially celebrities and artistic people, into that cult? How did you

get out and what happened after you left? Does the Church of Scientology harass or threaten you? These have all been relatively easy to answer.

But the most challenging—and troubling—question has actually become the catalyst that set me on the path of ministry. That question came from Christians around the country who have asked, *can a Christian be a Scientologist at the same time?*

Even though I was a new Christian with relatively limited experiences as a believer, I was nevertheless chagrined by this inquiry. A Christian who would even consider this a possibility, could not know what they believed.

Scientology is the antithesis to Christianity. Scientology philosophy leads followers the opposite direction of coming to know God of the Old and New Testaments. As a Christian, stepping into Scientology's "bridge to spiritual enlightenment" is comparable to leaving the promised land to enter a labyrinth of spiritual wilderness that leads you to total separation from God. This place is called "light", "spiritual freedom," and "immortality." It is the carrot that lures seekers into the labyrinth.

Recently, Scientology spokespeople have been promoting the statement—that one can be a Christian and a Scientologist at the same time—through national media. This deception has become so troubling to me, it prompted me to respond and expose what Scientology actually teaches about Jesus Christ. After all, Colossians 2:8 tells us, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

Even though I was a fairly new Christian when I was asked this question (*can a Christian be a Scientologist at the same time?*)—and my experiences within Christendom were limited—God showed me that my ministry was to begin with Christians within the

church, not to people wanting to get out of Scientology, or people who had already gotten out, as I had originally thought. Knowing that Scientology's biggest mission field is the Christian church, I was under no delusion that I was going to solve this problem alone, but I knew God planned to use me to do something about it, and make a difference.

I could see that Christians who asked that question did not know what they believed as Christians—and that Christianity was in trouble if its followers did not understand their own beliefs. I already knew that Christianity was Scientology's biggest mission field—people who grew up in “Christian” homes where parents did not model God's love or truth in the home, where church was ritualistic, and abundant life in Christ was not real. Those factors add up to a life built on sinking sand where the deceptive doctrine of Scientology could not only take hold but seem appealing to people seeking the supernatural, seeking answers to life's questions, and seeking something new—like I was years ago.

Scientology writings are chock full of inconsistencies about Jesus Christ. Their “public relations” perspective of Jesus Christ is found in “What is Scientology?” a glossy, 2” thick promotional book. In Chapter 2, “The Religious Heritage of Scientology,” after the sections on early religious rites and Buddhists, Jesus of Nazareth “brought new hope to man by preaching that life was not all men might hope for...”¹ A man is then shown on the cross with the caption, “Though crucified, the hope that Christ brought to man did not die. Instead, his death became symbolic of the triumph of the spirit over the material body and so brought a new awareness of man's true nature.”

¹ What is Scientology? Pg. 34-38. Compiled by Church of Scientology International staff; copyright 1992, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles.

Scientology's text represents a "new age" teaching, reducing Jesus to a mere symbol, and completely eliminating the truth about his personhood as God, as well as the meaning of His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead, wherein lies the true hope of man. Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of mankind, to reconcile man and God, as the Savior of mankind and the only way to the Father. Writers of *What is Scientology?* did not understand the message of the cross and failed to truthfully represent Him. An untrained Christian may not discern the false teachings of this text.

Later teachings about Christ, (in Scientology's Class VIII course materials and a *Certainty Magazine* article), depicts Jesus as a "figment of the imagination" and reduces him to "just a shade above clear" on Scientology's spiritual awareness levels, about 8 levels lower than their highest attainable state, OT VIII. At OT VIII, Scientologists are told to forsake their beliefs in Christ because He is a "figment of the imagination," a whole-track implant that needs to be erased from the mind in order to proceed on their spiritual path to immortality.

When I consider that, my blood runs cold from the thought of Christians being deceived away from God, only to follow the teachings that sprang from the heart of God's enemy thousands of years ago.

Knowing this now, *what would be your answer to the question, can a Christian be a Scientologist at the same time?*

Adjusting to life after Scientology was a gargantuan task, considering the necessary and total re-adjustment to society I had to make after living in Scientology's secluded world of staff life where L. Ron Hubbard's ideas and rules shaped and controlled my life, enforced by Scientology totalitarian, pseudo-militaristic management.

It was as if my mind, heart and soul had to be purged of Scientology's world view, methods of thinking, spiritual perceptions, vocabulary, lifestyle habits, and restraints, to name a few.

Many people who leave the organized "religion" of Scientology continue to use Scientology "technology" as well as vocabulary, out of deeply ingrained habit. But when I left, I made the choice to leave 100%, and totally closed the door on using any Scientology technology or philosophy in my new life. I wanted to be 100% free and clear of its grip or influence on my life. God's word addressed and solved this issue for me, in Romans 12:2: "...be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

For the first three years of my freedom, I chose not to pursue relationships with former Scientologists, especially other defectors like me, or vindictive dissidents who expressed vengeance against Scientology by picketing organizations or making attacks in the press or courtrooms. I knew I needed to "get a life." I wanted a life unaffected by Scientology's ways, particularly negative ways. I occasionally surfed the Web to read news about Scientology, and found several websites with comments from former members and former staff.

It grieved me to see the numbers of people felt they could not speak out freely about negative experiences in Scientology. It took me two years to be able to talk about it without breaking down into tears. The depth of my losses was too great—my husband of 21 years, my entire past, everyone I knew, everything I owned. I had been indoctrinated into believing that anyone who leaves Scientology (like me) or who speaks out in public derogatorily is a "suppressive person"—an enemy of the church, an enemy to mankind, the worst type of individual that can exist in Scientology's eyes. If I spoke

out, I would become “fair game” and reap repercussions from Scientology’s legal and public relations arm, the Office of Special Affairs. OSA has nearly unlimited funds for lawsuits, private investigators, and powers to crush or ruin the lives of individuals who do speak out. The “fair game” policy in Scientology is well known, thus rendering defectors relatively ineffective in exercising their freedom of speech as otherwise guaranteed by the First Amendment.

When I finally realized that the longer I stayed quiet, the longer Scientology would keep me in mental bondage. And, by staying quiet, I was under the thumb of their philosophy, rules and threats—which made me party to their deeds! They would be the victor, I would be the victim. Though it took me some years to break out of this emotional state, I decided to claim God’s promise, that if He was for me, who could be against me? I became increasingly willing to speak out and have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them...²

Watching Tom Cruise on television asserting his anti-psychiatry, pro-Scientology views lately reminded me too much of my former life as a dedicated Scientologist. As a former Scientologist, I was embarrassed for Cruise by the way he handled himself on his NBC Today Show and Oprah appearances. It’s difficult not to recall my own similar tirades as I watched or read about Cruise expressing his beliefs about Scientology in a near-fanatical manner as I once did. Since the media has been filled with feature stories over the past few weeks about Scientology, I felt strongly moved to look in the rear view mirrors of my past and write about some of my perspectives and personal experiences with the Church of Scientology International.

² Ephesians 5:12-13

It has not been easy to overcome my deep regrets about the choices I made in the past that led me into the labyrinth of life as a Scientologist. But I also thank God for that chapter of my life because every bit of it led I made a cognizant choice to take Scientology courses, as well as to join the “elite corps” of staff that served the Church of Scientology International, known as the “Sea Organization.” I had no way of knowing that when I pledged my life to serve Scientology, that I was entering a labyrinth—a maze of steps and choices that took me down a path of deception that would end up devastating my marriage, my family relationships, that led to the devastation of my life as I knew it before Scientology and

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What is most unnerving to me about Cruise’s recent media activities is that his “War of the Worlds” movie and recent anti-psychiatry tirades represent far more than meets the eye. Television audiences have little idea about the actual goals of the Church

of Scientology to make this a Scientology world—a deadly serious activity for church executives and staunch supporting celebrities.³

I considered my role in Scientology a deadly serious activity too, to the tune of making a lifelong dedication to the organization (which ended up being cut short after 18 years) and disassociating myself from my family and former friends in order to do whatever was required of me to achieve the goals of the church.

Friends, I'm here to tell you that "War of the Worlds" is more than just Cruise's latest adventure film. In fact, the movie's title symbolizes the very war-like circumstances that I used to believe, and Scientologists currently believe, that they fought in their past lives, and are fighting today in this, and other, universes. Think I'm kidding?

Not long ago, I walked a similar path of spiritual awareness as TC (TC is the C of S International Management pet name for Tom Cruise), the path Scientology calls "the bridge to total freedom." But it was not until I defected from my billion-year contract to the church—and then found God's promise of eternal life through faith in Christ—that I discovered the meaning of "total spiritual freedom" in the truest sense.

As a former Scientologist of 18 years, I had been a Scientology warrior, too—but not a samurai, top gun, or spy for the Impossible Mission Force like TC. I was simply a dedicated seeker of advanced spirituality and a dyed-in-the-wool follower of L. Ron Hubbard's philosophy.

One difference between Cruise, Katie Holmes (or other Scientology celebrities) and me as a Scientologist was my billion-year contract with Scientology's "elite corps," the Sea Organization. The Sea Org works in monastic, slave labor conditions to disseminate, manage, and protect Hubbard's "source materials", or spiritual

³ L. Ron Hubbard, Keeping Scientology Working, HCO PL 7 February 1965.

“technologies.” This is in contrast to being “public Scientologists,” customers⁴ like Cruise and Holmes who are free to come and go between their homes and Scientology’s pinnacle organization in Hollywood, Celebrity Centre International (CC INT), housed in a 1920’s French chateau near the Hollywood Freeway.

Before I pledged my life—and future lifetimes—to Scientology, my (former) husband Peter Schless and I achieved some success in the music business, with hit songs including “On the Wings of Love,” and I also enjoyed a career as a fashion designer. Once Scientology’s indoctrination took hold on us, we forfeited our careers, income, home, most personal possessions, and contact with family and friends. We joined (what we believed was) the only group on the planet with the ability to prevent mankind from destroying itself⁵, to help win “the war of the worlds.” Let me explain.

Prior to Scientology, we had little religious grounding. I had been raised a Catholic; Peter’s father was an atheist while his mother and grandparents were fringe Methodists. Neither of us had grown up in homes where a personal relationship with God was an essential part of our lives. “Christianity” was reduced to rituals, regulations, and repetition of memorized prayers. Church was more like a social club than a loving community of believers alive in Christ.

Our lack of knowledge of God’s love or experiencing His presence made us susceptible to false doctrine of cultic teaching, especially one that offered idealistic goals.

Who could say no to the aims of Scientology: “A civilization without insanity, without

⁴ L. Ron Hubbard, *Reason for Orgs* (HCO PL 31 Jan 1983): “The only reason orgs exist is to sell and deliver materials and service to the public, and to get in public to sell and deliver to. The object is totally freed customers.” “Customers” was changed in 1987 by C of S management to “beings” to eliminate the commercial business motives of Scientology.

⁵ L. Ron Hubbard, *Keeping Scientology Working*, HCO PL 7 February 1965

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...”⁶?

During my first three years at CC I held executive positions to capitalize on Peter’s and my contact with celebrity peers to recruit artistic types into Scientology. As an artist, I was infatuated with CC INT, which appeals to the ideals of artists through Hubbard’s adage, “A culture is only as great as its dreams, and its dreams are dreamed by artists.”⁷ Actors, musicians, writers, designers, and other artists are attracted to Hubbard’s lofty description of the artist’s role in society: “The artist has an enormous role in the enhancement of today’s and the creation of tomorrow’s reality. He operates in a rank in advance of science as to the necessities and requirements of man. The elevation of a culture can be measured directly by the numbers of its people working in the field of aesthetics.”⁸

Like I was, artists and celebrities are led to believe that Scientology’s “processing” (spiritual counseling, aka auditing) and training will move them up Hubbard’s emotional tone scale,⁹ and their minds will become “dis-enturbulated” (freed up) to enable them to become successful, rich and famous.

In 1985, before I joined the Sea Org, Peter and I participated in Scientology’s “Religious Freedom Crusade,” a C of S strategy for attaining celebrity-support to overthrow the Julie Christopherson lawsuit against C of S in Portland, Oregon. (Profuse documentation about the case is available on the Internet under Scientology lawsuits, for

⁶ L. Ron Hubbard, “The Aims of Scientology,” *Scientology 0-8*, pg. 17 (copyright 1988 L. Ron Hubbard Library, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles)

⁷ L. Ron Hubbard, *Science of Survival*, pg. 485 (copyright 1951, 2001 L. Ron Hubbard Library, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles)

⁸ L. Ron Hubbard, *Science of Survival*, pg. 482

⁹ L. Ron Hubbard, “Tone Scale Expanded,” *Scientology 0-8*, pg. 110-111 (copyright 1988 L. Ron Hubbard Library, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles)

more information.) C of S officials feared the motives of Christopherson's attorney, Michael Flynn, to bring down the C of S by breaking its bank from the lawsuit.

CC INT's President, Sue Young, appealed to Peter and me to put together a group of "celebs" for the Portland crusade, with the plan to do media and perform concerts in the city park that would attract locals to our staged events. This would give us a platform from which celebs and church officials could express our stand for "religious freedom" versus religious persecution. Overnight, we assembled singer Frank Stallone, a percussionist and a drummer from Santana's band, a vocalist from Stevie Wonder's group, and 13 other musicians and singers. We were flown to Portland on a chartered plane, along with about 50 other church supporters. Scientology executives, and pawns like Peter and I, appealed to the hearts of celebrities and religious leaders (like Sun Yung Moon and Rev. Jesse Jackson) to support "religious freedom," as if this lawsuit actually challenged that issue. The weekend crusade turned into nearly 40 days of working directly with church executives and Sea Org staff to produce the events and do things like fill the courtroom with Scientology support. Our presence overwhelmed the city of Portland as well as the legal team. C of S was victorious and won the court case.

I joined the Sea Org in 1986 following the Portland crusade, believing I had "discovered my purpose in life." Factually, I had never taken a stand for any significant issue, and believed I had acquired a significant position with Scientology staff, which I wanted to expand. The "church" of Scientology offered acceptance, fellowship, and a type of social and career support that I had never experienced before. Here was a community of people joined together with a common goal and a zest for action that seemed extremely appealing.

In 1987, my goal was to create a renaissance at CC. We had acquired much momentum with celebrity participation at the Portland crusade and we needed a strategy to capitalize on this. I established “artist associations” for the revival of artists coming into Scientology.¹⁰ However, the idealistic goals I held were modified when I soon fell under intense pressure and duress from senior executives to recruit new celebrities, and was verbally threatened with assignment to the Sea Org’s prison-like “rehabilitation camp” if I didn’t comply.

In 1989, while working at the C of S International Management base at Golden Era Productions in Hemet, California, I was required to read confidential LRH advices in my training. I discovered Hubbard’s true thoughts about artists that contradicted his writings about artists in “Science of Survival.” He (paraphrased) said that artists actually had an engram (mental aberration) that made them believe they were important and had a need to be acknowledged, which could be played on to use artists for one’s own purposes. This advice was one of many “Source” references used by church management to plan strategies for the utilization of celebrities to popularize Scientology through the media.

Celebrities like Tom Cruise, John Travolta, Kirstie Allie, Isaac Hayes, Lisa Marie Presley, Catherine Bell, and other dedicated followers who promote Scientology were unable to discover this fact. Public Scientologists such as they are not privy to the confidential, internal writings of church management. Nor were my husband Peter and I, when we first got involved in Scientology. We were flattered by the church’s frequent invitations to participate in public events. To be included in the Scientology limelight

¹⁰ Celebrity Magazine, “An Interview with Karen and Peter Schless” (copyright 1986 Celebrity Centre International)

seemed prestigious to us, and many of our up-and-coming artist friends coveted the same. We never considered that we were being “exploited.” Speaking for myself, and seeing my husband’s eager response to the invitations too, it was real ego-food.

Doing events for CC INT and other sectors of the church had enabled us to fulfill what we believed was a valuable social and religious contribution. This also aligned with our desires to network with other people in the entertainment business who participated in similar activities as we were. It wasn’t until I joined the Sea Org in 1986 (three years before my husband) that I realized I had made a serious mistake.

Though I thought the Sea Org was about achieving total spiritual freedom, totalitarian rule characterized my life at International Management headquarters. We were required to work 16 hours a day, 6 ½ days per week for \$45 weekly allowance under 24/7 security watch by guards who knew our every move. We were never free to leave the base without permission. There was no such thing as going shopping, visiting friends, or out to dinner. We couldn’t have a telephone, cell phone, or personal address at which we could receive mail. Security forbade televisions and personal computers, preventing connection with the outside world. We couldn’t receive phone calls from family or friends without security listening on an extension. My husband and I had little privacy since we were required to live with another couple in a small, security-guarded apartment. Women staffers were not able to get pregnant and keep their baby unless they overcame coercion to get an abortion, and insisted on leaving staff with barely a penny in their pocket to live on.

18 years of studying dozens of Hubbard’s books and hundreds of his policies revealed contradiction after contradiction between Hubbard’s front-line Scientology

philosophy and the back-lines operation of Scientology organizations. Here are just two examples:

- Cruise uses press interviews to promote Narconon as Scientology's drug rehab program, while Narconon promoters try to convince locals to open Narconon facilities by insisting they have no connection to Scientology.

- After I escaped in 1998 I re-read sections of "Dianetics: Evolution of a Science," and discovered that Hubbard "relied on information from the cults of the world to develop Dianetics."¹¹ As a Scientology disciple, I had adhered to Hubbard's writings; now I was free to think and question his doctrine like, *if Hubbard was the messiah he proclaimed himself to be*¹², *wouldn't he already contain all knowledge? Why would he go to cults to get information?*

My gradual disillusionment with Scientology staff life mushroomed as I observed countless instances of staff mal-treatment, in a form that seemed to violate human rights. This became more apparent as I traveled four continents to design and manufacture clothing and uniform parts for Sea Org staff in England, Denmark, Australia, and church training headquarters in Clearwater, Florida and Los Angeles. My own sufferings working at \$45 per week were minimized because Peter and I continued to receive a small royalty income from our past music business, so I didn't feel the pain of that income level as much as others did. But at every Sea Org base I visited, I observed staff members living in squalor conditions, including outside of London near East Grinstead, Copenhagen, New York, and Los Angeles. Staff mostly possessed one pair of uniform pants, a shirt, and a pair of shoes. It was more typical to see staff in dirty clothing than

¹¹ L. Ron Hubbard, *Dianetics: Evolution of a Science*, pg. 10-11.

¹² L. Ron Hubbard, *Hymn of Asia* (L. Ron Hubbard Library, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles)

otherwise. Sights I will never forget include neglected babies and children watched by Scientology nannies and cadets who looked like they belonged to sadly impoverished families.

My uniform project was meant to correct the staff appearance issues by upgrading not only their clothing but the personal appearance of the staff. The purpose, however, was to help raise the income of Scientology around the world¹³ as well as to increase the public's acceptance of Scientology in local communities where Scientology organizations existed.¹⁴ The St. Petersburg Times printed an article about the changeover of staff uniforms in Clearwater, in 1997. Journalist Tom Tobin wrote, "Addressing a longstanding complaint, the Church of Scientology unveiled a new look Thursday night for its 1,000 staff members downtown. Gone by this summer will be the formal-looking maritime uniforms... (Karen) Schless said the change will...address a concern by non-Scientologists in Clearwater about the sameness of church staffers...Over the years, merchants, city officials and residents have complained about what they said was a somewhat jarring, even intimidating, sight of hundreds of Scientology staff members massing through the streets of downtown as if there was a military Naval base nearby."¹⁵

It's not impossible to understand why an organization who entraps people through financial bondage (by going into deep debt to buy Scientology services to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars), and spiritual bondage (by entrapping customers in mental and spiritual bondage with the deception that Scientology holds the key to their

¹³ L. Ron Hubbard, "The Org Image" (HCO PL 27 June 1969)

¹⁴ L. Ron Hubbard, "Cleanliness of Quarters and Staff Improve Our Image (HCO PL 24 August 1965 II)

¹⁵ Tom Tobin, St. Petersburg Times article, "Scientologists get away from military look" (April 19, 1997)

eternity), makes millions selling “total freedom.” It’s explained by the battle raging in the spiritual realm¹⁶—a war of the worlds different from the latest Spielberg/Cruise hit.

Cruise is perfectly cast in his role of top gun spokesman for the Church of Scientology. And this is exactly what TC is supposed to do as an operating “thetan” (spiritual being), “cause” over life, thought, matter, energy, space, and time. Cruise is one of many served-on-a-silver-platter celebrity Scientologists. He has embraced his perceived responsibility for the dynamic of mankind like a good Scientologist should.

As Scientology’s most powerful samurai, Cruise wields his sword of faith unlike any other follower because of his box office success. However, when I listen to him speak about Scientology, I am reminded of how I was drilled and trained on how to say only exactly enough to introduce Scientology to people and make it sound desirable. In response to the question, What is Scientology? I was trained to answer with the definition, “Scientology is knowing how to know.” To explain that it’s about knowledge, about discovering oneself as a spiritual being versus an animal as taught by psychiatry.

So, I’ve never been surprised to hear the extremely brief, nearly surface-level answers that TC offers when he is asked the same questions that I have been. I’ve noticed that he never explains Scientology. That he never talks about the spiritual training and counseling which leads people toward become a god by walking Scientology’s route to its ultimate spiritual states. That he doesn’t inform Christians about denouncing Jesus Christ once they reach Scientology’s highest spiritual level. He

¹⁶ The Bible, New King James Version: Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:4.

might not even know that yet. (Wait a minute—doesn't Scientology say that we can be Christians and a Scientologist at the same time? Indeed it does. But those of us who have walked that road know that only "Christians" who don't know what they believe, and who don't yet know about the bizarre teachings in Scientology's advanced spiritual levels, will fall for that line).

What is Scientology's battle?

"Who Owns the World? WE DO" headlines a recent promo piece for Scientology's new technical delivery building in Scientopolis (Clearwater, Florida). Throughout Hubbard's writings, example after example reveals Hubbard's goal to make this a Scientology world. Hubbard's totalitarian philosophies ring of Hitler's strategies in Europe, to take any and all means to become a world-wide power. Policy after policy describes techniques and plans to permeate government, medical science, public schools, business, sports, the justice system, media, and the arts with Scientology.

Even as a dedicated Sea Org member, I buried my troubled thoughts about the Office of Special Affairs (OSA), Scientology's strong arm for changing social and political order. Why would a "religion" need this? Its operation can't escape a mafioso or CIA-type image functioning as Scientology's "public relations and legal defense." OSA's license to do whatever is necessary to protect Scientology's aims intimidated me

as a Sea Org member who had sold my soul to its causes, since I could reap OSA's wrath if I ever defected.

OSA exists "...to broaden the impact of Scientology upon governments and other organizations...to make the name and repute of Scientology better and more forceful...to bring the government and hostile philosophies or societies into a state of complete compliance with the goals of Scientology...to worsen the public belief and attitude toward societies and persons having purposes counter to Scientology goals...to bring continuous pressure to bear on governments to create pro-Scientology legislation, and to discourage anti-Scientology legislation of groups opposing Scientology. This is done by high-level ability to control, and in its absence, to overwhelm. Introvert such agencies. Control such agencies."¹⁷

OSA works closely with celebrities and offers them missions to forward Scientology's aims, should they choose to accept them. Cruise is just one celebrity who seems out to prove that no mission is impossible including Scientology's battle against psychiatry and the "evil" that opposes Scientology. Hubbard's "Science of Survival" says, "Because the artist deals in future realities, he always seeks improvements or changes in the existing reality. This makes the artist, inevitably and invariably, a rebel against the status quo. The artist, day by day, by postulating the new realities of the future, accomplishes peaceful revolution."¹⁸

Peaceful revolution is at the heart of any dedicated Scientologist—like mine was—who longs for a world without insanity, criminality, and war. Scientologists are

¹⁷ L. Ron Hubbard, *Department of Government Affairs*, (HCO PL 15 August 1960, OEC Volume 7, pg. 999 and HCO PL 13 March 1961 I, *Department of Official Affairs*, OEC Volume 7, pg. 1004-1006)

¹⁸ L. Ron Hubbard, *Science of Survival*, pg 482 (copyright 1951, 2001 L. Ron Hubbard Library, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles)

groomed to “keep Scientology working” by believing Hubbard’s words: “Man has never before evolved workable mental technology, and emphasizing it is the vicious technology he did evolve—psychiatry, psychology, surgery, shock treatment, whips, duress, punishment, etc., ad infinitum...”¹⁹

Hubbard continues: “The whole agonized future of this planet, every man, woman and child on it, and your own destiny for the next endless trillions of years depends on what you do here and now with and in Scientology. We’d rather have you dead than incapable.”

Hence, Scientologists fanatically defend their beliefs to anyone or anything who opposes them. This defense goes so far as Scientologists disconnecting from their parents, spouse, family members or friends who are critical or hostile to Scientology and cannot be “handled.” Before I left the Sea Org in 1998, I shared my discontent with my husband for nearly a year. He refused to leave with me, and I could see that I had lost him to Scientology’s stronghold. In 1999, Peter divorced me because I would not allow myself to be “handled,” and return to Scientology’s control.

When I heard that Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman divorced, I recalled that Nicole’s attitudes toward Scientology were less zealous than Tom’s. I was saddened but not surprised at their divorce. (Cruise and Kidman did a lot of their Scientology auditing and training at the International Management headquarters while I was there). Cruise fulfilled his obligation to Scientology’s policies. Media were sufficiently quiet about revealing their true cause of divorce.

Celebrities control life by learning rigorous communication skills and other Scientology “technologies” that bring them to high levels of “cause” over all areas of life.

¹⁹ L. Ron Hubbard, *Keeping Scientology Working*, (HCO PL 7 February 1965)

One example of this is Cruise's recent interview with Matt Lehr on the Today Show. It embarrassed me to watch Cruise shooting himself in the foot as a Scientologist (exhibiting poor communication skills) while talking over Matt Lehr, trying to overwhelm him through frequent interruptions, criticizing Lehr for his "ignorance" about psychiatry, and asserting his "superior knowledge" on the subject while invalidating Lehr for being "glib."

Likewise in Cruise's disastrous comments about Brooke Shields' use of medication to treat post-partum depression, and his denial of such a condition. Cruise was being faithful to Dianetics' theory that all illness is psychosomatic²⁰ or evidence of connection to a suppressive person.²¹ This however, is yet another contradiction within Scientology's theories, because Hubbard defines being "ill" as "being medically diagnosed as suffering from a known, well defined physical illness susceptible to medical care and relief."²²

Cruise's overly zealous defense of Scientology, as mine did, stems partly from being groomed in Hubbard's Gnostic-like teaching that the real barbarism of Earth is stupidity,²³ and that knowledge brings responsibility and control. Scientology promises to restore total knowledge of self by erasing hindrances of the mind, enabling its disciples to regain all innate spiritual powers and knowledge that they held *before the beginning of time when they created the world*. Scientology's brainwashing leads its believers toward

²⁰ L. Ron Hubbard, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health* (copyright L. Ron Hubbard Library, Bridge Publications, Los Angeles)

²¹ L. Ron Hubbard, HCOB 20 April 1972

²² L. Ron Hubbard, HCO PL 6 October 1958)

²³ L. Ron Hubbard, *Fundamentals of Thought*, pg. 3

a self-proclaimed godlike mental state of replacing God's role in the universe as the Creator of life and matter.²⁴

Scientology fights their wars on the battlefield of the mind. Their perceived enemies are anything or anyone who opposes their aims—psychiatry, psychology, hostile media, common critics, and people who leave Scientology. If Scientology can win enough opinion leaders and turn them into Scientologists, their battle of “clearing the planet” will be easier. Hubbard believes this planet is on a short wick, ready to blow itself up by mankind's reactive mind—which he plans to eliminate through Scientology.

Since the American Psychiatric Association and the American Medical Association refused to acknowledge Dianetics in the 1940's and '50's as having any scientific value or proof, his war against psychiatry has been raging. Hubbard believes the basic tenet of psychology is that man is just an animal.²⁵ He also believes he inherited the job of cleaning up the whole mental health field which he compares to Auschwitz concentration camp-like environments with psychs doing frontal lobotomies and using ice picks to rectify mental illness.

Israel International News reported, “German Jews have accused the C of S of using Holocaust material to link Sigmund Freud (one of the founders of psychiatry) with Hitler. The church's campaign against psychiatry blames the Viennese Jew for promoting sex and drugs and claims that his theories ‘have largely been disproved.’” Scientology's CCHR (Citizens Commission on Human Rights) has traveled through Germany to persuade Germans that psychiatrists were behind the Nazi campaign to exterminate ‘worthless lives.’ (Israel National News, June 5, 2005)

²⁴ L. Ron Hubbard, “The Factors,” *Scientology 0-8*,

²⁵ L. Ron Hubbard, “Criminals and Psychiatry,” HCOB 29 July 1980

Victims of Scientology's War

Who is Scientology trying to win over? Opinion leaders, plus you, your children, and your children's children. Victims like Cruise's current love, Katie Holmes, has no way of knowing what's in store for her as she walks Scientology's "bridge to total freedom." She will be told only information suitable for her current spiritual level, not the bizarre teachings that she'll discover once she has spent tens of thousands of dollars. She'll believe, like I did, that Scientology was helpful to improve abilities in life like communicating, getting along with others, achieving goals, and handling problems.

Katie has no way of knowing about the planetary wars and evil suppressors she'll be battling in her mind during her solo auditing (counseling, processing) sessions. She'll be deceived into believing that she will contact "body thetans" who attached themselves to her spirit tens of thousands of years ago during intergalactic battles, and who are now responsible for her aberrations and shortcomings in life.

She'll eventually be told to denounce her belief in Jesus Christ (isn't she a Catholic?) who Hubbard refers to as a mental implant on everyone's whole track who needs to be erased along with the rest of the reactive mind, as well as a pedophile, in his upper-level teachings. She'll find out that Hubbard denies Jesus' existence, in the event that she does the "Class VIII course" and listens to Lection 10 from 1968, which says, "There was no Christ...the man on the cross is like Everyman." When she reads Scientology's *Certainty Magazine* (Volume 5 #10), she'll see Hubbard say, "Neither Lord Buddha nor Jesus Christ were OT's (operating thetans) according to evidence. They were just a shade above clear." Imagine that—Hubbard reducing Christ to mere mid-ground on Scientology's spiritual awareness states.

I doubt Cruise thinks of himself as a pawn on Scientology's chess board—like me and others who attended CC and were used to popularize Scientology. He is doing exactly what he has been duped into believing he should do—use his star position to lure other celebrities and general public into Scientology. Unfortunately, Tom proclaims his stand against psychiatry, yet he subscribes to an organization that is known by media and former members for its psychological terrorism.

I'm not against Tom Cruise. He has fallen prey to the same deception I did in 1982 when I entered Scientology. I am sincerely concerned for Cruise, due to his recent out-of-character behavior on Oprah and the Today Show. Now, instead of media praising his bold faith, he's receiving negative press for criticizing Brooke Shields and invalidating Matt Lehr. Instead of being drooled over and acclaimed, he's being called loony and hostile.

The saddest thing is, Cruise is a victim of Scientology's war. He's not free to question Hubbard's writings or Scientology's policies. He is far from being free to leave Scientology if he so chooses. If he has any conflicting thoughts about Scientology philosophy, or thoughts of leaving Scientology, he will be told that he needs to clear up his misunderstood words, that something is wrong with him (nothing is ever wrong with Scientology). He'll soon find out that everything he has ever disclosed in his counseling files can be held against him, like an unofficial blackmail.

In an interview reported by *contactmusic.com*, Cruise compared the “bigotry” against Scientology to Islamaphobes and was quoted to say, “I think it's appalling that they're still burning synagogues in France...I think it's absolutely appalling when we talk about freedom of speech and human rights.” His contradiction about freedom of speech

and human rights is typical of any supporting Scientologist. When I belonged to the C of S, I would spare no words either to criticize my perceived opponents. Cruise's reaction to this article could be to threaten me with his samurai sword—but that would be contradictory to his beliefs in freedom of speech and religion.

I question whether Cruise is appalled by the human rights violations present at the Church of Scientology's International Management base (described earlier)—like fellow Sea Org members and I were subject to? Cruise's reaction to this article could be to threaten me with his samurai sword—but that would be contradictory to his beliefs in freedom of speech and religion.

* * * * *

My departure from Scientology in 1998 ended my participation in its “peaceful revolution” and I ceased being at war with Scientology's world. I lost my husband, friends, and nearly everything we had together. I'll never forget Hubbard's words about people who leave Scientology—that they are “degraded beings” who will never make it outside. I grieve for people trapped in Scientology's clutches who lack the courage or wherewithal to leave and at least try to make it.

By God's grace I received His love and free gift of eternal life—which no one can take from me. And, He brought me a whole new life, including reunion with my family from whom I was separated for 18 years, a new husband who loves me as I am, and a new career.

I've concluded that there are no merits to keeping Scientology's inner workings confidential. Despite threats for speaking out, I realize that the more I bury my experiences in Scientology, the greater their stronghold on me. God's grace spurs me on

to make the most of every waking moment in my new life, finally free from Scientology's deception.