

Putting the Testers to the Test

By Susan Verstraete

Outside our local Walmart, an outgoing and friendly group of people set up tables in the spot usually occupied by Girl Scouts, Shriners, or the VFW. Celebrity posters and colorful signs on their tables offered passersby a free stress test. One by one, interested shoppers sat down at the table and gripped two metal cylinders connected by an electrical cord to a meter that sat on the table. The operator (called an auditor) asked a series of questions about the shopper's life and monitored his reactions using the meter—a device called an Electropsychometer, or E-meter.

Sounds legitimate, doesn't it? But just who were these seemingly-altruistic people offering the test? They were members of the Church of Scientology, a group started by L. Ron Hubbard after the publication of his book in 1950, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. You might recognize the names of some of Hubbard's more prominent followers, including John Travolta, Tom Cruise and Nichole Kidman. Scientologists use these "sect-symbols" on posters, in print and on television to promote their teaching, while E-meter booths pop up in shopping malls all over the United States, manned by concerned, compassionate listeners.



Sadly, Scientology is not just an innocuous self-help program for Hollywood superstars and stressed-out Walmart shoppers. Scientology is a system of beliefs incompatible with Christianity and without value to the believer. Let's turn the tables and put Scientology to the test, using a few quotes from the first pages of their website.¹

Scientology teaches:

Man is an immortal, spiritual being . . . His capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized — and those capabilities *can* be realized. He is able to not only solve his own problems, accomplish his goals and gain lasting happiness, but also achieve new, higher states of awareness and ability.²

The Bible teaches that spiritual death as a result of sin is our most serious problem, and apart from Jesus Christ, we are helpless.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, *for apart from me you can do nothing*. John 15:5

Scientology teaches:

In Scientology no one is asked to accept anything as belief or on faith. That which is true for you is what you have observed to be true.³

The Bible teaches that our hearts can fool us, that we *can* know *absolute* truth in Jesus Christ, and that God rewards those who seek Him by faith.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 7:9

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6

Scientology teaches:

Past lives, or times we have lived before, are suppressed by the painfulness of the memory of those former existences. The memory is contained in mental image pictures which, on close viewing, are capable of developing a reality "more real" than present time. . . . A person with amnesia is looked upon as ill. What of a person who can remember only this life? Is this then not a case of amnesia on a grand scale?⁴

The Bible teaches that all of us live only one life on earth.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. Hebrews 9:27-28

The next time someone in the shopping mall stops to ask you about your stress level, don't be drawn in. Instead of allowing the Scientologists to test you, test *them* against the perfect standard of God's word.⁵

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³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.realscientology.com/index.htm>

⁵ For a more comprehensive critique of Scientology, we recommend this article from the Christian Research Institute. <http://www.equipt.org/free/DS170.htm>

¹ <http://www.scientology.org/>

² Ibid.