

SCIENTOLOGY AND ITS POTENTIAL
FOR DOMINANCE AS A WORLD RELIGION
Stephen Linguito

In recent decades, the belief system Scientology, founded by L. Ron Hubbard in 1950, has experienced a surge in membership, as well as in controversy. Scientology, which is a way of life that has at its foundation a marriage between science, knowledge and spirituality, has apparently grown in popularity due to its ability to improve peoples' lives, an ability not always possessed by traditional religion. However, many Scientologists question not only Scientology's religiosity, but also its claim to legally and morally sound practices. There is a multitude of information on issues including Scientology's teachings, its reception in other countries, and the legitimacy of the benefits it claims to provide. In his article, "Scientology—Is This A Religion," Stephen A. Kent discusses whether Scientology is indeed religious in nature, while his article, "The Globalization of Scientology: Influence, Control, and Opposition in Transnational Markets," explains how Scientology is marketing itself overseas and exerting influence on all aspects of life. Lorne L. Dawson, in "The Cultural Significance of NRMs and Globalization: A Theoretical Prolegomenon," describes the elusive connection between globalization, secularization, and new religious movements (NRMs). Paul Heelas, in "Prosperity and the New Age Movement: The efficacy of spiritual economics," explains both the pros and cons of New Age religions, and reports on their trends of expansion. Finally, L. Ron Hubbard, in *The Scientology Handbook*, gives applications of his religious system and philosophy to everyday problems and concerns and shows that his religion does, in fact, work. By using these sources as well as others to address questions concerning Scientology's current status as a popular religion, it may be possible to answer more profound and important questions that address Scientology's future as a dominant religion. At the heart of this process will be the assertion that Scientology's belief system is one that incorporates science, knowledge, and spirituality into one entity, offering to many people more practicality and flexibility than traditional religions. The investigation of the merits of Scientology will be framed by the debate between Hubbard, who claims that his system is effective, and the aforementioned authors who challenge it, collectively arguing that although the lofty claims for Scientology may seem legitimate at first glance, they fall short when Scientology is viewed as a world religion.

The first step in making the case that Scientology will someday be a dominant world religion is to explain its current status. Paul Heelas writes, "it would be rash to dispute the fact that the New Age is considerably more oriented to the New World of the mainstream than it was during the counter-cultural 1960s" (61). As Heelas suggests, people are more concerned now than they were then with material and spiritual prosperity and so they find it appealing that New Age religions incorporate these goals into their belief systems. People wish to take their destinies into their own hands; thus, they are attracted to ideas offered by New Age religions, including Scientology. These religions suggest that such goals can be achieved through a heightened sense of spirituality, that is, through knowing one's self and knowing one's limits and full potential. Hubbard illustrates this concept in his characterization of Scientology as "a religious philosophy in the most profound sense of the word. It is concerned with nothing less than the full rehabilitation of the *thetan* [the spiritual being], to increase his spiritual awareness, native capabilities and certainty of his own immortality" (iii). In other words, everyone is capable of doing something good for themselves and humanity, but the only way these innate skills can be applied is to look within themselves and gain self-confidence. People can ask God to help them become better people or to be skilled at something, but, in the end, only they can make this happen.

This desire to realize one's abilities and to achieve one's goals, especially that of financial security, is intimately related to the concept of globalization. It would be one thing if such an attitude-shift towards materialism occurred only in one country, but it is entirely different when this shift occurs globally. As Kent suggests, Scientology appears to be taking advantage of the homogenizing forces of globalization in order to gain influence and support. It exploits such forces by adjusting its belief system to each individual country it enters, while still maintaining its fundamental emphasis on financial and spiritual well-being. Kent illustrates this well in explaining Scientology's entry into Japan: "Scientology was willing to compromise its 'demanded designation' of religion that it uses almost universally in Western countries when attempting to enter a country whose culture might not respond favorably to a foreign religious incursion" ("Globalization" 155). Marketers of Scientology are willing to cater to potential followers because they know that Scientology still maintains the concepts compatible with globalization, such as the fundamental principles of capitalism, self-improvement, and goal-directed spirituality. Moreover, globalization, and consequently Scientology, advocates the *combination* of these principles

into one effective system, which Heelas describes when he quotes Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh who says, "I don't condemn wealth, wealth is a perfect means which can enhance people in every way, and make their life rich in all ways . . . [t]he materially poor can never become spiritual" (66). We can conclude from this particular point of view that a relationship between materialism and spirituality does not only exist, but *must* exist if a person wishes to reap the benefits of either of them. We must realize that many people hold this viewpoint, which is intimately bound up with globalization, and that Scientology strives to take advantage of it. By keeping this principle of combining materialism and spirituality at heart, while still making small modifications to its belief system along the way, Scientology displays a willingness to be all things to all people, that quality of wide appeal not currently held by traditional religions.

Yet Scientology does not focus strictly on cultures and countries as a whole; it also targets people as unique individuals. As Jon Atack explains in his book, *A Piece of Blue Sky: Scientology, Dianetics, and L. Ron Hubbard Exposed*:

Most cults have a single selling future, and so tend to appeal to a specific public. Scientology claims to be all things to all people: a psychotherapy, a religion, twentieth-century Buddhism, an educational system, a drug rehabilitation therapy, a human rights and social reform movement, or a business management system. It is spiritual, mental or material according to the mindset of the person being approached. (379)

Scientology does not simply try to take a broad look at the prevailing attitudes of the world and then attempt to fall in line with them. Instead, Scientology also tries to recruit members on an individual basis by conforming to what each person needs or wants in a religion. In this way, it goes above and beyond other traditional religions in terms of how it expands. Dawson explains that "New religious movements . . . are not in the strict sense revivals of a tradition: they are more accurately regarded as adaptations of religion to new social circumstances" (4). With each new culture that Scientology encounters, adaptations must be made in order for it to be accepted. In addition to making minor adjustments tailored to each culture, Scientology also looks at "new social circumstances" when determining how it will approach expansion (Dawson 4). Heelas discusses how society is changing and points out that these societal changes are being absorbed into New Age belief systems. He asserts, "Since the 1960s, prosperity teachings have come to occupy an increasingly important role

within the New Age Movement as a whole" (Heelas 60). Though prosperity teachings were not popular in the past, New Age religions such as Scientology have now incorporated this new aspect of society to advance themselves. Unlike New Age religions, religions like Christianity do not adapt to their societal surroundings. A specific set of beliefs is endorsed and if a person cannot relate to these specific beliefs because they do not align with social values, then these religions will not go to great lengths to ensure that this person is satisfied. At most, they attempt to take a broad look at life and how people approach it and try to conform to that. Therefore, Scientology seems to have a better chance in the future because it is willing to adapt to changes within society, and to be flexible during the expansion process.

This willingness is illustrated by Daniel E. Martin's article, "Brought Into The Fold: Scientology as a Case Study On Influence And Persuasion In Religion." Martin was interested in testing a social psychological theory called the "Elaboration Likelihood Model," which explains that "persuasion occurs in two different ways, depending on the amount of cognitive effort (elaboration) required. The first is called the central route of persuasion and the second the peripheral route of persuasion" (2). The central route involves the recruit's interest in the message being presented by the recruiter. The peripheral route is taken when a recruit needs something else alongside the message in order to be persuaded by it (2). Martin explains that he tested his theory at a Scientology orientation. The hostess working at the orientation, Haliva, went to great lengths to get Martin to join the religion and attend special classes. She relied mainly on techniques exploiting the "peripheral route of persuasion," which may suggest that the fundamental message of Scientology in itself was not quite enough to get results. The meeting was held in an impressive environment, a grand Victorian building, before a large enthusiastic audience. Recruiters acted in a friendly and sincere manner ("smiles abounded"), and portrayed Hubbard as an authority in many fields through the use of a carefully crafted movie (Martin 3). After ten minutes of endorsements by famous people and others, the narrator in the movie gave the viewers the choice to either adopt Scientology and be successful or reject the opportunity and face the possibility of negative consequences (4). When Martin said he did not have the money for the classes, Haliva suggested he borrow the money from friends or his parents. We might conclude that if Scientology is willing to grow one person at a time in this manner, there is no limit to the number of people it can convert. The thing we do not yet know is whether or

not people will always be receptive to such aggressive persuasion. It might come to a point where Scientology is so desperate for members (and profits) that people will feel that they are not being persuaded to join the religion for their own benefit, but instead for the Church's well being. It may also be that people will see through these techniques to the actual message, and be less likely to respond favorably.

Conformity to prevailing global attitudes, as displayed in Scientology's recruitment efforts, will be very important for Scientology's future. One advantage that it may have is the ability to effectively combine financial security and spirituality into the same system. However, Heelas doubts that New Age religions can allow a person to be materialistic while at the same time spiritual and detached from material possessions and wealth. He writes, "Detachment, we learn from the great Eastern mystical traditions, is essential. But how can those busy at work in the capitalistic mainstream become detached?" (70). In other words, how can a person combine a desire for material wealth, while still maintaining a connection with his inner self? Hubbard would explain that his system effectively combines both materialism and spirituality and establishes a justifiable relationship between the two. He comments, "By seeing man as essentially spiritual, Scientology follows in the traditional view of man and his relationship with the universe. Scientology, however, is unique in that it contains practical means of enabling man to resolve his material concerns and so come to achieve his spiritual aspirations" (Foreword).

Hubbard's teachings do seem to accomplish what he says they do. Many people claim that when they follow Scientology, anything is possible, and that Scientology can help them live their lives in all aspects; the key is to recognize your role in the grand scheme of things and to keep this in mind during your daily activities. Once again, this has an important link to globalization. As Lorne L. Dawson explains, religion is an important part of globalization. This importance stems from the definition of religion in today's world. He states, "religion in the modern world operates as a component part of the globalizing process . . . we might say that the appeal and power of many NRMs . . . may derive from their simultaneous conformity with and deviation from the process of globalization" (8). Scientology has such a relationship with globalization because it maintains popular religious and capitalistic views, while still clinging to a definitive uniqueness that stems from Scientology's ability to keep everything in its proper context, allowing spirituality and

capitalism to coexist in a secularized fashion. This is one concept among many that may allow Scientology to prosper even more in the future.

Now that we have established the current status of Scientology as a practice that seems to be able to conform to prevailing attitudes and take advantage of globalization, we can begin to explore more closely whether or not Scientology can have a future. There are many components to this discussion, but for now we will look at an overview of the issue. Stephen A. Kent seems to believe that Scientology will eventually be stopped because it cannot hope to be universally compatible: "Although, in the long run, Scientology's social psychological and medical ineffectiveness hinders its chances of achieving world domination, some of its international activities continue to expand while others are meeting stiff competition" ("Globalization" 157). In other words, Scientology may continue to grow due to its perseverance. However, Scientology's ineffectiveness for many people may be the flaw that would, at some point, bring it to an end, and although this is a recurring theme for a broad range of peoples, Hubbard would definitely come to Scientology's defense. In regards to Scientology's medical effectiveness, Hubbard argues that his system can facilitate recovery from injuries. He calls his technique an "assist," a "Scientology process which is done to alleviate a present time discomfort," and he provides testimonials which claim that they are very effective (201). "Many cases," he writes, "have been reported where, because of an assist, the expense of a trip to the doctor or hospital was saved. And doctors have been astonished at the speed of recovery they have witnessed after assists were delivered to patients under their care" (241).

Who, you may wonder, is correct, Kent or Hubbard? The answer depends on your viewpoint. If you believe that in many cases Scientology does, in fact, work as Hubbard suggests, than you would be inclined to believe that Scientology is an effective system. Perhaps many ailments are simply "all in one's head." Perhaps Heelas is correct when he writes, "The 'magic' is quasisecular; what lies within is of very little intrinsic value; and much is couched in terms of manipulating what 'genuine' New Agers would see as mere 'ego-functions'" (64). It is likely that Scientology takes a page out of Heelas' book, advocating that we have control over our minds and therefore can solve many problems mentally, including illnesses. However, if you look at the evidence Kent provides, which often includes allegations of brainwashing and other morally-questionable activities, then

you might think otherwise, that perhaps the results Hubbard provides are not widespread and that, in many more cases, unpleasant results are experienced.

A very prominent example of Scientology success stories which shows how a person can improve his or her life through mind manipulation and through a different approach to life is that of actor Tom Cruise. For many years, Cruise suffered from dyslexia and had difficulty reading and learning. In 1986, Cruise was introduced to Scientology, and by applying Study Technology, a system developed by Hubbard, he learned to read. Cruise relates this story in an article co-written by Jess Cagle, entitled "Tom Cruise: My Struggle To Read." Commenting on Study Technology, Cruise explains:

It pinpoints three barriers to learning: Lack of mass (you can't learn to fly a plane by just reading about it—you have to sit in the cockpit or at least have a picture of a plane); skipped gradients (trying to master skills or information without mastering or understanding that which comes before them); and misunderstood words (the most important one and a cause for stupidity). (2)

We can apply Heelas' reasoning concerning "ego-functions" to this example because this particular method for improving one's life entails taking control over one's mind and fixing problems from a mental standpoint. Cruise had a disorder, but by learning how to deal with it, he was able to overcome his troubles. Once Cruise understood fully his condition and what actions were needed to be taken to better his life, "[he] realized [he] could absolutely learn anything that [he] wanted to learn" (Cagle and Cruise 2). This is a cornerstone concept that Hubbard emphasizes time and again: we can do anything we want, as long as we understand our relationship with the world and ourselves.

Notwithstanding such success stories, Kent suggests that Scientology's ineffectiveness (as he perceives it) results from its shaky status as a religious entity. He comments, "Rather than struggling over whether or not to label Scientology as a religion, I find it far more helpful to view it as a multifaceted transnational, only one element of which is religious" ("Scientology" 3). This shines a different light on the issue. If Scientology were solely religious, as Hubbard claims, then you might say that it is an effective religion. However, Scientology has many other components to it such as politics and business ventures which you might conclude are a hindrance to Scientology as a religion. Jon Atack relates the story of Martin Samuels, a former Scientology Missions holder who was asked to pay money to the Church of Scientology to help fund Bridge Publications, the company

responsible for publishing much of Hubbard's work. When he refused, reasoning that a donation to a for-profit organization would be illegal, the Church attacked Samuels, and "[i]n a few weeks, Samuels had lost the business he had built up over thirteen years, with an annual turnover of millions of dollars. His seventeen-year marriage was destroyed, and he was deprived of his possessions. Samuels felt like a college kid again, rolling up penniless on his parents' doorstep" (Atack 302). Certainly, enough situations similar to this could hurt Scientology in the future, for it is doubtful that people will still cling to Scientology if they hear of these experiences. Throughout his book, Atack argues that Scientology is out for money, and exposes many cases of indifference to the welfare of its members. However one feels about this issue, it is certain that the extra-religious activities that Scientology maintains, in addition to its religious ones, will have an impact on its future expansion and how people regard it in terms of effectiveness. What remains to be seen is whether Scientology's extra-religious activities will actually help it prosper, as Heelas suggests in his discussion of various New Age religions' ties to prosperity teachings and capitalism, or if they will mask the qualities of traditional religion that Scientology seems to possess. If the latter, people may resort to boycotting Scientology on the grounds that it does not have its members' needs as a first priority.

Another important question regarding Scientology's status as a religion must be asked: Can Scientology be considered a religion when its belief system is so elusive? We earlier discussed Scientology's efforts to conform to individual's needs. If Scientology claims to be so many different things, then how can it pinpoint exactly what its teachings are? Perhaps that is simply the nature of the religion. Even so, it is hard to believe that one belief system can promote so many seemingly inconsistent concepts. This is exactly what Heelas discusses. In his article, he relates the example of a person who owned ninety-three Rolls Royces and who at the same time claimed to be detached from material wealth. Heelas then writes, "there are certainly questions to be raised about the 'authenticity' of prosperity teachings" (Heelas 71). In other words, Heelas questions the ability of New Age religions to promise the world and actually fulfill their promises in a system that works. Can we then say that Scientology is not a religion because its beliefs are hard to pinpoint and because, in promising too much, it decreases its effectiveness? Returning to Martin's experiences at the Scientology orientation, he comments further on the movie he was shown:

An interesting persuasive technique in the movie was its reliance on statements that used confusing double negatives and falsely attributed goals The movie argued that one needn't know psychology, psychiatry, or self-hypnosis to be successful. One only had to understand the Dianetic approach to life and take the classes offered by the organization. (4)

Martin seems to think that Scientology is being billed as something it is not. One may wonder whether people will conclude that the Scientology system is not what its leaders make it out to be, thus rendering the various approaches used to bring in new members ineffective. Furthermore, adapting to multiple cultures, causing much confusion as to what Scientology's belief system truly represents may cause others to simply turn away from it. However, despite these concerns, people may simply regard Scientology's aggressive tactics as unimportant in the grand scheme of things. They may employ an "ends justify the means" argument, pointing out that despite its faults, the religion has allegedly helped many people enrich their lives.

The people of the world must decide what future, if any, Scientology has and whether the benefits it provides are valuable enough to overcome what some might consider to be its underlying corruption. Kent seems to believe that Scientology's status as a "multi-faceted transnational" that combines religion and a conglomerate of other components will persuade people to dismiss Scientology in the end ("Scientology" 3). The religious component may be legitimate, but when you start bringing in examples of brainwashing and other kinds of abuse, you get a different picture. Kent discusses a Scientology program called the Rehabilitation Project Force (RPF), which basically monitors Scientologists. If they begin to stray from Scientology's principles, they are "rehabilitated" so that they once again are model followers. Kent explains, "In a phrase, the RPF program places Scientology's most committed members in forced labour and re-education camps" ("Scientology" 9). And the RPF is described by Kent as "a rigorous program of hard, physical labor, constant verbal abuse from immediate superiors, social isolation, intense co-auditing and sec[urity] checking and study of Hubbard policies and techniques" ("Scientology" 10). If this does not work, there is another program called the RPF's RPF. Kent asserts, "One hardly has to point out that the RPF and the RPF's RPF are brainwashing programs" ("Scientology" 13). On the other hand, there are those who experience no difficulties with Scientology and use it to improve their lives. As Heelas states, "it is highly likely that numbers of people have found

that New Age participation has enabled them to handle those stresses and other psychological problems generated by competitive, enterprise-driven, capitalism” (69). Scientology, therefore, works as a religion if you follow it correctly, but if you make a mistake, the entire system breaks down. We may conclude that Scientology’s potential to replace Christianity may be dependent on how willing people are to follow a strict code of conduct and on Scientology’s ability to survive as both a religion and as a profit-driven organization.

Like any complex debate, the issues discussed in this paper have no definitive answers. They must be further explored and resolved if we are to determine Scientology’s future, and even then, only time will truly reveal its potential. Scientology does have its proponents, but experiences with this religion are not always pleasant. It is fairly safe to say that Scientology as a religion has similar qualities to traditional religions, and perhaps even some beneficial ones that traditional religions do not possess. Its growing membership rates around the world show that it may very well continue to grow and become a mainstream religion. However, as for Scientology’s potential to *replace* religions such as Christianity in the future, this issue can only be resolved when we observe how Scientology conducts itself in coming years. Scientology’s future depends on how the world receives it, which in turn depends on several factors. These include its ability, or lack thereof, to attain wide appeal, to conform to prevailing global attitudes while still maintaining a unique identity, to take advantage of globalization, and to resolve its legal and moral issues. If Scientology’s leaders decrease their extra-religious activities and attempt to focus more on the religious aspects, it may go very far. If this does not happen, Scientology will not rival Christianity. After all, religion is about *people*, not about its leaders. People need to believe in something that makes sense to them, something that gives them purpose and direction. Scientology can be portrayed in any way, but if the people of the world do not respond favorably to this portrayal, then Scientology may have no future role in society.

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COMMENTARY

Courtney Borack

Scientology prides itself as a New Age religion that can be all things to all people and all countries, molding itself to the contours of each individual need, "adjusting its belief system for each individual country," and adapting to each "new social circumstance" that arises in our own progressively changing society. On the surface, it seems as though Scientology, with its extreme elasticity, has the potential to, in the future, transcend traditional religions such as Christianity that are not nearly as flexible. This provocative idea is precisely what Stephen Linguito explores in his essay, "Scientology and Its Potential for Dominance as a World Religion."

Beginning at this superficial level, Linguito addresses Scientology's current status as a booming New Age religion, nationally and globally, due to its willingness to expand and adjust itself wherever possible. However, this extreme willingness is precisely where Scientology's future becomes shaky. Determined to explore its adaptability beyond this superficial level, Linguito skillfully begins to break through that seemingly unblemished surface, uncovering controversial areas in which Scientologists strive to keep covered. Touching upon what he calls "extra-religious" activities—the "aggressive persuasion" techniques used at orientation, the illegal and immoral practices found at the heart of the

“profit-driven” leaders, and the brainwashing involved in the Rehabilitation Project Force program—Linguito forces his readers to not only question Scientology’s future, but also to develop their own perspective.

As one who has been unfamiliar with Scientology, I would certainly feel enticed to join a religious community that is willing to conform to what I, as a unique individual, need or want in a religion. I would also feel great relief to know that I have found a religion that is forever current with our changing society, rather than remaining close to a belief system that may no longer mesh well with the twenty-first century. At the same time, however, I would feel concerned about Scientology’s desire for money and the extent to which it pushes itself to get what it wants—i.e. ruining people like Martin Samuels. Just as important, I would also wonder why the leaders must use aggressive persuasion in order to recruit new members and why there is such a desperate need to prevent its members from straying toward other religions. If Scientologists recognize how each individual is unique, with different needs that must be met, then they ought to be sensitive to the fact that perhaps some people just need something more than what Scientology offers. These people should be free to leave, not be forced into re-education camps. Excessive aggressiveness only creates a hindrance to Scientology because, as Linguito writes, people will begin to think their importance comes second to that of the leaders. Furthermore, it shows how Scientology is not nearly as perfect as it appears to be.

From Stephen Linguito’s essay, we learn that there is no such thing as a perfect religion. If one did exist, people worldwide would flock to it. Scientology, like any other religion—be it New Age or traditional—has its flaws, some flaws worse than others, that create controversy which its leaders strive to keep silent. With everything good Scientology has to offer its potential members, I think it is possible for it to be as dominant as traditional religions such as Christianity, but I cannot foresee it transcending them completely. I agree with Stephen Linguito when he argues that for Scientology to prosper, its leaders would have to put an end to their “extra-religious” political activities, as well as their excessive aggressiveness. Yet, to add to this, and what I believe to be as important, I feel that Scientologists would also have to free themselves of the ambiguity they pride themselves on, because to say you are all things to all people creates contradiction, confusion, and frustration. One person may believe spirituality is the most important thing one can attain and so may turn to Scientology, but learning that this religion is willing to satisfy the needs

of another person who, perhaps, believes materialistic goals are the most important thing to attain can embitter the spiritual person. At the same time, one person may revel in a religion that constantly stays current with “new social circumstances,” but that same person could be turned away by an inability to pinpoint what precisely is Scientology’s belief system.

It seems as though the blessings of Scientology—ambiguity and flexibility— are curses in disguise. Nevertheless, these two components are precisely what form Scientology’s foundation. To rid itself of its foundation is to complicate things further, thus creating for Scientology a shaky, unstable, and uncertain future, one that could severely inhibit an attempt to transcend traditional religions.

RESPONSE

Stephen Linguito

As I began my research on Scientology, the idea of incorporating science, materialism, and spirituality into one system seemed appealing to me. However, as Courtney Borack suggests, the more I uncovered what Scientology actually represents, the less favorable its image became. This was definitely a case in which one could not judge a book by its cover. In my paper, I chose to research and report on current trends and situations both within and surrounding Scientology, and then, with these findings, I contemplated the needs of the future. I believe that this task was fulfilled adequately, given that things change over time, and that trends can rise and fall without warning.

As I collected information on which to base my paper, I found that most opinions and analyses in reference to Scientology are generally biased, whether they be testimonials from satisfied Scientologists, analysts completely removed from the religion, or unsatisfied victims. I attempted to find the least biased sources, and play the role of moderator in any instance where an unbalanced opinion was offered. In an endeavor such as this one, it is important to make sure that all positions of the debate are explored; if one cannot fully understand the present, looking ahead is much more difficult. As Borack so aptly explains, Scientology displays an “extreme elasticity,” and I further believe that this elasticity will eventually be stretched to the breaking point. However, I do find it very intriguing that Scientology’s conformity to many different beliefs represents a double-edged sword, in which it may either help or hurt the religion based on the specific situation.

This paper uses the present to better understand what lies ahead for Scientology. But another approach might be to look back at the past. Anyone with a general understanding

of history knows that people generally do not react well to coercion. Scientology seems to have been successful thus far in both persuading people to join the religion, and also in keeping them entangled in it afterwards. We may conclude that this is the result of Scientology's ability to make its members feel as if their needs are being considered and respected. However, as Borack argues, what may actually be happening is that Scientology is using empty promises and other persuasive tactics to exploit potential members and keep membership rates high. I contend that eventually, orientations and other methods of psychological persuasion will fail, because people will figure out that it is not their salvation that Scientology is concerned with, but rather with its own. One only needs to look at the highly disturbing cases of Martin Samuels, or the abused victims in the RPF program to see that financial well being for the religion is a top priority.

In my opinion, Scientology will likely be around for a while, but not long enough for it to become completely embedded in global society. Ancient religions such as Christianity do not always keep up with "society's progressive changes," as Borack puts it, but they do offer an established set of beliefs that people can cling to without fear of persecution or coercion. If someone is no longer satisfied with a religion such as Christianity, that person can leave the Church and go elsewhere. This is not quite the case with Scientology. Scientology makes every attempt to keep disgruntled members under its wing. If nothing else, this may be Scientology's downfall, for if it were a truly feasible and acceptable religion, its leaders would not have to browbeat its members into submission. In my opinion, a religion that finds it necessary to brainwash followers in order to prevent them from leaving may be better regarded as a cult, and although Scientology is already seen as such by many people, it will take more media exposure for this conclusion to become universal. In the meantime, Scientology will continue to pour on the charm as it attempts to convert the world to its belief system, and I will be interested to see just how far it gets.