

**A Short Study
of the
Scientology Religion**

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I am the Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion located in Evanston, Illinois; a research facility for the study of the small religious groups in the United States. I have been the Director of this facility for the past ten years.

I am an ordained Minister in the United Methodist Church, having been ordained in 1968; and I am the Pastor of the Emanuel United Methodist Church in Evanston, Illinois, and have held this position for three and one-half years.

I am a member of The Society for Scientific Study of religion and The American Association of Church History.

I have received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Birmingham Southern College; I have studied at and received a Master of Divinity degree from Garrett Theological Seminary, associated with the United Methodist Church; and I have received a Ph.D. in the History and Literature of religions from Northwestern University (1975).

I am the author of some seven books, and was one of the editors of The Encyclopedia of World Methodism, and the author of the Directory of Religious Bodies in the United States.

For the past sixteen years, in addition to my Pastor duties and responsibilities as Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion, I have been researching and have completed the writing of The Encyclopedia of American Religions, a comprehensive reference work which examines nearly twelve-hundred American religions and describes the history, practices and beliefs of each. To my knowledge, this is the first such work of this magnitude since 1936.

I have examined Scientology in my capacity as both a Minister of the United Methodist Church and as the Director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion. Based upon my extensive experience as a scholar of religious movements; my studies of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the Church of Scientology, my visits to several Scientology Churches (including the Church of Scientology of Missouri), and my lengthy visits with several Ministers of the Church of Scientology, I find it to be a religion in the fullest sense of the word. It has a well thought-out doctrine, including a belief in a Supreme Being, a belief in the freedom of the spirit and the immortality of the spirit; a system of worship and liturgy, an extensive pastoral counselling program and an out-reach ministry of service to the community that embodies the doctrines and beliefs of the Church. Such a full program is rarely attained by a new religion in its first generation. My examination of the Church includes personal attendance at a Scientology wedding ceremony as well as attendance at the Sunday Church service.

The rituals of the Church, including its worship, weddings, christenings, and funerals, are spelled out in the Ceremonies of the Founding Church of Scientology and in the Background and Ceremonies of the Church of Scientology. They follow traditional patterns and are led by the Minister of the Church.

The Church of Scientology does espouse a belief in and devotion to and worship of a "Supreme Being" as well as a belief in the immortality of the spirit and that man is a spiritual being; which are evident in the total life of the group, the program the Church has set up, in its beliefs and practices and in its literature, including the books above mentioned.

Its beliefs, worship, and relationship to God or a Supreme Being is further evidenced in the Church's program of pastoral care, group worship, its community life and program of spiritual growth.

The Church deals with the basic religious questions of where did we come from, why are we here, and where are we going. The Church of Scientology regularly holds its Sunday worship service which, though not the main focal point of the week as in the Methodist Church, nevertheless provides the community worship for the group.

The Church regularly propagates its beliefs through the traditional channels of liturgy, dissemination of its religious publications and in its community programs.

The Church of Scientology is very much a religion in the fullest sense of the word.

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