




defending  
religious freedom



**How do we  
vanquish  
the religious  
intolerance that  
destroys lives  
and disrupts  
communities?**

# Introduction



*Facing page: Terrified children, shielded by parents and riot police after a pipe bomb exploded near their Belfast school in September 2001, face a brighter future; through the efforts of many, an end to religious conflict in Northern Ireland finally appears in reach.*

It is a paradox that while religions exist as primary forces for mutual respect and peace, much of the world's turmoil arises from intolerance toward the religious beliefs and practices of others.

Human beings since time immemorial have taken great solace in their religions. As L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of the Scientology religion, observed, "For thousands of years on this planet thinking man has upheld his own spirituality and considered the ultimate wisdom to be spiritual enlightenment... at no time is religion more necessary as a civilising force than in the presence of huge forces in the hands of man...". He was joined in this view by many other thinkers and scientists of his time – and since. Indeed, no less a figure than Albert Einstein agreed that the civilising influence of religion is senior to the discoveries of materialistic science: "What humanity owes to personalities like Buddha, Moses and Jesus ranks for me higher than all the achievements of the inquiring constructive mind."

Yet, religion has also been at the core of many conflicts. Stridently asserting a particular dogma, intolerant individuals have justified the most appalling persecutions of those with differing faiths. Largely in response to the materialistic influences of psychiatry and

humanism, which deny the existence of a soul and equate man with an animal, and partly due to religious conflicts and their toll in human lives, there has been a trend away from religion and some people are even suspicious of strong religious convictions. This debate became apparent during the discussions concerning whether the Preamble to the European Constitution should include a reference to Europe's Judeo-Christian history.

Faced with extremism, governments have responded with stringent laws and more restrictive immigration policy. No doubt some of these measures are necessary. The spectre of terrorists killing and maiming while asserting that God has sanctioned their actions has become depressingly familiar to all of us.

But as human rights organisations have warned, increasing government powers to invade people's lives in the name of national security, if supplemented with nothing else, will lead eventually to the loss of the very liberties we are seeking to protect.

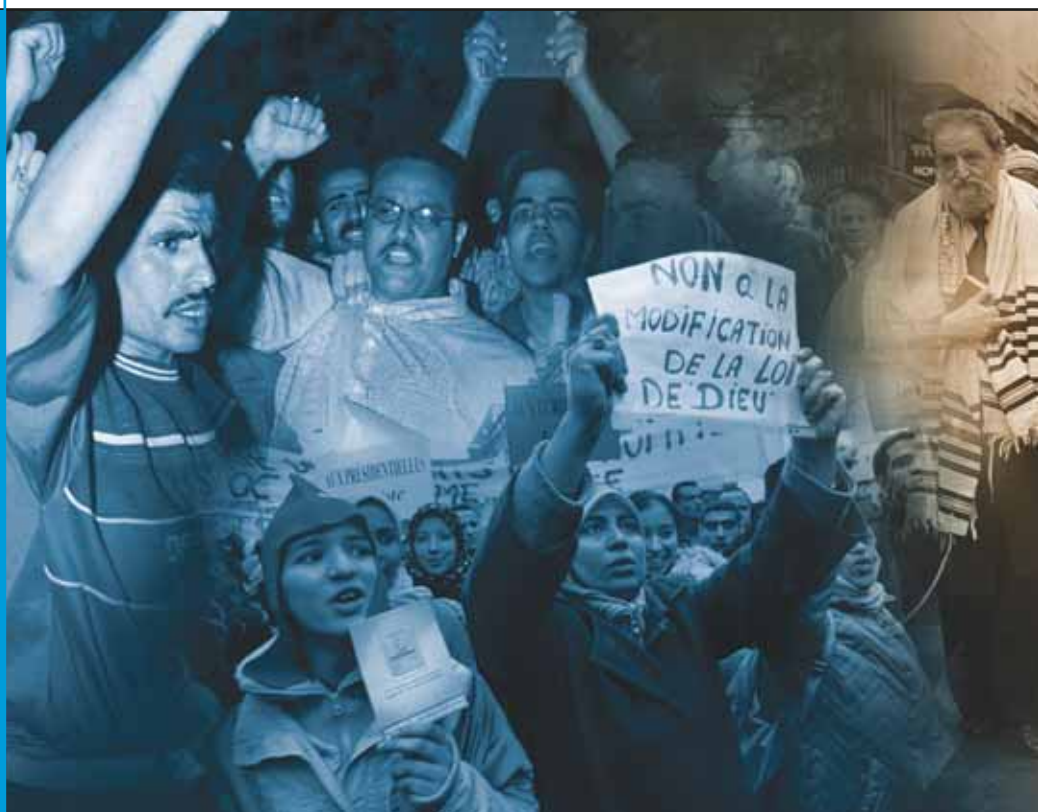
If one examines religious conflicts, whether contemporary or historical, one finds a common denominator: Intolerance. Have we no choice but to live with the consequences? What can we do to nurture the religious freedom and pluralism that almost everyone agrees are essential to a stable and peaceful society?

# Why freedom of religion?

Scientologists win rights that benefit all

“All men have inalienable rights to conceive, choose, assist or support their own organisations, churches and governments.”

— Creed of the Church of Scientology



From their inception, churches of Scientology have recognised freedom of religion as a fundamental human right and have made its preservation a pre-eminent concern and steadfast commitment.

Freedom of religion is both explicitly articulated and implicitly affirmed throughout the scriptures of Scientology. Not only are all Church of Scientology ministers required as part of their ministerial training to

become familiar with the great religions, but the Church’s Creed, written in 1954, declares “That all men have inalienable rights to conceive, choose, assist or support their own organisations, churches and governments.”

In that same year, the founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, issued the Code of a Scientologist to guide members in fighting for human rights and equal justice through social reform actions. The Code pledges

every Scientologist “To support the freedom of religion.”

It is a philosophic axiom that there can be no true freedom without responsibility. Hence, the Church holds that religious organisations have a right and a duty to engage in good works that benefit society. Indeed, Mr. Hubbard held that a decline in religious influence presages a deterioration in the cultural level of a civilisation: “No culture in the history of the world,



The Church of Scientology had to fight to win its religious rights and its victories have blazed a path that many others have been able to follow.

save the thoroughly depraved and expiring ones, has failed to affirm the existence of a Supreme Being," he wrote. Other great writers and philosophers have shared this view: Tolstoy, in his 1882 *A Confession and other Religious Writings*, described religion as "the chief motivator and heart of human societies."

In recognising that only through spiritual freedom can one truly discover and understand the

Supreme Being, Mr. Hubbard emphasised that "seeking to undermine or attack the religious faith and beliefs of another has always been a short road to trouble."

The Church of Scientology's advocacy of religious freedom, therefore, embraces the recognition that such freedom must include the willingness to permit others to practice their chosen religion or to change their religion, if they so

desire. This can occur only in a society that recognises the distinction between church and state, and where no one religion is permitted to assume a dominant role in the decisions of government. In its Proclamation on Religion, Human Rights and Society, released in September 2003, the Church articulated its definitions of religious freedom and the responsibility this right places on governments:

"Any restrictions on the freedom

to manifest religion or belief may only be permitted if they are a) prescribed by law, b) necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, and c) employ the least restrictive means necessary to ensure they are applied in a manner that does not vitiate individual and

all over the world. However, in its infancy, the Scientology religion faced the ferocious enmity of vested interests who perceived the existence of religious conscience – and the emergence of a new religion that offered solutions to life’s problems – as somehow a threat to their own

Social betterment is a primary role of religious organisations, and while church and state must remain separate, churches should work in concert with government officials to resolve the ills of society.



*Church representatives frequently bring together leaders of other faiths and human rights representatives to formulate solutions to religious intolerance, as in this conference in France.*

collective rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”

These affirmations arise out of both the Church’s own experiences and its observations of the hardships faced by other religious organisations throughout history. Today, the governments of many nations, including the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Portugal and South Africa have recognised Scientology as a religion, and its religious nature has been confirmed in hundreds of judicial and administrative decisions in countries

operations. Thus, the Church had to fight to win its religious rights. Its victories have blazed a path that many others have been able to follow.

Freedom of religion, of course, is articulated within the national constitutions of every European democratic nation and in many international human rights instruments. But more than written affirmation is needed. In his January 2004 report to the 60th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief pointed

# The role of religion in resolving society's ills

out: "in many cases, States have not met their human rights obligations as regards freedom of religion." He emphasised that these "are not limited to the negative obligation to refrain from violating the right to freedom of religion or belief; they also include the positive obligation to protect persons under their jurisdiction from violations of their rights, including those committed by non-State actors or entities."

As stated in one recent United Nations study: "The important guiding principle is that no individual should be placed at a disadvantage merely because he is a member of a particular ethnic, religious or linguistic group. Above all, in any multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic country, the strict application of the principles of equality and non-discrimination is an indispensable requirement for maintaining the political and spiritual unity of the State concerned and achieving understanding and harmonious relations between the various components of society."

Freedom of religion or belief must include the right to possess the scriptures and texts of one's chosen religion, to conduct religious services privately and publicly, and to bring up one's children in one's religious tradition, without interfering with their own right to freedom of religion or belief and their exercise of that right upon reaching maturity.

In this age of intercontinental travel and instantaneous worldwide communications, multi-cultural and multi-religious societies must be our destiny if the race is to survive. Thus it is a responsibility and mission that the churches of Scientology have endeavoured to fulfil since their beginnings.

Traditionally, religions have played an essential role in speaking out on and resolving the core problems affecting the culture. Indeed, a key reason why religious institutions are legally entitled to charity status and tax-exemption is that their good works furnish valuable services to the community that the government would otherwise have to provide, burdening the taxpayer with the costs. The Scientology religion holds that social betterment is a primary role of religious organisations, and while church and state must remain separate, religious bodies should work in concert with government officials to resolve the ills of society.

To some, this function of religion may seem self-evident. Yet it is currently under attack in some quarters. In April 2004, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Vatican's representative to the United Nations in Geneva, warned of "an emerging subtle form of religious intolerance [that] opposes the right of a religion to speak publicly on issues concerning forms of behaviour that are measured against principles of a moral and religious nature."

The increasing tendency to relegate religion solely to the private sphere is in opposition to what the framers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments envisaged. Article 18 of the Declaration makes clear that the right to freedom of religion embraces "freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching,

practice, worship and observance."

Freedom of religion is not a narrowly defined term. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has set the international standard by declaring that "the terms 'belief' and 'religion' are to be broadly construed," and that religious



freedom "is not limited in its application to traditional religions ...." The Committee "views with concern any tendency to discriminate against any religion or belief for any reason, including the fact that they are newly established, or represent religious minorities that may be the subject of hostility on the part of a predominant religious community."<sup>1</sup> The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights is aligned with this standard.

<sup>1</sup> General Comment No. 22 on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Forty-eighth session (1993).

# Creating new law: Church sets precedents from Australia to Europe

In 1983, in Australia's highest court, the Church of Scientology established the definition of religion under the Constitution, a precedent that protected the rights of all faiths. New Zealand later adopted that definition in recognising the Church of Scientology as a charitable, religious organisation.

The earliest actions in defence of religious freedom by a Church of Scientology were born out of both necessity and conviction. In achieving success, the Church has helped broaden the understanding of religion within the world's cultures and so advanced the rights of all faiths.

In the early 1960s, in the state of Victoria, Australia, a climate of intolerance posed a daunting challenge to Australian Scientologists to pursue their chosen religious path. But when the dust finally settled, the Church of Scientology in Australia had gained the respect of the state and federal governments of Australia, with the Deputy Premier of Western Australia characterising former acts of discrimination against Scientologists as "the blackest day in the political history" of his state. And the Church had won the right of its parishioners, in 1973, to have their weddings recognised as legal by the Australian federal government.

But the most important victory was still to come. In October 1983, in Australia's uppermost federal court, the Church of Scientology established the definition of religion under the constitution for the first time. The High Court of Australia determined that "[t]he conclusion that [the Church] is a religious institution

entitled to the tax exemption is irresistible." In reaching this decision, the court embraced a definition of religion that encompassed the teachings of all faiths generally accorded religious status, an expansion of the previously existing definition in Australian law that had restricted religiosity to a Judeo-Christian concept.

In fact, the Australian government's own Inquiry into the Definition of Charities and Related Organisations cited the case as "the most significant Australian authority on the question of what constitutes a religion...." That definition of religion became the basis for anti-discrimination laws that have protected the rights of, among others, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims and Hindus.

While the Church was setting a precedent in Australia, so too was it strengthening the rights of religious organisations under European law. In the 1970s, the Church brought two cases against Sweden before the European Commission of Human Rights. Until then, the Commission had held that a corporation, being a legal and not natural person, was barred from bringing an action under Article 9 (freedom of religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights. In ruling on the Church's cases, however, the Commission



In 1976, Western Australia Deputy Premier Herbert Graham (left) condemned the era of discrimination against Scientologists who, he said, had faced “the blackest day in the political history” of the state. The Church’s struggle for equal rights culminated in victory seven years later.

## ITALY: ADVANCING PLURALISM

Advances in religious liberty have often emerged out of a struggle against intolerance. Such was the case in Italy, where the Church and its members waged a successful 20-year campaign that ultimately brought about a true victory for religious pluralism.

The entire episode amounted to a prolonged assault on religious rights, one that no impartial court in a democratic country could sustain. And so it proved. It took two appeals to the Italian Supreme Court for the Church and its members to prevail. In October 1997, the Court issued a final ruling that set a new standard for religious freedom in Italy. The Church of Scientology’s activities, the Court held, “without exception, [are] characteristic of all religious movements.” With that, the Court revised a lower court decision that had restrictively defined religion in a Judeo-Christian context only. The renowned sociologist of religion, J. Gordon Melton, has described the ruling as “one of the most important discussions to date – and on an international scale – of how courts may apply existing laws apparently requiring them to decide if a specific group is, or is not, a religion.”

Once again, Scientologists’ dedication to their religion in the face of adversity had culminated in a precedent that now protects the rights of *all* faiths.

reversed its opinion, finding that “When a church body lodges an application under the Convention, it does so, in reality, on behalf of its members. It should, therefore, be accepted that a church body is capable of possessing and exercising the rights contained in Article 9(1) in its own capacity as a representative of its members.”<sup>2</sup>

The Commission’s ruling had profound ramifications. In *Religious Liberty and International Law in Europe*, Malcolm D. Evans, Professor of Public International Law

at the University of Bristol, England, noted that later decisions have built upon this finding and “have confirmed that churches and other forms of legal person are, in principle, beneficiaries of the rights set out in Article 9...”

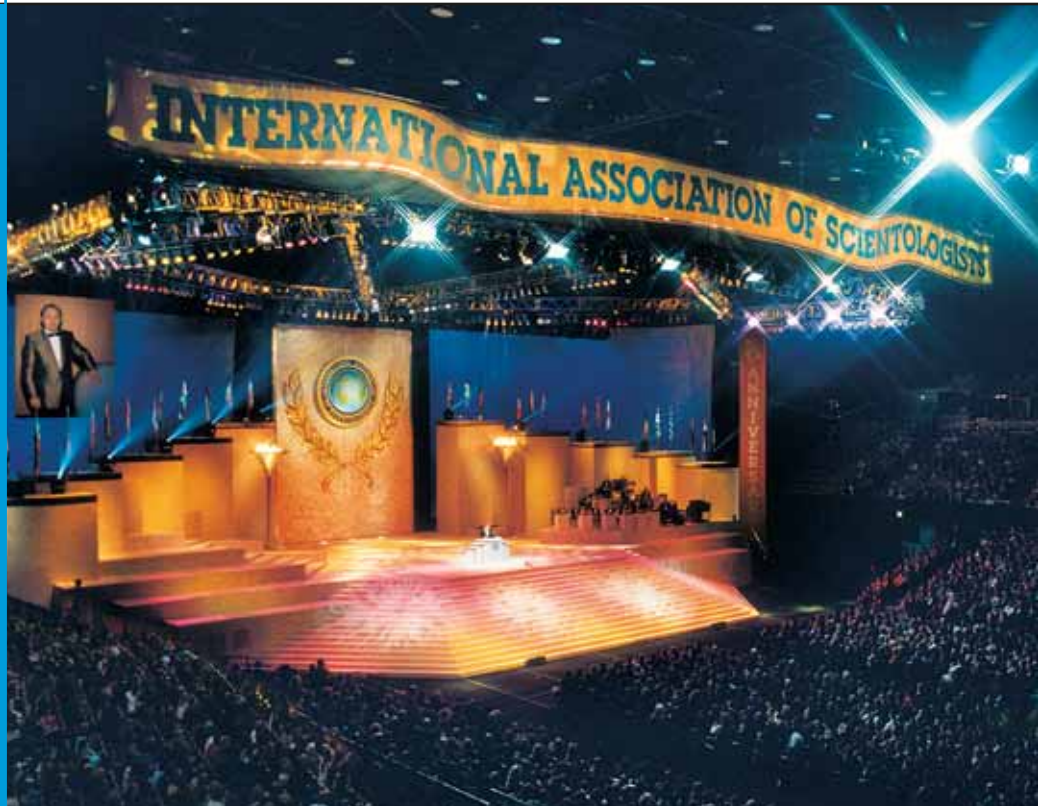
Given that the case that led to this precedent was brought against the Swedish government on religious freedom grounds, it is fitting that today the churches of Scientology are fully recognised in Sweden as religious, charitable and tax-exempt organisations.

<sup>2</sup> X and the Church of Scientology v. Sweden, No. 7805/77, 16 DR 68 (Dec. 1979), 70.

# Victory for all

## Full recognition in the United States

Thousands of Scientologists gathered to hear the news: On October 1, 1993, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service issued ruling letters recognising the Church of Scientology International and more than 150 affiliated churches, missions and social reform organisations as fully tax-exempt, on the grounds that they are organised and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes.

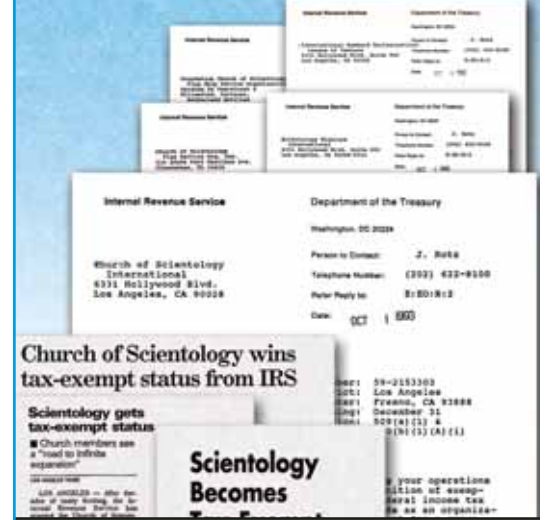


In terms of international importance, it is a fact that the Church of Scientology International's most significant precedent establishing the right to religious freedom came not from Australasia or Europe, but the United States. Although U.S. courts early recognised the religious nature of Scientology, its nonprofit status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was a point of recurring contention from the late 1950s through the 1980s. Because of false

information in IRS files and a misunderstanding of the nature of Scientology and how churches of Scientology operate, this situation remained unresolved for decades.

Finally, in 1991, at the Church's request, the Commissioner of the IRS assigned a high-level team to resolve the issue of the Church's exemption. In particular, rather than undergoing a review by regular employees at IRS district offices in Los Angeles, the home of Church headquarters, Scientology churches were examined

*The IRS' decision to grant the Church exemption represented the culmination of a fact-gathering and review process that, according to the IRS itself, exceeded any in its history, resulting in the largest administrative record ever for an exempt organisation. This vast exercise found the international structure of Scientology to be corporately and financially without flaw.*



by the IRS' most senior officials over exempt organisations at its national office in Washington, D.C. The team leader reported directly to the Commissioner of the IRS.

The IRS examination that followed was a comprehensive, detailed and exacting scrutiny of all major Church organisations at the most senior level of management in the United States, and all large Scientology churches in Europe. It embraced both the Church's associated publishing houses, Bridge Publications, Inc. in the U.S. and New Era Publications in Copenhagen. It also covered all related social betterment organisations and activities.

When it comes to the extent of those examinations, there is no parallel in the history of United States internal revenue exemption procedure. An average application for religious nonprofit exemption includes approximately ten pages of narrative and results in a brief review by an IRS official. By comparison, Scientology churches were subjected to an IRS review that lasted two years and posed thousands of questions requiring more than 11,000 pages of narrative responses and metre upon metre of financial records.

Nor is that all. The Church provided detailed compensation information about its executive administrators, financial information concerning its largest vendors,

extensive information concerning its structure and organisations, and it answered many other in-depth financial questions. That information included balance sheets for all Church organisations of a certain size, even those in Europe; all expenditures from Church reserves for a three-year period; all planned expenditures for the next five years and a report on the general expenditures for the five previous years. This fact-gathering process by the IRS involved hundreds of hours of meetings with Church representatives.

In addition, the IRS requested evidence to answer:

- Does the Church have its own religious creed and form of worship?
- Does it have its own definite and distinct ecclesiastical government?
- Is there a formal code of doctrine and discipline?
- Does Scientology have a distinct religious history?
- Are there ordained ministers?
- Does it have a literature of its own?
- Are there established places of worship and a regular congregation?
- Are there regular religious services?
- Is there religious instruction of the young?

Further, the IRS sought to establish that the Church "serve an

associational role in accomplishing its religious purpose in order to qualify as a Church." The documentation by the Church demonstrated completely that the Church accomplishes a religious purpose through Scientology ministerial counselling and training, special prayers and rituals, celebration of religious holidays and weekly church services.

In sum, the IRS concluded that funds raised by Scientology churches are used exclusively for charitable purposes that forward the churches' religious objectives.

The IRS also examined reports from numerous sources to sift out truth from falsehoods, resolving that the Church's activities are exactly as represented – purely religious.

In building upon that momentous achievement, churches of Scientology around the world have continued to achieve official recognition in their countries as religious organisations with idealistic purposes and serving the public benefit. And while this trend continues in the 21st century, the 1993 determination by the IRS yet stands as a watershed in the Church's history. That the Church emerged with flying colours from the most exacting test the world's largest tax agency has ever conducted says everything about the integrity of the religion and the commitment of its practitioners.

# Exposing agendas of intolerance

## Hidden instigators unmasked

“While many people in Europe enjoy basic human rights, some people, including asylum-seekers and ethnic and religious minorities, continue to experience a side of Europe that runs contrary to its image as a bastion of human rights and freedom.”

— *Amnesty International*  
April 2000

Although religious freedom in Europe was incorporated into national constitutions after World War II, some European nations have no enduring tradition of religious liberty. In these countries, freedom of conscience in religious matters has been under threat from private, vested interest groups and individuals who have for years lobbied government bodies to adopt discriminatory measures against certain religions. As reported by Amnesty International in April 2000, “While many people in Europe enjoy basic human rights, some people, including asylum-seekers and ethnic and religious minorities, continue to experience a side of Europe that runs contrary to its image as a bastion of human rights and freedom.”

One of the most insidious efforts to undermine religious freedom in Europe today has been the effort to redefine religious commitment, especially to a new religion, as a form of “brainwashing.” In 1998, commenting on the results of a two-year parliamentary investigation in Germany, Professor Gerhard Besier, at that time chair

of historical theology and religion at the University of Heidelberg, wrote, “The studies and expertises produced at the behest of the Inquiry Commission found, one for one, that new religious and ideological movements present no big danger.” It is a viewpoint shared by European and American sociologists alike. According to a respected professor of religious studies at the University of Lucerne, “Studies by scholars of religious studies and by social scientists have demonstrated that the socially constructed portrait, depicting new religious movements as destructive, dangerous and manipulative, was purposely perpetuated by particular pressure groups.”

Many years ago, realising that a threat to the religious freedom of one is a threat to all, the Church of Scientology’s human rights journal, *Freedom*, began an investigation into the groups and individuals behind efforts to discredit new and minority faiths. *Freedom* uncovered that a “consultant” named Rick Ross had a record of at least three arrests and a felony conviction for conspiracy to commit grand theft.

Ross received referrals to conduct “deprogrammings” –



Trading on the distress of family members whose son or daughter joined a religious organisation unfamiliar to them, deprogrammers would allege that the loved one had been “brainwashed” and charge thousands of euros to isolate him or her, often by brutal and forceful means, and try to break their faith.

In the wake of the Church’s revelations, between the late 1980s and early 1990s, more than a dozen United States deprogrammers were arrested and many convicted.

described by many religious experts as “kidnappings for profit.”

In 1995, a practising attorney who was a member of the Church of Scientology undertook to represent a Christian man in a lawsuit he filed against Ross and a deprogramming organisation over a violent deprogramming attempt. The case resulted in a landmark jury decision awarding

the Christian more than \$4.8 million in compensatory and punitive damages, a judgment upheld all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. During the proceedings, U.S. Federal Court Judge John Coughenour characterised Ross and the deprogramming group as “[incapable] of appreciating the maliciousness of their conduct...”

# Bridging the religious divide through real dialogue

In 1994, to foster tolerance, the Church co-founded the Danish Interfaith Forum, its membership including representatives of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Unitarian, Christian Science, Quaker, Lutheran and Baha'i faiths.

Because the Church helped to establish a new climate of zero tolerance for religious bigotry, an organisation was needed to bridge the gap in understanding between a person who joins a little-known religious movement and other family members.

Thus, a coalition of religious organisations formed the Foundation for Religious Freedom. Managed by a multi-faith board that includes civil rights experts as well as Christian, Muslim and Scientologist representatives, the Foundation educates the public on religious rights, freedoms and responsibilities through a host of activities. It is a member of the International Association for Religious Freedom, the oldest such advocacy organisation in the world.

The Foundation maintains a referral list of qualified experts in different religious fields who provide enquirers with factual information about groups outside the mainstream. These experts regularly deal with media enquiries in countries as diverse as Germany, Brazil, Great Britain, the U.S. and Canada.

According to the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Religion*, the Foundation "has

made every attempt to connect anxious parents with scholars who have researched particular groups and thus can provide an informed perspective on their beliefs and practices." Indeed, whereas "anti-sect" groups are bent on sowing division and conflict between family members, the Foundation's emphasis in handling the more than 15,000 enquiries they have received has been to resolve differences and bring people together.

To advance the cause of dialogue in religious matters, the Foundation has published a practical handbook, *The ABCs of Tolerance*<sup>3</sup>, which offers helpful tips to families whose relative has joined a movement they know little about. Translated into seven languages, the book has won praise from religion experts, including Dr. Huston Smith, author of *The World's Religions*, and the Swiss theologian and author, Dr. Hans Kung, who described it as "a most useful handbook." The work is available hardcopy and on the Foundation's website: [www.toleranceforall.org](http://www.toleranceforall.org), which receives 1,000 visitors a day.

Such endeavours are not new for the Churches of Scientology. Much earlier, in 1977, and towards

<sup>3</sup> In some language editions the book is titled, *The Cult Around the Corner*.



that same objective of healing divisions, the Church in Sweden co-founded the Swedish Religious Forum. The group boasts a diverse religious membership. It seeks to make better known and applied the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights among religious congregations and to defuse religious as well as racial tensions. The Forum made a significant difference in bringing about a more tolerant climate

towards religions and a heightened understanding of religious freedom, with its activities often featured in major Swedish media, including *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter*.

In January 2004, the name of the Forum changed to the Swedish Religious Peace Council, with a board that includes civil rights experts as well as Christian, Muslim and Scientologist representatives.

*One of several multi-faith marches for religious freedom led by the Church of Scientology in Germany, this peaceful demonstration in Frankfurt helped draw attention to widespread governmental discrimination against a range of religions.*

*This march in Italy, one of many conducted by Scientologists across Europe, was part of a marathon promoting the need for religious freedom.*



Since the late 1990s, joined by other religious leaders, the Church has sponsored a number of religious freedom marches and marathons in order to broadly promote religious tolerance as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The churches of Scientology's focus in advancing freedom of religion throughout Europe has been to dispel the stereotypes about minority religions that fuel intolerance and to increase public understanding of the value of religious liberty. As an example of such Church activities, in August 1998, Scientologists organised the European Journey for Religious Freedom, a 3,325-kilometre marathon through eight European

countries to raise public awareness of religious discrimination on the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The marathon culminated with a colourful and moving multi-faith festival of speeches and music in Frankfurt's Old Opera Square.

The next day, religious and human rights leaders from Germany, France, Britain and the United States met to formulate actions in response to what they

*"Filling the moral vacuum" was the subject of this gathering of interfaith leaders from across the world at the Church's headquarters in East Grinstead, West Sussex, England.*



saw as increasing religious intolerance on the part of the German government. They included, for example, representatives of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People who conducted a fact-finding investigation into the involvement of certain government officials in inciting religious hatred in Germany.

In 1994, the Church of Scientology in Denmark co-

founded another organisation, the Danish Interfaith Forum, its membership including representatives of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Unitarian, Christian Science, Quaker, Lutheran and Baha'i faiths. In fact, churches of Scientology regularly organise conferences to formulate solutions not only to religious discrimination, but other pressing problems of society. The Church has hosted such events in Germany, France,

Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries.

In May 2002, the Church of Scientology International's Human Rights Office, in coordination with the Association of British Muslims and the Queens Federation of Churches in New York, assembled 75 clergymen, professors and government officials, representing two dozen religious traditions, for a conference in England. They included faculty members from



The Church of Scientology's focus in advancing freedom of religion throughout Europe has been to dispel the stereotypes about minority religions that fuel intolerance and to increase public understanding of the value of religious liberty.



universities in England, Germany, Belgium and Sweden, as well as other attendees arriving from Nigeria, Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, Russia, France, Poland, United States, Latvia, Croatia, Canada, Spain, Zambia, Bulgaria, Armenia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

The purpose was not merely to provide a kaleidoscope of religious diversity at the beginning of the 21st century, but as Reverend Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths, declared in his inaugural address, "Society needs to be based on spiritual and ethical values, but in our modern world these cannot be based on the teachings of one religion, but on the moral values which the religions share."

Indeed, the conference facilitated representatives of the religions in working together to address social problems of declining moral values, poor education and drug abuse. Religions may have different theologies, but they share common goals and are faced with common social maladies and pressures.

Theologians, as well as attendees from a wide range of faiths, characterised the conference as an important step forward. Dr. Kartan Surindar Singh, Chairman of the UK Sikh Education and Cultural Association, praised the Church of Scientology for providing an "impetus" towards such inter-religious dialogue, while Mr. Bala Balaraman, a Hindu and former chairman of a British association of faiths, said he learned

something profound: "It taught me that people of different religions can meet and understand each other when they discuss problems affecting humanity at large." The conference ended with a declaration "to help alleviate anxiety and tensions in the world by emphasising religious values and sentiments" and set an agenda to work to reverse the trends of drug abuse, violence, crime and immorality.

In addition to uniting religions to help solve the problems of society, Scientologists have stepped in to heal wounds torn open by inter-religious conflict. In 1999, the civil war in Kosovo displaced an estimated one million Kosovars from their homeland. This ethnic cleansing had its historical roots in religious differences that were exploited by warmongers inciting people's hatred against each other. Whereas at one time, both Serbs and Albanians had been mostly Christian, over the recent centuries ethnic Albanians had become overwhelmingly Muslim. The depth of religious intolerance is evident from the Serbs' destruction of mosques and other Islamic landmarks and in the attacks on Serbian Orthodox churches and religious relics by ethnic Albanians who returned to their homes after the war ended.

The majority of those made homeless were shepherded into refugee camps in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro. Although the Red Cross and other humanitarian groups struggled to provide them with basic living



Multi-ethnic and multi-faith gatherings sponsored by the Church bridge barriers and create the understanding essential to a pluralistic society.

needs, many were suffering severe trauma. Scientology ministers from around the world travelled to Albania to help those in the camps, the largest of which, in Tirana, was the temporary home for some 100,000 refugees. They began by helping the displaced Kosovars solve immediate living problems such as how to feed their children with no stove and how to keep them dry and warm,

and simultaneously helped the disoriented and sometimes almost hysterical refugees recover from their emotional shock. One Kosovar summed up the gratitude of many when he described his transformation from “no hope” to a state where he felt “full of life again – something I had lost due to the war and the long journey here. I have been given a new life.”

# Exposing official bias

## Violations of religious rights documented

In an overview of religion in Europe, no country serves as a better example of the struggle regarding such democratic concepts of religious freedom than Germany. In light of its past violations of human rights and its ascent to leadership in European and world affairs, Germany's standing in the religious freedom arena is of no minor importance.

*Facing page: In 1997, thousands took part in religious freedom marches the Church organised in major German cities.*

In some European countries, insecurity exists over the growth – sometimes rapid – of minority and newer religious groups. In the 1990s, this insecurity was met by parliamentary “commissions” that inquired into the beliefs and practices of such groups in an arbitrary fashion and frequently recommended restrictions.

This has particularly been the case in France and Belgium. In its targeting of religious minorities, the French state essentially adopted the findings of a deeply flawed 1996 parliamentary commission report despite the fact that numerous experts have denounced its bias and inadequate methodology. For example, soon after the report's release, five distinguished scholars, including Dr. Eileen Barker, founder and director of the British government-backed Information Network Focus on Religious Movements (INFORM) and Dr. Massimo Introvigne, director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) in Turin, characterised it as a bigot's charter: “The French Commission was obviously working from faulty information sources and completely ignored the large body of material accumulated over the last two decades both on new religions in general and individual new

religious groups in particular... [W]ith little but the unexamined accusations of anonymous ‘witnesses’, it [the report] calls for a witch hunt against the innocent.”

At least two French court judgements have held that the report carries no legal weight, while the French government has concurred, characterising the report as merely a “parliamentary working document.” Notwithstanding, throughout the late 1990s, French government utterances and publications were replete with citations to the report, which contained a blacklist of 172 religious and spiritual minorities including many widely accepted religious organisations – Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, a Baptist Theological Institute, the Buddhist movement Soka Gakkai and the Church of Scientology.

When, as a direct outgrowth of the commission's report, a controversial law proposal was mooted in France that would empower the government to dissolve entire religious communities on minor pretexts, the Church of Scientology International's Human Rights Office alerted the international religious and human rights community. More than 40 religious organisations



Chick Corea addresses 1997 religious freedom rally

petitioned the Council of Europe to open an investigation into the law and religious discrimination in France. Church of Scientology officials and representatives of minority religions met with the investigator, known as a rapporteur, and provided him with extensive documentation of abuses against religious freedom in France.

While the Council of Europe's investigation was proceeding, the International Helsinki Federation for

Human Rights (IHF) recorded in its 2001 Annual Report that the law "caused continued uproar amongst both national and international organisations, regarding its potential to create religious discrimination and violate international and European human rights standards." In fact, so pronounced was the opposition that one of the law's primary advocates complained in the French newspaper *Le Monde* about the "extraordinary worldwide

and European mobilisation led by Scientology."

In November 2002, the Council of Europe's rapporteur concluded his investigation and presented his findings to the Parliamentary Assembly, which adopted a resolution criticising the law and calling on the French government to reconsider it. Leading French Catholics as well as the Vatican also expressed concern that the law could be used to dissolve Catholic orders.

At public hearings arranged by the Church of Scientology in Paris (below), religious and human rights leaders have exposed the individuals causing religious intolerance and discrimination.

The Brussels-based “Human Rights Without Frontiers” found that parliamentary commissions in France and Belgium had led directly to countless acts of discrimination against religious minorities.



To its credit, the French government subsequently admitted its earlier mistakes. In September 2002, a French government representative told a conference of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) that the parliamentary commission report of 1996 was “a parliamentary working document which cannot serve as the basis for any measure to be taken.” In July 2003, a senior French Foreign

Ministry official informed an OSCE conference on freedom of religion that “concerning the issue of new religious movements, the French position has evolved.... The intent is not to control, *a priori*, to suspect on the basis of prejudice, and even less to suppress one movement or another, but to focus only on known drifts\* and dangers, based on the law applicable to all citizens.... It is a completely different approach....” It is

\* drifts: idiosyncratic schools of thought or belief.

*Church of Scientology European Human Rights Director Rev. Martin Weightman regularly speaks at hearings and conferences in support of human rights and religious freedom.*



an approach whose success will depend on the degree to which the machinery of discrimination constructed over the last several years is dismantled.

In examining the sources of such abuses, the churches of Scientology looked into the activities of certain groups that agitate against all new and minority religious movements and often operate as an arm of the government or state church. To date, the Church has documented the illegal activities of members of these vested interest groups in Spain, Britain, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria and Germany and has provided the information to the authorities. For instance, when a member of a peripheral Catholic movement in Spain was kidnapped, constrained in a psychiatric hospital and force-fed psychiatric drugs because of his religious affiliation, the Church's human rights journal *Ethics and Liberty* investigated the perpetrators – members of the group "AIS Pro Juventud." After *Ethics and Liberty's* coverage, government funding of the group was abruptly cut. In 1999, the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg condemned Spain for violating the right of freedom of six members of the group CEIS who were subjected to a ten-day process of mental "deprogramming." Both the sentence of the court and the government hold the family of the arrested and the anti-religious association AIS Pro Juventud "responsible for this violation of right to freedom."<sup>4</sup>

In an overview of religion in Europe, no country serves as a better example of the struggle regarding such democratic concepts of religious freedom than Germany. In light of its past violations of human rights and its ascent to leadership in European and world affairs, Germany's standing in the religious freedom arena is of no minor importance. The Church has repeatedly published extensive details of religious discrimination in Germany and helped to inform government, media, human rights leaders and the public on the issue.

The Church painstakingly documented more than 1,500 cases of discrimination against its parishioners and members of other minority religions in Germany and presented the information to international human rights agencies. It was so compelling as to convince the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, the Human Rights Centre of Essex University, England, an ad hoc committee of British lords and scholars, the U.S. State Department, the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe and many other independent researchers that a serious problem of religious intolerance exists in Germany.

Then, in 1997, more than 10,000 Scientologists and members of other religious denominations held a march in Berlin in support of religious freedom for people of all faiths.

**The Church documented more than 1,500 cases of religious discrimination in Germany and presented the evidence to international human rights agencies.**

The Church's documentation and demonstrations contributed to a decision by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance to conduct an 11-day visit to Germany, meeting with members of minority faiths and German government officials to ascertain the facts first-hand. In his report, published in December 1997, he found that Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, the Unification Church,

<sup>4</sup> 37680/97, Ribera Blume and others v. Spain



Mormons, Scientologists and members of the Hare Krishna movement all complained of a climate of religious intolerance. The Rapporteur urged that the German government "beyond day-to-day management, must implement a strategy to prevent intolerance in the field of religion and belief." His recommendations and those of

rights bodies criticising the German government for religious intolerance, much remains to be done. In its 2004 concluding observations on Germany's adherence to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Human Rights Committee welcomed the positive developments while

The U.N. Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance found that in Germany Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'is, the Unification Church, Mormons, Scientologists and members of the Hare Krishna movement suffered from a climate of religious intolerance.



*Government officials and parliamentarians frequently participate in religious freedom conferences and workshops organised by the Church of Scientology International European Office for Public Affairs and Human Rights in Brussels.*

other human rights organisations had an impact: by March 2004, as Chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the Rapporteur was able to welcome the establishment in Germany of an independent national Human Rights Institute.

Although undeniable progress has been made, in large part due to the Church's work that led to more than 45 reports by human

expressing concern about continuing violations of the religious freedom article of the Covenant. And, in July 2004, the European Commission announced that it is taking legal action against Germany in the European Court of Justice over the government's failure to incorporate into domestic law two anti-discrimination directives that prohibit discrimination based on religion,

racial or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation and disability.

As Scientology has expanded into more than 150 countries, the churches of Scientology have increasingly adopted the role of religious freedom watchdogs and have found themselves fighting for the right to freedom of worship in countries all over the world.

## WORKING WITH RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The fall of communism in the Soviet Union opened Russia and its former satellite states to religious diversity for perhaps the first time in their history. A truly multi-ethnic nation, Russia is home to almost 150 million people. In addition to Orthodox Church membership, there are 19 million Muslims, two million Protestants, 1.3 million Catholics, more than 70 Scientology associations and 42 Jewish communities, not to mention significant numbers of Buddhists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

While the Russian Constitution of 1993 grants the right to freedom of religion, in practice that right has been severely circumscribed by a September 1997 law that set the conditions for favourable treatment towards the Russian Orthodox Church. Despite criticism from many international bodies, not to mention Russia's own Ombudsman, the law continues to provide justification for discriminatory and repressive actions against targeted religions. Nor are the religions considered "minority" the only targets; in its 2003 annual report, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) reported

that "The Catholic Church was subjected to a wave of harassment."

The Church of Scientology has responded to religious intolerance in Russia with efforts to raise public awareness of human rights and by seeking to bring together government officials and religious representatives in the cause of dialogue. In December 1999, the Church produced and funded 25,000 copies of a booklet, *Restoring and Safeguarding Freedom of Conscience: A guide for the protection of human rights*. The Moscow affiliate of the IHF distributed the booklet to interested parties throughout Russia, including university professors, sociologists, religious scholars, government officials and major human rights advocates.

In October 2001, along with the Moscow affiliate of the IHF, the Office of the Ombudsman of the Russian Federation and the Institute of Religion and Law, the Church organised a major conference in Moscow entitled "Tolerance in Today's Society." The ninety delegates who attended included representatives of the federal government, the Moscow mayor's office, UNESCO, several embassies, and a variety of religious and human rights organisations. The conference established an interfaith committee, with a representative of the Moscow Church of Scientology voted as chair. In other roundtables held by the Federal Ombudsman's Office and attended by high-level Russian government officials and religious representatives, the Church has also taken part in developing initiatives to promote religious freedom in Russia.



The Church's Human Rights Office has organised and taken part in a series of conferences to resolve human rights violations arising from a discriminatory 1997 religion law and to develop initiatives to promote religious freedom in Russia.

# Religious freedom and the future

## Creating a pluralistic society through vigilance

“I believe that human beings should be judged by the strength of their character and not by the religion they practice or the colour they’re born with. I also believe that that will start in places like this and with people like yourselves.”

— *Bashy Quraishy,*  
Chief Editor, MediaWatch

Religious intolerance became an issue of acute concern after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the face of the risk that intolerance would take root in the communities directly targeted by the attacks, the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D.C. and the Church of Scientology New York redoubled their efforts to increase understanding between different faiths. In acknowledgement of these efforts, in 2003, the president of the Founding Church was appointed chairperson of the Mayor’s Interfaith Council Education Committee in Washington, D.C. The president of the Church of Scientology New York, who, along with hundreds of Church volunteer ministers, daily assisted the Ground Zero rescue brigades and was featured in the *New York Times*, continues to work alongside major religious leaders to ensure that the aftermath of the terrorist attacks does not lead to inter-religious conflict in the city.

Above all, the work of Scientologists on behalf of religious freedom is nondenominational; it is carried out with the view that when one religion is infringed upon, the rights of all are endangered. In the last decade alone, churches of Scientology have made numerous submissions on the subject of

religious freedom to international, intergovernmental and other human rights bodies, including the United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE and the Council of Europe. In a single year, the personal contacts and written representations number in the hundreds. The Church’s European Human Rights Office is a registered NGO (non-governmental organisation) with the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Church’s representatives regularly attend OSCE and Council of Europe conferences, participate in their seminars, sponsor conferences, publish information promoting religious liberty, and work with other NGOs to increase application of human rights principles. It was in acknowledgement of these efforts that Mr. Bashy Quraishy, president of the European Network Against Racism, stated at the opening of the Church of Scientology International’s European Office for Public Affairs and Human Rights in September 2003, “I believe that human beings should be judged by the strength of their character and not by the religion they practice or the colour they’re born with. I also believe that that will start in places like this and with people like yourselves.”

There is a real need today for





*A September 2003 human rights seminar, one of many such events hosted by the Church of Scientology International's European Office for Public Affairs and Human Rights in Brussels.*

religious organisations to remain vigilant in the face of religious intolerance and discrimination. Quite apart from concerns related to terrorism, the survival of our civilisation will depend upon the degree to which each of us does his part to advance human rights. Of all such rights, religious freedom has been called the most fundamental and expansive – encompassing personal belief, thought, expression and association. It has been that

expression of freedom of conscience, which has been more vigorously disputed, defended and cherished, than any other in history.

The Church of Scientology holds that neither states, nor religious groups, nor indeed anyone, possess the right to control, either directly or indirectly, a person's religious convictions. It is a tenet that Scientologists have fought hard to establish, prompting Mr. Janssen van Raay, former chairman of the Law Committee of the European

Parliament, to declare that "after more than 100 positive court decisions upholding freedom of religion in a variety of European nations, I can truly say that the freedom of belief is alive in Europe in great part thanks to the Scientologists."

Respect for freedom of belief upholds human rights and pluralism by demanding acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's religions, races, ethnicities and cultures. This is not only a moral duty; in most democratic countries it is a legal requirement and in all nations it is sound policy, for without pluralism and diversity, real justice becomes impossible.

"If all the brightest minds since the fifth century B.C. or before have never been able to agree on the subject of religion or anti-religion, it is an arena of combat between people that one would do well to stay out of," L. Ron Hubbard observed. "In this sea of contention, one bright principle has emerged: the right to believe as one chooses."

Liberty of religious belief and practice is the cornerstone of freedom itself. By upholding that liberty, we can create a stable and peaceful future where each person can truly enjoy the freedoms that are one's birthright.

# The Scientology Prayer for Total Freedom

“Tolerance is a good  
cornerstone on which  
to build human  
relationships.

“When one views the  
slaughter and suffering  
caused by religious  
intolerance throughout  
all the history of man  
and into modern times,  
one can see that  
intolerance is a very  
nonsurvival activity.”

— L. Ron Hubbard  
Founder of the  
Scientology religion

**M**ay the author of  
the universe  
enable all men  
to reach an  
understanding  
of their spiritual nature.

May awareness and  
understanding of life expand, so  
that all may come to know the  
author of the universe.

And may others also reach this  
understanding which brings Total  
Freedom.

At this time, we think of those  
whose liberty is threatened;  
of those who have suffered  
imprisonment for their beliefs;  
of those who are enslaved or  
martyred, and for all those who are  
brutalised, trapped or attacked.

We pray that human rights will  
be preserved so that all people  
may believe and worship freely, so  
that freedom will once again be  
seen in our land.

Freedom from war, and poverty,  
and want; freedom to be; freedom  
to do and freedom to have.

Freedom to use and  
understand man’s potential – a  
potential that is God-given and  
Godlike.

And freedom to achieve that  
understanding and awareness that  
is Total Freedom.

May God let it be so.



Scientology holds in common with all great religions the dream of peace on Earth and salvation for humankind.

# Discover the facts

## Informational brochure series about the Scientology religion and its activities

**T**his is the ninth in a series of publications on the Scientology religion and its activities. Twelve in all, these brochures are being widely distributed in eight languages.

Published by the Church of Scientology International, these publications are intended to fulfil the growing public demand for more information about the Scientology religion, its beliefs and practices and community activities.

In particular, facts and figures about Scientology's wide-reaching social betterment and reform activities are presented; these are the effective solutions, based on the helping technologies developed by L. Ron Hubbard, that in the hands of Scientologists are bettering conditions across the continent.

These solutions and the lasting positive results they bring, have become the hallmark of this, the fastest growing religious movement on Earth.

We trust the information will be of interest — and use.

— Church of Scientology  
International

## For more information

To obtain more copies of this booklet or to receive other booklets in the series, contact:

**Public Affairs Director**  
**Church of Scientology International European**  
**Office for Public Affairs and Human Rights**  
Rue de la Loi 91  
1040 Brussels, Belgium  
phone: + 32 2231 1596  
fax: + 32 2280 1540  
email: [csiofficedir@scientology-europe.org](mailto:csiofficedir@scientology-europe.org)

Or contact the Director of Public Affairs at these locations:

### EUROPE

Church of Scientology Europe  
Store Kongensgade 55  
1264 Copenhagen K, Denmark

Scientology Kerk Amsterdam  
Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal  
116-118  
1012 SH Amsterdam, Netherlands

Dianetics & Scientology Centre  
Patision 200  
11256 Athens, Greece

Church of Scientology of Budapest  
Leonardo da Vinci U. 8-14  
1082 Budapest, Hungary

Church of Scientology Saint Hill Manor  
East Grinstead, West Sussex  
England, RH19 4JY

Asociación Civil de Dianética  
Iglesia de Scientology  
Calle Santa Catalina 7  
28014 Madrid  
Spain

Chiesa Nazionale di Scientology d'Italia  
Via Cadorna 61  
20090 Vimodrone  
Milano, Italy

Church of Scientology of Moscow  
103030 Moscow  
Juzmnoportovy Proezd, 27  
Moscow, Russia

Scientology Kirche  
Deutschland e.V.  
Beichstraße 12  
80802 Munich, Germany

Scientologikirken Oslo  
Karl Johans Gate 12J  
0154 Oslo

Association Spirituelle  
de l'Église de Scientology  
d'Île-de-France  
7, Rue Jules César  
75012 Paris, France

Scientologi Kyrkan  
Reimersholmsgatan 9  
117 40 Stockholm  
Sweden

Scientology Kirche Österreich  
Capistrangasse 4  
1070 Vienna, Austria

Scientology Kirche  
Freilagerstrasse 11  
8047 Zürich, Switzerland

### AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

Church of Scientology of Sydney  
201 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney, New South Wales  
Australia 2000

### NORTH AMERICA AND CANADA

Church of Scientology of Toronto  
696 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4Y 2A7 Canada

### UNITED STATES

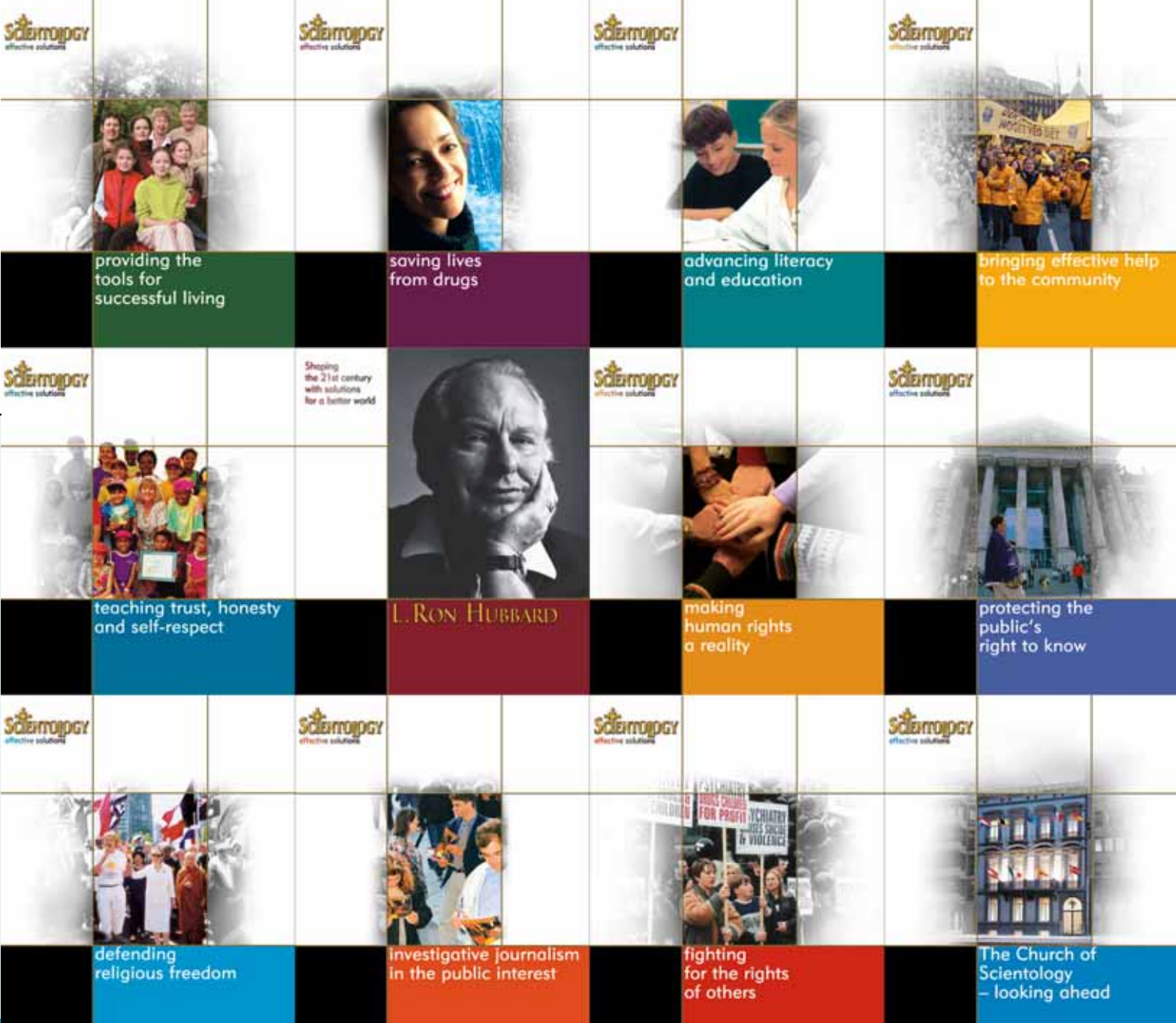
Founding Church of Scientology of  
Washington, D.C.  
1701 20th Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

### LATIN AMERICA

Federación Mexicana de  
Dianética Calle Puebla #31  
Colonia Roma, México, D.F.  
C.P. 06700, México

### SOUTH AFRICA

Church of Scientology  
of South Africa  
6th Floor Budget House  
130 Main Street  
Johannesburg 2001



## “Scientology: Effective Solutions” series:

- Providing Tools for Successful Living
- Saving Lives from Drugs
- Advancing Literacy and Education
- Bringing Effective Help to the Community
- Teaching Trust, Honesty and Self-Respect
- L. Ron Hubbard: Shaping the 21st Century with Solutions for a Better World
- Making Human Rights a Reality
- Protecting the Public’s Right to Know
- Defending Religious Freedom
- Investigative Journalism in the Public Interest
- Fighting for the Rights of Others
- The Church of Scientology — Looking Ahead

*To download copies of this or upcoming brochures from the Internet, as they are published throughout the year, please visit: [www.free2believe.org](http://www.free2believe.org)*

“AT NO TIME  
IS RELIGION MORE  
NECESSARY AS A  
CIVILISING FORCE  
THAN IN THE  
PRESENCE OF HUGE  
FORCES IN THE  
HANDS OF MAN.”

— L. RON HUBBARD