

The wacky world of Scientology

by Julianne Philpott

It's no secret that lately Scientology has gotten a bad reputation. Nevertheless, that is not to say that a bad reputation is therefore a bad reality.

The Church of Scientology was established in the 1950s by American author L. Ron Hubbard. It is the study and handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, others and all of life. It is also considered to be "the study of truth."

What, you ask, does all of this mean?

Scientology offers to help humans achieve awareness of their spiritual existence across many lifetimes. Also, humans may reach goals they have set for themselves as well as achieving new goals, such as realizing their potential in both their business and personal lives. This means, according to Scientology, that by practicing the spiritual procedures brought forth by Scientology, you can become a much more spiritual, happier, and decent human being.

Scientology is becoming a progressively more popular religion. Lycos, a search engine company, reported that the word "scientology" was included in the top 50 search items in June of 2005. Furthermore, many stars, such as Kelly Preston, Jenna Elfman, and most recognizably, Tom Cruise, have been practicing Scientology for a number of years.

As with most things in life, Scientology has its critics. Some have characterized Scientology as a pseudo, or fake religion, or even a cult. Furthermore, there are many allegations that the church is a commercial enterprise, exploiting

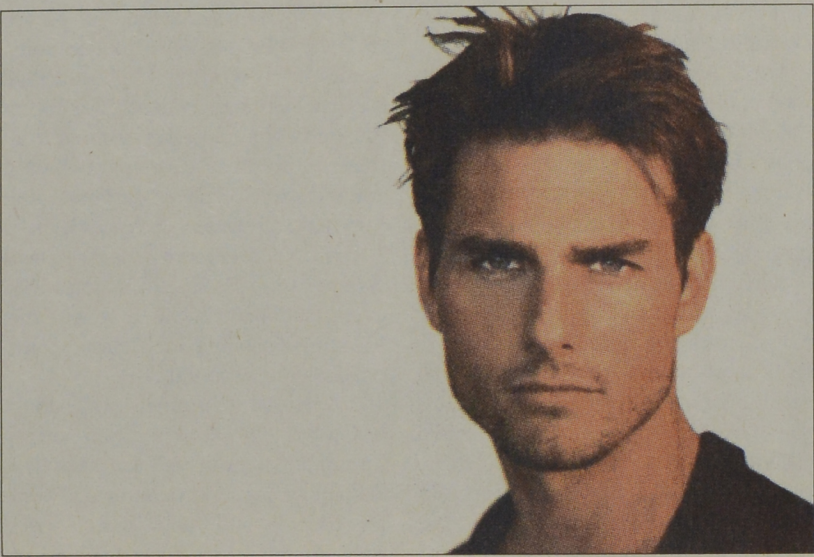
its members and using sales tactics to obtain money from their members. The Church of Scientology has been rumoured to give special attention to many celebrities in exchange for their money and world recognized publicity.

In a May, 1980 Reader's Digest article, Hubbard is quoted as saying "if a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way would be to start his own religion." Naturally, this quote has been around for decades and continuously reappears, although whether Hubbard actually said this is still being debated.

Most recently, Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes had a Scientology-inspired silent birth for their daughter Suri. Hubbard believed that the delivery room should be as silent as possible, for birth is a trauma which may induce "engrams" (a painful memory). Also, certain words spoken during birth may reappear in the baby's adult life, so any talking at all should be avoided. In contrast to Hubbard's beliefs, Dr. Patricia Devine, a maternal-fetal specialist at Columbia University Medical Center, explains, "there's absolutely no scientific evidence that taking [noise] away at the time of delivery will have any effect on outcome for the baby or mother."

As of 2006, The Church of Scientology claims that approximately 10 million people are currently members of the church.

Whether you are currently taking the side of Hubbard or of many critics around the world, the fact cannot be denied: since 1953, Scientology's beliefs and practices have been considered to be a popular, yet controversial, religion.



Internet

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turned out, impossible for it to happen this time."

"You have to think beyond; we had to think of UdeM, Mt. A, UNBSJ, and all the community campuses. We can't just do it for one group of students. If the new administration moves forward with a fixed date for election, that allows more time to plan for those exact things, to bring the vote to the students on campus."

"Our goal is to get the voters to come out, not to dissuade them."

So what of students turned away?

Students who have simply changed addresses since their last provincial vote, Harpelle explains, "are already on the voters list, they can have their name moved with ease." However, he goes on, "if you're a first time voter... there are two choices. For some students, could be an address that shows where they are in their home district, because they may want to vote for a candidate in the community they come from."

This could be something as simple as a driver's license with the right address for that student. However, many students prefer to vote for the

community where their school is - in this case, within Fredericton.

First off, Harpelle mentions, these people must vote "not at the polling station where the university is located, but where they live in the community."

Some other areas of confusion in this case were with regards to on-campus residents, some of whom, he says, "for whatever reason, were left with the impression that a list provided by student services of people occupying their residence was enough."

Unfortunately, according to Harpelle, it isn't.

"The requisite requirements for us include something that shows your name, has your civic address, and also a signature... The [students] that wanted to vote for another riding needed to do so with a special ballot, which you can only get at the returning office."

A majority of students simply had the information for their home riding, and no proof of residence in Fredericton, and thus in order to sign up, had to go to the returning office - the closest one of which was on Lincoln Road.

Since some students were unaware of all the identification required to vote,

'Masculine culture' reported at Memorial University

by Sheena Goodyear
The Muse (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. (CUP) - A report conducted in response to allegations of an unsupportive and unwelcoming environment at Memorial University has found a "masculine culture" at the St. John's, N.L., school.

Dr. Shirley Katz, an associate professor of humanities at York University and a member of the Bar of Ontario, conducted personal interviews, group meetings, telephone interviews, email correspondence and held an open forum.

"While some interviewed emphasized a positive environment, many of those interviewed reported evidence of a serious male and masculine culture," said the report.

The report was in response to concerns about the experiences of Deepa Khosla, a political science professor at the university.

Khosla passed away in November, 2005 from a brain hemorrhage caused by a brain aneurysm. Following her death, the university received messages from her family and colleagues alleging she felt a lack of support for her safety and an unwelcoming environment for women at Memorial.

On November 3, 2005, Khosla wrote a letter to Memorial president Axel Meisen detailing concerns that she

had received unwanted attention from a male graduate student.

The student allegedly approached Khosla on the street, knew her name, asked her to go out for coffee after she had already declined, and tried to register for her course despite having already taken the class with another professor.

At a September 13th briefing about the report, Meisen said it concluded interactions between Khosla and the student "were brief and apparently benign."

"Dr. Katz found that the units within the university that were approached by Dr. Khosla and the administrators who approached her responded with alacrity and utter good faith," said Meisen.

The report said the administration concluded the student posed no threat to Khosla, and her concerns grew over time because she could not find out the degree of risk.

Khosla's sisters, Prabha and Meenal, say the administration should have told Khosla the student was not a threat.

"If they knew that the student was not a threat, then why was she never, ever, ever, told that?" said Prabha Khosla. "Isn't that one of the appropriate things they should have done? I mean, she was an adult, she is a grown up. If they had said that and validated it, it would have reduced a lot of the stress and anxiety that she was experiencing."

Our country has never come close to this standard and has no scheduled plan to do so. Even the funds allegedly allocated to foreign aid do not all reach the hands for which they are intended.

"These rules are quite difficult to change. There's inertia there." However, Roter insists that such a change must take place, as the products of Third World countries can be found in our everyday lives.

"We are all connected through this challenge of poverty," Roter believes that extreme poverty can be ended within one generation. Just as New Brunswick's recycling movement was set into motion by educated children who educated their parents in turn, our generation can serve as the catalyst to end extreme poverty.

"It's going to require a broad movement of people talking about these issues and saying that they care about them." Roter called upon EWB members to motivate other people and "get them excited about making a difference." He expressed the hope that someday his grandchildren will see an exhibit on extreme poverty in a museum and "be shocked because in their world, it doesn't exist. And you

Seeing the full report would help them put the information in context, say the sisters.

The full report remains to be seen. The university is searching for someone to edit out contentious personal information.

"If we want to release the report, in order to be in compliance with the laws of the province, the information has to be... blacked out," said Meisen. "This is not a discretionary matter on behalf of the university or anybody else. This is a legal obligation."

Meisen is unsure who will do the blacking out, but he assures they will be independent from the university and have expertise in privacy legislation.

In response to her findings, Katz outlined a number of recommendations for improving the university's climate for women.

Among those recommendations is more staff training sessions about harassment issues and a thorough review of policies and procedures related to sexual harassment.

Meisen says many of the recommendations are already underway.

"I thought the forum was a good beginning," said Jean Guthrie, a women's studies professor. She said she was happy to hear the promise of working groups that will probe the recommendations of the report, review policies and write new policies.

[students] will be the ones who have built this museum, brick by brick."

Engineers Without Borders currently boasts 18,000 members across the country and has placed 150 volunteers in service projects in 25 countries. Jeff Melanson, a member of UNB's Engineers Without Borders chapter and a fifth-year civil engineering student, spent three and a half months of the past summer in Ghana. There, he worked in the district office of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. His duties included training agricultural extension agents, workers who train farmers in field working techniques, in

"I'm also very pleased to hear that that review is already underway in many places," she said.

However, Guthrie says the university needs to tread carefully when selecting people to review those policies.

"Who's going to be re-writing these policies and procedures? With references to what principles of justice? With reference to what assumptions? Are we going to turn over the review of this masculinist environment, as it has been described, to the people that have always managed and framed policy in the past, and who may see through a particular set of lenses?" said Guthrie.

Meanwhile, Prabha Khosla wonders how many other women have come forward to Katz about being harassed at Memorial, and if those allegations will be dealt with.

"There is nothing in the briefing that makes clear what is going to happen to all the men who are the ones who were involved in inappropriate behaviour," she said.

Meisen said anyone named in the report would be dealt with in accordance with the university's harassment procedures. As far as he knows, nobody has made a formal complaint.

[Editor's note: Any reference to Khosla is to Dr. Deepa Khosla. Her sisters, Prabha and Meenal, are referred to using both their first and last names.]

educational methods. He also provided computer training and consulting. In addition to this, Melanson took part in organizing a food security network of community leaders to help ensure security in times of food crises. He credits his UNB education for helping him gain the knowledge and approach to solve problems. After he graduates, Melanson plans to stay involved with EWB through a professional chapter. Does he believe that poverty can be ended in our generation?

"It's difficult, there's no question... poverty won't end really soon, but today is the time to start."



Melanie Bell/The Brunswickan

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like to see come to this group, Mullins replied, "I'd like to see the people who need this information get it... When you think of support groups, you think of people sitting in a circle [discussing their issues], that is a generalization." The two hour long meetings will be separated into an hour long information session, featuring many guest speakers, followed by an hour of discussion for the participants to share experiences and learn from each other. Some of the topics scheduled to be covered by this focus group include: organization and study tips, a look at currently prescribed medications, employment training, ADHD assessments, technology

training and several others.

Anyone interested in attending this group's meetings are more than welcome. The invitation is extended not only to those who have been diagnosed with an attention deficit disorder, but as well to those who have been affected by it or simply wish to know more about what life is like for people who live with a learning disability. Meetings are held bi-weekly in the SUB, room 103, from 6 p.m. - 8 p.m. The first topic covered will be a repeat from last week, "ADHD Fact and Fiction" with guest speaker Arthur Lamrock. This will take place on October 3. If you would like any further information on the ADHD focus group, visit www.unbsu.ca or email Bradley Mullins at academic@unb.ca.

Correction

Last week's story 'Book Buy and Sell success' was written by Julianne Philpott

Last week's story 'No choice for pro-choice: Student Union ratifies pro-life group' was co-written by Jason Henry

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