



Scientology : The Thriving Cult of Greed and Power

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Harriet Baker learned the hard way about Scientology's business of selling religion. When Baker, 73, lost her husband to cancer, a Scientologist turned up at her Los Angeles home peddling a \$1,300 auditing package to cure her grief. Some \$15,000 later, the Scientologists discovered that her house was debt free. They arranged a \$45,000 mortgage, which they pressured her to tap for more auditing until Baker's children helped their mother snap out of her daze. Last June, Baker demanded a \$27,000 refund for unused services, prompting two cult members to show up at her door unannounced with an E-meter to interrogate her. Baker never got the money and, financially strapped, was forced to sell her house in September.

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Before Noah Lottick killed himself, he had paid more than \$5,000 for church counseling. His behavior had also become strange. He once remarked to his parents that his Scientology mentors could actually read minds. When his father suffered a major heart attack, Noah insisted that it was purely psychosomatic. Five days before he jumped, Noah burst into his parents' home and demanded to know why they were spreading "false rumors" about him -- a delusion that finally prompted his father to call a psychiatrist.

It was too late. "From Noah's friends at Dianetics" read the card that accompanied a bouquet of flowers at Lottick's funeral. Yet no Scientology staff members bothered to show up. A week earlier, local church officials had given Lottick's parents a red-carpet tour of their center. A cult leader told Noah's parents that their son had been at the church just hours before he disappeared -- but the church denied this story as soon as the body was identified. True to form, the cult even haggled with the Lotticks over \$3,000 their son had paid for services he never used, insisting that Noah had intended it as a "donation."

The church has invented hundreds of goods and services for which members are urged to give "donations." Are you having trouble "moving swiftly up the Bridge" -- that is, advancing up the stepladder of enlightenment? Then you can have your case reviewed for a mere \$1,250 "donation." Want to know "why a thetan hangs on to the physical universe?" Try 52 of Hubbard's tape-recorded speeches from 1952, titled "Ron's Philadelphia Doctorate Course Lectures," for \$2,525. Next: nine other series of the same sort. For the collector, gold-and-leather-bound editions of 22 of Hubbard's books (and bookends) on subjects ranging from Scientology ethics to radiation can be had for just \$1,900.

To gain influence and lure richer, more sophisticated followers, Scientology has lately resorted to a wide array of front groups and financial scams. Among them:

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PETR DRULAK, director of the Institute of International Relations, on the Obama Administration's anticipated new proposal for Poland to jointly host an SM-3 missile system

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