

# UPDATE & DIALOG

is a journal for the Dialog Center International associates and friends. The Dialog Center International is a fellowship of Christians who – on the basis of classical Christianity – reaches out in dialog to the religious reality of contemporary society. Update & Dialog is published at least two times a year. Opinions expressed in Update & Dialog are those of the authors, when signed by them. Non-signed articles represent the views of the editors and of the Dialog Center International.

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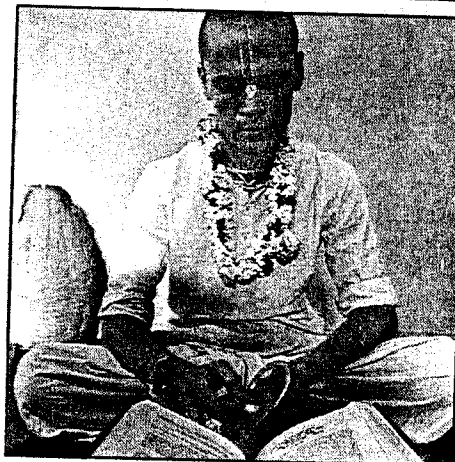
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AN ISKON MONK  
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PHOTO: FRANK  
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standing of these traditions. That is only possible in so far as the factual and contemporary religions are taken seriously. The nature of a religion is not just found by reading their classical texts and studying their philosophical schools of thought.

What a Hindu, what a Buddhist, what a Muslim is today is a decisive part of what Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam stands for.

At the same time of course not anything can be accepted as genuine Buddhism. When for instance scientologists make us believe that Scientology is Buddhism, then it is necessary to challenge them to answer the question how a "religion" with a god-concept and a soul-concept can be an expression of Buddhism, which fundamentally confesses "no god and no soul".

In a real dialog – and that is what the DCI first and last stands for, it is the task to challenge and be challenged. All tendencies to what we label "cocktail-party dialog" must be forsaken. Only in genuine confrontation can dialog come into existence.

*(This text was published in the very first issue of Update & Dialog, July 1991, which is now out of print.)*

#### NOTES:

1) The term "cult" and the term "sect" are used in a number of variations, but none of these variations are really helpful. They complicate more than they differentiate.

The term "New Religious Movement" has come to stay even if it is not perfect either. It indicates at any rate that we deal with movements, i.e. developments within something, and that the phenomenon is relatively new. In fact the newness is very relative, for good reasons takes us 125 years back to the beginning of the new religious movements in general.

2) New Age and New Religious Movements are not as terms expressing the same reality. New Age has in it a striving towards "holism" / wholeness, while for instance such important new religious movements as Scientology and Hare Krishna / ISKCON are definitely dualistic, i.e. separate soul and body.

3) Holism means that the whole person – soul and body – relates to God and to the world. Holism places an important emphasis on the body and the material world.

Dualism 1) separates soul and body and rejects the material world in order to save the soul from defilement.

Dualism 2) underlines the conflict in the world between good and evil, between truth and untruth and sees God in conflict with evil and un-

truth and puts personal involvement at the center.

Monism does away with all differences in order to reach "the one undifferentiated substance" in relation to which persons are observers and spectators in a "let go" attitude.

4) The Jewish community is the exception that confirms this rule. The reason is that comparatively more Jewish youth have joined the NRM's than any another religious youth. The Jewish activity is to a large extent expressed through parents-organizations and share their approach.

5) The American Family Foundation (AFF) is dealing with this dilemma in a very competent and genuine way. Other parents-organizations evade this issue, and one fully understands why. But evading should not mean ignoring or denying. If that is the attitude then Parents Organizations will not be able to deal with their most serious problem: the inevitability of religion.

6) Seen by an outsider in relation to the American scenery it seems to be an important factor in the present merciless struggle between the anti-cult people and the anti-anti cult people that both parties operate as paid (very well paid indeed) expert witnesses in court. Such a system must by necessity pervert the genuine discussion between partners with their heavily vested interests.

## REMARKS ON HEBER JENTZSCH AND SCIENTOLOGY

BY DR. REINHART HUMMEL

TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE ON  
"NEW RELIGIONS AND THE NEW EUROPE" IN LONDON, MARCH 1993.

Dear Friends and Colleagues! As you know *Heber Jentzsch*, President of the Church of Scientology International, has used, or rather misused, the Conference in London to launch an attack against churches, newspapers and the public in Germany and elsewhere. He has charged them with participating in a smear campaign against the Church of Scientology and has drawn a parallel with the persecution of Jews in Nazi-Germany. You will certainly know about the Scientology brochure titled *Hatred and Propaganda* where this argument is elaborated in detail.

Most of you do not need any help in assessing this type of propaganda. Even some representatives of New Religious Movements showed their uneasiness about the attacks at the conference.

Nevertheless I would like to make two points. First of all this attack was a clear

violation of the rule laid down by the conference to abstain from polemics against other groups and organisations. I have not entered a formal protest with those in charge of the conference. But I did express my concern to them that such incidents may strengthen the position of those who may stay away (and advise others to stay away) from conferences that offer a forum for propaganda and polemics of the Scientology type. I would very much appreciate if better precautions could be taken in the future to prevent such misuse of a public forum from being repeated.

As to the substance of the attack it should be pointed out: What Scientology has to face at present in Germany and other countries is not persecution of a religious minority by a suppressive and totalitarian state, but the ordinary, sometimes harsh, way in which a democratic press in a free

society is dealing with organisations that have come under public criticism. Nobody can be expected to like this way of being treated. But it is a scandalous abuse of the real victims of Nazi terror when the Scientology Church is posing in the role of a victim of a new holocaust.

During the conference I had the opportunity to tell Mr. Jentzsch that in my view Scientology itself has spoilt for some more years whatever chances of dialogue might have existed, simply by more or less identifying its critics with Nazi propagandists. Scientology leaders should make up their mind as to what they really want: Dialogue or dealing with critics and "enemies" according to their own Scientology handbooks. They cannot have it both ways at the same time. This is what I wanted to share with you since I did not like to start a dispute at the conference itself.