

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2011

CONTACT: Lisa Mansell

Phone: (727) 467-6860

mediarelationstampa@churchofscientology.net

Church of Scientology of Tampa Expands Into New Historic Landmark Ybor Square Home

This weekend marks the hundredth birthday of Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard (March 13, 1911). The celebration began Saturday evening, March 12, with a momentous Centennial Event including a two-hour biographical presentation of the Founder's life. It was attended by more than 6,000 in Clearwater, Florida.

The following day, Sunday, March 13, thousands of Scientologists next gathered for a Grand Opening ceremony to dedicate the Church of Scientology of Tampa in its new home, the landmark *Ybor Square*. The new Tampa Church was made necessary by a fourfold growth in Tampa's Scientology congregation over the past decade.

The 88,000-square-foot Church houses a Public Information Center presenting the beliefs and practices of Scientology, including the life of its Founder. The Information Center further presents an overview of all Church-sponsored humanitarian programs, including its initiatives for Human Rights, drug education and prevention, literacy and learning centers, as well as its world-famed Volunteer Minister program providing disaster relief and indiscriminate help. The Public Information Center also includes multimedia displays with nearly 500 documentary films.

Ybor Square is a designated National Historic Landmark. Originally built in the late 1880s by city father Vicente Ybor, the complex of three buildings served as the “cigar capital of the world” at the turn of the 19th century. In making Ybor Square its home, the Church has meticulously restored the historic site. It features period artifacts, including an original tobacco press, original embossed tin panel ceilings and original wrought iron steps at the entrance. Also preserved is the building’s “lectern,” the wooden platform from which “readers” read to workers to both entertain and educate.

At the Grand Opening ribbon-cutting ceremony, Church Executive Director, Lynn Irons, reflected on the significance of the new Tampa Church and the historically ethnic community it serves:

“The Cuban, Spanish, Italian, Jewish and German populations who settled here all thrived—thanks to the creation of Mutual Aid Societies. These societies were created by immigrants *for* immigrants. And it is in the same proud tradition of service to the community that we open this Church of Scientology today, in Ybor City.” Mr. Irons went on to say, “We bring the infinite value of L. Ron Hubbard’s priceless discoveries and technologies to improve the community and the human condition. Accordingly, we are very proud to expand in Ybor and in Tampa.”

Officially dedicating the building was Mr. David Miscavige, Chairman of the Board Religious Technology Center and ecclesiastical leader of the Scientology religion. In addressing the assembly, Mr. Miscavige placed the occasion in historical perspective for the worldwide religion:

“Unlike any other Scientology Church on Earth, this Church stands in the shadow of our spiritual headquarters in Clearwater. And with that comes another responsibility. For in the coming year, you will, indeed, see the ribbon falling on our new spiritual Mecca. And consequently, you’ll then see an unprecedented number of Scientologists arriving in Clearwater from virtually every country on Earth. As a matter of fact, coming soon to your neighborhood is the whole face of Scientology: Russians and Hungarians; Italians, French and Germans; Australians, Venezuelans, South Africans and Mexicans—not to mention Vietnamese, Taiwanese and Chinese. And they’re all going to want to see what now marks Tampa as a center for Spiritual Freedom and Greatness.”

Mr. Miscavige concluded his address by officially dedicating the building to the Church's Founder, L. Ron Hubbard.

The Church of Scientology of Tampa is one in a series of new Ideal Scientology Church Organizations ("Ideal Orgs"). Ideal Orgs realize the fulfillment of Founder L. Ron Hubbard's vision for the religion and its Churches. Ideal Orgs not only provide the ideal facilities to service Scientologists on their spiritual ascent, but they are also designed to serve as a home for the entire community and a meeting ground of cooperative effort to uplift citizens of all denominations.

Under the guidance of Mr. David Miscavige, 23 Ideal Churches have opened across 3 continents in the last 5 years. The Church of Scientology of Tampa is the third Ideal Org to open in 2011, following:

- The [Church of Scientology of Moscow](#), opened on February 26, 2011, located in the Russian capital's central Garden Ring, just a mile from Red Square;
- The [Church of Scientology of Melbourne](#), opened on January 29, 2011, occupying a landmark estate in the cultural capital of Australia.

For a complete list of new Ideal Churches of Scientology see [David Miscavige: At the Helm of the Era of Expansion](#).

The new Church of Scientology of Tampa stands just 7 miles from Flag, Scientology's Spiritual Headquarters, in Clearwater, where construction is moving towards completion on a new 7-story, 375-thousand-square-foot Church, scheduled to open later this year.

This new Church will crown the completion of the Church of Scientology Flag religious retreat, which has already included:

- The complete renovation, in January 2008, of the 13-story Oak Cove overlooking Clearwater Bay. The Oak Cove provides for the ministry

- of Scientology services, as well as accommodations for visiting Scientologists.
- The full restoration, in March 2009, of the historic Fort Harrison Hotel. The Fort Harrison now serves as a religious retreat for Scientology parishioners who travel to Flag from some 60 nations. Its public facilities also host a multitude of community gatherings and events. (See [The Landmark Fort Harrison Fully Restored](#))

The Scientology religion was founded by author and philosopher L. Ron Hubbard. The first Church of Scientology was formed in the United States in 1954 and the religion has expanded to more than 9,000 Churches, Missions and affiliated groups, with millions of members in 165 countries.