

Scientology Super Bowl Commercial Again Sparks Controversy

The Super Bowl commercials remain some of the most highly anticipated (and expensive) promotional spots of the year. And as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Kansas City Chiefs battled it out on the field, the Church of Scientology, widely regarded as a cult, served up another offering of New Age mystery in a spot that sparked controversy among viewers.

This year's ad, titled "Be More," at first seems innocent enough. Images of scenes from the pandemic and the stock market crash merge to those of individuals pursuing what the narration describes as "your purpose," "your passion," "your potential." The text calls viewers to "Be more. Be more!" until it concludes "Because no matter what we may face, nothing is stronger than the human spirit."

After that, the question "Curious?" appears on the screen, followed by "."

As has been true in previous years—according to *The New York Times*—Scientology aired its first Super Bowl commercial in local markets in 2013—social media lit up with comments about the commercial.

I cannot stop thinking about how creepy that Scientology ad was.

– Josh LeVasseur (@jmlevass) February 8, 2021

I did NOT just see a SCIENTOLOGY AD during the SUPER BOWL

– Maddie Crichton (@maddiecrichton) February 8, 2021

Regardless of the ad's content, more than one viewer pointed out the disconnect between an organization receiving a nonprofit designation and yet also airing a commercial on what is arguably the most prime of prime-time TV:

*Scientology has had a Super Bowl commercial 5 years in a row now. That is too much money for a "religion". Tax them!!
#SuperBowl*

– Uncle Heather (@heatherturman) February 8, 2021

Actress Leah Remini left the church in 2013 and has become known for her outspoken views on her experience there and what she calls the "abuse" she endured at its hands. Several Hollywood icons, including actors John Travolta and Tom Cruise, remain Scientology adherents. {eo}

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