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## **Meet a Scientologist—Tim Cooke, Painting with the Colors of the Rainbow Nation**

*Tim Cooke may look like the typical congenial South African gentleman, but there's more to the 69-year-old artist than first meets the eye. His profile is one of 200 "Meet a Scientologist" videos available on the Scientology website at [www.Scientology.org](http://www.Scientology.org).*

Tim Cooke grew up knowing there was something different about him. To begin with, he studied art in school when young men weren't meant to be artists—it wasn't the right thing to do.

But then, Cooke had trouble thinking the right way about *many* things in Apartheid South Africa—or so he was told.

He wasn't supposed to ask why only 16 percent of the population—the whites—could vote. When it came time for his compulsory military service

in the army that was expected to enforce the repressive laws of the land, he wasn't supposed to question why non-white men were excluded.

And there were other questions that set him a bit apart. Not satisfied with what passed for normal or acceptable in day-to-day life, he questioned conventional opinion about the nature of life and religion as well.

"I read books on Buddhism and other faiths," says Cooke. "The accepted 'truths' didn't satisfy my appetite for understanding and enlightenment. I kept casting about for answers."

One of his army mates had started looking into Scientology. It sparked Cooke's imagination. On completing his stint in the service, he found a job and started settling into his now-adult life. Then he said to the friend who was interested in Scientology, "Let's find out what they do at the Scientology Organization," and they both went in to check it out.

That was 1962—the same year Mandela was jailed in his now-legendary battle to establish human rights for the people of his nation.

"Scientology had an immediate and major impact on my life," says Cooke. "Here was a philosophy truly consistent with my own. Its creed begins with the assertion that 'All men of whatever race, color or creed were created with equal rights.' Here was a religion that recognized that the color or shape of one's body is not the measure of the woman or man—each of us is an immortal spiritual being with unlimited potential."

And here too was an understanding of aesthetics that put Cooke's art into perspective.

"There is a book on art by L. Ron Hubbard. It gave me encouragement, technology and hope as an artist," he says.

For more than a third of the last 49 years, Cooke served as a staff member of the Church of Scientology of Johannesburg, where his work helped secure the rights of South African Scientologists to practice their religion.

"There is a quality of life and existence that I have gained from Scientology," says Cooke. "Knowing who I really am and my true potential is what makes *me* the 'realist'—not those who see man as a body with a label on it. It gives me the confidence to think and be as I see fit."

View the Tim Cooke video at [Scientology.org](http://Scientology.org).

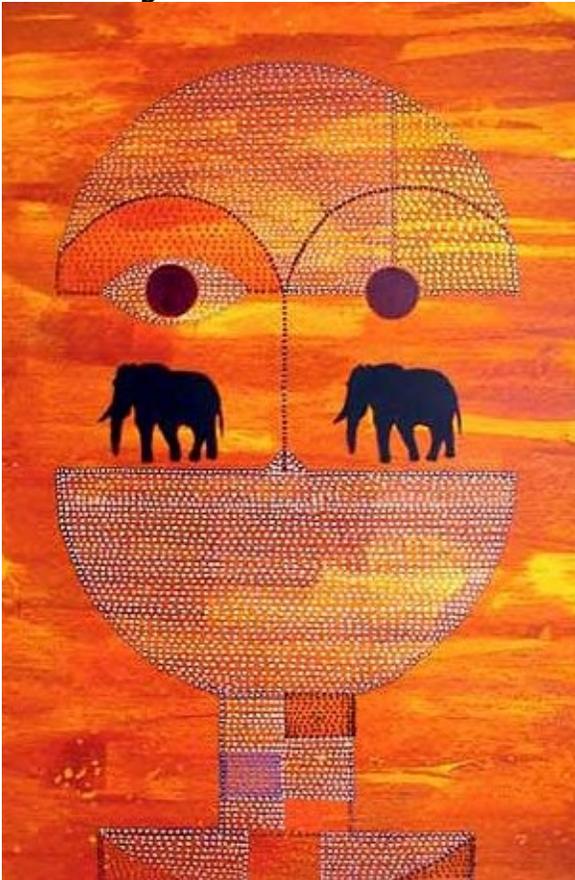
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*The popular "Meet a Scientologist" profiles on the Church of Scientology International Video Channel at [Scientology.org](http://Scientology.org) now total 200 broadcast-quality documentary videos featuring Scientologists from diverse locations and walks of life. The personal stories are told by Scientologists who are educators, teenagers, skydivers, a golf instructor, a hip-hop dancer, IT manager, stunt pilot, mothers, fathers, dentists, photographers, actors, musicians, fashion designers, engineers, students, business owners and more.*

*A digital pioneer and leader in the online religious community, in April 2008 the Church of Scientology became the first major religion to launch its own official YouTube Video Channel, which has now been viewed by millions of visitors.*



Scientologist and artist Tim Cooke of South Africa



"Vision of Africa", by South African Scientologist and artist Tim Cooke