



—Staff Photo.

E-METER IS PART OF CHURCH COUNSELING
Rev. Kuyper Uses Machine With Student.

Scientology Offers New Faith in Man

By Bruce Nelson, Staff Writer

ACROSS THE STREET from two "porno" bookstores at Lake Street and Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis, a group of religious workers are pushing the concept of man as a spiritual being.

Sandwiched between a loan company and an electrical supply outfit, the Minnesota Church of Scientology claims it can help people put their religious beliefs to practice.

Despite opposition from the federal government, the medical profession and orthodox religious groups, Scientology has become one of the fastest growing religions in the United States. After its establishment in 1955 by engineer-writer L. Ron Hubbard, Scientology has spread world-wide with a membership of 5 million. Of these, 3.5 million are in this country with about 400 in Minnesota.

A pan-denominational body, Scientology attempts to make the individual more effective by making him aware of himself as an immortal soul.

THROUGH COUNSELING, or "auditing sessions," Scientology ministers try to help church members become more aware of themselves, pinpointing what may be emotional obstacles in their lives.

The Rev. Robert Kuyper, director of the Minnesota church, said in a recent interview that a large number of young persons have come to the church seeking help with drug problems.

"We put them through our communication course and in about a week most of them have forgotten about drugs," Mr. Kuyper explained. "We've found that once the individual is aware of himself as

a spiritual being, he has no need to take drugs."

Bruce Bromley says he was "into really heavy dope thing" when a Scientology worker saw him walking by the church's headquarters.

Now he's going through a three-year training course to become a Scientology minister.

"I found people who were together enough to be able to care about me," Bromley said of the church. "Now I don't have to take drugs anymore. This message is put on. That's what I thought until I experienced it. But it's really beautiful."

Although the church is a non-profit organization, Mr. Kuyper said "donations" are taken from members. Cost of the counseling course, for example, is a \$100 "donation."

Mr. Kuyper said the average donation for persons receiving Scientology counseling is \$150 to \$200.

However, a person who receives extensive counseling and takes all of the church's courses may wind up paying \$1,000 to \$2,000 in "donations," Mr. Kuyper said.

The minister declined to release the church's income figures.

One of the keys to Scientology counseling is a battery-powered device called an "E-meter." The machine is connected to two tin cans which the person being counseled holds in his hands. When the discussion touches an area in which the person has mental problems, an electrical impulse is registered on the meter. The counselor then delves into that area until the person is "clear" about his problem.

The E-meter has been criticized by psychologists and the Federal Food and Drug Administration which claimed the device was being billed as a healing machine.

THE BATTLE with psychologists, Mr. Kuyper explained, stems from the fact that Scientology approaches counseling with the assumption that man is a "spiritual being," while psychology "treats man as an animal."

Despite controversy over the church's counseling program, scores of Minnesotans claim they have been helped by Scientology.

Among them is Thomas Waite, an executive with Waico, a mortgage financing and investment firm.

Waite said he joined the Scientology organization three years ago when his business was 'going well' but facing potential problems that could force its collapse.

He said, "The problems I had very likely would have destroyed my business except that Scientology increased my awareness enough to see the problem thoroughly."