

Why minister defected

THE COSTLY SEARCH FOR 'TOTAL FREEDOM'

The rev. Lorna Levett, Australian born counsellor, who has faced the wrath of the Church of Scientology by her defection in Calgary, says she resigned because she did not think some students were getting their money's worth.

She told the News this week that she had persuaded people to spend over \$200,000 in Scientology since she opened her Calgary franchise (later called a mission) in 1968.

"Well over \$100,000 they sent to the Los Angeles organization," Levett said in a prepared statement explaining why she left the church and led some 30 Calgary members with her.

"I was being used by the organization to exploit people by promising them intangibles that I had been indoctrinated into believing Scientology could and would deliver - for a price."

COUNSELLING

The minister said the price varied from \$50 per hour to \$200 for 12 1/2 hours and some processing could cost as much as \$1200 for a couple of hours.

About 1972 she started to realize that not all people were getting a fair deal. People sent to Los Angeles were pressured to sign up for more and more extras.

Then the cost of auditing went to \$50 per hour, double its former price.

SEEK FREEDOM

"I was horrified at this, and then I discovered that people would simply dig deeper and still come up with money. And I went along with this and even complained when another franchise holder cut prices on it.

"I could see that people had the money for Total Freedom, whatever the price. Then I began to suspect that they were on a never-ending chase and the total freedom was another step away and the path was ever lengthening."

but they were not always what were promised. She had given over 6000 hours of counselling using Scientology techniques.

One old woman of 70 spent over \$8000 in the last two years in the hopes of becoming totally free. She still hopes and pays for total

freedom in Scientology. Another person has spent over \$27,000.

Some "clears" returning from Los Angeles had psychiatric problems.

Mrs. Levett now says she regrets she did not have the

(continued on page 9)

HIGH COSTS

Levett said she had observed that spiritual counselling did get results

Total freedom

(continued from page 3)

courage to face the facts before but she had been blinded by her own training and aspirations.

EXPELLED

The rev. Harvey Schmiedeke, public relations official for the Church of Scientology, says in reply that Mrs. Levett's theological certificates were suspended months ago in an attempt to inhibit her unorthodox religious practices.

Several attempts at rehabilitation had failed and Mrs. Levett had been "duly expelled".

He claimed that despite religious dissenters, the church had continued to grow steadily at a rate of 400% annually. A new mission had been opened in Calgary at 1129 17th ave. SW.

"Whatever Mrs. Levett is doing, she is not doing Scientology and the public should be aware of this. It is our view that Mrs. Levett is sympathetic to institutional psychiatry and practices currently employed there."

MENTAL HEALTH

The church is now embroiled in a fight with the Canadian mental health association which it claims receives over \$2 1/2m a year from public funds and over half goes directly into their own pockets in the form of salaries, office furniture etc.

The CMHA was accused of feeding false reports to the press to justify its own failures.

Schmiedeke took issue with an article which appeared in this newspaper and the Rocky View News. He pointed out that the Church of Scientology mother church was in England, not Hollywood, and that the church had never been proscribed in Britain.

He said for a period the British government had restricted entry of foreign students.

EMIGRANTS

The rev. Levett says that her disagreement with the

organization started in 1971 when she refused to help Canadian members to cross the border into the USA to work as illegal immigrants.

She said in a signed statement to the News that she knows of 16 people from the Edmonton area alone who crossed the border and were still in the USA. (They may be considered by the organization as students rather than workers.)

ORDERS

Levett also said that in January 1974 she objected to the organization using the name of Calgary franchise (a non-profit limited corporation) in a bookstore.

"I was told by the guardian for all of Canada which is 'higher authority than any civil law' (his words) that I would be 'terminatedly handled' if I didn't cooperate. I didn't.

"On Feb. 17 I was ordered to Toronto at my own expense for special handling. I refused. I was then ordered to England for 'very' special handling. I refused. On April 4 my certificates were suspended. On April 16 the franchise charter was

cancelled for refusal to cooperate."

DISCIPLINE

On Calgary cable tv channel 10 last Friday, Levett's assistant minister John Hooker (who also defected) said the organization had secret instructions for imposing discipline.

He estimated that the mother church had a weekly turnover of about \$1.5m and he thought that it used a numbered bank account in Switzerland.