

St. Paul Dispatch

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Church of Scientology sues AMA for \$1.6 million

Associated Press

The American Medical Association (AMA) is among several defendants in a \$1.6 million libel suit filed Friday by the Church of Scientology of Minnesota.

Other defendants in the suit filed in Ramsey District Court include the Minnesota State Medical Association Foundation (MSMAF), several foundation officers and Ralph Lee Smith, a writer for the AMA's "Today's Health" magazine.

The church contends the AMA secretly hired Smith to do articles attacking various groups considered by the AMA hierarchy to be a threat to its financial interests.

THE SUIT further maintains that the Minnesota State Medical Association and MSMAF distributed an article by Smith containing false information about the Church of Scientology despite being informed prior to distribu-

tion that the article was erroneous.

"In its ill-conceived quest for absolute control of health care in the United States, the AMA has spread about defamatory rumors concerning several groups with an almost paranoid zeal," said Rev. Robert Kuyper, Minnesota spokesman for the church, in a statement announcing filing of the suit.

"... Their apparent belief that our church threatens their would-be monopoly is absurd. "It is a firm policy of the church that a person suffering from a physical ailment should consult a medical doctor," he said.

Kuyper said Scientologists maintain that lasting world peace can be brought about through a philosophy of social reform.

Spokesmen for defendants in the suit could not be reached for comment.