

A former victim now helps people escape "brainwashing" sects

# The rock drummer out to beat the cults

Last week cult expert Jon Caven-Attack set up a meeting in Exmouth and persuaded a member of the Church of Scientology to return to her family. The Echo's Peter Hardy now talks to the man who has dedicated his life to exposing cults which he says brainwash their members.

FOR NINE years, former rock drummer Jon Caven-Attack was under the spell of a "religious" sect known as the Church of Scientology.

Now, outside the cult, Jon has pledged his life and a full-time career to expose the workings of an organisation which has attracted thousands of followers.

The cult, which, like the Moonies, is accused of brainwashing its members, is thriving and has between 50,000 and 100,000 members.

Since leaving the "Church" in 1983, Mr Caven-Attack, now aged 30, has helped around 100 people leave the sect and has influenced many others. He lives in East Grinstead where the church's British operation is based.

He has already written one book. A Piece of Blue Sky, which came out last October, and is now working on three others.

He is a consultant on the Church of Scientology and is fast becoming an expert on the techniques of mind manipulation, which he says is used by advertising companies and by politicians to put over their message.

Things like trigger words or colour matching for certain products can sink suggestions deeper in the mind than the conscious on-looker realises.

Last week, he and two American cult experts travelled to Exmouth to help a mother and father retrieve their daughter from the grip of the Church of Scientology.

After luring her to a guest house in the town, they spent three days trying to convince the girl of the truths behind the teachings of the late L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of the movement. The girl then agreed to return with her parents to their home in the North of England.

Mr Caven-Attack refers to L. Ron Hubbard as a stage hypnotist whose book, The Science of Survival, first drew him into the cult.

"I was in a pretty receptive state of mind at the time," he recalls.

"I had just come back from a tour of France where I had not been able to find one gig to discover that my girlfriend was living with one of my best friends and they were intending to move out to New Zealand.

"I was just hooked by it. It wasn't a religious thing and there weren't any drugs or electric shock treatments.

"You were just going to sit down and talk over the traumas you had lived through in the past and it seemed eminently sensible."

Mr Caven-Attack said he did not have any money and had to scrape together the £5 for his first communications course.

It is these courses, known collectively as The Bridge, that can cost their students up to £250,000 to complete.

"The promises at the end of it all were that I would become super human and gain the ability to make lots of money.

"I was trained in how to recruit other people in Scientology and altogether got about 50 people in. Luckily, most didn't stay. The only rules were to avoid communists, journalists and homosexuals.

"They didn't pay me and they didn't provide me with anything. I was simply a happy hooker for L. Ron Hubbard."

Mr Caven-Attack knows of Scientologists who have parted with over 450,000 dollars in six weeks to the cult. Well known household names regu-



© A HELPING HAND: Former rock musician Jon Caven-Attack has now devoted his life to helping the victims of "religious" sects. He himself was held "under the spell" of the Church of Scientology for nine years.

larly contribute, and the church is thought to be worth many millions of pounds.

"The Bridge is never ending," said Mr Caven-Attack.

"Prices for the courses really went crazy from 1978. They were going up by 10 per cent per month, which was a 320 per cent per annum rise.

"After two years, a £6 course was costing £120. I managed to reach the

fifth OT (Operating Thetan) level. All the time you were aiming to rid your lives of body satans. I spent very little, probably about £8,000 to £7,000."

According to cult experts Conway and Siegelman, the Church of Scientology has the most debilitating set of hypnotic rituals of any cult in the United States. Meanwhile, the cult's late creator continues to be revered in three sacred shrines where all his writ-

ings are preserved — etched on to stainless steel to stand the test of time.

The shrines are multi-million pound caverns hewn out of rock and secured with titanium steel vault doors.

L. Ron Hubbard has been the subject of many books since his work to create the Church began in the 1950s. Mr Caven-Attack's 420 page book is available direct from his home at Avalon, Cranston Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, price £16.95.