

Letters to the Editor

After dabbling... I still say stay away

AT OUR monthly meeting held on Monday I asked how many of those who signed the letter from the clergy of East Grinstead (report and Letters, May 7) had visited Saint Hill. Four of us had.

Our knowledge of Scientology is not confined to anti-Scientology literature, as Barbara Bradley seems to imply. Speaking for myself, I visited Saint Hill in September 1985. I have dipped into dianetics, which I admit did not interest me at all.

My first contact with Scientology was with a group of students from Brooklands Technical College, Weybridge when I attended a series of lectures on L.R. Hubbard and Scientology given by two American gentlemen invited in by the liberal studies department.

This was in 1972 when the cult was fairly new to

our country. We were treated to a demonstration of work with an E-meter and sat in on an audit session.

My next contact with Scientology was at Bantstead Psychiatric Hospital when some individual Scientology members had upset a number of nurses regarding the treatment of mentally ill patients. This was fully discussed in the school of nursing in the hospital.

After these experiences I would still say — stay away from Scientology.

Please, Barbara Bradley, we the clergy of East Grinstead are not as un-Christian as you seem to imply. I still stand by the letter which was published over our names.

K.F. GASKIN

St James Road, East Grinstead

Statistics

I URGE the nine church leaders to find out the actual statistics of what the church of Scientology reform groups achieve on an international level.

The following are only a very few examples:

Narconon (drug rehabilitation).

This is recognised by the governments of Sweden, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland as a safe and highly effective programme. They provide funding for Narconon's drug education and support delivery of the drug rehabilitation programme.

Applied Scholastics (study)

In the People's Republic of China, this group has been active since 1984, since then more than 5,000 teachers and industrial managers have been trained in L. Ron Hubbard's study technology.

In South Africa the study technology has been taught to 2,000,000 underprivileged children.

Criminon (Crime)

This group runs programmes in 203 prisons, with more than 3,200 having successfully participated in Criminon programmes.

Way to Happiness

In 1992, the South African police requested 114,000 copies of the Way To Happiness booklet, one for every policeman in the country. In one year alone 324 international major recognitions were received by the Way To Happiness Foundation.

Citizens Commission on Human Rights

As a direct work of this group, in 1991 the United Nations unanimously issued for the first time a body of principles to protect persons with mental illness and improve mental health care — a mental health Bill of Rights.

These groups represent some of the principles of Scientology, I find it very strange that the local Council leaders are opposed to our principles.

RACHEL RICKETTS
Crescent Road
East Grinstead

Natural law

WHO IS stirring up the local "God Squad" again?

Possibly the same one who did so three years ago.

Is there one of them honest enough to come up with the name, rank and serial number this time?

Obviously many more of the general public read the Courier than attend local churches. May I share with my fellow general public something I have now read about Scientology?

Do not harken too well to he who would tell you this system will not work. He would not feel safe if people around him grew too strong. The wise man tests before he talks. The critic but follows the fact of a cynical and apathetic age. You have a right to your own opinion. This system works or it does not, according to your experience. Not all the authorities in Christendom can alter natural law.

J. HODGSON

Cantelupe Road
East Grinstead

Let's love

I HAVE been following the Christian-Scientology debate through your paper with great interest over the past month.

I originally got involved with Scientology in the mid 1960s as a result of trying to understand why a friend took an overdose. I soon came to believe that Scientology was the total answer to man's problems, and threw myself into studying it, which culminated in my doing the "clearing course".

However, due to various unhealthy relationships that I had prior to coming into Scientology I fell foul of ethics and was finally expelled from the church.

This was a terrible blow to me because I believed in Scientology with all my heart and soul. I felt totally alone. It was at this point that God graciously touched my life and I came to know that Jesus is alive today.

I realised that He knows all about Scientology and that He loves me, a Scientologist. If indeed God loves Scientologists and understands Scientology, should we Christians dare to do less?

I do not think it is good enough to declare that we do not hate Scientologists; we need to affirm our love for them, then we may find that we are freed from fear of Scientology and can start to understand the subject. (1 John 4:18).

As a Christian Scientologist I welcome any dialogue that might help to bring understanding.

G. THRELFALL

Western Road
Liss

After the church, the anti-drug campaigners hit back

Same old line of attack

HERE we go again — "Churches Speak Out on Scientology". The same old gang repeating the same old doggerel they did just over two years ago to this date, and I expect they will be saying the same things over again in two years time.

The clerics purport to know what is best for your spiritual development and yet they know nothing of the world except what they are told to know by their bishops; and of the universe they know nothing.

They are just as much under the influence of the implant station as everyone else.

Did I say implant station? Oops! Sorry, it's supposed to be a secret. Ah well! You had to be told some time. Your age of innocence had to end somewhere.

If I have aroused your curiosity and you want to know more, and believe me there is a lot to know, then step into the Dianetics shop, but beware of those nasty pieces of glass on the floor.

J. REVILL

Bricklands
Crawley Down

First stone

I SEE the Rev Roger Brown is leading his religious trade union again (Letters, May 7). I think he should not cast stones unless he is free of sin.

The main churches have a lot to answer for. There is raving in the aisles at Canterbury, talk of gay weddings in the Church with high homosexuality in the clergy, and many other matters that are now reported in the Press.

In my young days the Church was the moral guardian of society; they would take the lead in matters of family value. What direction are Mr Brown and company giving us now, with 14- and 15-year-olds getting pregnant, drug trafficking in our local schools, vandalism and thuggery common in the town?

I visited the Mormon Temple when it was open to the public earlier this year and spoke to many Mormons. I have a Scientology family living next door to me, and I can tell Mr Brown one thing about these new religions, they bring up their young people to be ethical and honest.

The kids don't drink, take drugs, get pregnant unwed, vandalise or beat up old people. These may be old fashioned ideas, but whilst these people bring up their children to have moral values I have a great deal more respect for them than for Mr Brown and his cronies.

(Name and address supplied)

Successful

BORN into a devout Christian family, I am truly shocked to read the uninformed words of the local clergy about the drug rehabilitation programme sponsored by the Church of Scientology.

As a point of interest, this programme was not started by a Scientologist. It was started by a prisoner in Arizona State Prison, one Willie Benitez, who read a small book by Mr Hubbard and decided he might be able to do something to help himself and his fellow-prisoners, many of whom were imprisoned for drug offences or drug-related offences.

From that small beginning in 1965 Narconon grew into an international programme, and has the highest success rate (over 76 per cent) in the world. In some countries it is government sponsored.

As anyone who has helped drug addicts knows, it is not easy work. It requires dedication. In addition to the daily care involved in getting individuals through the drug-rehabilitation programme, the Narconon staff also give lectures to schools throughout the country about the risks of drug taking.

There are many testimonials on file, which I would be happy to show the Rev Roger Brown and his colleagues, from grateful headmasters of both state and private schools who have been glad of the realistic lectures given to their youngsters at an age when they need the guidance.

While the Narconon programme is not itself directly run by the Church of Scientology, the programme uses the technology of L. Ron Hubbard, as does the church, and Scientologists are proud to be associated with a programme that daily saves countless lives around the world.

Many former addicts, once they have put their lives in order, do of course go on to help others come off drugs, and some do indeed become Scientologists, wanting to

gain further benefit from Hubbard's extensive humanitarian works.

I warmly invite all the reverend gentlemen to visit Narconon, to study the programme, see it at work, and talk to those taking part. When they have done this they may come to understand that lives are being saved, and realise that those who have the same purposes should join together to create a better world.

S.W. HEBBLEWHITE

Elizabeth Crescent
East Grinstead

Sociable

THE members and staff of the Church of Scientology are demonstrably civilised, educated, well behaved people who give their time and devotion towards helping themselves and other people to lead better, happier and more productive lives — demonstrable by the literally millions of success stories from individual scientologists which exists in church files around the world.

The Scientologist is a better class of sociable person who really does care about others and what goes on in the world.

However, a certain small percentage of people, about two-and-a-half per cent, possess paranoid mental characteristics of hate, not pertinent to the ongoing situation towards good intentioned people such as the Scientologists.

Such people lack a real concept of what helping others is.

Scientology technology works uniquely to better the individual in the positive direction that individual sees fit and wanting.

N. KAYE

Coombe Mill Road
East Grinstead

Outraged

I WAS quite simply outraged to see the Rev Roger Brown leading such an unspeakable attack on a religious group he apparently knows nothing about.

I was equally shocked to discover from church representative Barbara Bradley that not one of the so-called experts on Scientology had even visited Saint Hill.

How can they possibly say anything about the principles of Scientology?

Have they studied the creed of the Church? The aims of Scientology? The Scientology code of honour?

All these items are easily accessible to them or anyone else at the bookshop in town, at Saint Hill or better still, ask a Scientologist — they will gladly show anyone the information.

The clergy led by Mr Brown seem to be attempting a Nazi style disinformation campaign — not very Christian.

Having personally worked up and down the country with many other volunteers campaigning against drugs with a positive message of "say yes to life" I am appalled at the throwaway

remarks about anti-drug campaigns.

The work done by the Say No to Drugs Campaign involves radio shows, articles in magazines, lectures. All of these items promote the say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life message with success and we will continue to do this.

Perhaps Mr Brown and his clergy would like to sign the Say No to Drugs Pledge and work with other like minded people setting a good example to his parishioners. Contact me for details.

MIKE RICKETTS

Chairman, Say No To Drugs
Campaign
(Sponsored by The Church
of Scientology)

Crescent Road
East Grinstead

Ganging up

THE recent editorial (April 23) claiming to take the high moral ground over the Scientology debate should be viewed with a certain amount of incredulity. The pattern is obvious and there for all to see.

Scientology has never been given a free unbiased press in East Grinstead. The only time you find articles on the subject is when Scientology has to defend itself against attacks by, usually, Christian groups and disgruntled ex-members.

It is noted that local Christian clergy have ganged up (I won't glorify their actions with the word united) to condemn out of hand the religious beliefs of others, which is a direct inflammatory action aimed at whipping up emotion in the Christian population in this area.

Their accusations contain generalisations and not cases. I can only surmise that they are experiencing a deep-seated unease on the examination of the current state of their own religion.

With more and more of their ranks moving house to the Catholic faith, they may truly see the day when they themselves are relegated to the status of a religious sect.

The truth is that all this critical nonsense will lead nowhere and only bring more hate and alienation into an already overwhelmed community.

So please let's not start yet another religious war on our own doorstep.

(Name and address supplied).