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CHICHESTER
The News

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BIGGEST SALE IN THE SOUTH

Chichester Anglican leaders advise youngsters against scientology

CULT CHURCH WARNED OFF

Cult condemned

Church leaders have condemned the cult of Scientology which is growing in Chichester.

In a letter to the Observer 14 Anglican clergy have warned residents to stay away from the cult's new centre in the city.

And they have urged people not to complete "free personality tests" which cult members give out around the city centre.

The "church" of Scientology has stepped up its presence in the city over the past year and opened the Chichester Dianetics Centre by the railway station a month ago.

Now 14 Anglican church leaders from the Chichester and Selsey areas who are concerned by the cult's attempts to recruit young people have issued a warning.

They said: "We believe it is most important the general public should be kept aware of repeated attempts to present Scientology as something acceptable and beneficial to society.

"We believe the opposite is true and would urge everyone not to get involved."

The group included clergy from the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, Chichester College of Arts, Science and Technology, St Wilfrida Hospice and the Chichester hospitals, as well as vicars and rectors from the Chichester and Selsey areas.

Critics and former Scientologists say people who send off for the free personality test are put under pressure to sign up for expensive courses.

The cult was branded "obnoxious, corrupt, sinister and dangerous" by a High Court judge, and called "socially harmful" by a former Government minister.

Beware the lure of the questionnaire

Sir, - We, Anglican clergy working in and near Chichester, write concerning the cult of Scientology.

Although the practices of Scientology have been exposed for what they are, both in the national press and in the courts, we believe that it is most important that the public should be kept aware of repeated attempts to present Scientology as something acceptable and beneficial to society.

We believe that the opposite is true and would urge everyone not to get involved, either by visiting the new Dianetics Centre or by completing the "Free Personality Test" questionnaire, which is their basic

recruiting technique.

Signed: Richard Griffiths, St Pancras, Chichester; Peter Carmichael, St Anne's, East Wittering; Roger Davies, Lavant; Maurice Jewell, St Wilfrid; Clive Ashley, Chaplain to the Chichester Hospitals; Victor Cassam, Rector of Selsey; David Pollard, Priest-in-Charge and Chaplain to Chichester College; J. H. Lyon, St Paul's, Chichester; G. L. Driver, St Peter's, Selsey; P. M. Gilbert, St Andrew's, Tangmere and Oving; K. Woolhouse, West Sussex Institute of Higher Education; Michaela Collis, Rector of Fishbourne; V. G. de R. Malan, Hunston and North Mundham; Keith Catchpole, Rural Dean of Chichester.

By BRIAN WARREN

The News

Church leaders in the Chichester area have got together to issue a tough warning about scientologists.

They are concerned that the cult is increasing its influence in the district.

A warning has been issued by 14 Anglican church leaders from Chichester and Selsey, who are particularly concerned about the cult's attempts to recruit young people.

The "church" of scientology has stepped up its presence in Chichester in the last year and has just opened a new centre near the railway station.

In a statement, church leaders said: "We believe it is most important the general public should be kept aware of repeated attempts to present scientology as something acceptable and beneficial to society.

"We believe the opposite is true and would urge everyone not to get involved."

Included in the group are clerics linked with St Richard's Hospital and St Wilfrid's Hospice, both Chichester.

They are warning residents to stay away from the cult's new Chichester centre and are urging people not to complete "free personality tests" which cult members give out around the city.

Critics and former cult members say the free questionnaires play on insecurities and doubts.

People who completed them were persuaded they were depressed, unstable and needed help from a series of expensive courses on self-improvement.

The movement is believed to be planning to open a new Portsmouth base.

Scientology spokeswoman Sheila Challif said: "It seems that these reverend gentlemen have such a problem with diminishing congregations that they have a great deal of time to spend maligning other religions."