

# Rector fights cults

A leading Chichester churchman has declared war on the sinister cults besieging the city with their "mind-control" tactics.

Richard Griffiths, the rector of St Pancras, is bringing the country's leading experts to Chichester for a pioneering programme of cult awareness seminars.

Starting on May 10, the seminars will look at the dangers of Scientology, occultism, New Age and ritual magic.

The Rev Griffiths said: "We are concerned about cult activities in Chichester, particularly Scientology, and we feel that people ought to be made aware."

Invitations have already gone out to heads of schools, medical people and community leaders.

The seminars will be based on a formula successfully used

at Hull University, but are believed to be the first of their kind in the South.

Mr Griffiths, a long-standing critic of cult activities, said they would address a growing problem on the streets of Chichester.

"The problem is bigger than some people realise. We have got some cults which are fairly obvious in their tactics giving out leaflets, and then you have got Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons that do quite a lot of door-to-door work.

"But there are others like occultism that are more insidious in what they do", he added.

At worst cults and sects employ mind control techniques which then rob would-be members of their individuality.

"Obviously the methods will vary from cult to cult. In some cases it is a question of bringing people into a sort of total

environment in which they are led to a fairly pressurised existence so that they begin to conform more and more."

The seminars will run at St Pancras Church, Eastgate Square, on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm starting on May 10 and running until December.

The first will look at "Cults Today". June's meeting will look at Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, and then in July the subject will be occultism and ritual magic.

There will be no seminar in August, but the series will continue in September with a look at Scientology. Further seminars will explore New Age management training, getting out of a cult and, in December, "From Soft Sell to Hard Line: A survey of New Age influences".

All seminars will be free of charge, but donations will be requested to cover expenses.