

New pressure group under fire from cult

A NEW pressure group calling for government action to raise public awareness of cults has come under fire from the Church of Scientology.

Founders of Families Under Scientology Stress (Fuss) say that in the few weeks it has been formed it has been amazed at how many people have come forward from all parts of the country pledging support.

A group spokesman said: "Most of our supporters have been through difficulties of having a family member in Scientology and it is not an experience we would wish on anyone. We are determined the general public should be warned."

Fuss wants government action on clarification, education and regulation particularly in relation to Scientology.

The spokesman said: "We want the Government to clarify the position of Scientology's religious status. At law is it a recognised religion or not? Under prison service rules it is a non-permitted religion."

By Cathy Buss

"We want education in schools, colleges and universities so people are aware of recruitment techniques used by cults.

"We are also asking for fair, reasonable and effective regulation through a Psychological Practices Act that would protect the public from dangerous 'therapies'. With over 500 cults in Britain, many practising mind control, do we have to wait for our own Waco before regulation is in place?"

Summonses

Scientology spokesman Greg Ryerson, based at the cult's Saint Hill headquarters, dismissed Fuss as a "made for television group".

His comments came as a half-hour programme investigating the Church of Scientology was due to be screened on Independent Television channels yesterday (Thursday) evening.

On Tuesday the Church of Scientology issued summonses against Twenty Twenty Television — which makes Carlton's *The Big Story* — executive producer Claudia Milne and reporter Alison Braund.

The private prosecutions allege they obtained services by deception, contrary to section one of

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the Theft Act. As the East Grinstead Courier went to press producer Claudia Milne said: "We are obviously seeking to have these summonses quashed. This attempt to interfere with free speech is a serious threat to journalism."

Mr Ryerson said: "This group Fuss is riding on the back of this television programme to give publicity for the show."

● The Church of Scientology is currently threatening legal action against a Tonbridge man who it claims conspired to "injure and defame" the cult.

Richard Price sought help from a support group in a bid to get his sister out after she became a member of the cult five years ago. Mr Price also spoke to a researcher from *The Big Story*, and he claims that he and his wife are now suffering from harassment and intimidation.