

## London Church of Christ recruits homeless

Cult experts in Great Britain are warning the homeless in London to be wary of recruiters for the London Church of Christ, also known as the North London Christian Fellowship and the London City Fellowship. The group is believed to be targeting the homeless in a new recruitment drive.

London Church of Christ claims about 1,300 members. It is planning to offer shelter to homeless people who cannot find government housing or shelter from private charities.

Ian Haworth, general secretary of the Cult Information Centre, said: "I am very concerned for the welfare of anybody who would be staying with members of this pseudo-Christian cult for even a few hours."

Former member Jane Peters echoed

his fears. Peters said she spent three years with the London Church of Christ.

"At first I found them very attractive and welcoming. But then they started to put pressure on me not to let them down," she said. "It was a complex guilt trip. I felt I couldn't escape. I think they are the last people in the world to help the homeless."

Birmingham University in London has banned the group's recruiters. Father Nicholas Latham of the university chaplaincy said the group "can be very damaging because they demand so much time and commitment. Work and relations with family and friends suffers."

This is not the first time the London Church of Christ has targeted the homeless as potential recruits. One of London's largest centers for the home-

less complained a year ago they were "infiltrated" by a group of members trying to recruit the homeless.

A spokesperson for the London Church of Christ said the group is always searching for new members and would use "any possible way to enroll them." He also stressed that the homeless project was well-meaning.

The London Church of Christ is part of the controversial American-based Church of Christ movement, formed in 1979 by Kip McKean. It was first known as the Boston Church of Christ, and is not affiliated with the long-established Churches of Christ movement or the United Church of Christ.

(From "Fears grow for homeless given shelter by cult" by Charlie Pretzlik, *The London Telegraph*, Dec. 20, 1992, p. 4.) ❖