

info **SECTE CULT**

25 YEARS
(1980 - 2005)

News from Info-Cult

December 2006, #8

INFO-CULT TODAY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ICSA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2007 INFO-CULT

INFO-CULT TODAY

The principal means by which people contact us is by phone, even with the increased use of the internet. In the past, most requests were received by phone and by mail. Over the last few years mail requests have diminished to a trickle while emails have replaced it.

As the only center of its kind in Canada we are regularly called upon by, among others, the media for information and or interviews, by high school and college students doing a project; university students working on their masters or doctorates; professionals (mental health, legal, etc...) seeking information to help with a client or as a referral.

Those types of calls are only a small part of what Info-Cult responds to on a daily basis. Most of the requests we receive come from:

- ◆ Individuals concerned about someone close to them who is involved in what they believe is a "cult". Their concerns often stem from the dramatic personality change they have seen in their family member or friend. They call looking for information, and assistance in dealing with their situation;
- ◆ Former members who have recently left their group. This includes those who are second generation former members (born or raised in the group);
- ◆ Former members who have left a number of years ago and find themselves in a situation where their experience continues to have an impact on their lives;
- ◆ Members of groups who are starting to have doubts about their involvement or just want to know our views on their group.

We receive hundreds of these types of calls every year.

The groups we receive requests about vary from being religious to therapeutic in nature and from large international ones with hundreds to thousands of members to local groups with relatively few members. Every caller's concerns are dealt with individually. Every case is unique and complex though people often wish, when calling, for a miracle solution.

We are not miracle workers; however, in just about every instance we were able to provide at least support, referrals, information or some help that proved of assistance to them.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Article

“Perdus dans la controverse entourant la polygamie” is an updated and translated article on polygamy by Michael Kropveld and Michael Langone. Similar to the **English version** the article comments on recent events in the media about polygamy, to highlight both our organizations concerns about the emotional, psychological and other needs that former members of closed high demand groups face once they leave or are kicked out.

Media

Info-Cult staff and board members are approached on an ongoing basis by the media for background information or for interviews on “cults” and related subjects, and often in response to a specific situation.

Two situations of note among others in the last few months concern the **Mission de l'esprit saint located in the region of Joliette, Quebec and the case of Nathalie Gettliffe**. These two situations may appear different but have a feature in common. The decision to take the law into your own hands in order to achieve one's perceived goal – save the children.

Mission de l'esprit saint

The Mission de l'esprit saint is a group founded in Quebec in 1915 by Eugène Richer a former Quebec policeman. In 1970s the Mission splintered into a number of groups with the same name. This case involves the Mission in the region of Joliette a tightly run and closed group which has been operating their own school for years without a government permit. For the last couple of years the government has attempted to get the Mission to conform to the law. The group views society and its structures as evil and corrupt and believes that their way of life is the only way to live.

This group's case has focused considerable attention on the issue of illegal schools in the province.

Since 1982 Info-Cult has received about 320 inquiries concerning the different Mission groups. Many of the callers have been families concerned about loved-ones who've joined the group, former members who've have left, mental health workers, lawyers and the media. A significant number of former members were born and raised in the Mission and for many the lack of adequate education is one important factor that confronts them in their attempts to integrate into a world very different from their past existence. One former member in describing his experience stated “I'm an immigrant in my own country”.

We don't believe that a resolution to this the problem will be simple. It will require an understanding of the group's views as well how it reacts to the outside world.

Nathalie Gettliffe

The second case concerns Nathalie Gettliffe who is in custody in British Columbia, for kidnapping her two children. She has pleaded guilty to the criminal charges and was sentenced to 16 months in jail minus the 10 months she has already served. She has been in prison since April 2006 when she was arrested upon her return to Canada to defend her doctoral thesis at the University of B.C.

Ms. Gettliffe claims she took her children to France in 2001 to remove them from the influence of Scott Grant, their father, because of his activities in the International Churches of Christ – (ICC) a group that is considered a “cult” in France.

In a recent civil ruling in British Columbia reported on November 14, 2006 the judge indicated that interim custody of the two children is to remain with the father.

This story of Nathalie Gettliffe has provoked an intense public reaction in France and Info-Cult has received numerous requests for information about the ICC, its status in Canada and our views on this case. We have frequently stated, among other concerns about this story, that the coverage given the case may have already had a detrimental impact on those who supposedly were to be protected – the children.

- ◆ Besides the above cases interviews to the media included:

TV: CBC – National News, Radio-Canada and Télé-Journal.

« **The Deadly Messiah** » - Global TV.

This documentary, which forms part of a 7 part series called *Very Bad Men*, dealt with the group led by Roch “Moses” Theriault. It is scheduled to be rebroadcast sometime in January 2007. Info-Cult's Executive Director was interviewed for this documentary.

http://www.verybadmen.com/VBM_thedeadlymessiah.html

Print: Among other interviews given, Info-Cult's Executive Director was cited in L'Express du Pacifique, a French newspaper in Vancouver. The 2 articles are:

Sectes d'hier et d'aujourd'hui

http://journaux.apf.ca/expresspacifique/index.cfm?Id=33721&Sequence_No=33720&Repertoire_No=1101797170&Voir=journal&niveau=3&Image=0

Les sectes face à la justice

<http://www.lexpress.org/?q=node/27>

Web Site

The “News from Info-Cult” is now available on our website and can be found [here](#):

Reminder: Information is added to our site on an ongoing basis. To remain up to date we suggest visiting our site on a regular basis.

CONFERENCE

ICSA (International Cultic Studies Association) in collaboration with Info-Cult - 2007 International Conference - Brussels, Belgium - [Conference Home Page](#)

Info-Cult for the last few years has been involved in the organizing of ICSA annual conferences and is collaborating closely with ICSA in the upcoming conference planned for Brussels, in 2007.

ICSA conferences and workshops offer practical assistance, research findings, and information on cults, new religious movements and other groups from the leading professional organizations in the field. Attendees and speakers are diverse, including academicians, helping professionals, former group members, current group members, families, clergy, educators, and others.

In the past ICSA Conferences were held solely in the United States. In the past few years the conferences have become international in scope and have been held in Edmonton, Alberta (2004) and Madrid, Spain (2005).

The conferences include many forums for the exchange of information. Among the many sessions are those dealing with approaches in working with individuals and families with someone in a high demand closed group and treatment for those who've been harmed by a cult-related experience.

The conference program will soon be available.

INFO-CULT

Info-Cult is a non-profit charitable organization and as such relies on the generosity of individual donors for a significant part of its funding. If you would like to support Info-Cult and make a donation click [\(here\)](#)

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