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## News from Info-Cult

No 13, June 2009

### *Who Is Info-Cult*

Founded in 1980, Info-Cult is a non-profit charity organization that helps people concerned or interested about cults, new religious movements and related phenomena.

Our services include :

an information and assistance phone line, consultation, research, conferences, documentation centre and an internet site.

### Who calls for help

In addressing the needs and issues of former and current members who are, or who have been, harmed by cultic groups it is important to remember there is often an overlooked population of people who are affected. These people include immediate family members as well as other relatives, friends and co-workers, who are in need of information, support and help.

This population finds itself struggling with feelings of loss and grief as well as trying desperately to understand a situation which is foreign to them and for which they generally have no frame of reference for understanding. The situation these individuals have to come to grips with can range from seeing a loved one's behavior change dramatically to having been abducted by another family member.

The implications for their mental health cannot be under-estimated when one considers these people often experience feelings of helplessness, isolation, guilt and shame.

Moreover, without accurate information well, meaning loved ones can sometimes respond in ways which make a precarious situation worse, estranging themselves from the person they are concerned for. In other cases, these individuals may simply jump to erroneous conclusions, causing themselves undo anxiety and damaging their relationship at a sensitive time.

At Info-Cult we recognize how important it is that people have access to accurate information, in addition to understanding and support during the difficult period they are going through.

Info-Cult takes calls from concerned families, friends, co-workers and others on a regular basis and provides information and assistance to these individuals.

## Education

### A policy for renting rooms

In our last mailing ([No. 12, February 2009](#)) we highlighted a story about a TV program that focused on Biologie Totale (Total Biology). One of the things mentioned during the program was that the founder had given a lecture at the Sorbonne in France. The connection to the Sorbonne can lead to the belief that he and his theories were somehow linked to or supported by the University.

## **A policy for renting rooms (continued)**

This incident reminded us of the numerous times we have been asked by educational and community organizations about renting space in their facilities to individuals and groups that were unknown to them. That has led us to prepare “A policy on renting rooms” which we distributed by email to a number of Quebec educational and community organizations. If you think that a policy of this type may be of interest to you, your institution or organization or a institution you know, you can find the text on our web site at: <http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/Letter-space-institutions.pdf>

## **Montreal Conference (*Du croire à l'extrême et des pratiques sectaires : prendre en compte et intervenir*)**

Info-Cult in collaboration with two other Montreal organizations recently ran a 2 day conference at the Université de Montreal. The conference presenters included mental health professionals and academics. Among others attendees were social workers, educators, academics, members and former members of groups. A brief note (in French) about the conference can be found at: [http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/IC-PR\\_NOTE.pdf](http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/IC-PR_NOTE.pdf)

## **International Conference (Geneva, Switzerland)**

The upcoming International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) Annual Conference which is being organized in collaboration with Info-Cult will take place in Geneva from July 2 - 4, 2009. It will feature about 90 presenters from around the world including a number from Montreal and the rest of Canada. In addition to Info-Cult's Executive Director Mike Kropveld, two members of Info-Cult's board will be presenting – Carolle Tremblay and Dianne Casoni. Information about the conference and its program can be accessed at [http://www.icsahome.com/infoserv\\_conferences/conference\\_home\\_2009\\_geneva.asp](http://www.icsahome.com/infoserv_conferences/conference_home_2009_geneva.asp)

## **International Conference (New York, USA)**

Info-Cult is collaborating in the organizing of the ICSA (International Cultic Studies Association) Annual International Conference which will be held in New York in 2010. The Call for Papers can be found here: [http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ICSA10-Call\\_for\\_Papers.pdf](http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ICSA10-Call_for_Papers.pdf)

## **Info-Cult Web Site**

We update various sections of our website on an ongoing basis. You may find it informative to regularly visit our site at [www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org)



Info-Cult is a non-profit charitable organization and as such relies on the generosity of individual donors for an important part of its funding. If you would like to support Info-Cult you can make a donation through CanadaHelps:



or by check to Info-Cult, 5655 Park Ave. #208, Montreal, QC H2V 4H2

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