

News from Info-Cult

No. 27, April 2014

A Salute to Our Volunteers

By [Mike Kropveld](#), Founder and Executive Director of Info-Cult

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Info-Cult is one of the major organizations in Canada involved in responding to questions and concerns about cults, new religious movements and related groups and subjects. Info-Cult houses a unique collection of information in this field and provides a variety of services to meet individual and community needs.

Although in reality, Info-Cult operates with a skeleton staff, people assume that Info-Cult is a large organization with different departments. This impression has come about as a result of the profile Info-Cult has attained over the years, and is in large part due to the countless hours that volunteers have dedicated to Info-Cult.

Volunteers are involved in policy development and decision-making, providing legal advice, publicity, office work, fund-raising, research, public education, providing support to ex-members and families, helping to organize conferences, cataloguing new acquisitions to our documentation centre, translating documents from English to French and French into English, and creating and maintaining our web site, Facebook and YouTube pages.

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Education

2014 Annual International ICSA Conference, Washington, DC, July 3 – 5. (Pre-Conference workshops July 2)

The 2014 International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) Annual Conference will be presented jointly with **Info-Cult/Info-Secte**. The conference theme is **Government, Human Rights and the Cult Phenomenon**.

For more than a decade, Info-Cult has been co-organizing the Annual ICSA Conferences. ICSA conferences are unique because they bring together an enriching mix of academics, students, mental health professionals, former and present group members, and families. In addition to scholarly papers, student research posters, and workshops for former members, there are sessions for anyone having an interest in "cults", "new religious movements" and related phenomena.

Since 2009, **Mike Kropveld**, Info-Cult's Executive Director, has served on the board of ICSA and is the Chair of the ICSA conference committee. He is directly involved in the myriad details in putting on such a conference. In 2012, Info-Cult hosted the International ICSA Conference in Montreal.

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Since its beginnings in 1980, Info-Cult has received over 80,000 requests, involving close to 4,000 different groups, individuals and subjects.

A Salute to Our Volunteers (continued)

People assume that Info-Cult is a large organization with different departments. This impression has come about as a result of the profile Info-Cult has attained over the years, and is in large part due to the countless hours that volunteers have dedicated to Info-Cult.

Some of the volunteers who play an integral role in the life of Info-Cult, are former members, and we cannot stress enough the valuable time they have taken - and continue to take - to talk to other former members in need of support and to families in times of crisis.

Volunteers at Info-Cult include:

- Professionals (include educators, mental health professionals, lawyers, business professionals) who recognize the need for Info-Cult and its services.
- Concerned individuals who have taken the time to learn about and understand the area.
- Individuals who have, or have had a child, sibling, parent or friend involved in a cultic group and understand the harm that such involvement can cause.
- Former members who want to use their experience to alert others to the potential harm that involvement in a group can entail.

Info-Cult is extremely grateful to all those who have contributed their time, expertise and energy to helping Info-Cult provide services to those in need, and sharing their knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon. In future newsletters, we will be showcasing our volunteers.

Mike Kropveld
Executive Director

Education

2014 Annual International ICSA Conference, Washington, DC (continued)

Over the years, a number of Info-Cult board members and colleagues have presented papers at these conferences and this year will be no exception. **Carolle Tremblay**, Info-Cult's president, will be presenting on *Remembering the Needs of Children in High Demand Groups*, and **Marie-Andrée Pelland** and **Dianne Casoni** will be co-presenting on: *Cultic-Group Crisis and Conflict with Government Representatives: A Transformative Experience*. Carolle's presentation is dedicated in honour of the late Laurent Picard, who was a board member of Info-Cult for many years.

In addition, a colleague from Quebec **Lorraine Derocher** with whom Info-Cult has worked closely over the years will also be presenting at the conference as part of a panel on *Government Interventions in Canada, France, and the United States to Protect Children in Isolated Communities*.

The abstracts of their sessions follow.



A Meeting of
Info-Cult's
Board of Directors.

Education (continued)

Remembering the Needs of Children in High Demand Groups **(Carolle Tremblay)**

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. This Convention, which is the most widely accepted declaration of human rights, recognizes that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. In other words, every child has the right to be loved, to have an education, to play and to receive health care, regardless of the parents' religious beliefs.

By its very nature, this declaration of human rights is a frame work on which governments rely when taking steps in making decisions in the best interest of children. The specific situation of children in high demand groups (cults) requires more than a will to do something; it obliges governments to develop programs aimed at the children's special needs and the protection of their rights.

Inspired in part by the recent situation concerning the Lev Tahor group in Canada, Carolle will offer an analysis of the state's intervention. She will also provide suggestions that can assist in improving the state's role when confronted with allegations of child abuse.

Her presentation is dedicated to the memory of Laurent Picard who served in many public capacities in his lifetime and played a very instrumental role for many years as a member of Info-Cult's board of directors. His keen mind and understanding of the harm some groups cause was an invaluable contribution to Info-Cult and shaped the organization's mission.



**International ICSA
Conference,
Washington, DC**

Cultic-Group Crisis and Conflict with Government Representatives: A Transformative Experience **(Marie-Andrée Pelland and Dianne Casoni)**

Understanding how interactions between cultic groups and government representatives will impact members' and groups' everyday life demands a complex analysis. To comprehend how cultic groups and members will react toward government representatives' visits, questions, allegations, and sometimes interventions, information must be gathered about the group and the government's strategies. Cultic groups' general history and previous interaction with the government must be known and analyzed. Information must also be gathered on the government action and how groups perceive each of these actions. Are government actions directed toward something meaningful for a group and their members? Are government actions threatening for members' sense of self or social identity? If these interventions target aspects of cultic life that are essential to obtain eternal life, group reaction toward government action can be immediate. Sometimes conflicts with government representatives can provoke internal crisis.

These crises can have real consequences on members' engagement and philosophical interpretation, and on the leader's power. To understand how to analyze cultic-group reactions to government intervention and subsequent internal crisis, we propose to analyze two Canadian cultic-group experiences with government representatives: the Mission of the Holy Spirit and the Canadian polygamous Mormons.

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Education (continued)

Government Interventions in Canada, France, and the United States to Protect Children in Isolated Communities (Lorraine Derocher)

Lorraine Derocher's presentation summarizes doctoral research on the challenges faced during youth protection interventions in closed sectarian environments. One of the objectives of this research was to identify both the obstacles and the factors contributing to the success of interventions within five groups in Quebec (Canada). This field research was primarily based on interviews with judges, lawyers, social workers and health professionals who directly intervened in one of the five cases studied. We also met with children (now adults), leaders and parents who were present at the time of those interventions. Our analysis shows that the degree of social isolation in which those children were kept had a direct impact on the ability to intervene and increased the risks of maltreatment. In Quebec law, the degree of social isolation in which a child is raised can constitute a form of psychological maltreatment. Accordingly, the degree of isolation of a sectarian group may be a determining factor in the strategy of the intervention. The research concludes with the proposal of a model for a more efficient way to intervene in cultic environments where children are in need of state protection.

Information about the conference including the **Call for Art & Literary Works and Call for Posters** can be found at: <http://www.icsahome.com/events/conferenceannual>

INFO-CULT WEBSITE

Different pages on our website are updated on an ongoing basis and a number of documents and programs are available in their entirety. For example:



A **THESIS** by David Hoffman: *A historical case study analysis of the establishment of charismatic leadership in a Protestant Reformation cultic group and its role in the recourse to violence / Accessible in its entirety with the permission of the author): at:*
<http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ic-selacq.html#theses>



An **Italian translation** of a talk given by Mike Kropveld "Cults" and Globalization: Reflections and Questions - "Culti" e globalizzazione: Riflessioni e domande at:
<http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ICPubs.html>



Recent documentaries on the group Lev Tahor that have been shown on TV and Information on **Conferences and Workshops** and more at:
<http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ic-events.html>



Government reports such as the recent one from the Netherlands: *State of affairs regarding abuses in new religious movements and the way they are tackled in the Netherlands* at:
<http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ic-gov.html>

Information on Info-Cult, such as:

Info-Cult's Annual Report and Financial Statements (2012 - 2013)
<http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ic-finan.html>

News from Info-Cult: Past editions at:
<http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/ic-news.html>

Info-Cult on Facebook



Our page can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/InfoCult.InfoSecte>



Info-Cult E-mail Information Lists (English and French)

Info-Cult's **free email service** offers subscribers: articles on cults, new religious movements and related subjects, announcements of upcoming conferences, television programs and updates about Info-Cult. For more information about this service:

http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/Options_EN.html



Info-Cult on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/InfoCult.InfoSecte)



Info-Cult's videos can be accessed on our YouTube page:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/infosecte>



Info-Cult is a registered charitable organization and is recognized for its role in responding to a real need in our society. Info-Cult is able to carry out its activities thanks in large part to the support of people like you who believe we provide a vital community service. Please consider donating to Info-Cult today.

Online at:



<https://www.canadahelps.org/services/wa/dnm/en/#/page/16231>

Or by:

PayPal

Go to www.infocult.org and click on **DONATE NOW**

Or by mail to

Info-Cult at 5655 Park Ave., Suite 208, Montreal, QC, Canada H2V 4H2.

Donations to Info-Cult are tax deductible and are greatly appreciated.