



# **ICSA 2015 Annual Conference**

**June 24-27, 2015  
Stockholm, Sweden**



**In Collaboration With:**

**Info-Cult/Info-Secte  
Hjälpkällan**

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# Welcome Letter

Dear Participants,

The International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) and its conference partners welcome you to Stockholm and hope that you will benefit from the program, as well as from the beautiful sights and sounds of the city.

ICSA conferences encourage a diversity of views, including those of current members of nonmainstream groups. Conference goals include:

- Support those who have suffered as a result of their or a loved one's experiences in cultic groups.
- Encourage students and researchers to share their work with others and to deepen their understanding of cultic studies.
- Offer training to mental health professionals.
- Provide all who are interested in this field information and opportunities for discussion.
- Encourage respectful dialogue.

Opinions expressed at the conference are those of the speaker(s), discussants, or audience participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the conference organizers or their staff, directors, or advisors.

Please help us during the conference by beginning sessions on time and maintaining civility during the sometimes lively and provocative discussions.

This is a public conference. If you have matters that are sensitive or that you prefer to keep confidential, you should exercise appropriate care. Press who attend the conference may come from mainstream and nonmainstream, even controversial, organizations. If you don't want to give an interview feel free to refuse. Remember, if you give an interview, you will have no control over what part of the interview, if any, will be used.

Please respect speakers and fellow attendees by turning off all electronic equipment when in meeting rooms, and do not tape or photograph speakers or audience unless you have previously obtained their expressed written consent. The organizers decline any legal responsibility for unauthorized film or pictures.

Individuals with "Assistance Team" on their badges have volunteered to talk to those who may feel a need to deal with emotional reactions or pressing personal issues during the conference.

If you have questions or need help concerning conference issues, ask one of the conference staff, identifiable by their name badges.

The conference could not have taken place without the dedication of the 100+ speakers who put much time into their presentations and came at their own expense. We appreciate their generous participation.

We believe that this conference will be interesting and stimulating, and we hope that you will attend future ICSA conferences and workshops, as well as those organized by our collaborators.

Our deep appreciation goes to the ICSA Conference Committee, the Sweden Conference Planning Committee and to all who have volunteered their time to help organize and run this Conference. Finally, we would like to thank the lovely city of Stockholm.

Thank you for joining us today.

Steve K. D. Eichel, PhD,  
ABPP  
President, ICSA

Noomi Andemark  
Executive Director,  
Hjälpkällan

Carolle Tremblay, Esq.,  
President, Info-Cult/Info-  
Secte

# About ICSA

Founded in 1979, the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) is a global network of people concerned about psychological manipulation and abuse in cultic groups, alternative movements, and other environments. ICSA is tax-exempt, supports civil liberties, and is not affiliated with any religious or commercial organizations.



ICSA's **mission** is to

- Help those who have been harmed by psychological manipulation and cultic groups
- Educate the public
- Promote and conduct research
- Support helping professionals interested in this area

The following **programs and projects** advance this mission:

- Periodicals: *ICSA Today*; *International Journal of Cultic Studies*; *ICSA Member Update*; and the ISCA News Desk Bi-Weekly Mailing
- Conferences
- Workshops for former members, families, helping professionals, and researchers
- A Website, [www.icsahome.com](http://www.icsahome.com)
- An e-Library with more than 25,000 documents
- Consultation with experts
- Local monthly ICSA meetings and special events
- Research
- Publication of special reports and books

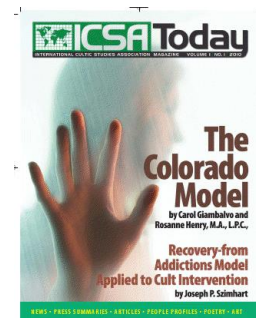


Some **members contribute** to ICSA's mission by

- Donating beyond their basic membership
- Submitting papers and/or news to ICSA's periodicals
- Submitting proposals for conferences and other events, including artistic and literary submissions
- Participating in various ICSA committees, such as research, mental health, former member, religion, and study groups
- Opening doors to foundations and other funding sources

**Members receive**

- *ICSA Today* - Magazine (3 issues/year)
- *International Journal of Cultic Studies* - Annual, multilingual academic journal that publishes scholarly articles and book reviews.
- News Desk bi-weekly e-mail of a news article deemed noteworthy by the ICSA News Desk
- *ICSA Member Update* - quarterly e-mail containing news about the activities (e.g., public talks, publications, etc.) of ICSA members
- E-Library - Access to ICSA's e-library of more than 25,000 documents, with news articles going back to 1979
- Annual Conference Discount for member and immediate family
- Opportunity to network with experts in the field and people adversely affected by cultic experiences by attending ICSA conferences, workshops, and local events/meetings and by participating in ICSA networks, committees, and study groups



# About Info-Cult

**Info-Cult / Info-Secte** ([www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org)) was founded in 1980 and is an independent, bilingual (English, French), non-denominational non-profit centre run by a Board of Directors concerned about the impact of cult phenomena on our society. Info-Cult / Info-Secte is funded in part by the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services as well as individuals, private groups, and organizations.

## Info-Cult's mission is to:

- Promote the study of cultic phenomena;
- Sensitize, inform, and, educate the public about these phenomena;
- Assist people with problems related to these phenomena.



## Services and Activities (selected):

- Information for Students and Teachers
- Educational Programs to professional and private groups
- Educational video – “Beyond the Mirage”
- *The Cult Phenomenon: How Groups Function* - Book published by Info-Cult
- Facebook and YouTube sites
- E-mail information lists
- Newsletter: *News from Info-Cult*
- Research Service



In addition, Info-Cult houses one of the largest **library** collections in North America with thousands of files, more than 1,200 programs on audio/video cassettes, journals, newsletters, government and legal documents, academic reports, thousands of books, principally in English and French, and other materials that are obtained from sources around the world. The library's documents include critical and group-generated information, as well as a smaller collection of documents in Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and German.



Over the years, Info-Cult has become widely recognized for many of its services, and is known in particular for its expertise in assisting families and individuals affected by cult-related problems and in providing the community at large with objective information on “cults,” “new religious movements,” and related groups and subjects. Info-Cult has evolved since its founding in 1980 and, like the groups it observes and studies, has developed and modified its perception and understanding of cult phenomena, which is in turn reflected in the services it provides.

## Speaker Biographical Sketches

**Peter Akerback** Researcher in Religious Studies at Dalarna University. Director of Studies at the Department of Sociology, Stockholm University and Co-founder of FINYAR (The Association for Research and Information on Alternative Spirituality), Sweden. Presented his doctoral dissertation about collective suicide in 2008. Co-author with Liselotte Frisk of *New Religiosity in Contemporary Sweden: The Dalarna Study in National and International Context* and, together with Liselotte Frisk and Franz Höllinger, *Size and Structure of The Holistic Milieu: A Comparison of Local Mapping-Studies in Austria and Sweden*. Current research project, funded by Vetenskapsrådet, deals with children in minority religions (2012-2015) with Liselotte Frisk and Sanja Nilsson. [peter.akerback@sociology.su.se](mailto:peter.akerback@sociology.su.se)



**Carmen Almendros**, PhD, is Associate Professor in the Biological and Health Psychology Department at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. She is on ICOSA's Board of Directors, and is International Journal of Cultic Studies, Co-Editor. She published a book and several articles on psychological abuse in group contexts, cult involvement, leaving cults, and psychological consequences of abusive group membership. Her research interests also include the study of parental discipline and psychological violence in partner relationships. She is principal researcher of a project entitled: "Psychological abuse, influence and adaptation to violence in partner relationships," which was financed by the Comunidad de Madrid and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She was the 2005 recipient of ICOSA's Margaret Singer Award, given in honor of her research into the development of measures relevant to cultic studies.



**Noomi Andemark** (right) is the executive director of Hjälpkällan, a Swedish help organization for former cult members and their families. She grew up as a Jehovah's Witness and left her congregation as a fifteen-year-old. She has studied journalism and science of religion, and worked with organizational development and managing youth projects within Hjälpkällan since 2006. Noomi is also a part of the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN DeRad) within the EU.

**Pia Andersson** is a former Jehovah's witness who raised her children in the organization. [pia.tidaholm@hotmail.com](mailto:pia.tidaholm@hotmail.com)



**Masoud Banisadr**, PhD, was born in Tehran in 1953. In 1976 he traveled to the United Kingdom where he earned a PhD in chemical engineering and engineering mathematics at Newcastle University in 1981. Dr. Banisadr joined the Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization (MEK) in 1979 and served as its representative in the United States from 1990-96. He left the MEK in June 1996. He wrote a memoir of his experiences entitled, *Masoud: Memoirs of an Iranian Rebel*, published by SAQI Books, London in 2004. He has also published a new book called [Destructive and Terrorist Cults: A New Kind of Slavery](#). He has been active in exploring and explaining cult manipulation and has written many articles in Farsi about cults, available on his Website. With the help of few ex-MeK members, he has established a group called RIDC (Research Institute on Destructive cult) in the United Kingdom to inform cult members and ex cult members about

destructive cults and how to face post-cult problems. The web site of this group in English and Farsi has all of his articles about destructive cults. There is also a Facebook page with the same name, RIDC (research institute on destructive cult).



**Eileen Barker**, PhD, PhD h.c., OBE, FBA, is Professor Emeritus of Sociology with Special Reference to the Study of Religion at the London School of Economics, University of London. Her main research interest is minority religions and the social reactions to which they give rise. She has over 350 publications (translated into 27 different languages), which include the award-winning *The Making of a Moonie: Brainwashing or Choice?* and *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction*. In the late 1980s, with the support of the British Government and mainstream Churches, she founded INFORM, an educational charity, based at LSE, which provides information about minority religions that is as accurate, objective and up-to-date as possible. In 2000, Queen Elizabeth appointed her as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for 'services to INFORM', and she received the American Academy of Religion's Martin E. Marty Award for the Public Understanding of Religion. She was the first non-American elected President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. A frequent advisor to governments, other official bodies and law-enforcement agencies throughout the world, she has made numerous appearances on television and radio, and has given guest lectures in over 50 countries. In 2013 Dr. Barker received ICSA's [Lifetime Achievement Award](#).



**Elizabeth Blackwell** was born into a Christian family who became heavily involved in a Bible-based doomsday cult. She was not permitted to obtain a formal education nor was she allowed contact with anyone outside of the group. In 2009, she sought help in coming to terms with her cult experience and became aware of the many unique challenges and strengths inherent to former members, particularly those who were raised in high-demands groups. She has since been an active member

of the International Cultic Studies Association, presently through service on the NYC Educational Outreach Initiative. She also serves on the board of reFOCUS, a cult survivor support network. Ms. Blackwell is currently studying Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience at Columbia University as a scholar in the Program for Academic Leadership and Service.

**Mario Bosson** is a member of International Coaching Community (ICC) and works with development of individuals and teams. He is a former member of Jehovah's Witnesses, an episode of his life that lasted 20 years. As a public speaker he uses his background to speak about how to face the challenge of creating a meaningful existence after a major loss when life changes direction. Another of his subjects is the phase of trial and error one has to pass through as an adult, former cult member, trying to join the game of dating, and finding out that one doesn't even know the name of the game. [www.mariobosson.com](http://www.mariobosson.com)



**Judith Bourque** has written a 'whistleblower' book called *Robes of Silk Feet of Clay*, the story of her love affair with the famed TM Guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who claimed that he was a celibate monk. After graduating from Massachusetts College of Art with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts, she went to India to become a teacher of Transcendental Meditation, and then worked for the TM movement for two years. She was seduced by the Maharishi when she was 22 years old, and he was 52, and has an insider's understanding of the fragility of young adults entering into a cultic environment. She is an award winning filmmaker,



teacher of meditation and a relationship counselor. She worked for Swedish Television for many years as a film editor, as well as producing and directing independent documentaries. Her films include "Sowing for Need, or Sowing for Greed?" a documentary on genetically modified seeds, "The Real Patch Adams", and "Hot and Cold Mandala", an experiential infrared film. [Judithbourque@email.com](mailto:Judithbourque@email.com)



**Russell H. Bradshaw**, EdD [A.B. (Wesleyan University), EdM, EdD (Harvard University), Cand. Polit. (University of Oslo)] is Associate Professor at Lehman College, City University of New York. He has taught psychological and historical foundations of education and directed the MA program in Teaching Social Studies: 7-12. Dr. Bradshaw's master's and doctoral dissertations described alternative living and child care arrangements in Sweden ('Samhem' and 'Kollektivhus'). During his undergraduate studies he received a stipendium to live in Samoa and wrote his Honors Thesis on religion's effect on cultural stability and change in Western Samoan villages. Dr. Bradshaw's continuing interest in alternative living and childcare solutions led him to an intensive study of a Hindu-based religious cult in New York City. Dr. Bradshaw has received fellowships and grants from Wesleyan, Harvard, and Uppsala (Sweden) Universities and from the City University of New York.

**Madeleine Brink** was brought up in a religious group in Sweden called Södermalskyrkan, part of charismatic Christianity, and went to their school during her childhood.

**Carla Brown** has led support groups, taught recovery classes and coached men in women in recovery from cultic groups. She is currently doing public education and outreach in the community to promote the awareness of cultic groups and the harmful effects of them. She is a member of ICSA and is well known as a advocate for freedom in all areas of psychological abuse.



**Arthur Buchman**, M.A., is an American-born psychologist and leadership coach in private practice, living near Copenhagen, Denmark since 1990., where he maintains a private practice. and leads a training organization, NLP World. Born in 1942, he holds a B.A. in Economics and an M.A. in Psychology. Arthur specializes in helping people recover from depression, phobias, trauma, relationship conflicts and cult involvement. He was a member of two different cults, first a yoga group and then an occult, pseudo-Christian music group. He has written articles on cult recovery for NLP Posten in Danish. Arthur Buchman is currently writing a book and presenting a workshop titled, The Instant Optimist - a practical method for building and maintaining a dependable positive attitude.

Arthur is He has been ICSA Today's News Correspondent for Scandinavia. Arthur Buchman is one of the few mental health professionals in Europe with expertise as an ex-cult member and who is available to travel to help people recovering from a cultic experience.

**Auri Bützow** is a doctoral student in social work at the University of Helsinki. Her research focuses on former members' childhood experiences in closed religious communities (for example Jehovah's Witnesses, Laestadianism, Mormonism, and charismatic Christianity) and how social workers in child protection can intervene in issues that occur in religious contexts.



**Cristina Caparesi** has a master's degree in Science of Education and a specialization in Family Mediation. She is an educator and family mediator with an expertise in conflicts related to cultic affiliations. She is president of EXIT ONLUS Cooperative Enterprise, Director of the Helping Centers against Harassment at the Workplace of the Udine Province and of CISL- Pordenone Province; and Director and consultant of the Support Network Against Manipulation and Abuse in Groups project of SOS Abusi Psicologici. She is also a member of the Working Group of the European Commission, First-line Deradicalisation Practitioners; president of ANPE-FVG, the Italian association of Educational Professionals in Friuli Venezia Giulia; Editor of the online journal of SOS Abusi Psicologici, *Manipulation and Abuse*; an expert for the Criminal Court of Udine in the branch of education, with a specialization in criminology and problems related to cultic affiliations; Italian Co-correspondent for *ICSA Today*; and a member of the Italian Society of the Psychology of Religion. She works professionally in the areas of undue influence and family mediation, multiculturalism and bilingualism, educational services. She is a co-author, with Mario Di Fiorino and Steven Kent, of *Costretti ad amare. Saggi sui Bambini di Dio, the Family* (only Italian) [*Forced to love- Essays on the Children of God-The Family*], and many other articles.

**José Antonio Carrobes**, PhD, is Full Professor of Clinical and Health Psychology and past Head of the Department of Biological and Health Psychology at the Autonomous University of Madrid. His work focuses in the areas of Psychopathology and Clinical and Health Psychology. He is President of the European Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Therapies (EABCT). He has directed numerous doctoral theses and is author of an important number and variety of articles and books in his areas of specialization. He has organized and participated in numerous national and international psychology congresses, among which stands out his participation as President of the Scientific Committee at the 23rd International Congress of Applied Psychology held in Madrid in 1994. He is a member of the editorial boards of several national and international journals.



**Dianne Casoni**, PhD Full Professor, School of Criminology, University of Montreal. Associates Professor, Department of Psychology, Université du Québec a Montréal. Psychologist. Psychoanalyst, member of the Canadian Psychoanalytical Society and the International Psychoanalytic Association. Dr. Casoni is the author of over 70 articles and book chapters on psychology and the law, sexual abuse of children, treatment of victims, wife assault, and the psychodynamic understanding of cults. She has just published a book on the psychoanalytical understanding of the criminal mind and edited a book on terrorism, both in French, co-authored and co-edited with Louis Brunet.



**Gina Catena, MS**, was raised in the Transcendental Meditation group, as an early Child of the Age of Enlightenment. She married and was a parent in the group until the age of 30. After twenty-two years of childhood and young adulthood enmeshed in the TM culture, she left the group with three children, obtained an education and career while integrating into mainstream culture. She lives with ongoing cult influence through three generations of her immediate family. Ms. Catena contributed to the anthology, *Children of Cults: On Healing Spiritual Abuse*, edited by Nori Muster. Ms. Catena is also working on several projects about family influence in cults. She obtained a Masters of Science from the University of California at San Francisco, a BA in Art History, and a BS in Nursing, with a minor in psychology. She is now a Certified Nurse-Midwife and Nurse Practitioner. <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/gina-catena/0/78a/173>

**Tianjia Chen, PhD**, Assistant Professor, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, is now counselor of Beijing Society for History and Sociology of Science. He received his PhD. degree in History of Science from Peking University. His academic interests include cultural history of science and religion in China, pseudoscience, and the cult phenomenon. [ctj@pku.edu.cn](mailto:ctj@pku.edu.cn)



**David Clark** is a thought reform consultant from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mr. Clark has been active in this field for more than 20 years and is the chair of ICSA's Video Education Committee. Mr. Clark has been on the Board of the Leo J. Ryan Education Foundation and reFOCUS. He was a contributing author for the Practical Guidelines for Exit Counseling chapter in the W.W. Norton book, *Recovery from Cults*. In 1985 he received the Hall of Fame Award from the original Cult Awareness Network. He was a founding member of the original Focus and reFOCUS, a national support network for former cult members. He has been a national and international conference speaker on the topic of cults and has been interviewed by newspapers, radio, and TV stations on the

topic of mind control and cults for over two decades. David Clark was the 2004 American plenary speaker at Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the Ukraine for the F.P.P.S. International Scientific-Practical Conference with the presentation title of Thought Reform Consultation, Youth Cult Education Preparation and Sect Family Intervention Work. He was also the April 21, 2006 United States of America plenary speaker for the International Scientific Conference of Cardinal August Hlond Upper Silesian School of Pedagogy in Mysolwice, Poland. The topic was Thought Reform Consultation, Family Youth Cult Education Preparation and Sect Intervention Work. Mr. Clark also contributed to a May 16, 2006 History Channel special on Opus Dei and was featured in John Allen's important book, *Opus Dei: An Objective Look Behind the Myths and Reality of the Most Controversial Force in the Catholic Church*. He spoke on exit counseling/thought reform consultation at an international conference, *Myth and Reality of Psychological Abuse and Practical Ways to Resist It*, at the Russian State University of Humanities in Moscow (March 13-14, 2008). He spoke on life in a cult and leaving a cult at a conference on cults and gangs, sponsored by Creighton University's Department of Psychiatry and the Douglas County (NB) Sheriff's Department (April 18, 2008). David has been the North American Vice President of the DIALOG Centre International since 2011 and is FECRIS's New York main representative to the United Nations. David Clark was the featured cult expert on the Dr. Phil Show episode and Dr. Phil gave special thanks to David on his show and his official network show website.

**Anuttama Dasa** is Director of Communications for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a monotheistic, or Vaishnava, Hindu tradition. He has served as a member of ISKCON's International Governing Body Commission since 1999. Dasa has also served as Vice President of the Religion Communicators Council (RCC), a North American interfaith organization, and is convener of the annual Vaishnava-Christian Dialogue, now in its 14th year, and an annual Vaishnava-Muslim Dialogue. He serves as Board Member of the ISKCON Temple in suburban Washington, D.C, and Trustee of the Bhaktivedanta College, ISKCON's first accredited College located in Belgium. Dasa has participated in many ICSA conferences, including the panel presentation, Can Cultic Groups Change. He and his wife, Rukmini, live in Rockville, Maryland.

**Jadwiga Daszykowska**, PhD, Hab, Associate Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin – Off-Campus Faculty of Law and Social Sciences in Stalowa Wola (Poland). Areas of research activity: social pedagogy, pedeutology, pedagogy of leisure time. Research interests relate particularly to the following issues: quality of life, leisure time, quality of education. Member of the Polish Pedagogical Association. Author of books: *Jakosc zycia w perspektywie pedagogicznej* (Quality of life in a pedagogical perspective, 2007), *Czas wolny nauczycieli* (Leisure time of teachers, 2008). Editor of books: *Czas wolny: przeszlosc – terazniejszosc – przyszlosc* (Leisure time: past – present – future, 2009), *Przemiany wartosci i stylów zycia w ponowoczesnosci* (Changes of values and lifestyles in postmodernity, 2010), *Wokół problemów jakosci zycia współczesnego czlowieka* (About the problems of quality of life of modern man, 2012), *Dziecko w przestrzeni zycia społecznego* (Child in the dimension of social life, 2013), *Pomoc czlowiekowi w obliczu cierpienia i smierci* (Assistance to man in the face of suffering and death, 2013). Author of numerous academic articles in these areas.



**John Debold** was born and raised in the New York City area. After completing a college degree in 1978 he traveled to California for a relatively brief planned tour. While in the city of San Francisco he met and was recruited by members of a high-pressure group. The planned short visit quickly turned into an extended involvement with the group including a typical spectrum of activities involving recruiting and fundraising. John's family arranged a rescue/deprogramming which was successful. In 1979 John began a career as a school teacher. He currently teaches science to 11th and 12th grade students in Orange County, New York and occasionally speaks on the subject of new religious movements through the lens of personal experience.

**Henri de Cordes** was the parliamentary assistant of the Deputy, Antoine Duquesne, author of the report of the inquiry committee of the Belgian House of Representatives on the illegal practices of cults (1996–1997). In April 1999, he was appointed vice-president of the Information and Advice Center on harmful sectarian organizations (Brussels, Belgium). On June 9th 2005, the Chamber appointed him president for a six-year term. He is the author of *L'Etat belge face aux dérives sectaires* (Belgian State Faced with Sectarian Deviations), which covers the period 1997–2006.





**Linda Dubrow-Marshall**, PhD, MBACP (Accred.), is Research Co-Editor of *ICSA Today* and is a co-founder of RETIRN, a private practice which provides services to individuals and families who have been affected by cultic influence and abusive relationships. She is the Programme Leader of the MSc Applied Psychology (Therapies) Programme at the University of Salford. She is registered with the Health and Care Professions Council, United Kingdom as both a clinical and a counselling psychologist, and she is a registered counsellor/psychotherapist with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. She is a licensed psychologist in Pennsylvania, USA, and a registered psychologist with the National Register of Health Service Psychologists, USA. She attends as co-representative of RETIRN/UK as correspondent to the General Assembly of FECRIS (European Federation of Centres of Research and Education on Sects). Dr. Dubrow-Marshall is a Consultant in Clinical Hypnosis (advanced certification) with the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and is certified by the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Institute. She has a Certificate of Proficiency in the Treatment of Alcohol and Other Psychoactive Substance Use Disorders issued by the American Psychological Association. She is a member of the Mental Health and Research Committees for ICSA.



**Rod Dubrow-Marshall**, PhD, MBPsS, is Professor of Psychology and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Derby, Derby & Buxton, Derbyshire, United Kingdom. Prior to that he was Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Glamorgan (now University of South Wales). Rod is a Social Psychologist whose research specialties include the psychology of undue influence and cults or extremist groups (where he has developed the 'Totalistic Identity Theory' as an evidence-based theory to combat and reduce ideological extremism and ideologically driven violence), organizational behaviour and healthiness and the social psychology of identity and prejudice. A graduate member of the British Psychological Society, Rod is also Chair of the Research Committee and Network of the International Cultic Studies Association and is co-Editor of the *International Journal of Cultic Studies* (since its inception in 2010). In 2006, he was awarded The Herbert L. Rosedale Award, jointly with Dr. Paul Martin, for their psychological research on undue influence. He co-founded RETIRN/UK in 2004, where he is a consultant, helping individuals and families who have been adversely affected by destructive cults and other extremist and high demand/manipulative groups, and attends as co-representative of RETIRN/UK as correspondent to the General Assembly of FECRIS (European Federation of Centres of Research and Education on Sects). Rod has served on more than a dozen Governing Boards of Schools, Colleges and Universities over the last two decades and as a member of the University's Executive at Derby his portfolio includes, amongst other responsibilities, the University's partnerships with Schools, Colleges and Universities locally, nationally and internationally. He is also a member of the Board of the homelessness charity the Wallich (headquartered in Cardiff, Wales) and is Chair of the Board of the Preston Guild Link charity (in Lancashire, England) which is fundraising for the next Preston Guild cultural festival in 2032.



**Steve K. D. Eichel**, PhD, ABPP, ICSA President, is Past-President of the American Academy of Counseling Psychology and the Greater Philadelphia Society of Clinical Hypnosis. He is a licensed and Board-certified counseling psychologist whose involvement in cultic studies began with a participant-observation study of Unification Church training in their Eastern seminary (in Barrytown, NY) in the spring of 1975. His doctoral dissertation to date remains the only intensive, quantified observation of a deprogramming. He was honored with AFF's 1990 John G. Clark Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Cultic Studies for this study, which was published as a special issue of the *Cultic Studies Journal* and has been translated into several foreign languages. In 1983, along with Dr. Linda Dubrow-Marshall and clinical social worker Roberta Eisenberg, Dr. Eichel founded the Re-Entry Therapy, Information & Referral Network (RETIRN), one of the field's oldest continuing private providers of psychological services to families and individuals harmed by cultic practices. RETIRN currently has offices in Newark, DE, Lansdowne, PA and Pontypridd, Wales and Buxton, England (U.K.). In addition to his psychology practice and his involvement with ICSA, Dr. Eichel is active in a range of professional associations. He has co-authored several articles and book reviews on cult-related topics for the *CSJ/CSR*.

**Marianne Englund** is a licensed psychologist in Sweden, working in forensic psychiatry. Former member of Jehovah's Witnesses. Volunteer psychologist and consultant for the help organization Hjälpkällan, targeting former cult members.  
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**Edna Eriksson** has worked with multiculturalism, diversity, equality and equal opportunities for almost two decades - as a journalist, commentator, civil servant on a variety of ministries and agencies, as well as an educator and lecturer. Edna Eriksson's subjects are equality, discrimination and equality - from theory to practice and to define target groups and skills in a global world. Edna also holds classes in speaking and training in how to work as a moderator, which she did on several occasions, both nationally and internationally around the topics of diversity, equality, inclusion, discrimination, human rights and racism. Contact: [noomi@hjalpkallan.se](mailto:noomi@hjalpkallan.se)

**Liselotte Frisk**. Professor in Religious Studies at Dalarna University since 2006 and current Chairman of FINYAR (The Association for Research and Information on Alternative Spirituality), Sweden. She presented a doctoral dissertation about new religious movements in 1993 at Åbo Akademi, Finland, and after that worked as a lecturer at Umeå University in Sweden for a few years. In 1999 she moved to Dalarna University where she created a profile of studying new religious movements within Religious Studies. Research projects, including two projects about the New Age in the 1990s, and later on a 3-year project about what happened to the new religious movements from the 1960s and 70s over the decades, funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. Another research project, together with Peter Åkerbäck, Stockholm University, dealt with a local mapping of the new spirituality in Dalarna (2008-2011), funded by Vetenskapsrådet. A current research project, also funded by Vetenskapsrådet, deals with children in minority religions (2012-2015). All research projects have resulted in books and articles in Swedish, as well as in English. Liselotte Frisk has been coeditor for *International Journal for the Study of New Religions* between 2010-2013, and is currently coeditor for *Aura*, a Nordic journal publishing academic articles about new religious movements. She was the director of International Society for the Study of New Religions for four years (2010-2013). [lfi@du.se](mailto:lfi@du.se).

**Angel Garden** started her career as a successful stand-up comedienne and actor. Her mediating skills and love for Ki Aikido led her to design highly praised community courses in assertiveness training. But her first love has always been filmmaking and journalism, which led her to create Amazon Films with her husband Steve Paris, through which they have made and released *Yam*, a full length comedy feature, "birth-trust", documenting the first Holistic Birth Trust conference and many other environmental, and community shorts. On stumbling onto an extremely controlling group, the repercussions of this event allowed her to strengthen her investigative reporting and presenting skills. This gave birth to the acclaimed political satire show "Beehave", which used the course of an education law change to lobby MPs in New Zealand. This then led to the creation of Amazon News Media, increasingly reporting on health, education, and community issues. Meanwhile Amazon Films is increasingly involved in projects focusing on the rights of children and young people. Angel is physically disabled and has three children. angelgarden@mac.com

**Steven Gelberg, MA**, while a member from 1970-1987, served as the Krishna Movement's principal liaison to the international academic community (e.g., edited *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna: Five Distinguished Scholars on the Krishna Movement in the West*, Grove Press, 1983), and its Director for Interreligious Affairs. He is author of a number of scholarly articles on ISKCON (and related historical, social-scientific, and cultic issues) published in various academic books and journals. He subsequently earned a Masters degree (comparative religion) from Harvard Divinity School in 1990. He currently lives with his wife near San Francisco, where he is an accomplished fine art photographer, and working on various writing projects. His most recent work is *India in a Mind's Eye: Travels and Ruminations of an Ambivalent Pilgrim*.



**Lorna Goldberg, LCSW, PsyA**, Board member and past president of ICSA, is a psychoanalyst in private practice and Dean of Faculty at the Institute of Psychoanalytic Studies. In 1976, she and her husband, William Goldberg, began facilitating a support group for former cult members that continues to meet on a monthly basis in their home in Englewood, New Jersey. In 1989, Lorna and Bill received the Hall of Fame Award from the authentic Cult Awareness Network and, in 1999; they received the Leo J. Ryan Award from the Leo J. Ryan Foundation. In 2009, she received the Margaret T. Singer Award from ICSA. Lorna joined ICSA's Board of Directors in November 2003. Along with Rosanne Henry, she co-chaired ICSA's Mental Health Committee until her term as President of ICSA from 2008 to 2012. Lorna has published numerous articles about her therapeutic work with former cult members in professional journals, most recently: Goldberg, L. (2012). Influence of a Charismatic Antisocial Cult Leader: Psychotherapy With an Ex-Cultist Prosecuted for Criminal Behavior. *International Journal of Cultic Studies*, Vol. 2, 15-24. Goldberg, L. (2011). Diana, Leaving the Cult: Play Therapy in Childhood and Talk Therapy in Adolescence. *International Journal of Cultic Studies*, (Vol.2), 33-43. She also wrote a chapter on guidelines for therapists in the book, *Recovery from Cults*, edited by Michael Langone. Lorna has co-written with Bill Goldberg, a chapter on psychotherapy with targeted parents in the book, *Working with Alienated Children and Families* (2012), edited by Amy J.L. Baker & S. Richard Sauber.



**William Goldberg**, LCSW, PsyA, is a clinical social worker and psychoanalyst with over forty years' experience working with former cult members. He and his wife, Lorna, co-lead a support group for former cult members; This group has been meeting for over thirty-five years, and is the oldest group of its kind in the world. In 2007 Bill retired from the Rockland County, NY Department of Mental Health, where he directed several programs and clinics. He is presently an adjunct professor in the social work and social science departments of Dominican College and he is on the faculty of the Institute for Psychoanalytic Studies. Bill is a frequent speaker at ICSA conferences, and he and Lorna have been the recipients of the Authentic CAN Hall of Fame Award, and the Leo J. Ryan Award. In 2010, Bill was the recipient of ICSA's Lifetime Achievement Award.



**Vega González Bueso**, Degree in Psychology from the University of Barcelona. Specialist Clinical Psychology from the University of Barcelona. Diploma in Nursing from the University of Barcelona. Master in Language Disorders, University Polytechnic of Catalonia. Graduate Judicial Expertise. Certification of Expert in Psychotherapy by the European Federation of Psychologist' Association. Postgraduates studies in Management of healthcare centers by the Fundació Unió – Universitat de Manresa. Professor in the in the postgraduate studies "Behavioral Adiccions", Universitat de Valencia. Professor in the Master "Clinical sexology and Sexual Health", Universitat de Lleida. Director and professor in the postgraduate studies "Behavioral Adiccitons and Psychological Manipulation", Universitat de Barcelona. Professor in the Master "Drug Addiction", Universitat de Barcelona. Also is teacher and tutor interdepartmental Program Health and Schools of Institute of Health Studies, Generalitat of Catalonia. AIS Manager (Care and Research of Social addictions), shares management of the organization AIS and assists with patients, research, and training health professionals. Specialist in drug dependency, social addictions, and Mental Health. Since 2003 also works within the scope of care and research for people affected by their membership in groups or sects using coercive psychological manipulation.



**Maria Göransson** comes from the town Linköping in Sweden and has a bachelors degree in psychology. She has a special interest in cultic environments and the effects they can have on their members and the members' families. The study she made as a thesis for a bachelor degree is about cults and the psychological well being among ex-cult members. She is now studying medicine to become a doctor. Her own experiences from cults is that from the age of 15 she was engaged in the Swedish pentecostal church, where she was an active but reluctant member for about 15 years. Although the pentecostal church is not considered a cult in Sweden, her experiences from that period and how it affected her raised an interest to learn about cults. This interest became even stronger when a family member became deeply involved in a church with connections to the Word of life in Uppsala, Sweden, part of charismatic Christianity.





**Friedrich Griess**, educated as an electrical engineer, was in 1983 confronted with disastrous consequences when one of his four children joined a questionable group. Since then he has been engaged in activities of consulting and prevention, being a board member of the Austrian Gesellschaft gegen Sekten - und Kultgefahren (association against the dangers from sects and cults) and from 2005 - 2009 the president of the European umbrella organization FECRIS. In 2013 he received an ICSA Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Camilla Hanke** is a 32-year old exmormon. She grew up in a highly active Mormon family and one day her parents suddenly questioned and left the church. She was still active and it was a very tough time. Growing up she did what was expected and married as a young women. It was a less than happy relationship. As the first person in her family and after a near death experience she filed for divorce. At the same time she decided to leave the church. She quit her job, stopped seeing her friends and moved to Asia. She came home a year later with a freedom in her mind she never knew existed.



**Steve Hassan**, M.Ed., LMHC, NCC, Director of Freedom of Mind Resource Center, Newton, MA 02459. A licensed mental health counselor and former leader in the Moon organization, Steve has been helping people on cult issues since 1976. He has written three books that have received extensive praise from former cult members, families of former members, clergy, cult experts, and psychologists: *Combatting Cult Mind Control: The #1 Best-selling Guide to Protection, Rescue, and Recovery from Destructive Cults* (1988,1990); *Releasing the Bonds: Empowering People to Think for Themselves* (2000); and *FREEDOM OF MIND, Helping Loved Ones Leave Controlling People, Cults, and Beliefs*, a paperback and e-book (2012, 2013). Steve has pioneered a new

approach to helping victims of mind control. His Strategic Interactive Approach (SIA) reflects the respect and care one must bring to the effort to help those involved free themselves. Unlike stressful, sensationalized and illegal deprogramming techniques, his non-coercive approach is an effective and legal alternative that has assisted thousands of families help individuals victimized by destructive group and cult-related mind control. This approach teaches family and friends how to strategically influence the individual involved in a group. In 2013, he participated in California training for the Joint Regional Intelligence Center presented to law enforcement professionals and has been teaching about mind control in human trafficking and terrorism. In 2014 Mr. Hassan received ICSA's Margaret T. Singer Award and co-developed Curriculum for "Ending the Game" (ETG), a groundbreaking "coercion resiliency" curriculum that reduces the feelings of attachment to traffickers and/or a lifestyle characterized by commercial sexual exploitation, thereby reducing the rate of recidivism among sex trafficking victims. Currently, Steve is working on updating and revising the *Combating Cult Mind Control Book*. It is expected to be released early March 2015.

**Janet Heimlich** is Executive Director and founder of the Child-Friendly Faith Project, a national nonprofit organization based in Austin, Texas. The CFFP educates the public about child abuse and neglect that is enabled by religious and cultural ideologies. It also promotes faith communities that seek to gain an understanding of child development and make improvements in how they teach children and their parents about their faith toward the goal of meeting children's emotional needs. Ms. Heimlich is the author of *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment*, which examines religious practices that physically and psychologically harm children in the United States. Ms. Heimlich has also

been a freelance reporter for National Public Radio and other national radio networks; her radio stories won nine journalism awards. In addition, Ms. Heimlich has written non-fiction articles for such publications as Texas Monthly, the Austin American-Statesman, and the Texas Observer.

**Petra Hólmgrímsdóttir** was born and raised in Iceland. She has a BSc in Psychology and a BEd in Primary and Lower Secondary Education. Currently Petra is applying for further education and has her goals set on clinical psychology, with a focus on psychological trauma, abuse, and PTSD. At the age of 16 Petra got into a Bible-based cult and spent the next 11 years of her life in various Bible-based congregations in Iceland. She attended a bible school in Florida at the age of 17 and was a youth pastor for a few years. Her experience from those years in a cultic environment has given her a different insight to the mind control that goes on in manipulative groups and the effect on people's lives when they leave. Petra is working on founding a counseling program or exit counselling for ex-fundamentalists, since there is none in Iceland. She did a research/final thesis with her close friend and fellow psychology student, Sigríður Sigurðardóttir, at the University of Iceland - instructor: Ragna Benedikta Garðarsdóttir. The title is: "Religious abuse: A Study on mental health of former members of Christian fundamentalist groups in Iceland."

**Fan Hong**, PhD, an associate professor of Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Chinese People's Public Security University, Beijing. He got his first degree in language (1984) at The Institute of International Politics, and his master degree in sociology (1989) at Chinese People's University. He earned a PhD in philosophy at Peking University. His recent research interests focus on public security, crime control and cult group. [hf63@sina.com](mailto:hf63@sina.com)



**Maya Horton** is a second-generation adult born and raised in a closed new religious movement. Through extensive focus and personal therapy, she has come to learn that her experiences are typical of children born in such organisations. She has fought to understand the ways in which she experienced so much psychological harm in a group that may not be considered 'bad' by existing conventional standards and assumptions. She left her organisation aged 22, and has battled to reclaim her childhood dreams and identities without losing touch of positive elements that came out of her experiences within her organisation. She is a full-time artist with a particular focus on identity issues within second-generation adults, although this is not the only focus of her work. Her long-term goal is to retrain as an arts therapist with a particular focus on interpersonal dynamics and identity issues experienced by survivors of complex trauma, including cult leavers.



**Heidi Hough** was fortunate enough to escape, as an SGA, from a Christian fundamentalist cult at the age of sixteen. After graduating cum laude from Occidental College in Diplomacy and World Affairs Heidi worked as a journalist for publications including The Los Angeles Times and taught creative writing to students ranging from inner city Hispanic fourth graders to rural Vermont Advanced Placement English seniors. Her current graduate school thesis in Interdisciplinary Studies at Dartmouth College is informed by her personal experiences with trauma healing and narrative recovery, the research and exploration of which she hopes to expand into a PhD in Human Development or Religious Studies. She believes everyone – fundamentalist or atheist - has an important story to tell and that the development of receptive audiences is a necessary step in the equalization of spirituality for

all. Part of her current thesis includes a documentary exploring these topics

**Biaowen Huang**, PhD, is the assistant professor at the Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Chinese Academy of Science. He earned his PhD in journalism and Communication at Renmin University of China, Beijing, and was an exchange doctorate student at National Chengchi University, Taipei. His major research areas are health Communication and public understanding of science and faith. He recently work on issues about public understanding of science, technology and faith(including cults, new religion movement) by content analysis and discourse analysis of media coverage. [huangbiaowen@ucas.ac.cn](mailto:huangbiaowen@ucas.ac.cn)



**Håkan Järvå**, Former Scientologist and now a licensed psychologist in Sweden. Editor and co-author of the book *Sektsjuka (Cult Illness)* and a former lecturer for the psychology department at the University of Gothenburg on the subject of manipulation, influence, and cult illness. He offers psychotherapy to former members of cults and is also employed as a consultant by the help organization for former cult members in Sweden, Hjälpkällan, to train their nationwide network of volunteer workers. He is currently involved in a project aimed at high schools in Sweden together with a professional magician with the purpose of educating and vaccinating teenagers against manipulation.



**Gillie Jenkinson, MA**, is a Director of Hope Valley Counselling Limited and specializes in offering counseling and psychotherapy to those who have left cults or coercive relationships/groups and those who have been abused. Ms. Jenkinson is a trained counselor and psychotherapist with an MA in Gestalt Psychotherapy. She is accredited and registered with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) and is a member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (MBACP). She served two internships at Wellspring Retreat Centre, Ohio. She has many years of experience working with survivors of rape, sexual abuse, and cults, as well as with clients with other issues. Ms. Jenkinson runs an ex-member support and education group from her home in Grindleford and regularly speaks and trains on recovery issues.

Ms. Jenkinson is a regular presenter at ICSA conferences. She co-authored a chapter entitled Pathological Spirituality with Dr. Nicola Crowley for a medical text book entitled *Spirituality and Psychiatry*, published by RCPsych Publications in UK - 2009. BACP Therapy Today published her article, 'Working with Cult Survivors', in May 2013. Her article 'Rebuilding the Jigsaw' was published in *ICSA Today* magazine in 2014. She is the Mental Health Editor for *ICSA Today*. Ms. Jenkinson is in the final year of her PhD at the University of Nottingham, England and is currently analysing and writing up her research. She has interviewed 30 former cult members and asked them: What helps former cult members recover from an abusive cult experience and what is life like post cult?

**Jenny Joelsson** is a teacher and former Jehovah's witness. She raised two children in the organization. Took the fight for sole custody in court, with a case based on the doctrines of JWs and their impact on children. [jenny.joelsson@yahoo.se](mailto:jenny.joelsson@yahoo.se)



**Joseph F. Kelly**, a graduate of Temple University, has been a thought reform consultant since 1988. He spent 14 years in two different eastern meditation groups. He has lectured extensively on cult-related topics, and is a co-author of *Ethical Standards for Thought Reform Consultants*, published in ICSA's *Cultic Studies Journal*. For many years, Mr. Kelly has also co-facilitated ICSA pre-conference workshops for ex-members. Recently, he helped to initiate ICSA's monthly meeting in Philadelphia. joekelly411@gmail.com. Websites: [intervention101.com](http://intervention101.com); [cultmediation.com](http://cultmediation.com); [cultrecovery101.com](http://cultrecovery101.com).



**Lois Kendall**, PhD. Dr. Kendall's doctoral research examined the psychological effects of former sect membership, she looked at both first and second generation former members of sects as well as current and former members of non-sect like groups. Her research included a series of quantitative and qualitative studies. Since completing her PhD, Dr Kendall has worked on a book about the experiences of those raised in sects and recovery from that experience. She was born and raised in an English sect, which she left when she was 17.



**Stephen A. Kent**, PhD, Professor of Sociology, University of Alberta, teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on the sociology of religion and the sociology of sectarian groups. He has published articles in numerous sociology and religious study journals. His 2001 book, *From Slogans to Mantras: Social Protest and Religious Conversion in the Late Vietnam War Era*, was selected by Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries as an Outstanding Academic Title for 2002. In 2012 he received The Margaret Thaler Singer Award for advancing the understanding of coercive persuasion and undue influence from the American Cultic Studies Association.



**Masaki Kito**, Esq, is a founding partner of LINK LAW OFFICE Kito and Partners in Tokyo, established in 2001. He has been an advocate for the victims of various cultic groups for over 20 years in Tokyo. He was the vice chairperson of Consumer Affairs Committee of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) and the chairperson of Consumer Affairs Committee of Daini Tokyo Bar Association (DTBA). He is a member of the National Network of Lawyers against Spiritual Sales, Legal Team Representing Victims of Aum Shinrikyo, and the Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery (JSCPR). He is one of the leading public commentators on cults in Japan, making frequent appearances in the various media, including TV and radio programs on NHK (Japan's national public station) and commercial stations, major newspapers, and magazines. He is also renowned as a specialist of the broader range of consumer affairs and also a specialist of issues concerning the Internet. As an expert, he is frequently invited to meetings and study sessions hosted by diet members of both majority and minority parties (Liberal Democratic Party and The Democratic Party of Japan).





**Karin Krijnen** (1964) is manager front-office at Sektesignaal. She has worked for the Ministry of Justice and for the police. Karin is involved in coaching employees who talk with victims or their relatives. They refer, if necessary, to counseling or investigative agencies to explore prosecution. The intensive maintenance of contacts with partners in the chain is part of this. She has frequent contact with youth care agencies. She asks advice from behavioral scientists on cases where children within closed groups are involved. The aim is to help children who are victims of abuse in the movement which their parent(s) live

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**Michael Kropveld** is Founder and Executive Director of Info-Cult /Info-Secte, based in Montreal, Canada and sits on the board of the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA). Since 1980 he has assisted thousands of former members and members of cults, new religious movements, and other groups, and their families. He has served as an expert witness on cult-related criminal and civil cases, and is consulted regularly by mental health professionals and law enforcement agencies. Since the mid 1990s he has collaborated on the organizing of the ICSA annual international conferences on cultic phenomena. He has been an invited speaker worldwide, and has

appeared on many radio and television programs locally, nationally and internationally. Among other publications he co-authored, in 2006, *The Cult Phenomenon: How Groups Function / Le phénomène des sectes: L'étude du fonctionnement des groupes*. Both versions are downloadable for free at <http://www.infocult.org> www.infocult.org. He was awarded the 125 Commemorative Medal in 1992 by the Government of Canada in recognition of significant contribution to compatriots, community and to Canada and in 2007 he received the Herbert L. Rosedale Award from ICSA in recognition of leadership in the effort to preserve and protect individual freedom.



**Cynthia Mullen Kunsman** (ASN, BSN, Gwynedd Mercy College; MMin, Chesapeake Bible College and Seminary; ND, Clayton College) is a nurse with a wide clinical teaching background who now serves as a consultant in forensic medicine and toxicology. Though she chose to decline their practice, her credentials in both naturopathy and hypnotherapy have enriched her understanding of the phenomenon of cultic influence. She and her husband sought exit counseling after four years in a Shepherding Discipleship group which set her on a journey of confronting her upbringing in the Word of Faith movement. She hosts [UnderMuchGrace.com](http://UnderMuchGrace.com) and blogs at [SpiritualSoundingBoard.com](http://SpiritualSoundingBoard.com), articulating information about spiritual abuse to Evangelicals with a

specific focus on gender and high demand homeschooling. She has contributed to Christian apologetics journals and conferences, aided other authors in research, and has contributed to books including Hillary McFarland's *Quivering Daughters*. She also serves with the Freedom for Christian Women Coalition and the Spiritual Abuse Recovery Blog Network. She resides in South Florida with her husband, Gary W. Kunsman, PhD, F-ABFT.



**Michael D. Langone, PhD**, a counseling psychologist, received a doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1979. Since 1981 he has been Executive Director of International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA), a tax-exempt research and educational organization concerned about psychological manipulation and cultic groups. Dr. Langone has been consulted by several hundred former cult members and/or their families. He was the founder editor of *Cultic Studies Journal* (CSJ), the editor of CSJ's successor, *Cultic Studies Review*, and editor of *Recovery from Cults: Help for Victims of Psychological and Spiritual Abuse* (an alternate of the Behavioral Science Book Service). He is co-author of *Cults: What Parents Should Know* and *Satanism and Occult-Related Violence: What You Should Know*. Currently, Dr. Langone is ICSA Today's Editor-in-Chief. He has been the chief designer and coordinator of ICSA's international conferences, which in recent years have taken place in Barcelona, New York, Rome, Philadelphia, Geneva, Denver, Brussels, Atlanta, and Madrid. In 1995, he was honored as the Albert V. Danielsen visiting Scholar at Boston University. He has authored numerous articles in professional journals and books, including *Psychiatric Annals*, *Business and Society Review*, *Sette e Religioni* (an Italian periodical), *Grupos Totalitarios y Sectarismo: Ponencias del II Congreso Internacional* (the proceedings of an international congress on cults in Barcelona, Spain), *Innovations in Clinical Practice: A Sourcebook*, *Handbook of Psychiatric Consultation with Children and Youth*, *Psychiatric News*, and all of ICSA's periodicals. Dr. Langone has spoken widely to dozens of lay and professional groups.

**Hilde Langvann** is 42 years old, and the CEO of the Norwegian support group for former members of isolated faith based communities; Hjelpekilden Norway. Hilde was previously married to a member of Jehovahs Witnesses and was for a brief time also recruited to the organisation. Seeing the psychological impact the upbringing in Jehovahs witnesses has had on her previous husband and other people she met, made her engage in the work for former members of closed religious groups, which led to the establishing of Hjelpekilden Norway in 2012. Hjelpekilden have an average of thirty inquiries each month, and has users from twenty different religious groups.



**Xavier Leger, MA.** was a member of the Legion of Christ from 1999 to 2006. Before joining the Legion he studied at the Faculté Libre de Philosophie Comparé in Paris. He is presently a school teacher, in Lyon (France). In December 2008, together with a number of families and former Legionaries, he created a web page : Prévention l'égard de la Légion du Christ et du Regnum Christi. In 2009 – 2010, he collaborated actively with Catholic newspapers such as *La Vie*, *La Croix*, and *Famille Chrétienne* to cover the sad revelations about the founder of the Legionaries of Christ. In March 2013 a TV report was released by French channel Canal + - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gq0DI-pWosk>.

In September 2013 his biography, co-written with the French journalist Bernard Nicolas, was published by Flammarion : « Moi, ancien légionnaire du Christ ». In 2014, he defended a little thesis of philosophy at the Catholic University of Lyon, focusing on this particular subject: « Regarding the epistemological status of the concepts of mind control, cult and cultic influence

». [http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/memoire\\_epistemologique\\_Xavier\\_Leger.pdf](http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/memoire_epistemologique_Xavier_Leger.pdf)



**J. Paul Lennon**, STL, MA, Child and Family Therapist, Board Member, [Regain Network](#) (Religious Groups Awareness International Network). Mr. Lennon was a Legionary of Christ brother from 1961-69 and an LC priest from 1969-84. He served as a Diocesan priest from 1985-1989 and received an MA in Counseling from the Catholic University of America in 1989. He was a Community Development Specialist from 1990-1995 and a home-based therapist to Hispanic Families from 1995-1998. He was the co-founder of Network 1992. From 1999 to January 2014 he worked as a Child and Family Therapist in Arlington, VA. In 2008 he published a memoir, *Our Father who art in bed, A Naive and Sentimental Dubliner in the Legion of Christ*. In early 2010 he published *Fr. Marcial Maciel, Pedophile, Psychopath and Legion of Christ Founder*. He received his Virginia LPC in September 2010. He is presently considering settling in Central America to continue writing, supporting former Legion of Christ and Regnum Christi members, practicing his therapy profession, and embracing new opportunities for personal growth.

**Dr. Jianhui Li** is a professor in School of Philosophy and Sociology, Beijing Normal University and a director of China Association of Philosophy of Biology. He has expertised in philosophy and sociology of science. He is the author or co-author of more than ten books, such as *What is Science*, *Science and Superstition*, *Philosophy of Science*, *Philosophy of Life Science*, *Being the Friend of Truth: Philosophical Thinking on Contemporary Science*, *Digital Genesis*. Recent years, he had begun to focus on science and pseudo-science, science and religion, philosophy of science and science education, and how science is used and criticized by new arising cults. Email: [ljh@bnu.edu.cn](mailto:ljh@bnu.edu.cn)

**Dr. Yaming Li** is an associate professor in department of medical humanities, Capital Medical University, China. Her research interests include history of medicine, philosophy of science, and the relation of science and religion. She published several papers and books in these area. [ljh98@sina.com](mailto:ljh98@sina.com)

**Aini Linjakumpu** is a University Lecturer in Politics in the Department of Social Studies at the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi and Adjunct Professor at the University of Tampere, Finland. For more than 15 years, her main research interest has been focused on political dimensions of religions, especially in the context of Islam and currently also in the context of the largest revival movement in the Scandinavia, i.e., the Conservative Laestadianism as well as Jehovah's Witnesses. Theoretically, her research interests are related to communities, violence, network politics, and politics of emotions. In addition, Linjakumpu has been a leader of two Northern related research projects combining historical and contemporary approaches as well as art and science approaches. Linjakumpu has produced three monographs on the political dimensions of Islam, two monographs related to the Conservative Laestadianism, edited five books, and published more than 30 articles and book chapters nationally and internationally. Her publications include topics on political Islam, Middle Eastern politics, the Conservative Laestadianism, Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as other topics in religion and politics.



**Helena Löfgren** is a licensed psychotherapist, former member of the Unification church (1990-1992), member of the support group FRI, co-founder of the former Swedish support group SESAM, and co-founder of an informal network in Sweden for people who meet members or former members of high demand groups in their work. Ms. Lofgren received treatment by Wellpring, when they came to Sweden in 1992. For about 20 years she has been involved in helping former members of different high demand groups in Sweden as a volunteer in the support group FRI and as a member of the board of the support group SESAM in Sweden. In the last five years she has also treated patients who grew up in different high demand groups. She co-authored a book with personal stories, and a book about Influence for students Sect disease (edited by Håkan Järvå). For many years she has given lectures about influence and manipulation, also at the University of Stockholm. Over the years she has participated in numerous TV-programs and radio-programs to spread awareness about cultic groups and processes. In 2004 one person was killed and one was injured in the small congregation Knutby in Sweden. She visited the congregation, talked to leaders and former members and the police. Thereafter she witnessed the trial and commented on the event on TV and also at a conference organized by FECRIS in Hamburg.

**Juanjo Santamaría Lorenzo**, Degree in Psychology from the University of Barcelona. Master in Clinical Psychology, University of Barcelona. Worked as clinical and researcher psychologist in a public Hospital in Barcelona form more than 8 years, on some national and international research projects, also had worked as Assistant Professor in the University of Barcelona. Has published more than 30 clinical articles in scientific journals. Specialist in social addictions, eating disorders, new technologies and mental health. At present is completing his Doctoral Degree and is contracted by AIS (Atención e Investigación de Socioadicciones) as clinical and researcher psychologist.

**Cyndi Matthews**, PhD, LPC-S, NCC is an experienced Counseling Clinician and Counseling Professor currently working at New Horizons Center for Healing in McKinney, Texas and at the University of North Texas-Dallas. Her passion for social justice and advocacy is exemplified in her current research, which focuses on effective counseling interventions for marginalized populations, such as cult survivors, domestic violence survivors, and LGBT populations. Based on her scholarship and clinical expertise she has researched and developed theory for working with and counseling former second generation adult cult recovery survivors.

**Maureen May**, CNM, WHNP, PhD, lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A medical ethnographer, she has recently completed her dissertation, "Turning the Board Blue: America's Epiduralized System of Birth." Although her main academic interest is childbirth and midwifery in developed nations, she has recently begun to also write on political cult group activity. She is an ex-member and survivor of a political cult group of the 1970s, the Communist Workers Party.





**Tony McAleer** is the Executive Director of Life After Hate and EXIT USA. Tony was recruiter and leader in the skinhead and white power movement in North America for over a decade before undergoing his own personal disengagement and de-radicalization process. Tony is active nationally and internationally in the study of best practices for understanding and assisting people who have been in extremist political groups. Life After Hate and EXIT USA was founded by former leaders in the radical far right who actively assist individuals wishing to leave extremist groups and criminal gangs and are active in education, research and outreach. Currently, Life After Hate (in partnership with government, academics and civil right organizations) is developing a tool to measure the disengagement and de-radicalization of former members of far right extremist groups. Life After Hate's core value is compassion.



**Eva Mackey Meyrat, MD**, is a second generation adult whose father was a tenured professor of philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin. Her mother was a devotee of an eastern cult that practiced a branch of Hinduism called Advaita Vedanta, a non-dualistic philosophy that teaches that the self is one with the ultimate truth or reality. Half of Eva's childhood was spent in an ashram in India where she and the other children were unsupervised much of the day. Despite the upheavals and instability that characterized her childhood, Eva managed to get out of the cult at the age of 16 and eventually earned her MD from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Dr. Meyrat has a busy Family Practice and she lives near Dallas with her three small children.



**Nori Muster, MS**, is the author of *Betrayal of the Spirit: My Life Behind the Headlines of the Hare Krishna Movement* (University of Illinois Press, 1997), *Cult Survivors Handbook: Seven Paths to an Authentic Life* (2000), and *Child of the Cult* (2010). She was an ISKCON member from 1978 - 1988, then earned her master's degree at Western Oregon University in 1992 doing art therapy with juvenile delinquents. She is currently an adjunct professor at Mesa Community College, in Mesa, Arizona.



**Stephen Bruce Mutch PhD, LLB, (UNSW)**, is Honorary Fellow in the Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. A retired solicitor and parliamentarian, Stephen served in the New South Wales Legislative Council (State Senate) and then the Australian House of Representatives from 1988-98. His 2004 doctoral thesis is entitled *Cults, Religion and Public Policy: A Comparison of Official Responses to Scientology in Australia and the United Kingdom*. Dr Mutch lectures on Australian Governments and Public Policy and Australian Foreign Policy. He also conducts colloquiums for the Macquarie University Global Leadership Program on Religion, Secularism, and the State.



**Jill Mytton**, M.Sc., C.Psychol., is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist. Currently, she is a visiting Lecturer in the School of Psychology, London Metropolitan University and at the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, London, where she is also a research supervisor for doctoral students. She is currently studying for a doctorate at the Metanoia Institute affiliated to Middlesex University. She is listed on the British Psychological Society media list for Cults and Thought Reform and has been involved in several TV and Radio broadcasts. Her primary research interest is the mental health of Second Generation Adults, i.e., those born or raised in cultic groups.

She has presented at several conferences, including: INFORM London, April 2008, the annual Division of Counselling Psychology conferences in Dublin, 2008 and Leicester 2012, the ICSA Annual Conferences in Geneva 2009 and Montreal 2012. She was born and raised in the Exclusive Brethren, leaving at the age of 16, when her parents decided to leave. Apart from a small private practice, she also runs an email support group for former Exclusive Brethren and has become a point of contact for leavers of several groups.

**Sanja Nilsson** was born in Sweden and holds a Bachelor of Arts with a major in religious studies at Dalarna University and a Degree of Master of Science (one year) in sociology at Lund University. She is currently a Doctoral student at Dalarna University connected to the University of Gothenburg. Her doctoral thesis: *Alternative Childhoods: Exploring the Lifeworlds of Children in Contemporary Minority Religions in Sweden*, is part of a project (with Liselotte Frisk and Peter Åkerbäck) about children in new religions in Sweden, which is funded by the Swedish Research Council. She is a co-editor for *Aura*, a Nordic journal publishing academic articles about new religious movements.

**Kimiaki Nishida**, Professor of Social Psychology in the Faculty of Psychology, Rissho University in Japan. He is also President of the Japan Society of Cult Prevention and Recovery. He is a leading Japanese cultic studies scholar and a standing director of the Japanese Group Dynamics Association. His studies on psychological manipulation by cults were awarded prizes by several academic societies in Japan. And he has served as an expert for some courts seeking an explanation of cult mind control.



**Piotr T. Nowakowski**, born in 1974, Ph.D. Hab. in social sciences, Associate Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin – Off-Campus Faculty of Law and Social Sciences in Stalowa Wola (Poland). Areas of academic activity: social prevention, social work, pedagogy of social rehabilitation, public security, pedagogy of mass media, philosophy of education; author of headings in the *Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (published by: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu). Books written: *Sekty: co każdy powinien wiedzieć* (Cults: what one should know, 1999), *Sekty: oblicza werbunku* (Cults: faces of recruitment, 2001), *Fast food dla mózgu, czyli telewizja i okolice* (Fast food for mind, i.e., television and surroundings, 2002),

*Modele człowieka propagowane w wybranych czasopiśmie młodzieżowych: analiza antropologiczno-etyczna* (Models of man propagated in selected youth magazines: the anthropological and ethical analysis, 2004). Books edited: *The phenomenon of cults from a scientific perspective* (2007), *Sekty jako problem współczesności* (Cults as a problem of contemporary reality, 2008), *Higher education in Nigeria: selected aspects* (2010), *Wokół pigulki gwałtu* (Talking about date rape drugs, 2011). Dr. Nowakowski is ICSA Today's News Correspondent for Eastern Europe.



**Robert Örell** is director at Exit Sweden (headed by Fryshuset). He has more than twelve years of experience on work with disengagement from political extremism and criminal gangs. Robert is involved in national and international networks focused on knowledge sharing and best practice within the field of radicalization, disengagement, and intervention. He has arranged several international conferences and workshops. He is an adviser on the work of setting up Exit organizations in a number of countries and has experience from several EU projects on de-radicalization and interventions. Since 2012 Robert has been a member of the steering committee of the European Commission's RAN (Radicalization Awareness Network) where he co-chairs the working group on De-radicalisation. Robert has studied social pedagogy and has some psychotherapy training.

**Cindy Owre** is a doctoral student at the University of Alberta. The study of incidents of child sexual abuse in alternative religions is her primary research focus. Her other areas of research interest and specialization include: historical examination of the rights of the child legislation, the production of the child as property and citizen, the sectarian history of alternative religious groups and the use of arts-based research methods for examining individual experiences of abuse.



**Stephen Parsons** is a retired Anglican priest living near Carlisle, England. His interest in cultic and high demand religious groups goes back to the 80s when he researched material for a book on Christian healing. He realised that among practitioners of spiritual healing there were some whose healing practice was abusive and exploited the vulnerability of the sick. This led eventually to a study of abusive Christianity, *Ungodly Fear*, which collected and interpreted stories of individuals who had joined certain fundamentalist Christian groups in the UK but suffered in the encounter. Since the book appeared in 2000, and especially since retirement in 2010, he has been reading widely in the areas of social psychology and psychoanalytical theory to understand this phenomenon of abuse within certain churches. He runs a blog, [www.survivingchurch.org](http://www.survivingchurch.org) which attempts to set out the fruits of this study and reflection. He has the hope that it will be of use to those coming to terms with an encounter with a religious institution or church that exploits and abuses.



**Marie-Andrée Pelland**, PhD, Assistant Professor, Sociology Department, Université de Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada. She received her doctorate from the School of Criminology of the Université de Montréal. Her dissertation is entitled, *Allegations of Illegal Conduct: Effect on Social Reality of a Community of Canadian Polygamous Mormons*.



**Miguel Perlado**, PhD, Psychologist. Psychotherapist (associated member of the Spanish Federation of Psychotherapy Associations, FEAP). Psychoanalyst (Spanish Psychoanalytical Association, SEP-IPA). Member of the Board of Directors of iPsi Psychoanalytic Training Center. Member of the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA). Coordinator of Task Force on Psychological Manipulation Processes on Cults and Other Social Organizations at the Official School of Psychology of Catalonia (COPC). He worked for eleven years with Attention and Research on Social Addictions in Barcelona. Now, he's the current director of AIIAP

(Iberoamerican Association on Psychological Abuse, Barcelona, Spain). He has specialized since 1999 in cult-related problems, helping hundred of families, current members, and ex members of cults and other victims of abusive relationships. He has published a number of professional articles on the subject and has organized numerous seminars for mental health professionals in Spain. He coordinated the specialized book "Estudios Clínicos sobre Sectas." He maintains EducaSectas ([www.educasectas.org](http://www.educasectas.org)) and also HemeroSectas ([www.hemerosectas.org](http://www.hemerosectas.org)), two specialized Spanish websites on cults. He develops his clinical practice with ex cult members and their families in Barcelona (Spain). In 2005 ICSA awarded Mr. Perlado the Herbert L. Rosedale Award in recognition of leadership in the effort to preserve and protect individual freedom.

**Frances Peters** (1959) She is a certified coach/counsellor at FreeChoice, in the Netherlands. She is a member of the ICSA. She is a former, second generation Jehovah's Witness. Together with her husband and two children, she left the group in 2004. In 2007 she was officially disfellowshipped. In September 2011 she published an article for the Magazine 'Tijdschrift voor Coaching', about the influence of cultbehavior on identity development ('Gezocht: Nieuwe Identiteit'). Mieke Barendregt and she host a support group of former members of cults, abuse groups and/or relationships (OwnFreeChoice Praatcafé) since 2012. She is also part of a team of professionals ([www.ontmaskermanipulatie.nl](http://www.ontmaskermanipulatie.nl)) to provide more information about cultbehavior.



**Diana Pletts**, MA, since 2006 has directed and coordinated The Phoenix Project, which provides a time, space, and place for cult survivors to present their cult and recovery related artwork. Diana is working, herself, to regain and work out her own artistic vision, which was abandoned when she became a member of the Path, a charismatic End-Times group. Diana went to Wellspring for post-cult counseling help in 1999. She then returned to college to complete her cult interrupted undergraduate degree and a master's in communication, writing a thesis project for a cult education information campaign. Diana has spoken on cults at colleges and churches, on the radio, and at Chautauqua Institution in New York State. She also edits the Arts and Literary section of ICSA Today. She has worked as a writer and adjunct college professor. In 2015 ICSA presented Diana with the Margaret T. Singer Award.

**Elizabeth Poulsen** is a former Jehovah's witness who raised her children in the organization.

**Kamala Priya** (1967), Master of Education, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, has been a member of ISKCON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness - Hare Krishna movement) since 1988, and has been working with people inside and outside the movement. She has several years of experience in teaching at secondary schools in Sweden. In 2011 she attended a course on child protection given by ISKCON's International Child Protection Office in Stockholm.

**Hanna Qwist's** parents were members of a small religious group called Maranata, who homeschool their children. [hanna.qwist@gmail.com](mailto:hanna.qwist@gmail.com)

**Sophia Ralph** is a PhD Criminology student at the University of the West of England (UWE), with special interests in sexual violence, death, spiritual identity, and the psychology of martyrdom and self-sacrifice. I work as an associate lecturer in UWE's Criminology department, where I teach Criminal Psychology; Research Methods; and Social Psychology of Violence and Crime. I was recently published in the Journal of Sexual Aggression, and presented papers on social perceptions of necrophilia at the British Society of Criminology



(BSC) Conference 2014 and the International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders (IATSO) 2014 Conference. I was born and raised a true-believing Mormon. At around nineteen years old I suffered disillusionment, and stopped attending a year later. My own spiritual journey and struggle, both growing up in the Church and subsequently transitioning from it, ignited a desire to help those experiencing similar faith crises. Consequently, I am currently co-authoring a research study with Dr. Mark Horsley at UWE exploring transitional identities in post- and ex-Mormon communities. Furthermore, I am a co-founder and co-director of Truth Will Prevail Ltd., a non-profit organisation aiming to support Mormons and their families, in and outside of the Church, through faith crisis. [Sophia.Ralph@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Sophia.Ralph@uwe.ac.uk)

**Mirosław Rewera**, PhD, doctor of sociology, Assistant Professor at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin – Off-Campus Faculty of Law and Social Sciences in Stalowa Wola (Poland). Areas of research activity: changes of values and roles of authorities in contemporary society, especially in the awareness of youth; usage of new drugs (smarts) by Polish youth, and influence of the media on human perception of social life. In the area of cultic studies, he focuses particularly on cult leaders.



**Patrick Ryan** is a graduate of Maharishi International University. He has been a cult intervention specialist (exit counseling, mediation, religious conflict resolution, thought reform consulting) since 1984. Mr. Ryan is the co-founder of TM-EX, the organization of ex-members of Transcendental Meditation. He established ICOSA's online resource (1995-2013), and has presented 50 programs about hypnosis, inner-experience, trance-induction techniques, communicating with cult members, conversion, cult intervention, exit counseling, intervention

assessment, mediation, religious conflict resolution, thought reform consultation, eastern groups, transcendental meditation and workshops for educators, families, former members and mental health professionals at ICOSA workshops/conferences. Mr. Ryan received the AFF Achievement Award (1997) from AFF, the Leo J. Ryan "Distinguished Service Award" (1999) from the Leo J. Ryan Foundation, and a Lifetime Achievement Award (2011) from ICOSA. [pryan19147@gmail.com](mailto:pryan19147@gmail.com).

Websites: [intervention101.com](http://intervention101.com); [cultmediation.com](http://cultmediation.com); [cultrecovery101.com](http://cultrecovery101.com).



**Omar Saldaña Tops** graduated in Advertising-Public Relations and in Psychology. Currently he is a PhD student, and he works in the Social Psychology Department at the University of Barcelona, where he collaborates with the research group led by Professor Álvaro Rodríguez Carballeira. His research interests are focused on influence, manipulation, and abuse processes in group contexts.

**Katharina Sengfelder** has a BA in Psychology, training as a support group facilitator for domestic violence, and experience with outreach and community awareness. She grew up in a small new age cult from age 10-20, where she was cut off from the outside world, taken to three different countries, and helped build a time machine. Her mother is still involved in the cult today. For the last 12 years she has been reading up on cults, talking to other people who have been exposed to mind control, and has been exchanging ideas with people studying the phenomena. In early 2015 she created the website [www.mindcontrolandcults.com](http://www.mindcontrolandcults.com) in an attempt combine academic knowledge with personal experiences. The website has a section specifically for people who were born and raised in

cults, as well as information regarding recovery for everyone who has experienced thought reform, no matter in what setting.

**Vasso Siameti**, a former Jehovah's Witnesses, grew up in a family where God and religion always came first. She was baptised as a member at the age of twelve. Inside the sect she got a first-hand experience of what it means to solve problems "within the organization" without involving authorities. In 2008 she decided, by her own free will, to leave the Jehovah's Witness. Her children were getting older and she didn't want to expose them to the same upbringing as herself. Today she is trying to find ways to help youth leave in time.



**Oliver J Smith** was raised as a Jehovah's Witness in the UK. After leaving home in his late teens to pursue a career as a musician, he is now studying towards a degree in psychology and is looking forward to seeing where it takes him. He would like to be involved with cultic research but is not yet sure in what capacity.



**Ann Stamler, MA, MPhil**, graduated from Brooklyn College summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 1965, and earned [graduate degrees](#) in Latin from Columbia University. From birth until age 41, she was in the Aesthetic Realism movement, which her parents, both artists, had joined before she was born. In 1971, along with her parents, Ann was one of the first people the founder designated as teachers of Aesthetic Realism. During the years before and after the founder's death she began to recognize cultic behavior in her fellow Aesthetic Realists, and chose to walk away from it in 1985. In 1987, she married Joseph Stamler, whom she had first met in Aesthetic Realism. For 22 years she was a senior executive of a nonprofit agency in New York that worked with the labor movements in the U.S. and Israel. She helped found a pluralistic Jewish High School in CT, and was elected three times to the legislative body of her town.

**Christer Sturmark** is Chairman of the Humanist Association Sweden, Publisher. Promotes secular schools for all children and is a well known debater on the topic of faith schools in Sweden. [hanna.qwist@gmail.com](mailto:hanna.qwist@gmail.com)

**Joni Valkila** grew up as a Jehovah's Witness. He was excommunicated at the age of 22 and has been shunned by his entire family since then. Joni holds a PhD from the University of Helsinki in Social Sciences. Since 2012 he has worked the director of UUT (Uskontojen uhrien tuki – Support Organization for Victims of Religion in Finland). He is one of the Nordic correspondents of ICSA Today.



**Amanda van Eck Duymaer van Twist**, PhD, is the Deputy Director of Inform, a non-profit information centre specializing in minority, new, and alternative religious movements, based at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her PhD, completed at the LSE in the Department of Sociology, examined the second generation of sectarian movements and the impact their segregated childhoods have had, and has been published under the title *Perfect Children: Growing Up on the Religious Fringe* (2015, Oxford University Press). As part of her work at Inform she has encountered many individuals and frequently writes in-depth reports on particular new and/or alternative religions, or issues pertaining to such groups.



**Samuel Varg** - professional magician and lecturer - or as he prefers to call it Magic Edutainer. Has done over 50 talks with Håkan Järvå about manipulation and social behavior. With a huge interest for religion and psychology he combines teaching with his skills in sleight of hand, so called mind reading, a bright look at life and a wicked sense of humor to encourage the audience to look at things with new eyes and to know that nothing is impossible.

**Media Waisson** 36 is currently working at Michael & Michael öppenvård with family related non institutional care in Skane. Media is one of the founders of the organisation FHF-Frieht, Hopp & Framtid. Media also has practical experience in working with honor-related violence with girls, both individually and in groups. She lectures on honor-related ideology and its consequences for social workers and school staff in different municipalities in Skane, and studies psychotherapy with a focus on CBT.

**Barbro Westerholm**, Member of the Swedish Parliament for the Liberal Party, is a doctor and researcher. She was formerly Associate Professor at the Karolinska Institute and General Director at the National Board of Health and Welfare. As General Director, she pushed through the decision that homosexuality would no longer count as a mental illness by the National Board. She gave impetus to the most comprehensive state investigation on cults made so far in Sweden: In Good Faith (1998). During her years in the Swedish Parliament she has continued to be one of the few Swedish politicians to raise human rights issues related to sects.



**Takashi Yamaguchi**, Esq, is a member of the Tokyo Bar Association and practices law at Link Law Office, founded by Masaki Kito. He represents victims of cultic groups, such as Unification Church, Home of Heart, etc., in and out of court. He is a member of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales and is also a board member of The Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery (JSCPR).

**Ms. Yukari Yamamoto** was born in Kobe, Japan. Ms. Yamamoto is a professional conference interpreter/translator (English/Japanese). She recently co-translated Steven Hassan's Releasing the Bonds into Japanese (Kyobunkwan, 2007). She is a board member of the Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery and an ex-member of Home of Heart, a controversial therapy group in Japan.

**Qing Ye**, PhD, was born in Anhui, China. She received PhD degree in philosophy from Peking University in 2008, and B.S. and M.S. degrees from Anhui Normal University and University of Science and Technology of China, in 1995 and 2003, respectively. She is now an associate professor in China Center for Modernization Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. Her current research interests include social history of science, policy of science and technology and cultic studies. Cults study in the process of the modernization of countries is a particular concern for her. For further information, please contact with her via email: yeqing429@163.com.

**Zengyi Zhang, PhD**, is a professor and the Chair of Department of Journalism and Communication at University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS), Beijing. He was a professor and the vice-dean of School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Beijing Institute of Technology, Beijing, before he joined UCAS. He earned his PhD in philosophy at Peking University. He was a visiting scholar at the Center for the Studies of Science, Religion and Society (now the Blaise Pascal Institute), Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, from 1998 to 1999, and was also a visiting scholar at Program in Science, Technology and Society, Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 2008 to 2009. His long research interest is the relationship between science and religion in history and contemporary society, on which he published a book entitled *A Century long Controversies between Creation and Evolution in USA: the Demarcation of Science in Social Context* (2006), and recently work on public understanding of science and religion through mass media and the Internet, especially focus on content analysis of media coverage of science and religion(including new religion).



# Abstracts

## **A New Integrative Model for Understanding Identity Development in Second Generation Adult Cult Survivors**

**Cyndi Matthews**

The presenter will introduce a New Integrative Model to assist Helping Professionals in supporting Second Generation Adult (SGA) cult survivors understand and negotiate identity development after leaving a cult. Based on the presenter's qualitative research with SGA's, along with current cult and counseling theory/practices, the model describes 1) identity formation while growing up in the cult, 2) identity confusion and dissonance while leaving the cult, 3) identity re-formation after leaving the cult; and 4) counselor strategies and interventions to be utilized with SGA's as they work towards identity resolution.

Former SGA cult members find integrating into society challenging and frightening (Singer, 2003; Matthews, 2012; 2013). The presenter will discuss results of her qualitative inquiry intended to increase understanding of the process former cult members experience as they leave their cults and integrate into society. Identity Development Models can assist helping professionals and individuals in understanding, normalizing, and validating experiences (Sue, 2010). The Identity Development Model being presented includes the stages of conformity and naiveté, dissonance and realization, pressure to conform, straddling two worlds, emergence, and multiple possible integration resolutions. Understanding former cult members' experiences can facilitate helping professionals assist SGAs in new identity development, working through former abuses and subsequent anger, and learning problem solving abilities.

Participants will:

1. Gain a working knowledge of the process and some of the challenges experienced by former SGA's as they integrate into society,
2. Understand key factors that help and hinder former SGA's through the process of reforming their identity, and
3. Increase awareness of how to counsel and discuss with SGA's their former lives in the cult, personal identity development, and life-long hardships they may face.

## **AIS Clinical Intervention Protocol for Members and Ex-members of Manipulative Groups and Their Families**

**Vega González; Juanjo Santamaría**

Concordance with evidence-based guidelines in the treatment of group dependence disorders is typically low. Patients with group dependence disorders tend to have special characteristics (low disease awareness and adherence to the treatment, low motivation, etc.), that impede a therapeutic approach. Sometimes it is hard or impossible to get access to the patient, and the large part of the therapeutic process is done with the family or friends. Our objective is to present a standardized clinical treatment protocol combining exit counselling and cognitive behavioral therapy. This intervention is adaptable to the individual circumstances of each case.

Since it was founded in 1977, AIS, a pioneer organization in Spain, has focused its therapeutic activity on the disturbances provoked by manipulative groups. One of our main therapeutic priorities is oriented towards providing assistance in cases related to manipulative groups, although we also treat cases related to unethical situations of intense interpersonal influences in "groups of two" (situations of one-way personal manipulation without the existence of a group). Our clinical experience has allowed us to develop a standardized clinical protocol. Nowadays, we are testing its efficacy through scientific research.

Our preliminary findings after treatment show that patients can keep distance and elaborate critical opinions regarding their manipulation groups and show a capacity to speak about manipulation and express critical opinions about it. Psychological treatment combining cognitive behavioral therapy and exit counseling can be effective to help people suffering from the effects of manipulation and coercion.

### **Childhood Experiences and Child Protection in Closed Religious Communities**

#### **Auri Butzow**

The research questions for my doctoral thesis in social work are: How do former members of closed religious communities experience their childhood? How can child protection services intervene in the internal actions of the communities? In my research, I asked former members to write about their childhood in a closed religious community. I got twenty autobiographical stories from people who were raised as Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Laestadians, and Mormons. Although the writers had been brought up in different religions, they had very similar stories from their childhood. All writers felt that they had been brought up in isolation, fear, and guilt, and they all felt that they had not had freedom of religion. They had controversial feelings about their childhood, since they felt that they had been exposed to issues children should not be exposed to, and yet they felt that their parents had thought they were raising their child in the best possible way.

According to the writers there seems to be an issue in how children are treated in closed religious communities, which is an issue for child protection services. In Finland and in the other Nordic countries the most important principle of child protection is to work for the child's best interest. This means that although families are autonomous, child protection services are obliged to intervene, if the child's best interests are in danger. But when it comes to religion there are always more complex issues involved. The child protection law in Finland is based on the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child. According to the declaration, a child's parents have the right to raise their child in their own culture and religion, while they still are obliged to inform the child about his/her rights, which include freedom of religion. This means that it is very difficult for child protection to intervene in issues associated with religion. Also, our strong principle of equality gives everyone the right to equality and same treatment but also the right to be different and get different treatment. These conflicting principles raise the question if child protection can determine approved diversity boundaries.

According to studies in England and in the US child protection with closed religious communities differ from child protection with other families. The main reasons are that the members do not trust public servants and the fact that the communities' culture, structure, and dynamics are different from the societal norms. My research focuses on the issue, how child protection services can work with closed religious communities to assure that the children are raised and treated in a way that serves their best interest.

## **Children as Victims of Quasi-religious Pseudo therapeutic Practices: A Polish Case**

**Jadwiga Daszykowska**

Children become victims of pseudo therapeutic practices in case when their parents are confident of the healing power of alternative therapies that have little or no relation to medicine. Behind these methods specific religious contexts may be hidden. A recent example, publicized by the media in Poland, is the death of six-month-old Magda who, following the prescriptions of a medicine man, had been fed on water mixed with goat's milk and starved for three months. Well-educated parents invoked the authority of God Man, as they called the medicine man, and referred to his curative and holy power. The paper is a monographic study, but it draws extensively on press releases.

## **Choosing Between Heaven and Help: Learning How to Safeguard Children and Vulnerable Families from Clerical Predators**

**Cindy Owre**

Numerous accounts of child sexual abuse by clergy in alternative religious groups report that the incidents have taken place in children's homes. In many of these situations, parents of the victims allowed clergy members to live in their homes in order to protect their positions within their religious groups, and therefore are loathe to report the abuses to either leaders or themselves or outside authorities. In essence, parents feel that they have to choose between heaven (i.e., ignoring or excusing child sexual abuses because of the religious status of the perpetrators) or help (i.e., contacting outside authorities such as child welfare workers or police). I suggest that professionals can help religious parents protect their children from clerical predators by educating them about the dangers of allowing strangers to live under the same roofs with children and emphasizing to parents and caregivers the human right that children have to a safe home environment.

## **Conflict Between Cultic Groups and Governments Representatives: Implications for Children Everyday Life**

**Dianne Casoni, Marie-Andrée Pelland**

Children can have various positions within a cultic group. For instance, groups who follow a philosophy of separation, who prioritize their differentiation and detachment from non-members, may view children as their future, their salvation, so children are at the center of the group's everyday life (Casoni, 2000). In these groups, members can focus their time and effort toward children's religious socialization and education. For other groups, who follow a philosophy based on paranoia toward the outside world, a world view that sees non-members as a threat to their religious goal, can conceive children as any other members within the group; they aren't the object of any particular attention. So, in these groups, children must accomplish as much work as any other members; age cannot be used to lessen their implication toward protecting the group from the outside world. In other groups, children can be viewed as a distraction toward good work, toward reaching perfection (Casoni, 2000). In these groups, children can often be isolated from their family members.

What happens to children when government representatives question group members about their activities and their philosophies or when they allege that some of their way of life is criminal? Are children's everyday lives transformed? What effect can conflict with the outside world have on children's positions within a group? Are children exposed, hidden, or

forgotten in cases of serious conflict? To answer these questions we will show results from qualitative research done with three Canadian groups who experienced conflicts with various government representatives. Based on interviews with members and ex-members, media analysis or court paper analysis, we will aim to understand how children's lives are affected by conflicts. We will focus on how their everyday life, their schooling and their relationship with their parents are affected within a polygamous Mormons group, within a group called Mission of the Holy Spirit, and within an ultra-Orthodox Jewish group called Lev Tahor.

### **Does the Legion of Christ Continue to Train Children to Discover a Vocation in this Catholic Religious Order?**

**Paul Lennon; Xavier Leger**

The Legionaries of Christ are directing a great number of minor seminaries all over the world. Historically, the recruitment of children has always been its main source of vocations, while, in most western countries, the vast majority of dioceses and religious orders have stopped the recruitment of children for the priesthood. Behind the apparent success of its minor seminaries (the "apostolic schools") the Legion of Christ hides a very disturbing reality: controversial techniques of recruitment; training system driven by strong ideologies where there is no room for errors; spiritual discourses/messages grounded on guilt and manipulations; iron discipline that does not consider the psycho-sexual development of the teenagers. Large amounts of pupils leave these structures deeply hurt, and they sometimes need many years to reintegrate into society and rebuild their own lives. In this conference we would like to share our concerns about this educational system.

### **Fifty years of One Family in Transcendental Meditation(TM)'s Ideal Society!**

**Gina Catena**

Ms. Catena will walk the audience from her parents' vulnerable moment for seduction in 1966, through subsequent family and lifestyle changes to today. The audience will find questions about validity of Transcendental Meditation(TM)'s science, family fallout from a multigenerational cult-effects, and concerns for children within this, or any, totalitarian organization.

By coincidence, Ms. Catena's life parallels the development of this guru-based organization that once claimed 5 million followers worldwide. Through personal stories she will reveal the secret society behind Transcendental Meditation's slick marketing. As her loved ones suffer degrees of psychosis, bankruptcies, medical neglect and suicides, the organization's world government with golden-crowned Rajas and mystical teachings continue to lead their flock. Without slander, Ms. Catena's personal stories incite questions as to the appropriateness of Transcendental Meditation(TM) as is currently marketed by the David Lynch Foundation for school children and Veterans suffering from PTSD. Listeners can draw their own conclusions.

### **First Generation Parents and Second Generation Children: Working Towards Increased Understanding and Empathy in the Family**

**Lorna Goldberg**

One of the most painful aspects of the cult experience is the undermining of the natural bond between parents who are in cults and their children. This presentation will explore the numerous techniques that cult leaders use to diminish the empathic connection between

parents and their children. The presenter also will discuss the powerful feelings that emerge when exiting a cult. How can those who leave the cult better deal with potentially crushing emotions? Often there is intense guilt on the part of the parents. On the other hand, there is often intense anger on the part of the second-generation adults. These emotions can be so overwhelming that former cult members can become unable to move towards a more satisfactory life. This presentation will contend that these post-cult feelings not only are the result of facing the reality of the cult experience; but, also, are a legacy of identification with the cult leader's punitive and uncompassionate attitude, which results in a harsh conscience for cult members. The presenter will provide examples from her clinical work, from the support group that she facilitates with Bill Goldberg, from workshops with first generation parents, and from ICSA workshops with second-generation former cult members. All case material will be disguised.

### **From Children of God to Children of Members: Changing Views on Children in TFI 1988-2013**

**Sanja Nilsson**

The Family International is one of the most extensively studied new religious movements in the world. They are also one of a few surviving new religious movements founded in the 1960's. Due to the group's continuous prophecy as well as society's strong reactions to their radical theology and intense critique of mainstream society, the movement has changed rapidly throughout its history. The movement's comprehension of childhood and its attitude towards children have had specific consequences for the group in terms of intervention from social services and raids against Family communes. For some children particularly this has led to frequent relocating and homeschooling in order to limit contact with people outside the group and to avoid attracting attention from social services. The view of children within the group changed dramatically in 2010, when the organizational change, "the Reboot," declared children no longer members but "children of members." This paper examines the changes in normative views on children's roles and the idea of childhood within The Family International in the last 25 years, with particular focus on the Swedish context. By analyzing the movement's own publications, academic publications, and media coverage on the group as well as biographical texts, a picture of a rapidly changing movement emerges. How have children's roles within the movement been understood during the last 25 years? The paper argues that the movement has had to reevaluate its understanding of children and childhood as a consequence of the increasing awareness in mainstream society of children's welfare.

### **Growing Up in Controversial Minority Religions: Constructions of Childhoods**

**Liselotte Frisk**

This paper discusses patterns and structures in different constructions of childhoods in some controversial minority and new religions. The study is based on life story interviews with young adults who grew up in religious groups, such as the Church of Scientology, The Unification Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Knutby Filadelfia in Sweden. The sample consists of interviewees who decided to join the religious groups of their parents, as well as those who decided not to. The method used is that of narrative analysis.

### **Is Love Spoken Here? An Examination of the Experience of Child Conditioning in the LDS Church, its Impact During Faith Crisis, and an Introduction to Truth Will Prevail**

## **Sophia Ralph**

The conditioning of children within the LDS (Mormon) Church is a subject which has caused controversy in ex, post, and never-Mormon communities. Concern remains as to the control and psychological conditioning of children within the LDS Church. Some of these fears include: the use of children to promote the practices and doctrines of the Church without full and balanced disclosure of relevant information; the pressuring of children to protect and support the organization, often at the cost of family relationships; loss of personal autonomy and with it the deprivation of authentic identity; detriment to the developing individual's physical, social, psychological, and financial well-being; and high rates of youth depression and suicide. Using written, qualitative data obtained from volunteers via online forums and post- and ex-Mormon communities, this paper shall consider the means in which children and young people are conditioned within the LDS Church. The experience of child rearing in the LDS church, in relation to the experience of leaving the organization, shall be discussed. The personal and interpersonal impact shall be explored, with particular emphasis on affected relationships with loved ones; the extension of child conditioning into life-course conditioning in the Church; a comparison of the abused child/abusive parent relationship, and that of the Church member with the Church organization; and the impact of faith crisis upon social, physical, financial, and psychological wellbeing. Finally, the presentation shall conclude with an introduction to Truth Will Prevail Ltd., alongside its aims to support and (re)unite affected individuals, families, and communities both in and out of the Church.

## **Legal Restrictions on Parents in the United States**

### **Philip Elberg**

There are a series of court decisions, particularly from the United States Supreme Court, that limit (perhaps not enough) a parent's right to make decisions about their children's upbringing. They include decisions which prevent parents from withholding medicine on religious grounds, decisions which require compulsory education, and decisions which limit the excessive use of force and punishment in school placements (my particular interest). They reflect the tension between the respect for parental rights and the related historic view of children as property and the public's interest in making sure that what are considered societal norms and needs are respected. I think these decisions present a framework in which to understand the growth of high-demand groups that exist along the boundaries of these decisions and sometimes cross over. In fact, the decisions typically arise as a result of the activities of what are fairly described as sects and from a legal perspective represent the core of the conference theme. This paper will summarize a few of these decisions and invite lawyers from other countries to comment.

## **Lessons from 30 Years of Cult Intervention Work including Second Generation Cult Members**

### **David Clark**

Cult intervention work by its very nature encounters families with children born inside and outside of cults or high-demand groups. The nature of exit counseling or thought reform consultation needs to be explained to the family seeking assistance and is especially true concerning group-related family children. The focus of this presentation will center on children born and raised in high-control groups. There are special needs these young members face and quality education can address many of them. Cult intervention work has a serious relationship to their parents and other family relationships of a lifetime. Critical

thinking skills and processes are crucial in the re-evaluation process from a totalistic high-demand group relationship and its impact of child victims.

This presentation will center on the stages of intervention consultation and its family relationship to those born in cults but also parents and other family relationships who were not born into high-demand groups. It is important to examine the influences of the before and after personality changes of those not born into a cult. We need to compare the connection from those born into a high-demand group and family members not born into a cult to find influence interaction and its impact. Those born into high-demand group need healing and understanding. Quality education and communication skills are needed to move families forward in a healthy support relationship this workshop should address.

### **On Being Born and Raised in a high-demand group: A position paper based on former Exclusive Brethren members experiences**

**Jill Mytton**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to stimulate awareness and discussion of the impact on child development of being raised in a high-demand group.

**Background:** Influences from parents, teachers and other sources that promote and facilitate normal childhood development are important aspects of the early years of an individual's life. Despite an increase in research in the cultic studies field there is still relatively little literature regarding the impact on a child's development of being born and raised in a cultic group. Using a specific example of such a group, namely the Exclusive Brethren, this paper will explore the experiences of and impact on children being raised in high-demand groups

**Key points:** The paper is based on an informal thematic analysis of descriptions and stories provided by former members via email and social media. Like many similar groups, the brethren exert considerable control over their members based on their doctrine of "separation from evil," a doctrine many consider to be taken to extremes. Now that their children only attend Brethren schools, all influence from sources outside the group that could offer alternative perspectives or narratives are absent. A number of important themes have emerged including the experience of fear and guilt, the impact of such a closed separate life on social development, the lack of life skills that inhibits them if they leave, and the common experience of dissonance as the child seeks to resolve the messages from different environments and narratives. The paper will also present findings from a quantitative study that suggests that control imposed in childhood might resonate in adult life through long term psychological sequelae

**Conclusions:** I will argue that control imposed in childhood may affect various aspects of child development and may later impact on adult mental health.

### **Panel: Comparing Growing Up in a Honor-Related Context vs Growing Up in Jehovah's Witnesses**

**Hakan Jarva; Anna-Lena Stahl; Vasso Siameti; Media Waisson; Moderator: Marianne Englund**

A panel for mental health professionals mainly. Vasso and Media are childhood friends. They both grew up in a high demand-environment and has a unique insight into each other's upbringing. Anna-Lena works as a therapist with girls coming from honor-related contexts

and Håkan works with people coming from cultic groups. The purpose of this panel is to spotlight differences and similarities between growing up in Jehovah's Witnesses compared to growing up in an honor-related context, with views from both professionals and victims.

### **Panel: Dialogue with NRMs**

**Michael Kropveld, Moderator**

#### **The Proactive Potential of Cultic Studies Research: The Example of ISKCON**

**Anuttama Dasa**

As an observer of ICSA for twenty plus years, I find that most cult-watching, or anti-cult, research has concentrated on the dynamics of cultic leadership and abuse; identifying dangerous groups or group tendencies; understanding the damage done to communities and individuals; methodologies of healing and re-entering mainstream society; and balancing human rights and religious freedom issues involved. Despite the growing evidence that cultic behavior and abuse can be present in any organization, little has been done to inform healthy, marginal, and other vulnerable organizations how to protect their communities by weeding out potentially abusive cultures and behaviors. In February 2014, as Vice Chairman of the Governing Body Commission and Minister of Communications for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) or the Hare Krishna movement, I made a twenty-minute plenary presentation to over 1,000 leaders of the Krishna organization at an international leadership convention. My presentation was based on what I had learned from ICSA and similar sources over my years of interaction with ICSA, and from materials provided to me by Dr. Michael Langone and others. The presentation included a) an analysis of why ISKCON is vulnerable to cultic behaviors, b) discussion of former ISKCON leaders who utilized cultic techniques to mislead their followers, c) the need for transparency and open discussion about the dangers of such behavior, d) warning signs of unhealthy potentially cultic behaviors, and e) healthy leadership patterns that protect communities from cultic behaviors. In this talk, I will present the highlights of the 2014 presentation to ISKCON leaders. I propose that additional efforts by ICSA researchers to promote healthy group dynamics for religious communities and other associations could take this research impact to another level—that is, to engage education and widespread dissemination of ICSA research to organizations large and small, thus, to proactively minimize abusive and cultic behaviors within organizations.

#### **How a Religious Movement has Dealt with Child Abuse**

**Kamala Priya**

Child abuse is a huge social problem found all over the world. It has occurred on all different levels of society, both in families as well as within organizations, and even religious institutions. Unfortunately, this problem has also been found within ISKCON, known as the Hare Krishna movement. At this conference I would like to present a case study in which I will discuss how ISKCON has dealt with child abuse. My focus will be on the following two questions: What was done by leaders and members of ISKCON to stop child abuse? Which preventive measures have been taken to avoid child abuse in the future?

I have read articles dealing with child abuse in general and within ISKCON, and done research on ISKCON's Child Protection Office. I also interviewed members and families of the movement both in Sweden and in Germany. My research shows that ISKCON has attempted to deal with the problem of child abuse in a self-critical and self-healing way.



After an initial denial due to not being able to accept and to deal with the problem, leaders acknowledged the issue and openly addressed it within ISKCON communities worldwide. An office for Child Protection (CPO) was formed, which assessed the problem internationally. The office then created measures to help abused victims and train internal judges to adjudicate past abuses. The CPO also developed actions to prevent child abuse, such as education for both children and adults, which became obligatory in every community, through Child Protections Teams. Today ISKCON members are aware of the problem of child abuse and are requested to report any kind of suspected abuse done to oneself or to others. Finally, I will shortly speak about the situation in Sweden.

### **Panel: Faith Schools and Children's Rights**

**Madeleine Brink; Rod Dubrow-Marshall; Hanna Qwist; Christer Sturmark (A moderator for this panel will be booked through Talarforum, Sweden)**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have freedom of thought, freedom of religion, right to education, to receive information from independent sources, and right to leisure and playtime. The panel meets with two former members of different religious groups who went to faith schools. The panel aims to explore the challenges in maintaining children's rights in faith schools, and to discuss the effects of faith schools for the children later in life.

**Panel: How do some SGAs find forgiveness and personal peace with systemic abuse and abusers from their childhood?**

**Jill Mytton; Cynthia Mullen Kunsman; Gina Catena**

Three adult SGAs who successfully transitioned to mainstream professions and family life will summarize different paths in reaching forgiveness, or not, as they came to terms with lifelong effects of childhood psychological abuse. The three participants experienced childhoods in three distinct groups. They had different roles within their respective groups, and they left under different circumstances. Clouds of their upbringing continue into their current lives.

The panelists will describe post-cult experiences of reaching forgiveness so they could have emotional peace in their current lives, long after leaving their groups of origin. Ms. Mytton was a teenager when her parents took her away from the Exclusive Brethren in the United Kingdom. One of her three siblings remained in the group along with many other close relatives. Ms. Mytton and her parents together adapted to mainstream society. She continued a relationship with her parents until their death and with the two siblings who left the group. Her two children were born after she left the group.

Ms. Kunsman was raised in a Pentecostal Bible based group in the United States. She left of her own accord after reaching adulthood. She currently has minimal contact with her family of origin. She is married and does not have children.

Ms. Catena was one of the first children in the global Transcendental Meditation Movement. She married twice and bore three children while in the group. She left with her ex-husband and children. Her father died as a believer. She keeps her aging true believer mother safe. Her only sibling converted and is now a respected elder in the Mormon Church. After much work, she succeeded in developing a warm relationship with her adult children.

**Panel: Interviewing SGAs**

**William Goldberg, Moderator; Mario Bosson; Camilla Hanke; Eva Mackey Meyrat; Ann Stamler**

A panel of adults whose childhood was spent in high demand groups will speak briefly about their individual experiences, focusing on what they sought when they left their communities, and then address questions from the audience. This will be an opportunity for helping professionals and others to explore through direct questions and answers the unique challenges facing second-generation adults, and better understand what distinguishes their experience. Moderator Bill Goldberg has facilitated ICSAs SGA Workshop in the U.S. since its inception in 2006. SGA panelists will include a woman raised in an eastern cult, now a medical doctor, a former Jehovah's Witness, a former Mormon, and the Associate Editor of *ICSA Today*, who grew up in a cultic therapy movement.

**Panel: Japanese Experiences of Aum Shinrikyo, Home of Heart, and Other Cultic Groups**

**Masaki Kito; Kimiaki Nishida; Eito Suzuki; Takashi Yamaguchi ; Yukari Yamamoto**

This panel includes lawyers, a journalist, and a psychological researcher. The lawyers and journalists will discuss the serious issues concerning the condition and the treatment of children in cultic groups. They will share their experience about physical abuse, medical neglect, educational neglect, and psychological abuse they have found with the cases concerning children in cultic groups, such as Aum Shinrikyo, Home of Heart (awareness/spiritual seminar group), to discuss the various lessons they have learned from involvement in such cases, especially about how conventional legal and non-legal resources can be used to help prevent child abuse by cultic groups.

Psychological researcher, Kimiaki Nishida, will re-examine the Japanese cult, Aum Supreme Truth. Soon 20 years will have passed since the guru Shoko Asahara and many Aum members were accused of a variety of illegal and terrorist attacks such as the sarin gas murders. Now, it is significant to examine the analysis of their psychological processes and the remaining members again because all of their trials will be finished presently. Their terrorist attacks were analyzed by using face-to-face and indirect interviews with the ten defendants, their court documents, books written by Aum former members, and some media reports. The results were as follows: 1) The guru probably did not hit upon the attacks as revenge for a denial of his thoughts or criticizing their exotic activities; however he had planned to destroy society from the initial stages of his religious establishment. 2) The sarin gas attacks in Tokyo and Matsumoto city were not the best-laid plans, but rushed in only two days for the purpose of distracting the police's attention. 3) The defendants did not conspire, or aim the defense of their group for themselves, but were manipulated psychologically to automatically do their best for the religious tasks the guru ordered them to do at any time. 4) The remaining members still believe in the guru Shoko Asahara, and they are succeeding in recruiting newcomers again, because they believe he was innocent and the defendants, as his followers acted without the guru's orders.

**Panel: Leaving Violent Extremism – Experiences of De-radicalization  
Can De-radicalization and Disengagement Be Measured?**

**Tony McAleer**

Governments worldwide are very committed to combating and countering the messages of radical political and religious cults. We know that the best messengers for counter

narratives is former extremist members themselves. How do governments, practitioners, etc. determine whether the formers they are working with are trustworthy? This lack of trust creates a barrier that prevents cooperation between entities with resources and those who may be the best messengers to counter cultic ideologies and beliefs. This presentation discusses ongoing extensive research with leading academics and with practitioners (Life After Hate/EXIT USA) in the context of the extreme far right in the USA to identify whether common archetypes exist in the de-radicalization and disengagement process. If so, can a tool be designed to accurately measure and identify where a former is in the de-radicalization and disengagement process?

## **Lessons From Exit and Beyond**

### **Robert Orell**

With more than 15 years of experience of disengagement-work with individuals from the white power movement, this presentation will present the experience of Exit Sweden. How is those experiences from a practitioner perspective used in expansion towards work with criminal gangs and support for parents and individuals engaged in violent Islamic extremism? What are the lessons learned, what are the similarities and difference with targeting these different groups? How could the knowledge from the European Commission's Radicalization Awareness Network be transferred to both practitioner and policy recommendations?!

## **Lost Parenthood and Lost Childhood**

### **Masoud Banisadr**

After leaving a cult, parents (especially if they were members of a destructive cult for a long time), cannot suddenly take their position as parents and change into a loveable, responsible, understanding parent that their children expect to find and have. On the one hand, their children want to have parents as other children have, and on top of that want to know why and how they have lost their normal childhood, and perhaps in simple word, they seek to hear an honest response of sorry from their parents. On the other hand, their parents, who have been victims themselves, and in this case have lost their rights as parents, do not know what has gone wrong. Moreover, they are confused about what they should they be sorry of? Also, after leaving a destructive cult, they too, like children, are badly in need of love, care, and understanding, which they seek from their relatives including their children (especially if they are adults and were out of the cult before the parents). This is the reason for a conflict or confusion of understanding and emotion between parents and children after leaving a destructive cult. One minute they love each other as society, culture, and nature dictates. And another minute, children express rage (almost similar to the rage of teenagers toward their parents) due to parents' refusal of acceptance and understanding of wrong, while parents, desperate and sad for not receiving the respect and love of their children as other parents do, show their anger and even "hate" toward each other. Yes, they both can learn and understand what has happened. Forgive, forget, and perhaps channel their anger toward exposing the cult and its leader who enslaved them both. Yes, they can start all over again and build new-shared memories. However, until then, they will continue to suffer and remain in dilemma and confusion about past and their feelings toward each other.

## **Panel: Magic Show Plus Heroic Imagination Workshop (HIP)**

### **Hakan Jarva; Samuel Varg**

These are two projects financed by the Swedish Youth Board (Ungdomsstyrelsen). We want to give the audience a demonstration of the projects. The magic show is aimed at inoculating against being manipulated and HIP is aimed at teaching basic social psychology to high school kids. The purpose of both the magic show and HIP is to make teenagers aware of group mechanisms and how easily they can get manipulated in order to counteract future bad decisions. Heroic Imagination Project (HIP) was initiated by Professor Philip Zimbardo. Samuel Varg Thunber, a professional magician, takes special interest in exposing fraud amongst faith healers.

### **Panel: Political Sectarianism: Violent Right-Wing Extremism From the KKK to Christian Identity**

#### **Maureen May**

Recent events have brought to the fore the issue of martyrdom as a characteristic of totalistic political organizations that operate under the cloak of religiosity. Dedication to a cult group can lead to martyrdom. Martyrdom is also used as a means to promote a cult group. In Western countries, this phenomenon is usually thought of in terms of Islamic terrorism. This presentation will discuss the phenomenon of Christian right wing political organizations and martyrdom in the American context. Specifically, the presentation will discuss to what extent martyrdom is inherent in these groups. What role does martyrdom play within the Christian Identity movement? The presentation will pose a question: In the American context of individualism, is the presence of a single charismatic leader with a claim to special insights a necessary element of cult activity? Martyrdom itself, perhaps, provides an individual the sense of specialness – the belief in having been chosen to carry out a special mission that serves to unite cult activity.

#### **Life After Hate**

#### **Tony McAleer**

Push or pull? Recent events have indicated that the pull to religious and political cult groups draws from a wide range of socio-economic and educational pools. What are some of the precursors that lead to attraction and acceptance of cultic beliefs and ideology and what are some of the common events and triggers that lead to disillusionment and exit from such groups and belief systems? This presentation will ask whether the ideology is what radicalizes individuals or if individuals become radicalized and then seeks out the ideology to justify their actions?

#### **The Experience of Exit Sweden**

#### **Robert Orell**

When the first Exit program started in Norway in 1995 there was little known about disengagement or de-radicalization from political extremist groups. By learning from the American experience of cult disengagement the Exit program developed and spread to Sweden and later to other countries. This presentation will describe the work that Exit Sweden does with supporting individuals to leave the white power movement and re-integrate into society. From what perspectives and with what type of interventions does Exit support people to leave a lifestyle of hate, destructive living, and violence? This presentation will present some of the work Exit operates in helping clients to gain new tools to get back to a life without hate.

## **Panel: Raising Children to be Jehovah's Witnesses: Three Former Members Tell Their Stories**

**Pia Andersson; Jenny Joelsson; Elizabeth Poulsen; Noomi Andemark**

The panel aims to tell former members inside stories about parenting methods in the Jehovah's witness organization, and what happens when one of the parents no longer wants to be a part of the organization, and how this affects the family bonds/the children. The panel will also discuss the attitude and knowledge among authorities, judiciary, and school, and give advice on what could be done better to provide help to children in these challenging family constellations. The panel is arranged by The Parents Network, part of the Swedish help organization Hjälpkällan.

## **Panel: Recovering Your Sexual Self After the Cult Therapeutic Issues for Recovery From Distressing Sexual Experiences Involving Cultic Influence: Getting the Balance Right**

**Linda Dubrow-Marshall**

Most cult observers are aware of the common tendency of cultic groups and leaders to manipulate and abuse members' sexuality, as a powerful means of controlling people's emotions and behaviors. Cultic sexual degradation can vary greatly between groups and even within a group. "Flirty fishing," polygamous marriage, devotional leader sex, child sexual abuse, coerced group sex, and enforced celibacy are only a few examples. Other groups concentrate on prescribing sexual behavior through arranged marriages, or within existing marriages. Some people are recruited into human trafficking/sexual slavery through means of cultic influence. In almost all cases, people who exit cultic relationships continue to feel shame and confusion. Women may continue to struggle with how sexual objectification and the violation of significant boundaries are obstacles to relating even casually to men. For those who struggled with minority or alternative sexual orientations, the demonization of their non-heterosexual desires often lingers long after physically exiting the group. Issues around psychosexual identity can be deeply impacted by cultic experience, and may result in deep-seated shame and confusion and persistent sexual conflicts. The consequences of post-cult sexual shame can range from loss of sexual desire and functioning to a period of intense (and sometimes dangerous) sexual experimentation or sexually compulsive behaviors. It can be hard for former members to 'get the balance right' and gain perspective on a more psychologically healthier view of their sexuality. This presentation will offer therapeutic guidelines as to how to help people to recover from distressing sexual experiences and explore their sexuality within a safe therapeutic environment that respects diversity and autonomy. Therapist avoidance of working with sexuality issues will also be addressed.

## **Praying Away the "Gay": How Cultic Practices Harm Sexual Minorities**

**Steve K. D. Eichel**

While most news outlets tend to concentrate on "conversion/reparative therapies" (C/RT) rooted in Christian fundamentalism, in fact attempts to "convert" sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, pansexual, transsexual) are common to many cultic groups, including eastern-religion, new age, political and pseudotherapy cultic groups. Some of these groups employ outdated or discredited "science," including but not limited to the work of the renowned U.S. sexologists William Masters and Virginia Johnson. For some groups, such as Scientology,

C/RT has been rooted in both the prejudices of the group's founder/leader as well as an extreme positivist approach to behavior change. For some political cults, homophobia was perhaps more rooted in a belief that sexual minorities were promiscuous or hypersexual and thus distracted from the more important task of revolutionary change. Still other political cults, such as many extremist Right-wing Christian Identity or Islamist groups, root their homophobia and use of C/RT in a combination of both political and religious dogma (e.g., Christian or Muslim doctrine). This presentation will summarize what science informs us about C/RT, sexual fluidity, and the differences between gender identity, sexual orientation and sexual/gender expression. Current research will be presented on the biological basis for sexual orientation and gender expression and identity, and the degree (if any) to which both prenatal and postnatal environments play a role. Research on what we know about the psychological harm caused by C/RT, and why it has been condemned by all major U.S. and British mental health associations and outlawed in two states (so far) will be reviewed. By integrating these findings with what we know about the social-psychological dynamics of psychologically-abusive groups, particular attention will be paid to how sexual science impacts on cult recovery issues for those who may find themselves coping with, exploring, or questioning their gender and/or sexuality.

### **The Role of Identity in Recovery From the Impact of Sexual Experiences in Cultic and Abusive Relationships: Reclaiming or Creating an Authentic Self**

#### **Rod Dubrow-Marshall**

Research has demonstrated how involvement in high demand or cultic groups can have profound effects on the identity of individuals (Dubrow-Marshall and Martin 2005). A theory of 'totalistic identity' has emerged to explain the way in which the cult identity comes to dominate a person's cognitive and emotional world (Dubrow-Marshall 2010) eclipsing existing aspects of self-identity or for children growing up in cults preventing those normal levels of identity from fully developing. The importance of sexual identity as part of a person's overall self-identity has long been established (Segal and McIntosh 1992) as has the damaging effects of sexual abuse on identity development as well on self-efficacy and on ongoing health and wellbeing more generally (Hall and Hall 2011). Existing patriarchal forms of gender identity (Connoll 2005) can become more entrenched as they are ideologically normative for the cultic group as part of its belief system. Recovery from sexual abuse in cultic groups can therefore be seen as part of the overall recovery process from undue influence and ideological indoctrination (Lifton 1961, Langone 1995) however the impact on sexual identity and development arguably also needs to be seen as a separate domain and area where tailored psycho-education and recovery approaches need to be developed which focus on identity recovery and the development of a healthy self-identity more broadly. This presentation sets out options for a tailored treatment programme which addresses sexual identity recovery as a part of the overall recovery from abusive groups, drawing on established approaches to recovery from sexual abuse (Long, Burnett and Thomas 2006) and cultic group recovery (Giambalvo and Henry 2010).

#### **Recovery From Marriage to a Cult Leader and Induced Sexual Shame: A Personal Account**

#### **Carla Brown**

The presenter will describe her experience in having married to a leader of the Exclusive/Plymouth Brethren. She will share her reflections about how her sexual feelings changed from having a comfortable view of her sexuality to experiencing induced shame about her prior behavior and adopting a new view of women as "temptress," with the need to control her behaviors so as not to provoke a sexual response, with the role of sexual



activity linking exclusively to procreation. She married the leader at the age of 23, and had seven children in the following seventeen years out of what she believed was obedience to the church teaching and her husband. When she met her future husband and was introduced to the church teachings, it was clear that any sexual contact outside of marriage was strictly forbidden by God and the church. Immediately, she felt shame that she had sinned by not being a virgin. She and her husband chose to wait until their wedding night to have sexual relations, and she became pregnant on their honeymoon, and every two years she had a baby. She was taught that modesty was very important to not tempt other men sexually. She witnessed the ex-communication of people for the sin of fornication and adultery. She was also aware of sexual abuse that was covered up. She encountered and embraced many challenges in the reclaiming of her identity and sexuality after leaving her husband and the church. She wondered who she was apart from being a "breeder" for the cult, and she had no idea how her sexuality could be expressed apart from "the undefiled marriage bed." She went through many programs, models, and experiences that proved to her that there is an incredible need for teaching and training to assist former cult members in restoring their sexuality.

## **Recovery of Sexually Trafficked People Based on Cultic Recovery Principles**

**Steve Hassan**

Abstract not submitted

## **Recovering From a Secret Seduction by a "Celibate" Guru: A Personal Account**

**Judith Bourque**

The presenter will discuss her own experience of sexual seduction by the famed Transcendental Meditation (TM) Guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who claimed that he was a celibate monk. She had travelled to India after obtaining a university degree when she was young, idealistic, and in a period of transition. She wanted nothing more than to become a teacher of TM. She was surprised when Maharishi started flirting with her from the very beginning, and soon they became lovers. She was twenty two and her Guru was fifty two. Maharishi asked her to keep the affair a secret since his public role was one of celibacy, and she agreed. Maharishi repeatedly maintained that celibacy was the best path for spiritual development, starting programs called Parusha for men and Mother Divine for women. Behind the scenes, he maintained a highly unethical relationship to women and finances. The presenter will talk about her journey of recovery, which included going public about her experiences and exposing the secret lie of celibacy of Maharishi. She "came out" about their relationship after Maharishi's death in the film "David Wants to Fly," a full length documentary about Maharishi and the TM organization, including the involvement of film director David Lynch, and she has now written a book about her experiences. She experienced great relief in her personal life by telling her story, and she hopes that her experience will serve as a warning to other young women who wish to follow a guru and may slide into an abusive relationship.

## **Sexuality in the Cult**

**Hilde Langvann**

Sexual control and restrictive views on sexuality has been observed in isolated, faith-based communities. What are the effects on children who grow up in these communities, especially when homosexuality, masturbation, and sexual desire all are viewed as negative

forces, and where the members' sexuality is being controlled by the religion? Is there a connection between the religious group's view on sexuality and sexual abuse? I will show what research in sexology has found in this matter, and I will talk about why sexual abuse cases will continue to appear in isolated faith-based communities. What are the psychological consequences of a restrictive view on sexuality and the sexual control in the religious group? I will show what research in psychology has found in this matter, and how the life of children growing up in high control groups will be affected by this control.

### **Panel: Research from China**

**Eileen Barker, Moderator**

#### **The Fantasy Themes and Rhetorical Strategies in the Propaganda of Cultic Groups: A Case study of the Eastern Lightning**

**Biaowen Huang; Zengyi Zhang**

It is impressive that cults spread widely and rapidly, but few studies try to analyze their rhetorical and persuasive strategies. In this proposal, we will do a case study of the Eastern Lightning to focus on its advertisements, posters, training videos, books, internal manuals, and other material, to probe into how the cultic group reconstructs the social reality and identify sharing meaning of symbols with its followers.

In this paper, we try to use the analysis frame of fantasy theme to study the discourses and rhetorical strategies of the Eastern Lightning. We will analyze the most representative publications and materials issued by the Eastern Lightning since 1993, including 20 advertisements in newspaper, 50 posters, 38 training videos, 30 books and internal manuals, etc.

We conclude that the Eastern Lightning successfully reconstructs the collective interpretation of life and a fantasy world by use of fantasy themes. (1) In the setting themes, it says we are living in "the Age of Guodu (the Age of Female Christ)", and the god's name, theophany and work will be totally different from past time; (2) In the character themes, it sets the role of Female Christ, High Priest and five levels of people, and normal people only have to believe in the Female Christ and follow the god's instruction to escape the Armageddon; (3) In the action themes, it makes a three-step-plan to rule the universe, and the members' mission is called "Jiao- Tong" (means regular assembly and communication), "Mo-Di" (means joining other religious groups to investigate), and "Pu-Lu" (means recruit new members); (4) In the sanctioning agent, it uses misinterpretation of the Bible, strengthens the darkness of Satan, representation of god's human body to establish his own authority. Those conclusions would be helpful to understand other cultic groups.

#### **An Empirical Research Study on Children of Cult Member Families in China**

**Fan Hong**

This study is about the social status of children in cult member families with samples from a cult group named 'Almighty God' in Hebei province in northern China. We classify these families into three types: (1) the parents are all cult members; (2) the father is cult member; (3) the mother is cult member. We investigated whether or not the children of these families are abused, and their practical difficulties in school or daily life. The similarities and differences between the three types will be analyzed.

Initial investigation and analysis indicated that there are signs of physical abuse in a few families, but not much. The main problem is neglect of the children, particularly with regard to education and social life. Family is a core concept in Chinese culture. Cult members usually neglect their family and children because of the frequent cultic activities and brainwashing. So, most children in cult member families have poor academic performance and often are truant from school. Compared with local households, cult member families have unstable income, and some have difficulty making ends meet. A lot of children live with their grandparents at the poverty level. Many of them have shown inferiority, loneliness, and social withdrawal. These problems in families are especially prominent when both parents or mothers alone are cult members. According to statistics, more than seventy per cent of "God Almighty" members in Hebei Province are young and middle-aged women. Hence, giving assistance to the children in such families should be considered by government and civil society.

### **Cult Awareness, Science Literacy, and Education for Chinese Youngsters From the Perspective of Textbooks**

**Tianjia Chen**

As the statement submitted by FECRIS to United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2011 put it "Quality education and appropriate publications are some of the main tools to prevent harm to students." According to 2010 collaborative statistics by UNESCO and UNICEF, 77.4 percent of 813,000 youth illiterates in China are in rural areas, where a low level of science literacy indicates high vulnerability to pseudoscience and cult recruitment. Strong public pressure and intensifying publicity and education has contributed to a targeting of cult crimes against children.

Textbooks constitute an important teaching aid for cult awareness since they influence how students perceive the cult phenomenon. Is the cult awareness content of textbooks suitable considering the cognitive style of children? Do the current textbooks measure up to the science literacy standards for Chinese citizens concerning anti-pseudoscience? The purpose of this study is to answer the above questions by investigating the content of textbooks used for Chinese students in grades 1-9. Document analysis was employed as the research method and data were collected from various versions of textbooks and teachers' reference books in Chinese language, science, morality and society, and specific cult awareness readings for youngsters published in recent years.

The following aspects of the textbooks' content could be examined and analyzed: (a) traditional Chinese supernatural beliefs, (b) definition of cult within Chinese cultural context and global context, (c) relationship between pseudoscience and cults in China, (d) cult crimes, narrative mode, and proportion of comics. The implication of this study for advancing cult awareness in education will be discussed.

### **Qigong Fever and the New Religions in Contemporary China**

**Dr. Li Yaming & Dr. Li Jianhui**

From 1979 to 1999, China witnessed a huge mass movement for pursuing "Extrasensory Perception" (ESP) or "Extraordinary Power", which describes a range of supernatural human abilities, including telepathy, fluoroscopy, clairvoyance, telesthesia, precognition, telekinesis, idiodynamics, out-of-body experience, special physiques (e.g., body-elicited combustion and body-elicited electricity) and others. During those two decades, enormously

popular so-called Grandmasters of ESP and Qigong emerged. Qigong refers to a broad range of Chinese self-cultivation exercises for cultivating and balancing life energy, especially for health. Millions of people across the country went to study with masters. This social phenomenon was named "Qigong Fever" or "EP Fever". The Qigong Grandmasters were entrusted with superior positions. To attract more people, many Qigong schools ceased to use scientific terms and instead resorted to traditional mysticism. With the stabilization of the trust and worship for the Qigong Grandmaster from the public, it became very hard for the Qigong organizations to reject the temptation to gain benefits through the people's worship. Some Qigong organizations had motives in touting the efficacy brought about by Qigong and to privilege and idolize their Qigong masters. They also tried to break the government's control and develop their organizations into religions. For example, Zhang Hongbao developed Grandmaster worship to such an extreme that he required his followers to hang his "True Grandmaster Portrait" in their homes and worship him in religious rituals. From that point forward, people no longer cared whether ESP was science or not because Qigong Grandmasters began to propagandize ESP in a transcendent fashion, which was not related to scientific or empirical evidence. In this research, we will trace back the development of these new arising religions and analyze why they can develop in a socialist China.

### **Panel: Research from Spain**

**Carmen Almendros; Jose Carrobles; Håkan Järvå; Petra Hólmgrímsdóttir; Sigríður Sigurðardóttir; Alvaro Rodriguez; Omar Saldana**

For many years Spanish scholars have conducted empirical research pertinent to cultic studies. This panel will provide an update on this ongoing research, with particular focus on the development of assessment measures; the relationship of cults, domestic abuse, and workplace abuse; and psychological effects of cult involvement.

### **Psychological Abuse Reported by Swedish and Icelandic Former Members of Abusive Groups**

**Carmen Almendros, Håkan Järvå, Petra Hólmgrímsdóttir, Sigríður Sigurðardóttir, Omar Saldaña, Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira, and José Antonio Carrobles**

Part of this presentation is an update of the international research project: "Development and Validation of Measures Relevant for the Study of Abusive Groups," for which new instruments are being translated and used at varying paces in different languages (i.e., English, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish, Italian, German) and countries. The aim of this work is to study the Swedish versions of some of the instruments measuring influence and psychological abuse in group contexts, through the responses of Swedish, self-identified former members of various abusive groups. Besides presenting preliminary properties of these instruments with Swedish participants, their responses are compared to those of previous samples from other countries. When applied to people from different cultural contexts, similar results are obtained when we compare former members of abusive groups from different countries (US, Spain, Japan and Sweden) and samples of students, all showing a similar pattern but a quite different level in the intensity of the influence and psychological abuse subscales. Research conducted in Iceland using the modified version of the Group Psychological Abuse Scale, together with other instruments evaluating distress and life satisfaction, will also be presented.

### **Distinguishing When Group Influence Becomes Psychological Abuse**

**Omar Saldaña; Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira; Carmen Almendros**

Group psychological abuse has been defined as a process of systematic and continuous application of pressure, control, manipulation, and coercion strategies for the purpose of dominating other people in order to achieve their submission to the group. One approach to find out whether a person has experienced psychological abuse in a group setting is the administration of validated instruments. The Psychological Abuse Exerted in Groups Scale (in Spanish Escala de Abuso Psicológico Aplicado en Grupos [EAPA-G]) is a new measure intended to assess the intensity of implementation of various abusive strategies perpetrated by manipulative groups. Previous studies have suggested adequate psychometric properties in terms of reliability, internal validity and convergent validity.

Social influence processes are present in most human groups to some degree. In this sense, some strategies related to psychological abuse, such as control of information or imposition of an extraordinary authority, may be present in non-manipulative groups in low-intensity forms. Therefore, it is important to determine instruments' capability to discriminate between socially accepted influence experiences and psychological abuse experiences, in which the suffered strategies may be greater in number, intensity and frequency

The present work studies the validity of the EAPA-G to detect abuse using two samples of self-identified former members of manipulative groups as cases and two samples of former members of non-manipulative groups as controls. In this direction, the EAPA-G has been administered to two samples of victims, one formed by Japanese citizens (N=60) and the other one by North American citizens (N=65), as well as in two samples of non-victims, one composed of Japanese students (N=60) and the other one by people from English-speaking countries (N=50). The ROC curves were obtained and the areas below the curves were analyzed so as to maximize the sensitivity and specificity in order to determine the optimal cut-off points to separate cases from controls.

Establishing an empirical cut-off point of the EAPA-G to distinguish between people who have experienced group psychological abuse and those who have not experienced abuse is a new step to provide guarantees of psychometric quality of the EAPA-G. These evidences of diagnostic validity could contribute to a more accurate delineation and assessment of group psychological abuse in research, as well as in different applied fields, such as clinical settings or legal contexts.

### **Panel: The Dutch Approach: Current Situation and Future Plans**

This panel will address the importance of building networks for the protection and education of children and youth. There is more focus on a curative, preventive, and judicial approach. It is important to make Dutch people more aware of the danger of cults, such as criminal, sexual and financial misbehavior. In the Netherlands the general attitude towards the danger of high demand groups has changed. People have begun to acknowledge the existence of cults, harmful groups, and cult behavior in groups. Future plans: In the years to come the Dutch youth care system will be decentralized and transformed. From 2015 on the municipalities will be responsible for all youth care services. In The Netherlands the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport is responsible for overall youth policy and most specialized services for families and children. The Ministry of Security and Justice is responsible for juvenile justice policy and related institutions. Experts of cult behavior can play a part in the changes to come, for childcare also needs more focus on the harmful effects of cult behavior and how psycho-education can help protect children and youth. One of our projects is supporting national programs of the Ministry of Security and Justice, for instance prevention programs for schools and youth.

## **The Dutch Hotline 'Sektesignaal' Helps Cult Victims and Their Children**

### **Karin Krijnen**

On February 27th 2011 a Dutch television program broadcast an undercover-operation in a Dutch cult. This program led to questions in parliament. The Minister of Justice decided to initiate a scientific research study into cults in the Netherlands. This research was published in October 2013. According to this research 84 injustices within cults were reported these past 20 years. The research only took into account so-called new religious movements. The research concludes that new laws regarding cults are not necessary but confirms the importance of more awareness regarding specific cult problems. In December 2012 the Minister of Justice opened a hotline called Sektesignaal. It offers victims of cults and their family and friends the opportunity to tell their story. If necessary, Sektesignaal can refer a caller to different kinds of legal and health care institutions. Sektesignaal employees are trained as confidential mediators. They will report what kind of injustice there is within a cult. They also report how people are manipulated within the cult. Up until December 2012 there was no place to go for these victims. They often felt nobody could help them. Since December 2012 Sektesignaal created 164 reports and in many cases Sektesignaal mediated on behalf of the victim with several legal and healthcare institutions. Since 2014 they also registered cases where children are involved as victims. In some cases these children are subjected to social isolation, sexual abuse, violence, and refusal of medical treatment. From January 2015 onwards Sektesignaal will work with a so-called child-check. Every caller will be asked if there are any children involved in the cult. Sektesignaal believes in the importance of registering these children. Sektesignaal is working on a network of legal and healthcare institutions, whose task it will be to help cult-victims and tackle the perpetrators behind these injustices.

## **Current Initiatives and Future Plans in the Netherlands**

### **Frances Peters**

The overall attitude in the Netherlands towards cults and high-demand groups has changed positively over the past few years. This helped ex-members to share their stories openly and be heard. It is a start to provide in specialized care for ex-cult members. The media take harmful cult behavior more seriously. And in March 2015 the Education Center SBO (Study Center for Company and Government) starts the (first in Dutch history) training Inzicht in Dwingende Groepsstructuren (Insight in High Demand Groups). Arjan van Dijk and Frances Peters share their knowledge with mental health professionals and other professionals to gain more insight into cult dynamics. Our guest speakers are Gillie Jenkinson (England) and Robert Örell (Sweden). Our new website [www.ontmaskermanipulatie.nl](http://www.ontmaskermanipulatie.nl) is providing a knowledge platform concerning manipulation and group pressure. Our goal is to share information and make it available to everyone who is interested in the subject. Since 2012 Mieke Barendregt and Frances Peters started OwnFreeChoice Praatcafé – meetings for ex-members. Five times a year we host these afternoons to provide a safe place to exchange experiences and receive psycho-education, free of charge.

## **Panel: Two perspectives on Children in Cults in Sweden - Religious vs. Psychological Studies**

### **Hakan Jarva; Marianne Englund; Peter Akerback; Liselotte Frisk**

The panel intends to examine the two different perspectives that dominate the discussions



on children in cults in Sweden. One of them is psychological discourse, usually represented in health care/psychiatric care, help organizations for former members and often in the media. The second perspective is represented by academic research on new religious movements, sociologists, as well as historians and anthropologists in religious studies. Each panel participant will have a few minutes to present themselves and their work. Each panel member will also give a one-sentence statement expressing an issue, a standpoint or a question that has relevance to the theme of the panel and will be responded to by the other panel members during the following discussion. The panel will be moderated by Edna Eriksson who is a professional moderator from Talarforum. The organizer and contact person for the panel is Noomi Andemark: [noomi@hjalpkallan.se](mailto:noomi@hjalpkallan.se).

### **Paul Martin Lecture: What Helps Former Cult Members Post-Cult?'**

#### **Gillie Jenkinson**

This paper reports on a doctoral research project located at University of Nottingham, England. This qualitative investigation examines former members' experiences post-cult to determine what helps former cult members recover from an abusive cult experience? A grounded theory approach is used to analyze data, and this presentation will focus on the themes and theories that have arisen from the semi-structured interviews and data analysis to date.

#### **Phoenix Project**

##### **Diana Pletts**

This Phoenix Project of cult survivor art and literary work consists of a gallery of works of visual art and literature created by those born and raised in cults. Some of these works have been previously presented in North American Phoenix Projects, and are presented again, here, in order to introduce them to European participants who may not have previously seen them.

### **Poster: Actions of Anti-Cultists on Campuses in China**

#### **Jianhui Li**

During recent years, with the great changes in Chinese society, religions have been gradually growing and widely spreading. Most Chinese students are free from religions, but a few may join different religious groups, including some destructive cults. According to some case studies, after joining cults, these students' studies may deteriorate, their minds may be controlled, their health may be affected, and some may even sacrifice themselves for their beliefs or hurt and kill other persons who might not agree with them. How do universities prevent students from joining destructive cults? How do the universities help students who already joined such groups? These are important questions for university administrators. In order to prevent cults from controlling and harming students, university administrators have initiated a series actions: for example, to establish offices in charge of students' psychological affairs, to set up psychological consulting centers for students, to set up tutors for each class, to set up science, philosophy, sociology, and religion courses for students. In this research, we will analyze these actions and try to find which actions are effective for preventing cults from controlling and harming students.

### **Poster: Children in High Control Groups**

## **Angel Garden**

The poster seeks to depict boundaries in an arbitrary educational high-control group. It explores community boundaries with parents and others, and what effects controlling boundaries can have on the children. Controlling boundaries that bring schools into conflict with parents and care-givers (those ultimately responsible for children's welfare,) create violence for children, and experience repeating patterns of aggression, exclusion and victimization. Educational movements that accept collateral damage, show clearly identifiable patterns of victimization of both children and families.

Our own journey from supporting a child following the rules to report bullying, who was targeted and excluded, all the way to the pinnacle of the movement, far across the world, in a search for genuine accountability, reveals the same mechanisms endlessly repeating. Measuring our own against others' experiences only corroborates the troubling finding that the controlling boundary mechanism in high control educational groups can be exacerbated by the further mechanism of having no obvious chain of authority within the institution, meaning that accountability can simply be left hanging, inevitably leading to more control.

The poster will be designed as an Mandelbrot-type infographic, drawing people in from a distance with a distinct visual style; they will then find information upon closer inspection that leads them on an endless loop of action and reaction. The resulting depiction of these proliferating controlling tendencies, will build into a clear picture showing how even huge global educational movements can enjoy gentle reputations, and publicly espouse human rights, while also managing to openly accept children as collateral damage. The poster will be a stand-alone presentation, however it will be richly supported by a detailed paper documenting the processes and mechanisms depicted.

### **Poster: Perspectives From Inside an Ex-Cult Member Group**

**Oliver J. Smith; Gillie Jenkinson**

We wish to share our experiences from within an ex-cult member group in order to provoke discussion and consolidate our journey thus far. The group is made up of a dozen or so ex-members—both first and second-generation—from various cults and has been active for several years. The group is mainly for support and education with the educational aspects being central to each meeting. Our poster contains a description of the ex-cult member group, observations from regular participants, and an overview of our plans for the future. This poster represents an effort to achieve transparency and provide room for individual expression – things that were sorely lacking in the cultic groups we used to be part of.

### **Poster: Should We Fight Against or Within the Church? The Bold Choice of l'appel de Lourdes 2013**

**Xavier Leger**

When you get into the fight against controversial communities within the Catholic Church, two angles of attack are possible: fighting "against" the institution or trying to help the institution to defend itself against the scourge of sectarianism. However, both approaches have shown their limits.

If you are fighting "against" the Church, you may be accused of collaborating with the enemy, being embittered with people, and thirsting for revenge. Moreover, some people won't hesitate to spread rumors in order to discredit you (kind of: "This man is involved with Freemasonry"), and this is why your complaints, alas, will never be heard.

If you are fighting "within" the institution, you may be quickly demoralized and feel that you are wasting your energy struggling against windmills. When you send to a particular bishop a confidential letter with some serious complaints, you may receive a thank you letter with the promise that the case will be investigated and treated and with the "good advice" that you should now leave this issue in the hands of God, and be able to forgive. After a few years, you discover that nothing has ever been done, and eventually you learn that your letter has been sent to the leaders of the group you were denouncing. How, then, to be heard in these conditions?

This is the challenge a group of former members coming from various controversial religious communities took up in 2013: "L'appel de Lourdes 2013." They decided to educate the main actors of the Church in France about the perverse mechanism of sectarian aberrations. Through this presentation, I will outline the history, core beliefs, failures and successes of this group.

### **Protecting Children Against the Excesses of Cults According to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe : Resolution, Yes, Recommendation, No**

**Henri de Cordes**

In March 2014, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe approved a report on the protection of minors against excesses of sects. The report was presented by French Deputy, Rudy Salles. The following month, the Assembly adopted a resolution according to which, "The Assembly [...] calls on national parliaments to set up study groups on the protection of minors, in particular those belonging to religious minorities."

The next step was a draft recommendation to the Committee of Ministers, "to conduct a study of the scale of the phenomenon of sects affecting minors at European level, on the basis of information provided by the member States; to set up a working group to exchange information between member States on excesses of sects affecting minors and to develop good practices for preventing the problem and to seek to improve co-operation at European level with a view to implementing joint activities to prevent excesses of sects and protect minors against them." The draft recommendation did not reach the two third majority and was thus rejected.

An analysis of the different votes of the members of the Assembly on the various draft texts and amendments can provide some indications on the way political groups and national groups address this issue. This analysis will try to explain why a parliamentary assembly specialized in human rights can adopt a resolution in order to protect children against the excesses of cults and immediately afterwards reject a recommendation in favor of concrete measures enacting this resolution.

### **Protecting the Innocent Victims of Cultic Abuse in Australia and Poland: Comparative Perspectives**

**Stephen Bruce Mutch; Piotr T. Nowakowski**

This paper examines governmental responses to public episodes involving cultic groups in Australia and Poland. Situated in the fields of comparative public policy and political philosophy, it seeks to compare and contrast policy responses in two democratic societies; making observations about the comparative efficacy of these responses, the real or

imagined restraints imposed on governments operating under a liberal democratic paradigm and the potential for better policy interventions aimed in particular at protecting the rights of children in abusive groups.

### **Recently Reborn – To Turn Back as a Child to Scientology Parents**

**Peter Akerback**

This paper is about a certain aspect of the worldview/religion that most commonly is summarized as Scientology, namely what this worldview has to say about children. The view on children will be addressed by examining three separate questions: What is a child? How are you supposed to raise a child? And how should a good parent act and behave towards a child? As members of Scientology believe in an immortal soul that is reborn time and again and harboring in a body with a reactive and an analytical mind struggling with engrams, the assumption can be made that this system of belief also affects how they come to view, raise, and are supposed to behave as parents. To answer these questions the material that will be used will mainly consist of the group's own material and foremost by the group's founder L. Ron Hubbard and published in different forms such as course material, books, lectures, and movies.

### **Reclaiming Identity after Religious Trauma: Rewriting Personal Narrative for "Cult Children" Who Grow Up Denying Self**

**Heidi Hough**

Mythologist Joseph Campbell suggested that the leading myths of a culture not only form an individual's expectation of human experience but their very definition of self. Religious Trauma Syndrome (RTS) is increasingly being recognized as a psychosocial reality for former members of religious groups where emphasis was placed on denial of self. A major symptom of RTS includes identity distress, wherein a healthy sense of personal identity can become underdeveloped or fragmented.

If the myths of the 'cult'ure within which one is raised trigger RTS and identity distress, then the importance of creating new narratives to enable moving past old ones in pursuit of a strong sense of selfhood becomes paramount. As a member of such a group or upon desired departure of one, the question becomes, how to find and/or reclaim this self-identity especially if, as in the case of second-generation adults (SGA's) there is no pre-cult identity to return to?

My proposal suggests that redefinition of personal narrative via "rewriting," both metaphorically and literally, allows one to make sense of traumatic experience and transform the past into intentional identity, self-realization, and one's chosen mythos. "If you succeed [in telling the stories as accurately and artfully as your abilities allow] you replace the fragments of memory with something that has its own shape and meaning, a separate thing that has value in itself. The past becomes an assertion that your life is of the present and the future." (Kidder, Tracy; Todd, Richard) This can further allow "positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances." (L. Calhoun & R. Tedeschi)

My ongoing graduate thesis work asks and will continue to explore, up to the conference this question: "What is unique about the formation of identity in children who grow up in 'cults, what are their human rights in the face of the possible abuse of these, and how can we, as a post-secular society, create a safe space for healing and receiving these individuals' necessarily rewritten personal myths?"

## **Reexamination of the Terrorist Behaviors of Aum Supreme Truth and Their Impact Today**

**Kimiaki Nishida**

The purpose of this report is to reexamine the Japanese cult, Aum Supreme Truth. Soon 20 years will have passed since the guru Shoko Asahara and many Aum members were accused of a variety of illegal and terrorist attacks such as the sarin gas murders. Now, it is significant to examine the analysis of their psychological processes and the remaining members because all of their trials will be finished soon. Their terrorist attacks were analyzed by using face-to-face and indirect interviews with the ten defendants, their court documents, books written by Aum former members and some media reports. The results were as follows; (1) The guru probably did not hit upon the attacks as revenge for a denial of his thoughts or criticizing their exotic activities; however he had planned to destroy society from the initial stages of his religious establishment. (2) The sarin gas attacks in Tokyo and Matsumoto city were not the best-laid plans, but rushed in only two days for the purpose of distracting the police's attention. (3) The defendants did not conspire, or aim the defense of their group for themselves, but were manipulated psychologically to automatically do their best for the religious tasks the guru ordered them to do at any time. (4) The remaining members still believe in the guru Shoko Asahara, and they are succeeding in recruiting newcomers again, because they believe he was innocent and the defendants, his followers, acted without the guru's orders.

## **Reframing the Negative: Integration of Cult and Post-Cult Identities of Second Generation Adults**

**Maya Horton**

Many Second Generation Adults (SGAs) born and raised in destructive cults and closed organizations struggle to define ourselves after leaving our groups. We may realize that our entire life has been shaped by the expectations and desires of other members of our group, and we may feel like we don't know who we are. We are often met with the idea that we are free to start again outside of our cult, and that we can become anybody we wish if we try hard enough. This can be liberating for many, but destructive for others. We may have left our cults with multifaceted disadvantages in terms of career, education, physical and mental health, interpersonal skills and material resources, yet we may feel pressure to "catch up" with our secular peers, often feeling intense guilt if we do not recover instantaneously from our experiences. We may spend years battling feelings of fear, panic and inadequacy, while pursuing goals which we are ill-suited to, or losing touch with important parts of our past identities. Drawing heavily on my own personal experiences, this paper focuses on the aftermath of leaving a destructive closed organization, and the difficulties of trying to carve a new identity and connect with mainstream culture as a SGA. This paper specifically focuses on integrating cult and post-cult identities. It challenges the perception that SGAs are free to start again, and highlights intersectional disadvantages, social narrative and recovery pathways, and suggests that not every aspect of growing up in a cult is universally bad.

## **Religious Socialization and Dimensions of Spiritual Violence among the Jehovah's Witnesses**

**Aini Linjakumpu**

Young adulthood is a critical period of life in religious communities with regard to whether a human being stays in a community or diverges from it. Continuity of many Christian movements requires, not only the recruitment of new people, but also that a person remains in a community she or he is born into. A child is socialized, i.e. brought up, to a religious community from birth. Socialization to religious communities takes place through concrete activities as well as a spiritual teaching by the community. In addition, socialization of children and young people takes place with the help of family, relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

Socialization of a young person to a religious movement can occur without problems. In this presentation, however, the focus of the examination is on those dimensions of socialization that may show up as a problem for young persons. Socialization is analyzed as a potential form of spiritual violence, which is understood as a mental or physical violence articulated through one's belief or existence in the religious community. It is an exercise of power against members of the community, which reduces the ability to determine one's own future. Birth into a religious movement is not in itself a spiritual violence, but in the socialization process, there are many factors that are relevant to the emergence of violence. Empirically, the presentation focuses on the Jehovah's Witnesses. As dimensions of spiritual violence, the presentation examines socialization as a structural form of violence, as a cause of vulnerability and as a reduction of being. Empirically the presentation relies on collected narratives, internet material, interviews, autobiographical books, as well as documents, newspapers, and official material provided by the Watchtower Society.

### **Saved by our Son: Adolescent Resistance Behavior in High-demand groups, a Swedish/American case study**

**Russell H. Bradshaw**

Most of the literature on children in high-demand groups focuses on how distraught parents and desperate families attempt to get young people out of a cultic group. This case study, set in both Sweden and the United States tells the opposite story. An adolescent, resisting the belief system of parents and the norms of the spiritual group he was raised in, revolted and struck out on his own path. He quickly found out that the leader was in fact, not the celibate and "realized" guru he claimed to be, but a deceptive and manipulative narcissist. In the midst of his own alienation and suffering, he nevertheless struggled for several years trying to convince his "true-believer" parents of the hypocritical behavior of the leader. He also had to contend with the morally corrupt rationalizations, denials, and double-standards adopted by the inner circle of first-class disciples and other followers who tried to destroy his credibility, his career, and his relationships. Finally, amidst death threats, police complaints, and an intense "internet war" that erupted when he created a web-site, which included first- person accounts of sexual abuse by several young women, he managed to convince his parents and drag them out of the group - after almost a quarter of a century of belief and devoted service to their Guru.

Central to this case study is the psychodynamic theory of Erik Erikson concerning the adolescent stage of development labeled, "identity versus role-confusion." The specific identity crisis at this stage is the necessity of choosing an identity status and the use of resistance behavior to develop this identity. In Erikson's theories, adolescent revolt, turmoil, and resistance are seen as positive attributes that are necessary to the positive development of personality.

### **Shunning and Ostracism in Cultic Groups - Insights from Social Exclusion Research**



## **Stephen Parsons**

For those in leadership in cultic and other high-demand groups, the power to exclude members provides an effective means of control over the whole group. Survivors of such exclusion have to endure the pain, not only of losing their status and role within the group, but also that of being shunned and ostracized by those who have been close to them. This paper will review some of the recent literature in a relatively new area of social psychology, social exclusion research, which seems relevant to the field of cultic studies. Among its findings, social exclusion research appears to offer relevant material to help us understand, both why individuals find their way into groups, and also why they may find it so difficult to leave them.

Studies in social exclusion over the past 15 years indicate how membership of any group normally provides satisfaction for four basic human needs. These needs are identified respectively as belonging, control, meaningful existence, and self-esteem. This insight alone would appear of value in our attempt to understand how cults and religious groups attract their members. But the literature takes us further by describing the effect on an individual when expulsion takes place. The fulfilment of the human needs offered by membership in the group ceases at the moment of departure. This can be devastating for the individual and the effect is made worse if the parting is sudden or within the context of conflict.

In summary, the paper will suggest that the language of social exclusion studies enables us to gain new insight, not only into the dynamics of cult membership, but also into the reasons why and how ex-members often suffer with such intensity. The experience of exclusion and ostracism may have attacked their sense of identity at a profound level. The paper will conclude with some observations about the issue of evaluating the testimonies of ex-members alongside those who remain attached to cultic groups. Evidence of good mental flourishing among existing members will not be, in itself, evidence of healthy dynamics within their groups. The evidence of ex-members, on the other hand, by describing the dynamics of the exclusion process, will provide pertinent evidence as to whether power is operating malignly or not.

## **Social Structural Factors that Facilitate Child Sexual Abuse in Sects, Cults, and Alternative Religions**

### **Stephen A. Kent**

This presentation identifies ten related social structural factors that facilitate child sexual abuse in alternative religions, sects, and cults. These social structural factors involve ordered interactions taking place within opportunities that groups establish and maintain. They may involve: 1. the creation of trusted hierarchies; 2. the operation of improperly monitored child care facilities; 3. the cultivation of co-dependents and facilitators; 4. the implementation of adults' (especially leaders') unsupervised time with minors; 5. the circulation of strangers through households; 6. the establishment of sexual opportunities for minors; 7. the construction or utilization of buildings that provide privacy for abuse; 8. the operation of boarding schools away from parents; 9. the utilization of national and international networks through which abusers move; and 10. one's location in poverty, which drives people into the sex trade. These factors have emerged from examinations of primary and secondary material (interviews, group publications, scholarship, media accounts, court documents, etc.) from dozens of sexually abusive groups on file in a large archival collection that I oversee for my university's library on sects, cults, and alternative religions. This social structural approach to analyzing child sexual abuse in cults

complements and extends earlier published research on religious justifications that sectarian-based child abusers tend to use in attempts to sanctify their actions. This presentation will be interesting to both child welfare workers who may encounter cult victims in their practices, and to policy-makers who are attempting to understand the dynamic of abuse in the relatively closed subcultures of faith.

## **Stories from Child of the Cult**

### **Nori Muster**

In this presentation, I will share my research from *Child of the Cult*, a book on the experiences of children born into cultic groups. The discussion will consider the importance of personal narrative as the center of the recovery process. The stories in *Child of the Cult* range from good memories that helped the writers get through, to memories of emotional pain, neglect, and physical, sexual, and spiritual abuse.

Child abuse has grave consequences for the victims, but also for any community where child abuse is allowed to take place. Rather than an isolated occurrence, child abuse is more often a negative consequence of a dysfunctional system. Researcher David L. Calof, of the Family Enrichment Center of Seattle, named the symptoms of child abuse: a rigid, controlled environment; demand for absolute obedience; an ideology based on judgment and false piety; immature behavior among the adults; chaotic changes, collective secrets, hypocrisy, family violence, crime, broken interpersonal boundaries, and the absence of healthy touching. These symptoms are evident in the groups described in *Child of the Cult*.

The discussion will include the role of metaphor, symbol, and myth in the recovery process. Common metaphors for child abuse include a clipped rose, feeling caught in a spider web, seeing no reflection of oneself in a mirror, and other images of soul murder. Metaphors of recovery include natural miracles like the emergence of a butterfly from a cocoon, or supernatural miracles like the appearance of the divine, whether as a deity, an angel, or a wondrous synchronicity. There will be time for questions and stories from members of the audience.

## **Support Network Against Manipulation and Abuse in Groups: Project in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy**

### **Cristina Caparesi**

Founded in 2004, SOS Abusi Psicologici is a non-profit charitable association registered in the Regional Registry of non-profit organizations in Friuli Venezia Giulia, North-East Italy. SOS Abusi Psicologici was founded to promote and coordinate activities related to awareness, information, prevention, research, and study towards the recognition of the various forms of psychological abuse by groups or individuals in any context (cults, domestic violence, bullying, harassment in the workplace). In partnership with EXIT SCS ONLUS, a social enterprise founded in 2011, SOS Abusi Psicologici runs a Family Support Centre in Udine and two help desks in Pordenone and Trieste, supported by Regional Law 11/2012. EXIT runs another help desk for workers who are victims of harassment at the workplace in Udine, supported by Regional Law 7/2005. After 11 years of working in this field we are heading towards the next important goal of opening a shelter for abused women and children. In recent years our organizations have been included in the Radicalisation Awareness Network founded by the European Commission in 2011 to counteract extremist and terrorist groups. After illustrating data on this last year of work, I will present tools and methodology used in our activities.

## **Surely No One Can Be Safer? Case Studies of Individual Vulnerability in Two Young Adults Who Grew up in the Jehovah's Witnesses and Later Left the Church**

**Helena Lofgren**

The purpose of the study was to explore the development of individual vulnerability in terms of early maladaptive schemas (EMS) in two young adults, who grew up in the Jehovah's Witnesses and later left the group. The Jehovah's Witnesses are defined as a closed authoritarian religious group. This is based on Heimlich's (2011) risk factors in her survey of child abuse in religious contexts, and an additional criterion: visitation ban with former members who have been expelled or voluntarily have left the Church, indicating a form of introversion. The method was depth interviews and an assessment instrument measuring EMS (YSQ-L3a). The analysis was based on the Model of Individual Vulnerability by Perris and Perris (1998). The Results shows that the respondents felt great fear of becoming socially isolated if they left the church (Social Isolation/ Alienation), that neither of them had the opportunity to be authentic (Approval-Seeking) and also that both have the schemas Unrelenting standards/Hypocritical and Punitiveness. A person's tolerance for stressful life events and her ability to mobilize social support must always be viewed in light of the internal working models she developed. For all individuals who have an insecure attachment, all life events involving an actual or anticipated separation or rejection can be particularly traumatic (Perris & Perris, 1998). Based on this background, the family's involvement with the Jehovah's Witnesses significantly increased the individual vulnerability in the studied individuals. The study contributes to the knowledge of how children can be affected by closed, authoritarian religious cultures. It shows the need for further research and illustrates the difficulties within the area of research, in terms of concepts, an elusive population, and high demands of care in selecting populations and doing methodological choices (especially the need of methods that may surprise the subconscious).

## **Teaching about Cults: A Guide for Educators, Therapists, Speakers, and Parents**

**William Goldberg**

One of the Missions of ICSA is to "Educate the Public about Cults." This workshop will explore the best methods to accomplish that goal. The presenter has, for many years, spoken to public school and college classes, youth groups, adult education classes and legislative bodies about cults and the dangers they pose to a pluralistic society. The presenter will focus upon how to tailor an interesting presentation to different age groups and audiences and he will give examples of presentations that can be understood by elementary school-aged children, young adults, and adults.

In general, those whose families have been touched by the cult phenomenon recognize the effects of cult involvement on the individual and on the family. However, the psychological and sociological dynamics of cult involvement are sometimes difficult to explain to others. Members of the general public may disregard reports of cults because the concept is so frightening to them.

Presentations should demystify the cult phenomenon by explaining it using examples that the audience can relate to. For example, we have all made mistakes in judgment based on emotions, salesmanship, manipulation and naiveté. Recognizing the universality of our psychological needs, we can understand how victims can join cults, why they behave the way they do in cults, why it can be difficult to exit cults, and how to maximize the forces that can lead to that exiting. By utilizing age-appropriate examples, the cult experience can be re-framed so that an otherwise mysterious and frightening topic becomes one that can

be studied and understood. The presenter will cite the results of psychological experiments and explore the psychodynamics of cult involvement as well as the developmental processes that can render people vulnerable to cultic manipulation. This workshop will explore terms such as mind control, love bombing, exit counseling, floating, and religious ecstasy and discuss ways of making these terms understandable. The topic of how cults can be discussed in the classroom without offending those who have non-mainstream beliefs will also be addressed. This workshop can be helpful to educators, therapists, speakers, parents, journalists, and former cult members.

### **The Cult Group as a Space for the Guru's Pathological Fantasies: How the Leader's Psychology Can Help Us Understand Cultic Functioning**

#### **Miguel Perlado**

This work is based on the author's sixteen-year clinical experience as a psychotherapist and exit counselor helping families and former members of cultic relationships and cult groups. Clinical observation shows that in some cults, children have an important role, but not in other groups. One way or another, however, children always have a function within the omnipotent fantasies of the leader. Relying on his experience with small cultic groups, in which it was possible to approach the psychology of the leader through primary sources (the family account or legal diagnostic assessments), the author will illustrate, through various clinical vignettes, how in many cases the pathological child experience of the leader - in one way or another - ends up transpiring inside the group's dynamics. Without justifying abuses and transgressions, which can be detected clinically, understanding the child history of the leader can illuminate the nature of the dynamics of psychological manipulation and can help us to go deeper in our comprehension of follower's pathological attachment to the guru.

### **The Cult Life Cycle Model**

#### **Arthur Buchman**

This paper will present the updated, finalized version of the Cult Life Cycle Model. This presentation will incorporate feedback from ICSA colleagues and be tailored to the conference theme of children.

The Cult Life Cycle Model presents the basic elements that combine to lead a person into and out of harmful cult involvement. The cycle starts with life before the cult, goes through vulnerability, recruitment, in the cult, and then transitions out of the cult to recovery. A one page chart is attached which is not copyrighted, as it is intended for the public domain.

Questions to be explored: The model summarizes well-established ICSA answers to the most common questions about cultic involvement: How can someone get drawn into a harmful cult situation? Why did they stay and endure treatment that was clearly abusive? How did they get free? What helped them recover?

I will explain how manipulators use influence techniques to gain compliance and use thought reform control tactics to entrap a person into a cultic group and make it difficult to leave. Each of the underlined terms is elaborated in this presentation with links to specific pages from the most recognized professional literature on cults. The model includes psychological resources that defend or might have helped defend against cultic abuses at each stage of involvement.

Purpose: The intention for the Cult Life Cycle Model is to provide a framework of public

domain information with readily available references which anyone can use to understand and explain how someone can be recruited and induced to stay in a harmful cult, plus what helps them to leave and recover. The hope is that this information may contribute to preventing cultic recruitment, shortening the period of cultic involvement, and aid in someone's exiting a cult and recovering from the experience.

### **The Evidence for and Against Hypnosis as a Thought Reform Technique**

**Steve K. D. Eichel**

Perhaps more than any other single method of influence, there is mystery, myth, misunderstanding and outright falsehoods about hypnosis, even among mental health professionals. Some cite research that essentially claims hypnosis does not exist beyond a not-particularly useful and confusing construct; others—especially among but hardly limited to some cult-critics—describe hypnosis in a manner that greatly exaggerates its power. This presentation, by a cult-aware psychologist with advanced training in scientific/experimental as well as clinical hypnosis, will cover and debunk a range of misunderstandings and misinformation about the use of hypnosis in cultic environments and processes. On the other hand, the very real impact of hypnosis on certain people in certain situations will be carefully explored, using the most current research available rather than relying solely on anecdotal evidence. The presenter will also briefly cover credentialing issues in hypnosis (including the latest update on the famous “Dr. Zoe D. Katze, Certified Hypnotherapist” incident), and discuss the possibility that “natural” and covert hypnosis may be utilized by certain cultic leaders, trainers and indoctrinators.

### **The Freedom of Mind Approach to Helping Individuals Born in High-Demand Groups**

**Steve Hassan**

Over the past decades, I have developed an approach to do intensive, short term work (24 hours: 6 hours a day Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) over a week to dramatically help people to understand, process, heal, and have a toolbox of strategies for helping them recover. The theme of this work is, “The way to recover from destructive mind control is to accept who you are, how the mind works, how ethical and unethical influence works and to control your own mind.” This intensive “jumpstart” is not right for everyone, however for most people coming to Boston, it has produced amazing results. Sometimes, family members, friends, and support people, are invited to participate. The week is totally tailored to fit the unique needs of the person and to meet the agreed-upon objectives of the intensive work. Sometimes former cult members are brought in, in person or Skype to assist. Of course, follow up is often needed, and situations where ongoing therapy and professional support is indicated, supervision and coaching is offered to the local therapist. This non-traditional approach is something most therapists do not offer, due to the demand for a whole week, and the intensity and depth. But former clients describe the experience as doing years of healing in a week.

### **The Jehovah's Witnesses' Internal Judicial System as a Human Rights Problem – Efforts to Draw Attention to the Problem in Finland**

**Joni Valkila**

The Jehovah's Witnesses have an internal judicial system that investigates “sins” committed by members and punishes wrongdoers. The worst form of punishment is shunning, which

means that the “sinner” becomes an outcast to whom current members will not speak . Shunning includes family members when they do not live in the same household. Judicial committee hearings and shunning can be very traumatizing experiences. We asked 28 former Jehovah’s Witnesses to write about their experiences in judicial committee hearings. These experiences indicate that Jehovah’s Witnesses violate the human rights of their own members. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not have such fundamental freedoms as freedom of religion or freedom of speech, because exercising these freedoms would mean risking losing loved ones.

UUT is an organization that provides information on human rights problems within religious groups and supports people who are facing problems in these groups. During the last two to three years we have been successful in drawing the attention of the media and the Finnish government to the operation of the internal judicial system of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The presentation is about how this was achieved and what the response of society has been so far. We hope that our experiences could benefit other organizations similar to ours in their work. We invite others to join us in making this problem better known globally and to pressure the Jehovah’s Witnesses to respect the human rights of their own members.

## **The Legion of Christ and the Constant Endeavor to Re-Write History**

### **Xavier Leger**

In 1984, George Orwell described a world bending under the yoke of the worst dictatorships in history. The central pillar of this dictatorship depended on the sinister work done by the "Ministry of Truth" in charge of constantly re-writing its own history. By controlling all publications, all books, all history textbooks, the PTB (the “Angsoc”) ensure their blamelessness, their influence on consciousness, and their sustainability. In the 1950s, the private secretaries of Father Maciel (the founder of the Legion of Christ) had already noticed with amazement the propensity of the latter to re-write his own history and the history of his group in order to always appear as a saint and a hero, and to create a mystical and providential atmosphere among his followers. In the first part of this lecture, I will summarize some of the main historical lies of the congregation, in the light of the historical studies done by Mexican sociologist Fernando Gonzalez. In the second part, I will tell, through a personal testimony, how I have been affected by these perverse mechanisms.

## **The Neurobiological Effects of Childhood Trauma in High-Demand Groups**

### **Elizabeth Blackwell**

While adult trauma and its treatment have been studied extensively (e.g. war veterans), the ethical and methodological constraints inherent to the study of childhood trauma present challenges to our understanding of the SGA population. Recent advances in neuro-imaging have allowed for a greater understanding of the developing brain, as well as the specific brain areas most affected by traumatic stimuli. This, coupled with complimentary advances in the field of epigenetics surrounding trans-generational genetic changes in autonomic regulation following trauma, allow for deeper insight into the challenges specific to the SGA community and, perhaps, the ex-member community at large. Research findings from the fields of behavioral neuroscience, epigenetics, and psychology will be examined and explained colloquially to an audience that should ideally consist of both helping professionals and former members. These findings will be applied to current understandings held by the counter-cult community in order to explain and/or challenge common conceptions. A biological understanding of interpersonal trauma will serve the SGA community by de-



pathologizing what is a normal response to abuse/neglect—allowing SGAs themselves an opportunity for greater self-understanding and acceptance, and mental health professionals the ability to offer more insightful treatments.

## **The Role of Children in Moderating High Control Groups – Sometimes**

### **Eileen Barker**

Drawing mainly, though not exclusively, on the history of the Unification Church, ISKCON, and the Children of God/The Family International, this paper examines the changes that have taken place in some of the movements that became visible in the West in the late 1960s/early 1970s. It will be argued that the members tended to hold unreasonably high expectations of the first cohort of children born into such first-generation religions, and that when some of these children clearly did not live up to the standards, which it was assumed they would have innately acquired, they were treated in ways that frequently involved emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse. When such an approach clearly did not work and many of the children left at the first possible opportunity, the movements, for various reasons, changed tactics and treated the second cohort of this second generation in a markedly different manner. This does not mean that some of these children did not have problems, but that they found themselves confronting somewhat different problems in a somewhat different environment.

## **The Situation of Children in Bogdan Kacmajor's Cult Niebo**

### **Piotr T. Nowakowski; Mirosław Rewera**

This paper provides a critical assessment of the situation of children in the Christian Assembly of Treatment with Holy Spirit "Heaven," which with time was transformed into a strongly toxic cult. The years 1990-2002 were the period of the group's greatest attractiveness. Formally, Bogdan Kacmajor's assembly was supposed to "treat with Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ by putting on hands," however, in reality they used blackmail, threats, and psychological manipulation, both within the group (the leader used mechanisms of psychomanipulation abusing his subjects psychically, physically and materially) and externally, i.e., towards potential members of the assembly and other people. In this context, the authors try to analyze the situation of children who belonged, with their parents, to the cult. There will be also an attempt to identify their present status. The research will have a qualitative character. As to the techniques of analysis, library and archival research will be applied as well as interviews with former members of Kacmajor's group.

## **Violation of Children's Rights in High Control Groups**

### **Friedrich Griess**

At the end of the last century, some young adults addressed authorities and associations in the Norwegian capital and asked for help: "We have escaped from a cult, we have no money, no home and we never even went to school. Please help us." Those young adults were defectors from the notorious Children of God (CoG), later called The Family. Most of the addressees did not really believe what they heard. But the association, "Save the children," in Norway called "Redd Barna," took them seriously and started a project, for which they also got public support, to re-integrate those young adults into society. Soon, around one hundred people were involved in this project, defectors from various high control groups, the majority not from CoG. Already at the FECRIS conference 2002 in

Barcelona, the leader of this project known as GO-ON project, Mrs. Turid Berger, a lawyer, came with two of her protégées to present the case, showing how the rights of children and youngsters were systematically violated in such high-control groups. A very important point of view is that this project was started by an association that could not be accused of being religiously biased, as Redd Barna said: "regardless of faith."

### **What Does the Research About First and Second Generation Current and Former Members Tell Clinicians?**

#### **Lois Kendall**

What does the research about first and second generation current and former members tell clinicians? The paper will address: why clinicians should be aware of research on current and former sect members, what they should bear in mind when interpreting the research, and what questions have researchers explored so far in this area.

Discussion will explore why research may strengthen confidence in the observations of lay persons and clinicians and why it may challenge clinical observations or call for a more nuanced conceptualization. Clinicians' awareness and understanding of research findings can be helpful when former members become aware of research the findings of which may impact them negatively. Negative effects may be especially acute if research dismisses or denies former members' reports of abuse and harm or contains information that directly contradicts their experiences. Clinicians' knowledge of good research may prove helpful to former members as they may find their experiences acknowledged, which may reduce their sense of isolation and secrecy.

The paper will discuss the issue that very few studies obtain representative samples from the population of interest. Further there will always be a percentage of research participants who deviate significantly from the means of a sample, including a former member sample. Although research may not be able to explain these deviations, clinicians may have to make a "best guess" theory when treating clients who may deviate from the means. The results of quantitative studies can be no better than the instruments used to measure the dependent variable(s) of interest, i.e., studies which have data containing numbers do not have inherent authority over studies which contain words. Consequently, one must look closely at the methodology of a given study.

Some of the key questions explored by researchers within psychology in the field of sects will be addressed briefly, such as: Do former sect members experience higher levels of distress than population means or comparison non-sect like groups? Are certain aspects of some sect environments associated with particular kinds of harm? Are there differences in distress nature and levels between first- and second-generation former members? Can childhood abuse and trauma have negative effects that last into adulthood? Is there evidence that treatment can reduce distress? What positive effects have first and second generation former members experienced as a result of prior sect membership?

### **What Happened to the Children? Mutual blaming and Talking at Cross Purposes**

#### **Amanda van Eck**

This talk is based on research into the childhoods of young members of several religious and sectarian groups. I have focused on groups that have been controversial and where there is a documented history of practices that have been problematic. These segregated childhoods affected the young members; in some cases their childhoods were marred by neglect or

abuse. The groups involved changed and banned or adjusted problematic practices, yet for the first cohort of children this was often too late. They are more likely to have left, and to be angry. Consequently, there is division between different cohorts of the young generations (who had different experiences), as well as divisions between the parents and groups, and those young members who left. These divisions are augmented by communication that is hampered by talking at cross purposes. Over time, different versions of history have emerged, with diverse views of "what happened," creating a continued sectarianism between "them and us," between generations, and among cohorts of the young generations - whether they are in the religious group of their childhood or not.

## **Why Hippies Became Hare Krishnas**

### **Steven Gelberg**

Building on an earlier version of this paper, I take the reader back to the very beginning of the Hare Krishna movement (ISKCON) in the midst of the 1960's counterculture scene. From its founding in 1966 until at least the early 1970s, the overwhelming majority of ISKCON's members were former "hippies" - nearly all of whom had become spiritual seekers as a direct or indirect result of having had profoundly transforming experiences on LSD, a rite-of-passage that had sacramental significance for many spiritual seekers.

There was much about the Krishnas that appealed to spiritually-minded hippies: the movement's outspoken anti-materialism, its vegetarianism and free feasts, the communal chanting of the Krishna mantra, its ties to ancient Indian religion, and of course Krishna himself, who was seen as a Hindu deity more human than godlike, even hippie-esque: a playful, androgynous blue youth with long hair decorated with flowers, and a sweet, innocent face with a beatific smile. For many youth, LSD had opened the door to the realm of the spiritual, the mystical, the numinous, and the magical, and Krishna consciousness seemed to embody those transcendent principles and offer a path to their attainment.

The Krishnas took the fullest possible advantage of those perceptions by circulating thousands of flyers promising that one could "Stay High Forever" by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra - that Krishna consciousness was a direct and easy path to permanent enlightenment and bliss. In the Haight Ashbury, none other than Allen Ginsberg, patron saint both to the post-war Beats and now the 1960's Flower Children, announced from the stage of a "Mantra Rock Dance" held at the Avalon Ballroom that the nearby Krishna temple was a good place to hang out while on "re-entry" from an LSD trip.

However, there were aspects of temple life and the founding guru's teachings that one would think should have raised red flags to free-spirited seekers: a non-democratic, hierarchical form of leadership, uniformity of dress and appearance, the near-deification of the guru and scripture, rigid adherence to a communal daily schedule, an expectation of sacrifice, loyalty and hard work, strangely negative attitudes toward women, and harsh condemnations of all other spiritual groups and teachers. The full effects or implications of these attitudes and practices were not, however, fully or clearly manifest or obvious during the movement's infancy in the counterculture.

Drawing from early documentation (e.g., contemporary press accounts, memoirs by pioneering members, an unpublished sociology dissertation), as well as personal recollection and reflection, I try to make sense of the whys and hows of sincere young seekers' willingness to overlook, rationalize, or ignore evidences of cultic ideation and practice in their quest for peace, love, and enlightenment.

## **Working with Faith Communities to End Religious Child Maltreatment**

### **Janet Heimlich**

Traditional approaches to protect children from religious child maltreatment (RCM) have not been very effective. This paper proposes a solution that promises to significantly reduce the number of RCM cases by fostering the growth of faith communities that engage in healthy childrearing practices. With this growth, such an approach has the added benefit of weakening authoritarian or high-control religious groups in which children are at the greatest risk for RCM. The predicted efficacy of this approach is based on research into the abolition of the abusive practice of Chinese foot binding.

Historically, cultures have been loath to abandon long-held childrearing practices, even when those practices are severely abusive. The practice of Chinese foot binding, which went on for hundreds of years, was brought to a relatively quick end, largely due to the efforts of outsiders. These advocates were able to initiate a grass roots movement within China that ultimately led to the practice of foot binding dying out within one generation.

Despite the cultural differences, the same key strategies employed by the anti-foot-binding advocates should be taken up today by those who seek to protect children from RCM. Specifically, child advocacy organizations (whose members would be considered as outsiders by faith cultures) should offer educational programs to churches, synagogues, and mosques and larger religious organizations that would teach them about RCM and the importance of having faith teachings be aligned with healthy child development models. Participating organizations would receive a designation that recognizes them as role models in child protection. With this "child-friendly" status, the organizations would enhance their ability to attract new members. The result would be a growth in faith communities that engage in healthy childrearing practices, while non-participating faith communities that engage in practices that are unhealthy for children would be stigmatized.

### **Workshop for Former Cult Members (preconference)**

**Facilitator: Ann Stamler. Discussants: Joseph Kelly; Lois Kendall; Patrick Ryan**

[This workshop is for former members of cultic groups.]

This pre-conference workshop will explore issues relevant to recovery from high-control groups, including the role of triggers, setting appropriate boundaries, and dealing with identity issues. The workshop will also address special issues pertinent to people born or raised in cultic groups (SGAs - second-generation adults) and prepare former members for a conference in which there a wide diversity of opinions are expressed, some of which may be unsettling to some former members.

### **Workshop for Former Cult Members Who Were Parents in the Cult**

**Lorna Goldberg, L.C.S.W.**

This group/workshop, open only to former cult members who were parents while in the cult, will deal with the aftereffects of this experience. Parents who leave cults have to handle all the post-cult issues of former cult members; but, additionally, they have to deal with the consequences of having raised their children in a cult. Topics for discussion may include:

- The cult leader's establishment of the child-rearing process
- The cult leader's interference with parental involvement, nurturing, and protection of children

- · Parental role (as defined by the cult) and cult relationship with children
- · Consequences of cult marriage
- · Consequences of cult life for children
- · Empathy and special feelings experienced for children
- · Present relationships with children and suggestions for improvement

### **Workshop for Mental Health Professionals (preconference)**

#### **Panel: Clinical Issues Regarding Working with SGAs (pre-conference)**

[This session is open only to licensed mental health professionals or mental health students.]

Facilitators: **Lorna Goldberg; William Goldberg**

This seminar will focus on typical SGA issues, such as: how to make and maintain relationships, how to balance work and play better, and what to do with feeling. The discussion will explore why those born and raised in cults struggle with these issues, how the cult created many of these dilemmas, and how to work with them in therapy through case presentations.

#### **Panel: Clinical Roundtable for Mental Health Practitioners (pre-conference)**

[This session is open only to licensed mental health professionals or mental health students.]

Facilitator: **Gillie Jenkinson**

Following interesting and lively discussions at a number of ICSA conferences including the 2014 Washington DC conference, a Clinical Roundtable for Mental Health Practitioners is being held again. This 90-minute session will be an interesting opportunity for clinicians to discuss clinical vignettes (highly disguised for confidentiality) to illustrate a specific clinical problem and to highlight their questions regarding certain circumstances that occur within therapy with cult leavers—both first and second generation—as well as issues that arise with family members. It is also an opportunity to support one another in this specialist work. As the conference is focusing on children and cults, this clinical roundtable specifically invites clinical case studies related to those born and or raised in a cult although the session may cover first generation issues also. The subjects that might be covered could be, for example: how to apply the psycho-educational approach, floating and grounding, cult pseudo-personality, confidentiality, trust, identity, problems with relationships, effective therapeutic approaches for these client groups, assessment, communication skills, dissociation, self-harm, post-cult adjustment and so on.

The Clinical Roundtable will be facilitated but structured so that mental health professionals have an opportunity to participate in the discussion (it is not a presentation as such but a discussion forum). This session is open only to those who are mental health professionals with an advanced degree in one of the mental health fields or are students pursuing a mental health degree. The only cases that will be discussed will be those presented by a clinician in the session (that is, vignettes cannot be discussed if the clinician does not attend and present them). Discussion preference will be given to clinicians who submit their clinical vignettes and discussion issues in advance to Ms. Jenkinson at [info@hopevalleycounselling.com](mailto:info@hopevalleycounselling.com).

## **Panel: Clinical Issues: Working with First Generation Former Cultists (pre-conference)**

[This session is open only to licensed mental health professionals or mental health students.]

### **Steve K.D. Eichel; Gillie Jenkinson**

A panel of mental health professionals with extensive experience in working with first-generation former cultists will present their recommendations for best practice in providing clinical services to this challenging population. They will highlight principles of ethical and effective practice, and will address potential obstacles to gaining the trust of clients when their trust has been so betrayed in the past. The role of psycho-education in the therapeutic process will be elucidated. The opportunities for psychotherapists to integrate a variety of psychotherapeutic approaches and models within their work with first-generation former cultists while addressing unique clinical themes common to first-generation former cultists will be discussed. Suggestions will be given on how to address developmental deficits caused by time “away” in the cultic group or relationship. Pseudo-identity and pre- and post-cult identity issues will be examined. The presenters will refer to case studies to illustrate the principles of best practice. The moderator will lead a discussion between the panel members as well as the audience regarding unique issues to providing clinical services to first-generation former cultists.

### **Workshop for Researchers**

#### **Rod Dubrow-Marshall, PhD**

The 3-hour research workshop will include a presentation on current developments in research in the field of cultic studies across a range of disciplines. Opportunities will also be given in the workshop for researchers to provide an update on their work and to share experiences and ask questions in a friendly and supportive peer-to-peer environment, including discussions about the challenges of working in this field and issues such as access to participants, potential legal impediments, and getting published in refereed journals. Editors of the International Journal of Cultic Studies will also be present to answer questions and to have one-to-one discussions with researchers (during the rest of the conference) about their work. The workshop also offers a great opportunity for reports on research projects from many different countries and cultures.

### **Workshop on Education (preconference)**

#### **Piotr T. Nowakowski**

A number of individuals within the ICSA network have taught courses or given public talks on cults, psychological manipulation, and related topics. A small group of these persons met during the 2012 Montreal conference to discuss their work. If you are interested in participating, please send background information to me ([Nowakowski@maternus.pl](mailto:Nowakowski@maternus.pl)). If practical, please attach curricula, outlines, and so on. With participants' permission, of course, I will create an online resource collection that workshop participants can consult before the conference. The workshop will include one or two brief presentations and extensive discussion about core questions, such as:

- What content should all cult educational programs, courses, and one-time talks include?

- What variations in content and approach should one make for different audiences—e.g., high school, college?
- What factors should educators consider to ensure that their programs are balanced and professional?
- How can those interested in this area maintain collegial communication after the conference—e.g., chat room, Listserv?

### **ICSA NY Educational Outreach**

The ICSA NYC Educational Outreach is a volunteer committee under the guidance of the International Cultic Studies Associations' Board of Directors, serving as an educational resource for schools, community organizations, churches, and synagogues that are interested in literature, speakers, and programs. Our goal is to raise public awareness; to provide thoughtful, well-researched information; to help frame appropriate questions; and to suggest an approach to productive answers. Committee members Ashley Allen, Elizabeth Blackwell, Russell Bradshaw, Gunilla Bradshaw, Chris Carlson, Maureen Griffo, Daniel Shaw and Ann Stamler, are all former members of cultic groups, and include educators, mental health professionals, and three second-generation adults.

The committee has developed basic talks on major cultic issues such as "Common Myths and Misconceptions About Cults and Cultic Groups," "Impact of Cults on Children Born Into Them," "Characteristics of a Cult," and "Impact of Leaving a Cult or Cultic Group." These sections can be adapted for diverse purposes and audiences. Before the end of this year the talks will be made available by ICSA on its website. At the pre-conference education workshop, committee members Elizabeth Blackwell, Russell Bradshaw and Ann Stamler will present a sample talk, and discuss the committee's process, goals and challenges. Our hope is that our work can be the basis for similar initiatives elsewhere.

### **Educational Opportunities on the Topic of High Pressure Groups through the Lens of personal Experience**

#### **John Debold**

A number of years ago I was recruited into a high pressure group. For a few months I became a member of this group. Subsequent to this experience I began a career as a school teacher. In the many years that followed I have shared my story as a cautionary tale with my students with varying degrees of formality. Most recently my approach in these classroom presentations has evolved into three important components: my personal history along with an offering of how religion has been a part of my life, the story within the story of my involvement with the high pressure group, and finally, a discussion exploring the nature of my experience with the high pressure group within the context of my life story as well as my current beliefs and understanding of this episode. Key ideas used as discussion points include isolation, effusive praise, monitored control of the flow of information, decisions and pathways that need urgent action beyond the scope of one's current awareness and a lack of an appropriate foundation for judgment, orchestrated spontaneity, old words taking on new meaning, a lack of trust in the "outside" world, periods in life when one is more susceptible to undue influence than others.

### **Considerations on Creating a Website for Cult Education and Recovery**

#### **Katharina Sengfelder**



A brief look at what goes into the planning and creating of a website, ideas for making them efficient, and a discussion on some of the challenges involved in trying to condense a large amount of information, as well as the issue of privacy in social media.

### **Workshop: What Can Families Do? (preconference)**

#### **Patrick Ryan & Joseph F. Kelly**

Research suggests that, in the West, hundreds of thousands of individuals join and leave cultic groups each year. Research studies also suggest that at least a sizeable minority of those who join cultic groups are adversely affected. The families of these group members, and probably many other families, tend to become concerned about their loved one's group involvement. Over the past 25 years, most professionals who work with these families have emphasized helping them persuade their loved ones to leave cultic groups. Very little attention has been paid, however, to the large majority of families for whom an exit counseling is not feasible or appropriate. This talk will explore ways in which families can more effectively manage a loved one's involvement in a group that causes concern and how families and group members can come to better understand and appreciate each other's perspectives on the conflict that divides them by discussing:

- · How they can improve communication so as to reduce the level of conflict.
- · How they can negotiate mutual behavioral changes that will reduce the level of conflict.
- · How they can come to terms with the need to compromise so as to protect the love between them while respecting differences that divide them.

### **Your Thoughts or Mine? Psychological Well-being Among Ex-Cult Members Related to Psychological Abuse in the Cult**

#### **Maria Goransson**

The presentation will be mainly about psychological well-being among ex-cult members, based on the results from the study the presenter made for a bachelors degree in psychology. The participants were mainly reached through the Swedish organization Hjälpkällan and participated by answering an internet questionnaire. The study investigates if there is any relation between psychological well-being among ex-cult members and the extent of psychological abuse in the cult, measured with the Group Psychological Abuse scale. Furthermore, this study supports results from former studies that ex-cult members show a lower level of psychological well-being than the normal population. But what are the characteristics of their psychological well-being and should personnel in health care be aware of any special features? Is there any difference in the psychological well-being between those who have joined the cult as adults or those who were born into the cult? These and other questions will be discussed. The presentation will also deal briefly with the question of what makes people abandon their own thoughts, values, and beliefs to replace them with somebody else's. Furthermore, what makes members of cults sometimes act in a way that is in opposition to their own feelings? The presenter will make some references to her own experiences from being a member of the Swedish Pentecostal church (pingstkyrkan).

## Hotel



The conference will take place at the [Ariadne Scandic Hotel](#) in Stockholm. Address: Södra Kajen 37, SE-115 41 Stockholm, Sweden.

Reservations: Call +46 8 517 386 52+46 8 517 386 52 or +46 8 517 386 05+46 8 517 386 05. Or e-mail: [meeting.ariadne@scandichotels.com](mailto:meeting.ariadne@scandichotels.com). Give the booking code (35350101) to obtain the conference rate of 1220 SEK (single) and 1320 SEK (double). The rate includes a full buffet breakfast. [Currency Converter](#).

After April 21, 2015, the hotel will not guarantee the reduced conference rate. There is free wireless access throughout the hotel.

## Meals



The conference schedule allows a two-hour break for lunch, and darkness doesn't arrive at Stockholm's latitude in the summer until late at night. So there is ample time for socializing around meals.

The Ariadne Scandic Hotel has a fine restaurant. There are also a few restaurants in the vicinity of the hotel.

Those who reserve sleeping rooms at the Ariadne get a full buffet breakfast

## Getting There



For directions and maps, go to the hotel's [location page](#).

**Money-saving tip:** Purchasing a train ticket at the airport is less expensive than purchasing it on the train.

**Train to hotel:** "It is very easy to take the train, it only takes 20 minutes from Arlanda airport. From the central station you can take a taxi or the subway with the red line to "Gärde". From Gärdet Station there is about 10 minutes walk to the hotel " Or you can take a taxi from the airport or from Gardet station. Walking directions from Gardet Station: Exit

towards 'Vartavagen/Finland'. Turn left onto 'Vartavagen' outside the metro and then take a right onto 'Tegeluddsvagen'. After about 50 metres, cross the street at the pedestrian crossing and walk through the small park (Finland Park) to the Scandic Ariadne hotel. The distance from the metro station 'Gardet' and the Scandic Ariadne hotel is about 800 metres.

**Airline tip:** Iceland Air travels from a number of [North American cities](#) to Stockholm via Iceland, and the airline permits a [stopover in Iceland](#).