

2016 ICSA Annual Conference

Online Archived Conference Handbook

The 2016 ICSA Annual Conference will take place at the Magnolia Hotel Dallas Park Cities(6070 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75206).

Dear Participants,

The organizing committee of the annual conference of International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) welcomes you to Dallas, Texas. We are confident that you will benefit from the program that has been set up for you, and from the beautiful sights and sounds of the city. This year's conference has been organized in conjunction with Info-Cult/Info-Secte of Montreal.

Unlike closed, cultic groups, ICSA is firmly committed to freedom of thought, expression, and religion. In order to counter the closed thinking of cults and other "true believers," ICSA conferences provide an open arena for people from diverse backgrounds with diverse points of view. Opinions expressed are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICSA's directors, staff, advisors, or supporters. Former group members dealing with recovery issues should keep these points in mind and, if possible, attend a preconference former-member workshop, which will help them better understand the challenges of an open conference.

Conference goals are to:

- 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 and other helping professionals.
- Provide information and opportunities for discussion to all who are interested in this field.
- Encourage respectful dialogue.

There are preconference workshops for researchers, mental health professionals, families, former members, and those interested in educational outreach.

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 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 discuss 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.

Our deep appreciation goes to the ICSA Conference Committee and to all who have volunteered their time to help organize and run this conference.

Thank you for joining us today.

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



Agenda / Schedule

2016 ICSA Annual Conference, Dallas, Texas

Time	Session(s)	Room
Wednesday (Preconference Events) - 29 June 2016		
9:00–5:45	Mental Health Workshop (Rosanne Henry) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:00 – 10:00 - Some Considerations for the Therapist Working with Former Cult Members (Lorna Goldberg) • 10:00 – 10:15 - Discussion (Moderator: Lorna Goldberg) • 10:15 – 10:45 - Break • 10:45 – 11:30 - Mentalization/Attachment Approach to Cult Recovery (Rosanne Henry) • 11:30 – 12:15 - Psychological Trauma and the Ex-Cult Member: The Problem of Attachment to the Perpetrator (Colin Ross) • 12:15 - 1:30 - Lunch • 1:30 – 2:45 - Clinical Issues: Working with First- -Generation Former Cultists (Linda Dubrow-Marshall; Mary Moore – Co-Facilitators) • 2:45 – 4:00 - Clinical Issues: Working with Second- -Generation Former Cultists (William Goldberg; Ashley Allen – Co-Facilitators) • 4:00 – 4:30 - Break • 4:30 – 5:45 - Clinical Roundtable for Mental Health Practitioners (Gillie Jenkinson; Doug Duncan – Co-Facilitators) 	University Park
9:00 – 5:00	Education Workshop (Piotr T. Nowakowski) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:00 – 10:30 - Approaches to Spiritual Safety and Healing: The Safe Haven Network (Bob Pardon; Judy Pardon; Neil Damgaard) • 10:30 – 11:00 - Break • 11:00 – 12:00 - Informing Students About Cults on Campuses: A Japanese Experience (Takashi Yamaguchi) • 12:00 – 1:30 Lunch • 1:30 – 2:15 - Cultism in Nigerian Educational Institutions: Formation, Structure, Method of Recruitment and Solutions (Adesoji Oni; Edith Alufohai) • 2:15 – 3:00 - New York Educational Outreach Committee Progress Report (Maureen Griffo et al.) • 3:00 – 3:30 - Break • 3:30 – 5:00 – Discussion (on educational work of attendees) 	Lakewood
2:00 – 5:00	Recovery Workshop for Former Members (Carol Giambalvo; Joseph Kelly) [Only former members of cultic groups may attend this session.]	Park Cities
2:00 – 5:00	Research Workshop (Rod Dubrow-Marshall)	Hillcrest
7:00 – 9:00	Workshop for Families: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing a Loved One's Cult-Related Involvement (Joseph Kelly; Patrick Ryan, Rachel Bernstein)	Lakewood
	Workshop on Collage Art (April Marten; Diana Pletts) [Only former members of cultic groups may attend this session.]	University Park
	Parenting Workshop for Second Generation Adult Former Cult Members (Eva Meyrat; Rosanne Henry – Co-Facilitators) [Only people born or raised in cultic groups – second generation adults, SGAs – may attend this session.]	Park Cities
Thursday – 30 June 2016		
9:00 – 10:30	Welcome; housekeeping; Paul Martin Lecture: Trauma, Healing and Forgiveness (Bob Pardon; Judy Pardon)	Magnolia II/III
10:30 - 11:00	Break	
11:00–12:30	Social Media's Impact on Jehovah's Witnesses: A Narrative Qualitative Research (Steve Guziec) Mormons Online: How Internet Communities Fuel the Exodus and Aid Post-Totalist Recovery (Luna Lindsey)	University Park

	Panel: Ending Religious Child Maltreatment through a Child-Friendly Faith Movement (Janet Heimlich; Charles Johnson; Cindy Kunsman)	Park Central
	Workshop for Former Cult Members Who Were Parents in the Cult (Lorna Goldberg) [Only former members of cultic groups who were parents in the cult may attend this session.]	Park Cities
	Combining Identity Development Theory and Trauma Counseling in Helping Heal SGAs (Cyndi Matthews)	Hillcrest
Thursday – 30 June 2016 [CONTINUED]		
12:30–2:00	Lunch Break	
2:00 – 3:30	Boundaries (Rosanne Henry; Elizabeth Blackwell) [only former members of cultic groups may attend]	Park Cities
	Logotherapy and Recovery from Religiously Abusive Environments (Pat Knapp) After the Legion, What Happened to Christ? The Impact on Cradle Faith From Exposure to the Legion of Christ Catholic Religious Order (Paul Lennon)	Hillcrest
	Vulnerabilities and Techniques of Undue Influence (Patrick O'Reilly) Cliques, Crooks and Cults: Understanding Power and Control as Shared Core Components of Abusive Social Organizations and Relationships (Abigail Hazlett; Chelsea von Passey)	University Park
	Panel: Cults: Lessons From History (Tony Jenkinson; William Goldberg; Stephen Parsons)	Park Central
3:30 – 4:00	Break	
4:00 – 5:30	25 Years After – The Friedrichshof Commune (FHC): An Exploration of How a Diverse Selection of Ex-Members have Adjusted to “Normal” Life (Anthony Murphy) Gnosis, Faith, and Reason: Using Epistemology to Analyze any Cult Experience (Joseph Szimhart)	Hillcrest
	Treatment for Depression in Former Cultists (Sejal Mehta) Why do Ordinary People Have False Perceptions of Being Rational (Jose Fernandez)	Park Central
	The Socio-Historical Context of the October 1949 Revolution in China: Towards an Understanding of the Development of a Cult (Jeff Bryson) The Serpentine Road From the USSR to the US and to Freedom: A Cult Survivor Story (Alex Gawkins)	University Park
	Open Discussion for SGAs (Moderators: Ann Stamler; Elizabeth Blackwell) [Only people born or raised in cultic groups – second generation adults, SGAs – may attend this session.]	Park Cities
5:30 – 6:30	Poster Presentations (Poster presenters will be available to speak to attendees.)	Magnolia I
6:30	Break for Dinner	
7:30 – 9:00	Phoenix Project Mostly Live! Presentation Time of readings, music, and video	Park Central
Friday – 1 July 2016		
9:00 – 6:00	Phoenix Project / Bookstore / Posters	Magnolia I
9:00 – 10:30	Panel: Life in a Dallas Cult (Rick Robertson; Doug Duncan)	University Park
	Panel: An Empirical Research Program From China (Rod Dubrow-Marshall, Moderator) On the Causes of Cult Members’ Recommitment: Psychological Withdrawal Phenomena and Their Intervention Strategies (Qinping Chen) A Study of Token Economy Counseling on Cult Members’ Stereotyped Behavior (Yichen Wang; Qingping Chen) Correlation Between Psychological Characteristics and Worship Behavior of Cult Members (Yuran Luo; Qingping Chen) Cult Members’ “Three-Low-and-One-High” Symptoms and Their Solution-focused Brief Psychological Counseling (Juan Zhou; Qingping Chen) The Relationships of Self-Consistency Congruence, Interpersonal Trust Characteristics and Health of Cult Members (Qingping Chen; Jiquan Zhou)	Lakewood
	The Lack of Research in Adolescent Group Settings: Psychological Pressures as Part of the Milieu in Controlling Institutions and Systems - Making Art out of the Inexpressible (Zack Bonnie) Blogging, Booking and Busting (John Huddle)	Hillcrest

	Panel: Sexual Recovery After the Cult (Steve Eichel; Carla Brown)	Park Central
	Workshop for Former Members of Regnum Christi and Legion of Christ (Facilitators: To be determined) (open only to former members of those two groups)	Park Cities
10:30 - 11:00	Break	
Friday – 1 July 2016 [CONTINUED]		
11:00-12:30	Workshop for Former Members of Regnum Christi and Legion of Christ (Facilitators: To be determined) (open only to former members of those two groups)	Park Cities
	A Modern Christian Movement Operating As A High-Demand Group (Tia Rebholz) The Stories We Tell – Dispelling False Narratives for Cult Recovery (Eric Bernasek)	University Park
	Panel: My Loved One Was in a Cult – A Discussion With Family Members (William Goldberg, Moderator; Molly; Heather Magee; Suzanne & Karl Solum)	Park Central
	Challenges “Cults” Present for Social Workers and Other Healthcare Professionals (Piotr T. Nowakowski; Stephen B. Mutchi)	Hillcrest
	Relational Psycho-Educational Intensive: Time Away for Post-Cult Counselling’ (Gillie Jenkinson) Cult or New Religion: A Case Study on “Xue-Shui-ShengLing”(Blood, Water and Holy Spirit) (Fan Hong)	Lakewood
12:30–2:00	Lunch Break	
2:00 – 3:30	Workshop for Former Members of Regnum Christi and Legion of Christ (Facilitators: To be determined) (open only to former members of those two groups)	Park Cities
	Panel: Providing a Haven for Spiritual Healing (Steve Kelly; Ron Burks; Reverend Oliver Lee, Jr)	University Park
	The Print Culture of Alternative Religious Groups (Carolyn Jervis) Utopian Expectations and Shaping of Charisma: An Analysis of Biography of Leaders (Tianjia Chen; Guanghui Xu)	Lakewood
	Panel: From Demanding Duggar Cradle to Troubled Teen Home: Transcending the Independent Baptist Myth of Family (Cindy Kunsman, Moderator; Janet Heimlich, Discussant; Joanna Wright; Cindy Foster)	Hillcrest
	Panel: Hare Krishna at 50 – Alive and Unwell ISKCON and Beyond: An Updated Understanding of the Global Hare Krishna Landscape (Nitai Joseph) A Fish Rots from the Head – How Bhaktivedanta Taught by Example (Eric Bernasek)	Park Central
3:30 – 4:00	Break	
4:00 – 5:30	Panel: Life After the Cult: Struggles and Successes of People Born or Raised in Cultic Groups (Gina Catena, Moderator; Leslie Belcher; Dhyana Levey; Eva Meyrat)	Park Central
	Growing up LGBTQ in a Cult – SGA Experiences – Moving Towards Healing (Cyndi Matthews) Heaven’s Gate: The Rhetorical Foundations of Religious Extremism (Cameron Berger)	University Park
	Disillusionment with the Cause: Leaving White Power Environments (Tony McAleer) Identity and the Cultic Experience: About Changes, Transformations and Consolidation (Dianne Casoni)	Hillcrest
	The “Oprahfication” of Rob Bell: New Ageism, New Thought, and the Postconservative Evangelical (Robin Willey) Mild and Mainstream: Understanding and Mitigating the Damage Caused by the Milder, More Accepted, High-Control Organizations (Mark Giles)	Lakewood
	Workshop for Former Members of Regnum Christi and Legion of Christ (Facilitators: To be determined) (open only to former members of those two groups)	Park Cities
5:30 – 6:30	Poster Presentations (Poster presenters will be available to speak to attendees.)	Magnolia I
6:30	Break for Dinner	
7:30 – 9:00	Phoenix Project Mostly Live! Presentation Time of readings, music, and video, followed by Artists' "Meet and Greet."	Park Central
Saturday – 2 July 2016		
9:00 – 6:00	Phoenix Project / Bookstore / Posters	Magnolia I

9:00 – 10:30	Recovery from Cults and High-Control Groups Through Writing Fiction and Poetry: A Case Study (K. Gordon Neufeld) Media, Victim-Blaming, Trauma, and Recovery: How Personal and Public Narratives Impact Survivors of Traumatic Psychological Manipulation (Christine Katas)	Hillcrest
	Panel: Inside Out — One Group, One Fugitive Swami: Three Different Experiences (Karen Jonson; Joseph Kelly; Patrick Ryan)	Park Central
Saturday – 2 July 2016 [CONTINUED]		
9:00- 10:30	Panel: Church Universal and Triumphant, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, and the Gregory Mull Trial: A Review of the Coercive Persuasion Model (Cathleen Mann; Steve Eichel; Erin Prophet)	University Park
	An Introduction to Cults for Law Enforcement: Crimes of Note (Marita La Palm) Why did I Join and Stay? How did I Leave and Heal? (Marlowe Sand)	Lakewood
10:30 - 11:00	Break	
11:00– 12:30	Psychospiritual Trauma and Integration: A Narrative Study of the Recovery Process of Second-Generation Cult Survivors (Mary Anne Rardin) Bible Oriented University Campus High Control Groups That Manifest Harm, Abuse, and Common Themes of Intervention and Recovery Processes Observed With an Effective Outcome (David Clark)	Hillcrest
	Exit Counseling Cult Members in China’s Modernization Process (1978-2015) (Qing Ye) Strategies and Methods for Recovering from Cults Based on Qigong and ESP (Jianhui Li)	Lakewood
	Panel: Former Member Guilt and the Path to Self-Forgiveness (Nori Muster; Lorna Goldberg)	Park Central
	Role of Legal Professionals in the Process of Cult Survivors’ Recovery: Lawyers Roles and Survivors’ Efforts (Masaki Kito) Risks of Writing About One’s Experiences with Cults (J. Shelby Sharpe)	University Park
12:30– 2:00	Lunch Break	
2:00 – 3:30	Wrap-up for Former Cult Members (Carol Giambalvo) [Only former members of cultic groups may attend this session.]	Park Cities
	Panel: Colliding Worldviews: Ministering to Those Traumatized in Bible-based Cults (Robert Pardon; Judy Pardon; Neil Damgaard)	Park Central
	Prevent and Channel: The UK’s De-Radicalization Program Embraces Brainwashing, Thought Reform and Exit Counselling: The Challenges and Opportunities for Cultic Studies (Rod Dubrow-Marshall) The Intersection of Cults and Terrorism (Chelsea von Passeky; Leanne Smith)	Hillcrest
	Cults and the Legal System: Obtaining Redress and Recovery (Breckan Scott) Prosecuting Child Sexual Abuse In Alternative Religions (Andrea Willey; Stephen Kent)	University Park
3:30 – 4:00	Break	
4:00 – 5:30	Awards Searching for Healthy Faith (Doug Duncan; Wendy Duncan) 2017 Conference Preview Closing (Steve Eichel)	Magnolia II/III
6:00 – 11:00	Social	

Poster Sessions

Thursday and Friday, 5:30 – 6:30

- **A Comparative Study in the Helping Strategies and Means for Recovery from Cults between China and the United States: A Study of People’s Daily and The New York Times** (Zenghi Zhang)
- **Applying Routine Activities Theory to Cult Recruitment** (Marita La Palm)
- **Christianity Awareness Training” for Clinicians and Helpers who are Working with Former Members Recovering From High demand Christian Groups** (Autumne Kirkpatrick)
- **Disciplinary Practices Among Children in Isolated Authoritarian Groups and Their Implications for Long-Term Psychological Well-Being** (Ruben García-Sánchez, Carmen Almendros, Jose Antonio Carrobles, Omar Saldaña, Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira, Manuel Gámez-Guadix, José Manuel Martínez, María Jesús Martín-López, and Begoña Aramayona)
- **New Visual Angles for Guarding against the Destructive Cults** (Baoxiang Fan)
- **Survey on Exit Counseling with Community Help and Education** (Min Wu; Qing Ye)

- **Taxonomy of Psychological Difficulties Experienced by Former Members of Abusive Groups** (Omar Saldaña, Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira, Carmen Almendros, Emma Antelo, and Álvaro Torres)
- **The Effects of Cult Membership on Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder** (Jessica Lissette Perdomo)
- **The Evidence for and Against Hypnosis as a Thought Reform Technique** (Steve Eichel)

Speakers



Ashley Allen, MSW, LSW, completed her Master's in Social Work at Monmouth University. Ashley spent her formative years in a religious cult, and her personal experiences have led to her professional interest in the cultic-studies field. She has presented on cults, with a particular focus on second-generation adults (SGAs) at various mental-health agencies and universities in New Jersey. Ashley is currently serving on ICSA's NY Educational Outreach Committee. [NY Committee]



Carmen Almendros, PhD, is Associate Professor in the Biological and Health Psychology Department at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. She is on ICSA'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 ICSA's Margaret Singer Award, given in honor of her research into the development of measures relevant to cultic studies. [Directors, IJCS Editors]

Cameron Berger, MTS, MA, graduated from the University of Maine at Orono with a Master's Degree in Communication, the emphasis of which was Rhetorical Theory and Criticism. His first Master's Degree in Theological Studies was obtained from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, with a concentration in Christianity and Culture. His area of competency and primary research interests focus on the development, maintenance, and resolution of controversial religious movements through the use of persuasion and argumentation tailored to specific audiences. His secondary area of research and competency is an extension of the

first and concerns conversion and deconversion narratives, and the ways in which preexisting ideological commitments and values impinge upon or facilitate these processes of affiliation or disaffiliation.

Eric Bernasek is a freelance writer and copyeditor who lives with his wife and son near Montreal, Quebec. Eric first came in contact with the Hare Krishna movement while in college in Hartford, CT. That initial exposure would eventually lead to full-time involvement. Just before leaving ISKCON, he was employed as a copyeditor and proofreader for the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, ISKCON's official publishing house. Though the majority of his time in the movement was spent in temples on the East Coast of the US, primarily Hartford and Boston, Eric spent over three years in Hungary, on a farm the movement touts as being self-sufficient. It was during this time that he began to reconsider his involvement in the organization.



Rachel Bernstein, MS, LMFT, has been working with former cult members for 25 years. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and Educator, who lives in Los Angeles, CA. She has been a member of ICSA for many years and has presented talks and moderated panels at ICSA conferences. Rachel previously ran the Maynard Bernstein Resource Center on cults, named after her father. She was the Clinician at the former Cult Clinic in Los Angeles, as well as the Cult Hotline and Clinic in Manhattan. She now treats former cult members and the families and friends of those in cults in her private practice. Rachel has facilitated numerous support groups for former cult members, for people who were in one-on-one cults, and for the families of those in cults. Rachel has published many articles, made media appearances, consulted on shows and movies about cults, and has been interviewed for podcasts and YouTube videos. In addition to her private practice, she consults on cases through Freedom of Mind. RachelBernsteinTherapy.com, rbpsychology@gmail.com.



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-demand 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 an honor's student in the Psychology department at Columbia University. For her honor's thesis she is researching attachment to caregivers, and traumatic childhood experiences of both physical and psychological abuse in Nim Tottenham's Developmental Affective Neuroscience lab. [NY Committee]



Zack Bonnie is the author of the *Dead, Insane, or in Jail* memoir series, about his experience as a troubled teen incarcerated in the 80s at a cultish, Synanon-influenced facility called Rocky Mountain Academy. With a solid background in the entertainment field, he proposes that art is the antidote to thought reform. His presentation will encompass the mechanics of undue influence and cultic dynamics focusing on coercive institutionalized persuasion. His hope is to reach younger audiences as they enter careers in psychology and other social sciences. He works to create and promote media to illustrate the common dynamics of high-control groups wherever they appear: in the teen-treatment related programs, in religious failure, in strife at home, and as part of the US court system. Part of a larger plea for increased individual awareness, Zack Bonnie's mission is to educate the public - through the arts - about the systems applied in these institutions.



Jeff Bryson (LPC/ALPS (WV), IMFT (OH), CCSOTS, AAMFT Clinical Fellow). After completing his BA in Bible and Religion, Jeff went on to complete an MAR in counseling with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy. He completed his PhD in criminal justice in 2014. Jeff began his career working in community mental health and began specializing in the treatment of anorexia/bulimia and sex offenders over 20 years ago. He joined Paul Martin and the team at Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center in 2005.. Jeff was formerly in an employer cult and has faced an evangelical Christian cult in his family. His dissertation was a qualitative exploration, *Parental Use of the Sex Offender Registry: A Routine Activities Approach*. Jeff holds the LPC and ALPS in WV, the IMFT in Ohio, is a Clinical Fellow of the AAMFT and serves on the AAMFT's ethics committee.



Ron Burks, PhD, holds an MDiv and an MA in counseling from Asbury Theological Seminary and a PhD in Counselor Education from Ohio University. He worked for many years at Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center in Albany, OH. He and his wife Vicki wrote, *Damaged Disciples: Casualties of Authoritarian Churches and the Shepherding Movement*, published by Zondervan. He and Vicki now live near Tallahassee Florida where both are licensed mental health counselors.

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. Associate 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, NP, CNM, serves on ICSA's Advisory Board. She is Nurse Practitioner and Certified Nurse Midwife with a large medical group in the Bay Area, California. She has degrees from University of California San Francisco School of Nursing, University of California San Diego School of Medicine, and Dominican University of San Rafael. Gina writes and speaks about issues for those raised in cults, and about women's health. She was raised as one of the first enlightened children in the Transcendental Meditation (TM) Organization where she twice married, divorced and bore three children. Her adult children also now live successful cult-free lives.

Qingping Chen, PhD, is a professor at the Institute of Psychology at Shaanxi Normal University in xi'an, China. Her research interest is clinical psychology. She has studied the cult problem for a long time, focusing on cult members' return and social-psychological rehabilitation. Dr. Chen has won a number of academic awards for her research.



Tianjia Chen, PhD, Assistant Professor, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, is now councilor 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 cult phenomenon, STS. For further information, please contact with him via email: 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 30 years. Mr. Clark has been on the Board of the Leo J. Ryan Education Foundation and reFOCUS. He is FECRIS's New York main representative to the United Nations [2011-] and science committee member [2015]. 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. 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. 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 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.



Neil Damgaard is originally from the Washington D.C. area. A graduate of Virginia Tech with a degree in industrial engineering and operations research, he worked for the U.S. Navy under contract as a management engineering consultant. After entering the ministry in 1976 he later graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary with a four-year Master's of Theology degree in historical theology, and has served as Senior Pastor of the Dartmouth Bible Church in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts since 1983. With an interest in students and young adults and long experience with them, Pastor Neil also serves as Protestant Chaplain with the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (since 2007). He also earned his Doctor of Ministry degree in 2008 from Dallas Theological Seminary. His church experience, both in his own congregation and among a number of other local churches affords him a good perspective in the area of safe churches which espouse a healthy and balanced philosophy of ministry. Neil holds an endless fascination with history, culture, architecture, music, and film. He lives in New Bedford, Massachusetts and has been married to Renée (who loves being a public school high school math teacher) since 1975. Together they have raised two daughters: Jocelyn, a mechanical engineer and recent graduate of the Law School at the University of Connecticut. She is also a wife and mother, living in NYC. Susanna, a graduate of Messiah College and Yale University, is a public health registered nurse in Seattle, Washington.



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!. [IJCS Editors; Research Network; Directors]



Doug Duncan, MS, LPC, was a member of an aberrant religious group for over twenty years. After defying the cult leader and marrying Wendy, they eventually left the cult and Doug began the task of rebuilding his life. He enrolled in a master's program in counseling and earned a degree and license to practice therapy. After working on their cult recovery issues by reading all the available cult literature, attending conferences, and becoming involved with ICSA, Doug and Wendy started a ministry to increase the awareness and understanding of cults. They are frequent presenters at churches, civic groups, and conferences, as well as facilitators of a support group for former members of cults and high-demand groups. Additionally, Doug offers individual counseling to ex-members. **Wendy Duncan, MA, LBSW**, has a Master's Degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a licensed social worker in the state of Texas. She has spent most of her career in the mental health field. Last fall, Wendy resigned from her full-time career position to devote more time to she and her husband's ministry to cult survivors. Wendy is also the author of *I Can't Hear God Anymore: Life in a Dallas Cult*. She and her husband, Doug, live in

the Dallas metroplex where they are active in cult awareness activities and facilitate a monthly support group for former members of cults.



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*. [Directors]

Baoxiang Fan, BEng, MSc, Associate Professor, Center for the Study of Cultic Groups & Religious Culture, Beijing Union University, Beijing, P.R.C.

Hong Fan, PhD, Associate Professor, Division of Humanities and Social Sciences, the People`s Public Security University of China, Beijing.



Jose Fernández has a Degree in Psychology for the University of Barcelona and is credited as a Psychologist and Psychotherapist by the EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists Associations). He has worked as such in Private practice in Barcelona for the last 12 years at Pehuén Institute of Psychology (www.institutpehuen.com) with a constructivist and systemic approach, subjects on which he has postgraduate studies, as well as in hypnosis. He coursed these postgraduate studies, which were directed by PhD. Guillem Feixas, at the University of Barcelona. He is involved with Hypnosis both as a therapeutic tool and as a field of research, having published on the matter in *La Revista de Psicoterapia internacional* journal, as well as in the *International Journal of Cultic Studies*. He is interested on Psychological Manipulation and abuse at schools (Bullying), Workplace (mobbing), and home (psychological maltreatment). He is also interested in the implementation of codes of good associational and ethical practices in all kind of organizations and associations in Spain. He is been a founding member of the Catalanian

College of Psychologists task force on Hypnosis and is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Experimental and Applied Hypnosis, (AAHEA) of which he is its current secretary. He was a psychologist and exit counselor at AIS (Barcelona) for two years. Contact him at: jfernandez@institutpehuen.com

Cindy Foster. A native of Sugar Land, Texas, Cindy grew up in an Independent Fundamental Baptist (IFB) home, attended an Accelerated Christian Education high school, and graduated from a Baptist Bible College. She and her husband spent the next twenty years assisting her sister and brother-in-law with pastoring an IFB church in Oklahoma. When the church dissolved, along with her eight homeschooled children, her family relocated near Tulsa. After much healing through resources from Ministry Stress Management, she and her husband eventually became facilitators for the organization. Still growing and learning (and after managing a family-based business), the two also now pastor a home church which they established two years after leaving the IFB. They are currently developing a program for missionary kids to help them assimilate into American culture upon leaving parents' field of service.



Rubén García-Sánchez, PhD candidate, is a researcher in the Biological and Health Psychology Department at the Autonomous University of Madrid. He is a specialist in Gender Studies and Emotion Management, has extensive experience in psychosocial intervention with adolescents at risk of social exclusion, and clinical therapy with adults and couples.



Alex Gawkins grew up and survived the USSR, the political cult that had spread to many countries and had abused its members for more than 70 years. While the Soviet Union was collapsing in 1991, Alex was pushed to join a small family-based healing cult during his freshman year in the university. After graduating the university, Alex became a refugee and was recruited by the bible-based cult, The New Generation Church in Latvia, which belongs to the Word of Faith movement. He left the group and immigrated to the US with great difficulties. When he stepped down from an airplane in New York in 1999, his pocket had only a few dollars and a diploma with an MS degree in Electrical Engineering from Riga Technical University (Latvia) . Alex took a second chance in America as a computer programmer and got his first job in 2000. Alex works as a senior software engineer at one of the Fortune World's Most Admired Companies. He also volunteers with ICSA as co-chair of the technology committee.



Carol Giambalvo is a former cult member who has retired as a Thought Reform Consultant. She is a cofounder of reFOCUS, a national support network for former cult members. She is on ICSA's Board of Directors, Director of ICSA's Recovery Programs, and is responsible for its Project Outreach. Author of *Exit Counseling: A Family Intervention*, co-editor of *The Boston Movement: Critical Perspectives on the International Churches of Christ*, and co-author of *Ethical Standards for Thought Reform Consultants*, and co-author (with Rosanne Henry, MA, LPC) of The Colorado Model in *ICSA Today*, 1(1), 2010. Ms. Giambalvo has written and lectured extensively on cult-related topics. In 2008 and 2010 (shared with the other Colorado workshop facilitators) Ms. Giambalvo received ICSA's Margaret T. Singer Award. [Directors; Workshop Facilitators]



Mark D. Giles, APR, is a former Mormon and a military officer specializing in public affairs (PA), communications, and influence activities (IA) – including psychological operations. Currently with the Canadian Army's Influence Activities Task Force, he recently completed his research paper (thesis), for his Masters of Defence Studies, with a focus on PA and IA. His previous experience includes positions as communications director for the Canadian Forces Military Police and National Investigation Service, as Interpol's chief of communications, and as a civilian police officer with the Calgary Police Service. Raised in what he believes is a mild cult, he left after working overseas in a "marketing/PR" role as a full-time missionary for two years. Interested in how corporations, cults, and faith-based organizations sometimes blend and distort facts and figures – even employ flat-out propaganda – to sell their messages and merchandise, recruit, and retain members, and attract funding and donations for various ventures, he is also a volunteer advisor with Cultwatch.com, responding to queries from around the world.



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. [Directors; Workshop Facilitators]



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. [Workshop Facilitators]



Maureen Griffio, MA, MEd, an ex-member of The Church of Bible Understanding as well as several fringe churches, is a board member of reFOCUS and also was one of four collaborators who established the Leo J. Ryan Education Foundation. Ms. Griffio had moderated an online chat/support group for former members for many years. Currently she is spearheading the ICSA New York City Educational Initiative. She has a Master's in Sociology with a focus on cultic practices as well as a Master's in Education with a focus on special education. She works with children with severe emotional and developmental disabilities in New York City. [NY Committee]



Steve Guziec, MS, LPC, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Nationally Certified Counselor. He holds a Masters of Clinical Psychology from Benedictine University in Lisle, IL. Steve practices with Behavioral Health Providers in Sycamore, IL, and specializes in helping people who have been abused by a cult or other coercive entities, especially destructive religious groups. In addition to providing one-on-one treatment, Steve hosts a podcast, [Sunshine After the Fog](#), that provides information, resources, and support for victims of cultic and coercive groups. Steve is currently working on a groundbreaking approach to help therapists and counselors better identify and treat victims of destructive groups.

Abigail Dagleish Hazlett is a survivor and victim advocate. In 2012, she graduated from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, with a BA in Sociology. Abigail has served on several panels highlighting the issue of sexual violence and, while in school, she co-founded a community organization focused on the prevention of sexual violence and advocacy for victims. Her undergraduate research examined Christian clergy's training in handling sexual violence in their congregations. She hopes to use her research to develop a training that can be implemented into seminary school curricula. She also served as a research assistant for Human Rights and Human Trafficking, a textbook published in 2013, and has presented at multiple conferences, including the 2012 Texas Association Against Sexual Assault national conference. She now resides in Dallas, Texas with her husband and daughter and works in the non-profit world.



Janet Heimlich is the founder and Executive Director of the Child-Friendly Faith Project, a national nonprofit organization that educates faith communities about child development, maltreatment, and protection. The mission of the CFFP is to end child abuse and neglect that is enabled by ideology. Ms. Heimlich is also an award-winning journalist and the author of *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment*, which examines child abuse and neglect that is justified with religious doctrines. As a freelance reporter for National Public Radio, she won nine journalism awards given by the Dallas Press Club, the Houston Press Club, and the State Bar of Texas. In addition, Ms. Heimlich has written nonfiction articles for such publications as Texas Monthly, the Austin American-Statesman, and the Texas Observer.



Rosanne Henry, MA, LPC, is a psychotherapist practicing in Littleton, Colorado. For the past twenty years she has been active in the counter cult movement working closely with the former Cult Awareness Network and ICOSA. She presently sits on the board of ICOSA and heads the Mental Health Committee. She has facilitated ICOSA's Recovery workshops for twenty years. Rosanne's private practice specializes in the treatment of cult survivors and their families. She is a former member of Kashi Ranch. In 2010 ICOSA awarded her the Margaret L. Singer Award for advancing the understanding of coercive persuasion and undue influence. [Directors, Workshop Facilitators, Mental Health Network]



John Huddle lives in Western North Carolina. He works providing services to Credit Unions. In addition to writing his blog, www.religiouscultsinfo.com since January 2010, John serves as a member of the Faith Freedom Fund. This non-profit group helps survivors with their immediate needs after leaving high-demand religious groups. This work allows him to serve survivors of his former group, Word of Faith Fellowship, by helping them make the first steps into a new life. Advocating for survivors has provided him with many opportunities to share the warnings about high-demand groups. In September of 2015, John released his first book, "*Locked in- My Imprisoned Years in a Destructive Cult.*" John's next book revealing the struggles and victories after leaving Word of Faith Fellowship is expected to be published in 2016.



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 Grindelford 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?



Tony Jenkinson, MA (Cantab), graduated in mathematics at Cambridge University and is currently working towards a degree in Social Sciences and Psychology with the Open University. He is a tax consultant and a Director of Hope Valley Counselling Limited which specialises in assisting survivors of cults. He is a former cult member and lives in the Peak District in central England with his wife Gillie.



Carolyn Jervis, MA (CCST) is the Exhibition Experience and Interpretation Coordinator at the Art Gallery of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. She is also a freelance visual art writer and curator. Her curatorial projects include a nationally-exhibited participatory art installation and her consulting work includes assisting the creation of exhibition space for an art therapy and creative arts-focused college. In 2012, Carolyn first visited the alternative religion archive of Sociology Professor Stephen Kent at the University of Alberta, and immediately became interested in the research and exhibition potential of the collection from the perspective of art history and visual culture studies. Since then, she has been working on formulating an exhibition about print culture and alternative religions, and about the work of artists in collections and archives. Carolyn has a Master of Arts degree in Art History, Critical Curatorial Studies from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. [Arts Committee]



Rev. Charles Foster Johnson is founder and pastor of Bread, a non-traditional faith community in Fort Worth. Throughout his thirty-five year pastoral ministry he has served churches in Mississippi, Kentucky, and Texas, including Second Baptist Church of Lubbock, where he led in a complete church relocation, and Trinity Baptist Church of San Antonio, where he helped build a multi-cultural and multi-racial community of faith among the 6000 member congregation. He served interim pastorates with Immanuel Baptist Church of Nashville and Broadway Baptist Church of Fort Worth, and served a two-year term on the faculty of McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, as Visiting Professor of Preaching. In 2013, he founded Pastors for Texas Children, a statewide ecumenical organization mobilizing the faith community for public education ministry and advocacy. His child advocacy also includes his service on the Board of Trustees of the Child Friendly Faith Project and with New Horizons Treatment Center for Children. He is a frequent preacher and speaker in university, church, business, education, and non-profit circles. He has written for numerous publications, and has made guest appearances on several cable network news shows. He is involved in civic and denominational life, including the Mentor Pastor faculty at Perkins School of Theology, SMU and the Board of Trustees of Brite Divinity School, TCU. He was named "Baptist of the Year" by the Baptist Center for Ethics in 2004. He was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers at Morehouse College in 2008. He is married to Jana, has three children, and three grandchildren. He enjoys reading, hunting, and spending time at his ranch in Desdemona, Texas. You may read his blog at www.charlesfosterjohnson.com and find him on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



Karen Jonson was a spiritual seeker for over a decade, dabbling in a variety of spiritual practices until she found one organization that captured the heart of her divine longing. It was headed by two Hindu men, who she called "guru" for 15 years. Then, she learned their dark secrets. Now, she exposes them. When Karen escaped the charismatic grip of these two powerful Hindu men, she realized an inner strength that was even more powerful than their authoritarian grip. She used her reclaimed power to expose the gurus' corrupt organization to the world. Her dedication to exposing this dangerous cult resulted in Karen writing her memoir of the experience, *Sex, Lies, and Two Hindu Gurus*. This memoir is a cautionary tale for people seeking spiritual guidance in organizations ruled by charismatic, nefarious forces. It is also a crime drama—telling the story how one guru of the two gurus went from convicted pedophile to one of Texas' 10 most wanted. Finally, it is a story of how the power of pure faith, honest intentions, and sheer determination will surmount even the darkest experiences of our lives. In her memoir, Karen shares her journey of travelling from innocent spiritual seeker to a voice of truth, wisdom, and transformation for many others.

Nitai Joseph was born into the fringes of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna) and at 18 joined an offshoot sect called Sri Caitanya Sanga. Over the course of 7 years, he lived as a monk in their temples in North and Central America. As part of the group's leadership, he held positions as the guru's personal assistant, temple manager, administrator, editor, and so on. He later moved off the group's properties but remained heavily involved. Slowly he came to realize that he had been the subject of extreme psychological and financial manipulation and began seeking out support and information to make sense of his past. Now living in Asheville, North Carolina, Nitai works and maintains a blog about his experience and cultic conditioning in general. He plans to make the most of a troubled past and return to school for psychology and enter into the realm cult awareness and recovery.



Christine Marie Katas, MBA, PhD student at Fielding Graduate University. She is an educator, human rights activist, and author, having published 19 educational books. She is the founder of Voices for Dignity, an organization that creates educational content, media and activities to help create awareness about and empower survivors of cults, religious abuse, polygamy, prostitution, and human trafficking. She is on the board of the Sound Choices Coalition which advocates against polygamy, and she has appeared on the popular TV shows "Sister Wives" and "Escaping Polygamy." Her own cultic experience was featured on the History Channel, Lifetime, Crime Investigation and other networks in the U.S. and abroad, but her story was misrepresented, motivating Christine to return to school to get a PhD in Media Psychology. Her special research interests include promoting media sensitivity to prevent victim-blaming, public humiliation and retraumatization. She is currently working on a guidebook to trauma-inform the media, and to help cult and other survivors navigate the process of going public with their stories in a way that empowers their lives. In addition to helping survivors rebuild happy lives, Christine educates and assists them in understanding how to take control of their media, maintain power over their personal narratives, and use digital media to foster their life victories.



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; cultmediation.com; cultrecovery101.com.



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.

Autumne Kirkpatrick is Pastor of Engrafted Word Fellowship Church and Associated Ministries, She is also a former member of two high-demand religious groups. She helps Christians recognize and overcome abuse, including spiritual and marital abuse. She is an advocate for believers who want to retain their faith and beliefs in God and the Bible while sorting through the unhealthy and legalistic directives, practices, and belief systems of former high-control leaders and groups. Recognizing that both the Christian and therapeutic communities have some inherent prejudice towards each other, she supports training and education in both groups so that Christians may better access the evidence-based therapeutic resources available today, and so that clinicians may become more sensitive in responding to the unique needs of Christians in recovery. She has a broad base of experience and training within the non-Christian and therapeutic communities, as well as in Christian ministry modalities. Autumne is also a published author, artist, and photographer, who writes books about God's love for every person and about restoring loving relationships with God, oneself, and others.



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).



Patrick J. Knapp, M.A. Philosophy of Religion, Denver Seminary. Pat's initial interest in cult recovery stems from his own involvement in a harmful bible-based group (1970-1984). His recovery resulted from individual and marriage counseling, in addition to several years of work in and facilitating support groups for ex-members and their loved ones. His M.A. thesis was titled: "The Place of Mind-Control in the Cult Recovery Process." Over the past 25+ years he has formally mentoring Denver Seminary students for spiritual formation. Pat is the founder of and co-directs Becoming Free (www.BecomingFree.org). This organization is committed to facilitating compassionate,

safe support/recovery groups for those who have suffered previous involvement in abusive/harmful religious or spiritual environments. He and his spouse (Heidi) co-facilitate these 12-week support groups. He has done doctoral studies in Marriage and Family Counseling (Professional Track), at Gordon-Conwell Seminary in Charlotte, NC. He has also recently completed multiple counseling internships at addictions treatment centers and at a local counseling center. Currently he is pursuing ABD in a PhD (Pastoral Psychology) at Graduate Theological Foundation (GTF) and is involved in several writing projects examining spiritual abuse and recovery.



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 [Info-Cult /Info-Secte](#). 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. [Directors]



Cynthia Mullen Kunsman is a nurse with thirty years of experience including a strong clinical teaching background and credentials in naturopathy. Though guided through recovery by the sound Christian instruction she received as a child which her seminary studies reinforced, she identifies as a second-generation adult because of the Word of Faith influence imposed by her family. As part of her transition into a healthy faith, she and her husband sought exit counseling together after walking away from a four-year involvement in a Shepherding Discipleship group. She primarily writes about recovery from abuse within high demand Christian homeschooling and the 'Quiverfull Movement' at [Under Much Grace](#) and [Redeeming Dinah](#). While participating in Christian counter-cult education and contributing to books including the landmark work, *Quivering Daughters*, she also serves in an advisory capacity for several cult recovery efforts including the [Spiritual Abuse Survivor Blogs Network](#) at [Patheos.com](#).



Marita La Palm, M.A., is a former third degree (3GF) lay consecrated woman of Regnum Christi, a Catholic movement affiliated with the Legionaries of Christ. She was recruited as young as eight years old, eventually attending Regnum Christi's boarding school for girls discerning consecrated life for two years in high school. She experienced two years as a consecrated member in Monterrey, Mexico. Later, she completed her Master's in Creative Writing at Eastern Michigan University where she was awarded "Distinguished Graduate Student in Creative Writing" for her thesis, a novella on a young girl's physical and psychological escape from a cult. Currently, she teaches College Writing with a human rights theme at American University.



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, including the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion American Association for the Advancement of Science, Pacific Division, American Group Psychotherapy Association, American Psychological Association, the Carrier Foundation, various university audiences, and numerous radio and television stations, including the MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour and ABC 20/20. [Directors]

Fr. Oliver Lee, Jr. Fr. Oliver (Br. Martin De Porres) is the 3rd Rector of TRINITY Episcopal Church in Dallas, Texas. He previously served as the Priest in Charge at St. George Episcopal Church, and as the Middle School Chaplain at Parish Episcopal School, both in Dallas. He has also served as the Assistant Rector at St. Barnabas+San Bernabe in Garland, Texas. In addition, he has served as the Associate Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Lawrence, Kansas;

and as a Curate at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Dallas. Fr. Oliver made his promises as an Oblate, a Second Order Monastic in the Order of St. Benedict, on July 10, 1999. He was subsequently Ordained to the Deaconate and to the Sacred Order of Priests. He is licensed as a Priest in the Episcopal Church, a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Fr. Oliver pursued his undergraduate and graduate studies in Political Science, Law and Theology, at the United States Naval Academy, the University of Kansas, Weston Jesuit School of Theology, and Harvard University. His degrees include a Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate. Fr. Oliver served in the U. S. Marine Corps and also as a Commissioned Officer and Operator in the Army's Special Forces, commonly known as the Green Berets. He served in the Foreign Service of United States Department of State and was stationed in The People's Republic of China; Beirut, Lebanon; and various other assignments around the world. Fr. Oliver was conferred the degree of Jurist Doctor and is an Attorney licensed in the State of Texas, various State and Federal Courts, and the UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT. He is a former Federal Prosecutor (Senior Trial Attorney; GS-15) with the United States Department of Justice. Fr. Oliver also recently served as an Associate Municipal Court Judge for the City of Dallas, Texas, and currently serves as a Chaplain with the Dallas Police Department.



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.



Dhyana Levey grew up on a commune connected to the United Lodge of Theosophists, an offshoot a group formed in 1875 by controversial Russian aristocrat and spirit medium Helena Petrovna Blavasky. She has a degree in journalism and worked as a newspaper reporter for about 15 years, covering environmental issues and law in California, as well as labor at an English-language newspaper in Cambodia. She now writes regularly for a couple of Bay Area magazines and is working on a book about adults who were raised as children in cults.

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*, *Pilosophy 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.

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Luna Lindsey was born into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) and left the faith in 2001, at age 26. She now lives in Seattle, WA and writes about topics of interest to her, including psychology, mind control, social justice, culture, autism, and science fiction. Her book, *Recovering Agency: Lifting the Veil of Mormon Mind Control*, connects known mind control techniques to doctrines and policies of the LDS Church, and it has been helping exmormons recover from the totalist manipulation they experienced. <http://www.recoveringagency.com>

Yuran Luo, Shaanxi Normal University of China (Master), was born in Chongqing, China. Her research interest covers cults and clinical psychology. She attended the 9th Annual Psychology of Religion Conference in China.

Cathleen Mann, PhD, has consulted in about a hundred cases involving cults, undue influence, psychological influence, and related areas. She has been qualified by a court of law as an expert in 15 states, testifying in 40 cases. She has an independent practice in Lakewood, Colorado, where she also does counseling, evaluations, investigations, supervision, and consulting. Dr. Mann has extensive experience with the qualification process required to be allowed to testify as an expert. Dr. Mann has a PhD in psychology and has held a counseling license in Colorado since 1994.



April Marten is a multimedia artist whose current body of work encompasses performance art, sculpture, book arts and collage. Born into a high control religious group, in Miami, Florida, much of her young adult life was spent escaping religious indoctrination and oppression. She studied at Kennesaw State University's School of Art and Design, graduating Magna Cum Laude with a BFA concentration in Painting and Drawing. Through a full time social and studio art practice, Marten explores religious culture and identity, using art as a catalyst for dialogue and healing. She pushes the boundaries of media while developing her unique visual and conceptual vocabulary. Elements of sacred text and universal themes relating to patriarchy, religious extremism, and social control appear throughout her body of work.



Cyndi Matthews, PhD, LPC-S, NCC is an experienced Counseling Clinician and Counseling Professor currently working in private practice 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.



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.

Sejal Mehta, M.D., MBA, is a practicing psychiatrist in Plano, Texas. In addition to her private practice, she serves as the medical director of Carrollton Springs Hospital in Carrollton, Texas. She received her medical degree from B. J. Medical College, India and completed her residency and fellowship in Child & Adolescent psychiatry at the University of Kansas. Dr. Mehta is board certified in general and child & adolescent psychiatry. In addition, she attained a master degree in business administration from Southern Methodist University's Cox School of Business Administration. She is a frequent presenter at medical conferences.



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.

Molly is a former Bible-based cult member and graduate of Wellspring. Molly has made much progress in her recovery from a ten-year involvement in a cult. Although it has been seven years since she left the group she still has several family members who remain heavily involved in the Bible-based cult in North Texas. Molly is currently a high school teacher and lives in the Dallas area.



Mary Moore is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker currently practicing in Maryland. She participated in Divine Light Mission, later renamed Elan Vital and The Prem Rawat Foundation, from 1973 to 2001, having been recruited in her first year of college. While in the group, she pursued a career in accounting and software, helping to found and grow a company which went from 3 to 500 employees from 1981 to 1998. She worked as a Senior System Consultant, Software Designer, and VP of Marketing. The organization's top management originated within the group, but is no longer affiliated, having been sold by the owners a few years ago. She realized she had been in a cult in 2004 after talking with a former member, reading Margaret Singer's *Cults in our Midst*, and visiting the ex-member website. She attended an ICSA former member workshop that summer, then returned to college, obtaining Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Social Work. She has attended three ICSA conferences, as a former member and mental health practitioner. She has developed a practice that focuses on couples' therapy, trauma work using EMDR, play and sand tray therapy. She has begun co-facilitating a cult recovery support group in the Washington DC area.



Anthony Murphy, (MPhil), University of Eindhoven, NL, is 55 years old and works as the Head of Department at the International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) Department at Eindhoven University in the Netherlands. In his former career, he had a commercial background working as an Investment Banker up until 1997 – after which he entered higher education. His academic specialization is in Political Economy. Originally from Liverpool, UK, he moved to the Netherlands in 2008 and has since been promoted to the position of HoD. He spent 9 years living in a high-control group from 1981 to 1990. He thinks that using his theoretical tools, combined with hindsight and personal experiences, enables him to share his important findings with others.

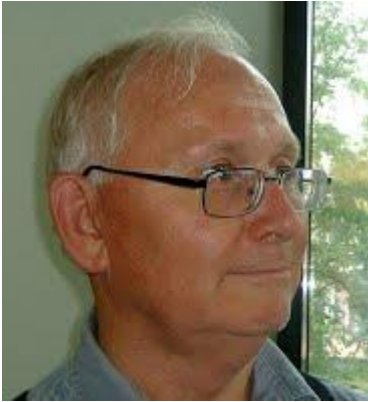


Nori Muster, MS, is the author of *Betrayal of the Spirit: My Life Behind the Headlines of the Hare Krishna Movement* (University of Illinois Press, 1997), *Cult Survivors Handbook: Seven Paths to an Authentic Life* (2000), and *Child of the Cult* (2010). She was an ISKCON member from 1978 – 1988, then earned her master's degree at Western Oregon University in 1992 doing art therapy with juvenile sex offenders. 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 has taught Australian politics, public policy and foreign policy. His research interests include cults, sects, new religious movements and

secularism, from a comparative policy perspective. He also conducts colloquiums for the Macquarie University Global leadership program on Religion, Secularism and the State. He is on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Cultic Studies* and the Polish quarterly, *Society and Family*.



K. Gordon Neufeld, MFA, is the author of *Heartbreak and Rage: Ten Years Under Sun Myung Moon, A Cult Survivor's Memoir* and *Cult Fiction: One Writer's Creative Journey Through an Extreme Religion*. He was a member of the Unification Church from 1976 to 1986. Following his departure from the group, he graduated from the University of British Columbia Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing. His opinion piece about the Reverend Sun Myung Moon's mass marriages appeared in *First Things* magazine in January, 2003. He has read from his work three times at ICSA conference Phoenix Project exhibits. *Living Water* (a story read at ICSA's 2010 annual conference) was published in *The Windsor Review* in the Spring 2011 issue. He is working on a novel and a collection of short stories. Mr. Neufeld now lives with his wife and step-daughter near Schenectady, New York.



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 kazdy powinien wiedziec* (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 czasopismach mlodziezowych: 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 wspólczenosci* (Cults as a problem of contemporary reality, 2008), *Higher education in Nigeria: selected aspects* (2010), *Wokół pigulki gwaltu* (Talking about date rape drugs, 2011). Dr. Nowakowski is ICSA Today's News Correspondent for Eastern Europe. [Education Network]

Patrick O'Reilly, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist in California and an Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. He wrote his Master's Thesis on Cults and joined a cult to acquire the data he needed for his doctoral dissertation. He was the late Dr. Margaret Singer's postdoctoral intern and research assistant and is the co-author of the book *Undue Influence: Cons, Scams and Mind Control*, published by Bay Tree Publishers. Dr. O'Reilly has testified in trials involving cults and undue influence and has spoken on the subject numerous times to legal and psychological organizations. He has taught Continuing Education and Continuing Legal Education courses to psychotherapists and attorneys on matters related

to cults, street and prison gangs, false confessions, and undue influence and has taught a forensic psychology doctoral course on Undue Influence. Additionally, he has been the guest speaker at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, California.



Judy Pardon, M.Ed., has been a teacher and a counselor. Since 1992 she has been Associate Director of the New England Institute of Religious Research and Meadowhaven, where she has worked with former cult members, including some who have experienced profound trauma. She has also spoken widely on the subject and conducted training programs for human service personnel. In 2014 Ms. Pardon received, with her husband Robert, ICSA's [Herbert L. Rosedale Award](#).



Robert Pardon, M.Div., Th.M., is the Executive Director of the New England Institute of Religious Research and MeadowHaven. During the past five years he has specialized in Bible-based communal groups. Much of his work involves counseling, support groups, working with those born and/or raised in groups, and helping former members rebuild their lives. To facilitate the recovery process MeadowHaven, a long term rehabilitation facility was opened in 2002. It can accommodate individuals or families who require long term (up to a year) care to recover from trauma and cult abuse. In 2014 Rev. Pardon received, with his wife Judy, ICSA's [Herbert L. Rosedale Award](#). [Boston Local Meeting]



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 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.



Jessica Lisette Perdomo graduated from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, with honors in her Criminology (BA) major as well as in her minor of Human Services. She also graduated with distinction as an inductee of the Alpha Phi Sigma National Criminal Justice Honor Society and PSI CHI International Honor Society in Psychology. She is a member of the International Cultic Studies Association. Her interests in deviant behavior and mental illness diagnoses has led her to pursue a master's degree in Forensic Mental Health Counseling – expected graduation June 2016. Currently, she interns at Elmcors, a non-profit organization focused on rehabilitation services and positive alternatives for at-risk youth and adults. After graduation, she plans to work with the prison population for rehabilitation purposes as well as with former members of high-control groups. Jessica plans to pursue her PsyD in Clinical Psychology in the near future.



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.

Erin Prophet is a scholar of religion currently pursuing her doctorate at Rice University, where she focuses on the American metaphysical tradition, religious experience and new religions. She is the author of "Charisma and Authority in New Religious Movements," (Oxford Handbook of New Religious Movements, Second Edition, forthcoming) as well as "New Religion" (Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks, Religion: Primer, forthcoming), and *Prophet's Daughter: My Life with Elizabeth Clare Prophet inside Church Universal and Triumphant* (2009). She is a

co-author of *Comparing Religions*, by Jeffrey Kripal (2014). She has a master's degree in public health from Boston University.

Mary Anne Rardin completed her PhD at the California Institute of Integral Studies in December of 2013. She will present the findings of her dissertation. Dr. Rardin is a cult survivor and had planned to write on another topic for her dissertation. However, her professors, who became committee members, encouraged her to write on the topic of cult recovery because they felt she was healed enough from her experience and had a solid understanding of the cult phenomenon. She is an SGA and her committee agreed/suggested that her research participants should also be SGAs. Her parents took her out of school in 7th grade at the request of the cult in which she grew up, so she never attended high school. She is extremely proud that when she found a way to escape from her family and the cult she took and passed the California High School Proficiency Exam with a high score and later obtained an AA, BA, MA and PhD. She has worked on some cult recovery workshops and plans to work more in the field of cult recovery, teaching, speaking, and coaching as she determines how to navigate growing this into a full-time career while continuing her day job in technology.



Tia Rebholz (aka Tia Marlier) is a seasoned voice-over actor and narrator for TV and radio commercials, corporate training, e-Learning and phone systems. She teaches voice-over acting and coaches business professionals in presentation skills training and effective use of the voice in Denver, Colorado and has also performed as a stage actor, radio news announcer, and professional vocalist. Tia spent 10 years in churches affiliated with a Christian, high-demand, cult-like movement, and after leaving, discovered ICSA through an ICSA-affiliated therapist. Last year she attended a regional ICSA Cult Recovery Workshop, which provided tremendous insight and support for her recovery.

Rick Robertson is the owner of Antic Productions in Plano, Texas. He has had a storied career as a disc jockey, on-air radio personality, television host, and stand-up comedian. In recent years he has run his own advertising and voice talent agency. He and his wife, Kim, live in Dallas, TX.



Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira, PhD, is Full Professor of Social and Legal Psychology at the University of Barcelona (Spain). From 1999 to 2008 he had been Head of the Social Psychology Department at this university. He has been Director of the "Invictus Research" group (<http://www.ub.edu/grupvp>) since 2003 and is the coordinator of the PhD Program in Social and Organizational Psychology at University of Barcelona. He is a member of the board of the "Spanish Scientific Society of Social Psychology." His research interests include the psychology of influence, harassment and violence, especially in group settings (cults), workplace, intimate partner, and terrorism. He has been involved in many projects and published many articles in these areas. During the 1980s, before and after a 1985 internship at ICSA, he worked with families and victims affected by cult membership. Dr.

Rodriguez-Carballeira was awarded ICSA's 2011 Margaret Singer Award "for advancing the understanding of coercive persuasion and undue influence".

Dr. Colin Ross is an internationally renowned clinician, researcher, author and lecturer in the field of dissociation and trauma-related disorders. Dr. Ross obtained his M.D. from the University of Alberta in 1981 and completed his training in psychiatry at the University of Manitoba in 1985. He is the founder and President of the Colin A. Ross Institute for Psychological Trauma, and he consults to hospital-based Trauma Programs in Texas, Michigan and California. He is a Past President of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation. Dr. Ross' book, *The Trauma Model: A Solution to the Problem of Comorbidity in Psychiatry*, was first published in 2000, with a second edition appearing in 2007. Other books of his include *Trauma Model Therapy: A Treatment Approach for Trauma, Dissociation and Complex Comorbidity* (2009), *The C.I.A. Doctors: Human Rights Violations by American Psychiatrists* (2006), *Satanic Ritual Abuse: Principles of Treatment* (1995) and *Moon Shadows: Stories of Trauma & Recovery* (2007). Dr. Ross has authored 28 books and over 180 professional papers, and has reviewed for numerous professional journals and grant agencies. He has appeared in a number of television documentaries and has published essays, aphorisms, poetry, short stories and screenplays.



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 ICSA'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 ICSA 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 ICSA. pryan19147@gmail.com. Websites: intervention101.com; cultmediation.com; 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.

Marlowe Sand (nom de plume) was a student of the charismatic guru, Andrew Cohen. In search of spiritual truth, she left her husband, career, and country. With her two small children, she followed Cohen to California and then

to Massachusetts. She spent fifteen years in his Community. Since leaving, she has remarried and retrained as a child psychotherapist. Marlowe Sand is the author of *Paradise and Promises – Chronicles of my life with a self-declared, modern-day Buddha* (2015), published by O Books (an imprint of John Hunt Publishing).

Breckan C. L. Scott is an attorney licensed to practice in Washington, Alaska, and Oregon. She graduated from Willamette University College of Law, cum laude, with a certificate in dispute resolution. Breckan has an established record of trial practice, including cult-related litigation. She has successfully represented clients in settling cult-related disputes pre-litigation, as well as providing representation in cult cases through the litigation and the appellate process. Breckan was the sole, lead attorney representing a defendant accused of violating a contractual secrecy clause by JZ Knight/Ramtha's School of Enlightenment at the trial court, and is currently the lead attorney pursuing that case through the appeals process. In addition to accepting cases directly, she is also available to provide consultations and assistance to attorneys, litigants, and others regarding cults and the legal system. Breckan maintains an office in Washington State and can be reached via www.breckanlaw.com.



J. Shelby Sharpe graduated from The University of Texas School of Law in June, 1965 with a Doctor of Jurisprudence. He is a partner at Sharpe & Rector in Fort Worth, TX and is a member of the State Bar of Texas, the American Bar Association, the Fifth Circuit Bar Association, and the Tarrant County Bar Association. Shelby has taught courses at Texas Christian University and chaired the pre-law advisory committee from its inception and developed the pre-law program for the university. He has also taught at Dallas Baptist University. His practice areas are: Media Law; Insurance Defense; Constitutional Litigation; Complex Litigation. Representative clients include: Denton Publishing Co.; Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, Inc.; Harvest House Publishers; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Southern Bible Institute; Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth; Tyndale Theological Seminary and Biblical Institute.



Leanne Smith earned a BA from the University of Washington Tacoma where she majored in Interdisciplinary Studies with a concentration in politics and values, and minored in human rights. She has been a legislative coordinator for Amnesty International since 2005. Her interest in cultic studies comes from her experience growing up in the Jehovah's Witness religion.

Karl & Suzanne Solum grew up in Spring Grove, Minnesota. Karl attended the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis and Suzanne attended Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. After marriage and attending Christ for the Nations, Dallas, TX, they returned to their hometown to become a part of a coffeehouse ministry that evolved into a small Christian fellowship, which Karl's older brother helped start with another man. This small fellowship

was soon systematically taken over by the other founder that used "spiritual authority" and the principles of the shepherding movement of the 1970's and 80's to solidify his power to control people's lives. The members live under extreme accountability to its leader for every area of their lives, along with isolation from anyone questioning the leader. Karl & Suzanne spent 35 years of their lives in the group, with many of the later years serving in a leadership role, before leaving in 2008. They left behind 5 sons & 6 grandchildren who are still trapped in this cult. Karl now owns a successful construction business, and Suzanne has 2 music studios teaching over 40 piano students. They live in the DFW area.



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. Ann delivered a paper about her experience at a Cult Information Service conference in New Jersey in 2002. In 2006, she received a notice of ICSA's first annual workshop for Second Generation Adults, people born or raised in cultic movements. She attended the workshop as a participant from 2006 to 2011, and was invited to become a co-facilitator in 2012. She is ICSA Today's Associate Editor. In 2014 she received ICSA's [Margaret T. Singer Award](#). [Workshop Facilitators, NY Committee, Arts Committee]



Joseph Szimhart began research into cultic influence in 1980, after ending his two-year devotion to a New Age sect called Church Universal and Triumphant. He began to work professionally as an intervention specialist and exit counselor in 1986 on an international scale. From 1985 through 1992, he was chairman of an interdenominational, cult information organization in New Mexico. Since 1998 he has worked in the crisis department of a psychiatric emergency hospital in Pennsylvania. He continues to assist families with interventions and former members in recovery, including consultations via phone and Internet. He maintains a cult informational website, lectures, consults for the media, and has published articles, book reviews, and papers related to the cult problem. His first novel, *Mushroom Satori: The Cult Diary*, was released in 2013 through Aperture Press. He has an art studio at Goggleworks Center for the Arts in Reading, PA. [Arts Committee]



Chelsea Von Pasecky, MPAff, is a survivor. Chelsea also serves as Chief Strategy Officer of the Center for Healthy Communities in Austin, TX, managing community-based projects and research for a local public health non-profit. Her graduate studies were completed at the University of Texas, Austin with a Master's degree in Public Affairs, with a completed certificate in mediation, as well as completing the course requirements of the portfolio program from the Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution from the UT School of Law. Publication credits include policy research projects focused on bi-national water quality agreements with Mexico and a 100-year analysis of the federal budget-making process. Chelsea has worked in several fields of policy including health and human services, behavioral and mental health issues, childhood health, socio-economic policy, and urban affairs. Chelsea has worked for a city public engagement office, for a state senator on health policy research, and for a state public health department as a policy analyst studying Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.

Yichen Wang, Shaanxi Normal University of China (Master), was born in Shandong, China. Her research interest is cults and clinical psychology. She attended the 12th Religious Social Science Annual Conference in China.

Robin Willey is finishing his PhD under the supervision of Professor Stephen Kent in the Department of Sociology, University of Alberta. His Master's thesis, *Discovering the Evangelical Sexual Marketplace*, used ethnographic analysis to examine the development, conversion, and exchange of erotic capital amongst young adults in an Evangelical church. It focused on the value of sexual abstinence in this Evangelical context. In addition to his interests in Evangelicalism, sexuality, and politics, Willey has published an article, which uses a popular cultural figure from the Star Trek series to examine certain methodological difficulties that new academics may encounter who are conducting research in religious groups. Mr. Willey's PhD specialization paper refines Bourdieuan theory's ability to draw theoretical and historical connections between religion and madness through the concept of liminality. Willey's current research interests focus on conservative Christian involvement in Canadian politics. He investigates the intersection between neoconservative political strategy and Christian nationalism in Canada—an intersection otherwise known as theoconservatism. In particular, he is interested in the implications of theoconservatism on government policy related to gender and sexuality. His initial work in this area has focused specifically on the relationship between gender ideology, conservative think tanks, and the current Canadian government.

Joanna Wright. Raised in the jungles of Paraguay, Joanna Wright grew up in James Saint John's pseudo-Christian cult compound of 76 people known as Beulah Land. Her father, an Independent Fundamental Baptist (IFB) minister, was eventually imprisoned there after a civil uprising created by "the Group" (as they chose to be called). She escaped the abusiveness of the IFB system and a violent marriage in early adulthood with an infant and no preparation for living in the outside world. Therapy and growth enabled her to raise three children into independent, educated, and kind-to-the-core adulthood. She also completed two college degrees, studying both criminology (A.S.) and psychology (B.S.). In 1998, Ms. Wright founded Hope4Kidz, Inc. with a focus on foster children placed in Residential Treatment Centers and worked with the Texas State Comptroller to expose and address problems with institutional warehousing of children in foster care. Ms. Wright provided valuable input to The Forgotten Children's Report in 2004 that resulted in numerous policy changes. After retiring from Hope4Kidz, Ms. Wright now works as both book editor and author while encouraging others in their writing.

Min Wu, was born in Anhui, China. She received B.S. degree in Anhui Normal University of China in 2015. She is an enrolled postgraduate in University of Chinese Academy of Science in Beijing. Her major is the social history of science & technology, and cults study is her current research interest. For further information, please contact with her via email: 1258305291@qq.com

Takashi Yamaguchi, Esq, practices law in Tokyo at the Link Law Office, founded by Masaki Kito. He represents and advises the victims of various cultic groups, as well as individuals and entities confronted by those groups. He is a member of the National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales, a board member and executive director of the Japan Society for Cult Prevention and Recovery (JSCPR), and one of the founders of the All Japan Network of Universities for Counter Cult Measures. He is Japanese English bilingual and is admitted to practice law in JAPAN and the State of California.

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: <mailto:yeqing429@163.com> 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).

Jiquan Zhou, Shaanxi Normal University of China (Master) ,was born in Shandong,China. His research interest is cults and clinical psychology. He attended the 9th Annual Psychology of Religion Conference in China.

Juan Zhou, Shaanxi Normal University of China (Master), was born in Hunan, China. Her research interest covers cults and clinical psychology. She attended the 12th Religious Social Science Annual Conference in China.

Abstracts

Abstracts are organized alphabetically within the following structure:

- Preconference workshops
- Conference Sessions
- Posters

Preconference Workshops

Education Workshop

Piotr 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 previous conferences to discuss their work. If you are interested in participating, please send background information to me (Nowakowski@maternus.pl). If practical, please attach curricula, outlines, and so on - with participants' permission, of course. The workshop will also include presentations.

Approaches to Spiritual Safety and Healing: The Safe Haven Network

Robert Pardon; Judy Pardon; Neil Damgaard

People who leave a Bible-based cult usually have great difficulty integrating into a church because of the spiritual abuse they have suffered in the "name of God." This spiritual abuse can be so destructive that it harms the deepest and most intimate aspects of a person's being, making trust and commitment to spiritual oversight nearly impossible. Often, these individuals have been "inoculated" against the Church by their group and are filled with fear and anxiety. It is not unusual to hear former members say, "No one in my church understands what I am still going through—not even my pastor." And simply understanding the cult's destructive doctrines is not enough for the former members or the church. Former members' anxieties are often so severe that if they find no one who understands, they usually have only four options: stay in the church and be miserable; church hop; leave the church entirely; or go back to their group. This workshop attempts to open up the world of the former cultist to the church, and to sensitize the church to the hurts and needs of these people. Topics to be covered include tactics and strategies denominationally and locally; necessary approaches for a "safe" church; how to understand categories—e.g., heretical vs. aberration, "wounded sheep"; and components of a competent lay and pastoral approach.

Informing Students About Cults on Campuses: A Japanese Experience.

Takashi Yamaguchi

This presentation is about informing students about cults on campuses. One may recall the "mad scientists" of Aum Shinrikyo, who were crucial in developing chemical and biological weapons used by the group. Not only them, but many other bright minds has been solicited into controversial groups while they were students. This could have been prevented if the universities had taken pains to educate and inform the students about the various "traps" hidden in student life waiting to ensnare them. Many Japanese universities have now introduced educational lectures about cults and controversial groups, and formed an information exchange network about various groups operating on campus.

Cultism in Nigerian Educational Institutions: Formation, Structure, Method of Recruitment and Solutions

Adesoji A.Oni, Edith Alufohai

Nigeria's social system most especially the nation's institutions of higher learning are now dens and covens of groups seeking to initiate gullible and sometimes unsuspecting students into what is now known and referred to as secret cults. Secret cults or cultism is a universal phenomenon and this phenomenon is not alien to Nigeria. A cult group could be defined as an unethical group that follows a dominant leader, accepts his claims and dogma, and obeys a set of determined commands. Cultists are the set of people who are dissatisfied with the status quo, tradition, and society. It has to do with people who think they are at the fringe of the society. The escalation of secret cult activities is one of the greatest problems currently facing the educational institutions in Nigeria. The philosophy of educational institutions in developing countries like Nigeria rests on the facilitation of manpower development, political sanity, socio-economic progress, and technological advancement. Seen from this perspective, the preponderance of secret cults in educational institution in Nigeria has not only become an anathema but a negation of the ideas for which the institutions stand. The recruitment process of all the cult groups can be divided into four segments. These are recruitment by luring, recruitment by tricking, recruitment by forcing, and voluntary membership. The organizational structure of the cults is similar. It is hierarchical and autocratic. The paper identifies some reasons why students join cult groups and these include dysfunctional and conflictive families, personality variables, the state of the nation, lack of security and love, and weak and porous admission process. Cult groups in Nigeria's educational system most especially are heavily sponsored financially not only by the members but also by the former members and service charges collected from different assignments carried out for people. The activities of these groups include killing, maiming, stealing, examination malpractice, and other anti-societal practices. Both the government and the school authorities have on many occasions tried to stop the activities of the groups. This paper, however, submits that the groups may not be stopped for a number of reasons, such as the number of years they have been in existence, and the societal problems faced by the generality of the citizenry. In curbing the menace of the cult groups on campuses of learning the paper recommends a dozen strategies that could be used, among which are strict compliance to admitting the best students to schools, identification of cult group godfathers, and sincerely dealing with them, breaking the myth of secrecy in cultism by unbanning them and registering all of them with the names of their leaders and patrons.

New York Educational Outreach Committee Progress Report

Maureen Griffo et al.

The ICSA NYC Educational Outreach is a volunteer committee under the guidance of the International Cultic Study Association's 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, provide thoughtful, well-researched information, help frame appropriate questions, and suggest an approach to productive answers.

Mental Health Workshop

(This workshop is open only to licensed mental health professionals and students of mental health fields.)

Considerations for the Therapist Working with Former Cult Members

Lorna Goldberg

This session will focus upon several factors for the clinician to keep in mind in therapy with former cult members. The presenter will highlight an overriding treatment approach and typical transference/countertransference issues that might emerge with this population. Case examples will be used throughout the presentation.

Mentalization/Attachment Approach to Cult Recovery

Rosanne Henry

Those harmed by destructive cults need a comprehensive approach that addresses the intentional, interpersonal and often emotionally overwhelming aspects of cult trauma. This seminar will define attachment and mentalization, and how these developmental capacities are systematically undermined in cult environments. It will explain cult trauma through the lens of attachment and offer six therapeutic tasks that improve cult recovery. In addition to the well-established psychosocial approach to cult recovery this developmental and relational one adds important avenues to healing. It focuses on resuming derailed psychosocial development, evaluating the intention of cult survivors and cult leaders, improving one's ability to create and maintain relationships and enhancing cognitive and affective skills. Understanding this framework enables therapists to help survivors move more quickly to a mentalizing mode of experience where they more clearly understand the relationship between their internal and external reality. Along with this new perspective comes the possibility of helping cult survivors mentalize cult trauma, develop more secure attachments, and reclaim their resilience.

Psychological Trauma and the Ex-Cult Member: The Problem of Attachment to the Perpetrator

Colin Ross

In recent years the mental health community has become increasingly sensitized to a promising new development in the theory and treatment of emotional illness. The central role of trauma - physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect - in the generation of a wide variety of symptomatic behaviors and emotional distress is becoming more and more apparent. Trauma can lead to many symptoms including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, psychosis and dissociation. An enduring pattern of numerous complex symptoms can devastate a person's emotional and cognitive development, causing severe dysfunction and distress in adulthood. Trauma's various manifestations include chronic depression, lack of coherent self-image, low self-esteem, repetitive self-defeating and self-destructive behaviors, unstable mood, hallucinations, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Dr. Ross will describe his treatment approach for former cult members with trauma-related disorders, as well as important things for a counselor to consider when helping an ex-cult member overcome the long-term effects or symptoms of psychological trauma. He will focus on one of the core features of his Trauma Model Therapy, the problem of attachment to the perpetrator, which is relevant for a wide range of psychological trauma victims including battered spouses, survivors of childhood sexual abuse, former cult members, and victims of coercive interrogation and kidnapping. The problem of attachment to the perpetrator is faced by any person whose physical or emotional survival depends on a perpetrator who is also a caretaker or spiritual leader. The outcome of the unresolved problem is a conflicted, ambivalent attachment

pattern with love-hate, approach-avoidance, “I hate you, don’t leave me,” as its core feature. In treatment, it is important to acknowledge and work both with the love and the hate, the approach and the avoidance sides of the attachment conflict.

Clinical Issues Working with First-Generation Former Cultists

Linda Dubrow-Marshall; TBD

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.

Clinical Issues: Working With Second-Generation Adults (SGAs)

Furnari, Leona; Ashley Allen

This session will use the discussion of clinical cases to explore issues clinicians encounter when working with people who were born or raised in cultic groups—i.e., second-generation former adults (SGAs). Presuming at least a basic familiarity with the relevant clinical literature and at least minimal experience in the field, the presentation and discussion will focus immediately on common clinical concerns and ways of addressing them.

Clinical Roundtable for Mental Health Practitioners

Gillie Jenkinson; Doug Duncan

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. This will be strictly adhered to for reasons of confidentiality. 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.

Parenting Workshop for Second Generation Adult Former Cult Members

Eva Meyrat; Rosanne Henry – Co-Facilitators

This workshop is designed to address issues second generation adult former cult members (SGAs) face when they have children and become parents. Most people model their parenting style after that of their own parents’. SGAs were invariably raised in highly dysfunctional, traumatic environments. Having escaped the

abusive cult and taking a critical stance towards it, they are also keenly aware that they want something different for their children. Figuring out how to provide that is easier said than done. Parenting is hard even when you have healthy models from your own childhood to build from. An SGA has no such healthy models. An SGA has to start completely from scratch when learning how to parent. The topics to be addressed:

- How does an SGA explain his/her own childhood to his/her children?
- How does an SGA explain family relationships to his/her children? An SGA is often estranged from his/her family and will have to find age appropriate ways to explain this to the children.
- What does an SGA teach his/her children about religion? It is hard to know what to tell your children about God when you aren't even sure yourself.
- How should children be disciplined? Rarely did an SGA experience healthy discipline as a child. This is a skill that must be learned.
- How does an SGA's adult relationships affect the children? Many SGAs have a pattern of getting involved with abusive partners. When an SGA becomes a parent the children must be protected first and foremost.
- Last but not least is the concept of the good enough parent. SGAs often expect nothing less than perfection from themselves. When it comes to parenting this is an elusive goal. All parents make mistakes and yet children still thrive.

Recovery Workshop for Former Members

Carol Giambalvo; Joseph Kelly

(This workshop is open only to former members of cultic groups.)

This workshop for former members is an opportunity for former members to meet and be able to identify with other former members; it orients them for the conference and informs them of the special sessions "for former members only," prepares them for possible triggers that may occur, and includes discussion about the importance of critical thinking to recovery and attendance at the conference. We briefly discuss triggers, and the possibility of triggers occurring when we are learning about and discussing cultic experience. Triggers are not something to be afraid of. They actually can be helpful, pointing out areas of our vulnerability—this is a safe place for them to occur. After introducing the presenters, we inform the attendees about what they can expect when the conference begins. ICSA conferences are open to all. There may be speakers for whom and sessions in which information is presented that you disagree with or are in direct opposition to; please use your critical-thinking skills. Also remember that ICSA has provided a safe place where you can disagree and you can be heard. The following information is presented:

Dissociation is a disturbance in the normally integrative functions of identity, memory, or consciousness. It is also known as a trance state. It is a very normal defense mechanism. You've all probably heard of how a child being abused—or persons in the midst of traumatic experiences—dissociate. Those are natural occurrences to an unnatural event. What are some of the events in the life of a cult member that may bring on dissociation?

- Stress of maintaining beliefs.
- Stress of constant activities.
- Diet/sleep deprivation.
- Discordant noises—conflicts.
- Never knowing what's next.

There are many, many ways to produce a dissociative or trance state:

- Drugs.
- Alcohol.
- Physical stress (long-distance running).
- Hyperventilation.
- Rhythmic voice patterns or noises (drumming).
- Chanting.
- Empty-minded meditation.
- Speaking in tongues.
- Long prayers.
- Guided visualizations.
- "Imagine..."
- Confrontational sessions (hot seat, auditing, struggle sessions).
- Decreeing.
- Hypnotism or "processes."

- Hyper arousal—usually into a negative state so the leaders can rescue you (ICC confessions).
- Ericksonian hypnosis (Milton Erickson) hypnotic trance without a formal trance induction.

Why are we so concerned about trance states?

- Individuals don't process information normally in trance states.
- Critical thinking—the arguing self—is turned off.
- Also turned off are reflection, independent judgment, and decision-making.
- In trance you are dealing with the subconscious mind, which has no way to tell the difference between something imagined or reality—it becomes a real experience which is interpreted for you by the group ideology.
- Once in a trance, people have visions or may “hear” sounds that are later interpreted for you in the context of the cult mindset—the “magic”—while, in reality, they are purposely manufactured physiological reactions to the trance state.
- While in trance you are more suggestible—not just during trance, but for a period of time up to two hours after.
- When a person dissociates, it becomes easier and easier to enter into a dissociative state—it can become a habit—and it can become uncontrollable.
- You may have heard it said that not everyone can be hypnotized ... that you need to be able to trust the hypnotist's authority. While it's true that there are degrees of hypnotizability, dissociative states may be induced indirectly. What if instead of telling you that “now we're going to hypnotize you,” the leaders just say, “Let's do a fun process—close your eyes and imagine ...”? Are you told to trust your leaders? Do they have your best interest at heart? And what if they are using Ericksonian hypnosis, in which there is no formal trance induction?

What is Ericksonian Hypnosis? It's an interchange between two people in which the hypnotist must

- Gain cooperation.
- Deal with resistant behavior.
- Receive acknowledgement that something is happening.

Ericksonian hypnosis involves techniques of expectation, pacing and leading, positive transference, indirect suggestion, the use of “yes sets,” deliberate confusion, the embedding of messages, and suggestive metaphor.

Research Workshop

Rod Dubrow-Marshall

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 for Families: A Collaborative Approach to Addressing a Loved One's Cult-Related Involvement

Joseph Kelly; Patrick Ryan; Rachel Bernstein

This workshop reflects the growing awareness in the anti-“cult” community that it often “takes a village” to respond appropriately and effectively to cult-involvement and that each discipline brings different and important expertise to bear on the issue. This talk will explore the vital elements of our (mental health professionals, former members and exit-counselors) collaborative approach using examples to illustrate these elements.

Workshop on Collage Art

April Marten and Diana Pletts

Cathartic art processes encourage self-discovery and emotional growth. Facilitators provide guidance in the simple, straightforward techniques used to create basic collage. Collage art for healing isn't concerned with art

skill or masterful works rather it is about creating art and seeing what it means to the individual maker. The art is a reflection of the individual's unique voice. Collage in particular is an excellent medium for self-expression as individual participants are relieved of the pressure to draw or paint realistically and given complete freedom to create from their intuition. The act of cutting, arranging, and pasting gives individuals the opportunity to pull disparate images, symbols and words from their surrounding environments to form their own objects of personal meaning. The physical creation reflects through visual language the inner world of the maker, a world that is often difficult to express. Visual art becomes a catalyst for dialogue about experiences of control, escape and freedom of individual expression.

Conference Sessions

25 Years After – The Friedrichshof Commune (FHC): An Exploration of How a Diverse Selection of ex-Members have Adjusted to 'Normal' Life

Anthony Murphy

This paper will show how recovering from a cult is a complex and individual experience. Certain threads and generalizations can be made – however, the recovery process is based on a myriad of psychological and sociological factors which means that it is important to highlight these varied experiences of such recovering individuals. I will focus on these individual experiences in this paper. The focus of this work concerns the FHC – probably the most successful European commune of the 1970s and 1980s. Unusually, this was neither an apocalyptic, religious or spiritual set up – it has its roots in an adopted interpretation of Viennese (Reichian) psychoanalysis by a famous 1960s Austrian avant-garde artist, Otto Muehl. The practice of Art, free-sexuality, free-expression and the dissolving of 'nuclear family' structures were some of the main tenets of this cult. After setting out a brief context, I will then give some first-hand accounts of how a variety of ex-members negotiated life after leaving the FHC. Of note here is that the FHC dissolved itself in 1991, meaning that my study covers ex-members who made a conscious decision to leave and as well as a large cohort who basically experienced the commune dissolving around them – they never actually made a decision to leave – the cult simply stopped. What emerges from this study shows the importance of understanding an individual's motivation, childhood, social class, gender, family, finances, education, method of leaving the cult, etc. in how they subsequently recover from the cult experience. My methodology will combine first-hand accounts from ex-members (I am also one) with some theoretical reflection on the psychological and sociological factors pertinent to how individuals can re-adjust to 'normal' life after a cult experience. The paper will contribute to a deeper understanding of individuals trying to adjust to normal society after living in a cult.

A Modern Christian Movement Operating As a High-Demand Group

Tia Rebholz

A religious movement called the New Apostolic Reformation has infiltrated numerous Christian denominations in the U.S. and around the world, and it operates - and can be experienced - as a high-demand group. This particular large, wide-spread, influential and multi-faceted charismatic movement is not well-understood nor recognized by the majority of Christian believers. Several Christian leaders and writers who have investigated it consider it to be outside the orthodoxy of traditional Christianity. I'm a survivor of the New Apostolic Reformation, which I was a part of for 10 years and which I left a year ago. I suffered spiritual abuse from teachings, leaders, and members of this movement, although I didn't recognize this until after I'd left the movement and the church I attended, which is affiliated with it. I believe the spiritual abuse is specific to the New Apostolic Reformation's paradigm and goes beyond just individual leaders. For the most part, I was only loosely connected to leaders in the movement and still suffered the after effects of being part of a high-demand group.

After the Cult: Who Am I?

Leona Furnari

According to Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), "Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in a natural or divine order and cast the

victim into a state of existential crisis....” ...which brings the former cult member to the question, “After the cult, who am I?” Living in a cult or closed, high-demand group is a traumatic experience that may leave former members feeling as though they are strangers in a strange land, unfamiliar with the language, customs, sense of meaning, and skills that those in the general culture seem to possess. In this interactive workshop, we explore the process of the redefinition of self that takes place upon one’s leaving (and often begins even before one’s leaving) a cultic group. We will discuss psychosocial developmental building blocks of safety, trust, competence, self-esteem, and autonomy, and look at developing healthy relationships with healthy boundaries because these often require revisiting after experiences in high-demand groups. Although it may be a scary process to confront the traumatic experiences and also take risks in redefining oneself, this approach opens the door to hopefulness and possibility.

After the Legion, What Happened to Christ? The Impact on Cradle Faith from Exposure to the Legion of Christ Catholic Religious Order

John Paul Lennon

For thirty years I have taken the Legion of Christ to task, exhorted the Catholic hierarchy, and criticized the Vatican. Those who know I was a priest and a religious often ask: Paul, are you still a Catholic? Do you practice? Do you go to Mass? They seem eager to know and I can sense that my nuanced –or evasive- answers don’t always satisfy them...Now is my opportunity to “come clean.” Besides focusing on my personal experience and that of many other former Legionaries, I hope to contribute to the broader discussion: What happens to one’s cradle religious beliefs and practices when one is subjected to abuse in a religious sect? The “thesis” could be summarized as follows: the extent of damage done to one’s cradle faith is in direct proportion to the intensity and length of exposure to a religious cult. The reality, however, is more complex because members’ experiences and conclusions differ. Can we or should we attempt to salvage that cradle faith? Can anything good come out of our painful experience? Is there a positive side to the negative? In the process, I will not hide my own personal experience and what I did to survive after being exposed to several forms of cultic abuse in the Legion of Christ. I will complement this making ample use of thirty years of experience listening to and supporting scores of former members.

AIS Group Intervention Protocol for Members and Former Members of Psychologically Manipulative Groups

Vega González; Laura Merino; Juanjo Santamaría; Elena Montero

Concordance with evidence-based guidelines in the treatment of group dependence disorders is typically low. Patients with group dependence disorder tend to have characteristics (low disease awareness and adherence to the treatment, low motivation) that impede the therapeutic process. This presentation will describe a standardized group intervention protocol combining exit counselling and cognitive behavioral therapy. Since it was founded in 1977, AIS, a pioneer organization in Spain, has focused its therapeutic activity on the disturbances provoked by manipulation groups. Our clinical experience has allowed us to develop a standardized group intervention protocol run by a clinical psychologist. We are currently testing the efficacy of this program through scientific research. Our preliminary findings after the group treatment show that patients develop knowledge about the running of these groups and the common manipulation techniques used in them. Patients feel understood and the therapeutic group helps them to accept and work their personal situation. Psychological group treatment combining cognitive behavioral therapy and exit counseling can be effective to help people suffering manipulation and coercion.

An Introduction to Cults for Law Enforcement: Crimes of Note

Marita LaPalm

This talk will present a template for a law enforcement-style informational briefing about possible cult dangers for awareness. The goal is to open up a discussion about a resource that can be used by anyone and what information should be included. Not all cults are violent, but law enforcement officers need to be aware of the range of possibilities of crimes that have historically occurred within cults. The concern is not about removing the member from the cult, but about protecting victims of crimes and timely response to crimes within cults. The audience will be involved in the second section, developing strategies for non-traumatic law enforcement intervention for the good of victims.

Bible Oriented University Campus High Control Groups That Manifest Harm, Abuse, and Common Themes of Intervention and Recovery Processes Observed With an Effective Outcome

David Clark

Since the 1980s of the twentieth century there has been a consistent unbroken pattern of Bible oriented cult like groups on University campuses around the world. They are particularly prominent in North America and recruiters from South Korea appear decade after decade well into the twenty first century here in the United States of America. This presentation will focus on the history of each major group or movement active on college campuses. The cultic methodologies employed by those who applied them drew attention to the growing harm and abuse active members suffered. Family interaction created a strange journey toward awareness and venues of how to address these ongoing difficulties of loss of communication and serious or subtle destructive personality changes. The consistent pattern of harm and abuse created cries for help and attention where campus faculty, various professionals and even the media brought out hidden information the general public found disturbing. It is important to observe why these destructive patterns of personal injury keep manifesting themselves decade after decade on our college campuses. The context of growth and development of cult like manifestations and the need for intervention and recovery responses lays the ethical foundation for assistance. The reply methods for ethical cultic intervention work needs to be explained to the family and potential active cult member when they are able to meet together. What is required for intervention and recovery stages must be integrated with quality information and networking resources. The critical elements for serious healing and integration are explained with timing factors understood in the context of cultic exposure. Regaining your life from cults on campus that rob members of a future the cults seek to control without fully informed consent. Freedom of conscience and will are precious virtues that needs quality education and support.

Bloggin', Bookin' and Bustin'

John Huddle

Purpose- Part 1- During this session, I will share insights gained into the process of setting up and maintaining a blog. The content of the blog may cover time in a high-demand group. Various considerations will be discussed including platform choices, frequency, text and video content and legal disclosures. The basis for the material will be presenter's experience of writing a blog for five years. Part 2- Included in this segment, the presenter will explain the basic methods to publish a memoir. Options discussed will be traditional and self-publishing avenues. A simple outline of the process will be available with emphasis on establishing quality vendors to supply products and services to publish the highest quality book with the resources available. The foundation for this instruction will be the presenter's own experience combined with resources gained from attendance to various writers conferences. Part 3- The last segment will introduce the available resources for discovery of vital information about groups or individuals. A simple review of the Freedom of Information Act will be included as well as methods of access to county and state records where ownership of assets is revealed. Access to documents in criminal cases will be discussed and the method(s) for securing these documents. The knowledge base will be the presenter's 30+ years in consumer finance in addition to recent methods learned while investigating his former group. Disclosures will include the fact that John Huddle is not an attorney and any legal questions need to be reviewed by a lawyer. Care and sensitivity to the traumatic nature of involvement in high-demand groups will be the undertone to the material with caution and awareness of the consequences of each of the activities listed above. An outline and resource listing will be available to each attendee.

Boundaries: Recognition and Repair After Leaving a Destructive Cult

Rosanne Henry; Elizabeth Blackwell

People exit cults confused about their own identities and how to relate to others in the mainstream culture. Identity issues stem from the diffuse or excessively blurred boundaries within cult systems: Just like enmeshed families, cultists and their leadership become over concerned and over involved in each other's' lives. This practice pressures members to quickly adapt to the cult environment and promotes cohesiveness at the expense of autonomy. Connection to the larger culture is limited because of the rigid boundaries legislated by cult leadership. Separating cultists from the world as well as their families helps leaders remold recruits more efficiently and control most of their relationships and their time. Participants will learn how the shame-control

model of abusive family interactions accurately describes cult recruitment and cult life. They will process how shame was used to control and manipulate their boundaries. Boundary violations will be discussed, along with tips on how and when to set boundaries.

Challenges “Cults” Present for Social Workers and Other Healthcare Professionals

Piotr T. Nowakowski; Stephen B. Mutch

There are several contexts within which cults and related issues may pose a potential challenge for social workers and other professionals active in the field of healthcare. Within the health context the concern may relate to substituting institutionalized healthcare by alternative forms of treatment, but also to the refusal of medical treatment based on religious beliefs, among others. With respect to the Polish situation, we will discuss two specific cases involving the Niebo group and the “Rosary cult”. The issue of healing as a form of recruitment will also be examined, with an attempt made to outline a typology of the risks involved in the field of healthcare. This context poses specific challenges to social workers and other professionals, including: high legal consciousness, especially with regard to the duties of medical services and the rights vested in patients (including the legal situation of minors); inadequate awareness of mind influencing techniques and social manipulation applied in cults; the particular sensitivities inherent in the context of a religious community of a patient and their family; obstacles to seeking dialogue opportunities with a patient and their community; predicting the course of action which facilitates facing future challenges; as well as taking into account health needs of a former cult member. With respect to the situation in Australia, we examine submissions to the Australian Health Minister’s Advisory Council examination into a national code of conduct for health care workers, made by Cult Information and Family Support Inc (CIFS) referring to several groups, and an individual complainant outlining concerns about the activities of the Universal Medicine group.

Cliques, Crooks and Cults: Understanding Power and Control as Shared Core Components of Abusive Social Organizations and Relationships

Abigail Hazlett; Chelsea Von Pasecky

The field of cultic studies often seems strange and bizarre, obfuscating what former group members and those working in the field already understand: like many other abusive social organizations and relationships, when you strip away the exotic ideology and practices, cults are all about power and control. Mental health professionals and educators who are already sensitive and trained to help recognize, prevent, and treat abuse, such as domestic violence and anti-bullying, already have the basic tools for understanding how cultic relationships work, but they may not know it. Understanding power and control as a core component of varying types of abusive social organizations and relationships, including cults, can aid health professionals and educators who otherwise may feel underqualified in feeling confident in their ability to provide help. Recognizing similarities between various forms of abusive relationships can assist these professionals in better understanding cults and aiding others in recovery from cult relationships, as well as equip them to include the prevention of cult recruitment in existing prevention programs. This paper will argue that similar dynamics of power and control are at the core of each of these varying social organizations and relationships and establish parallels in systems of abusive behavior and victim experience. Further, this paper will argue that helping professionals who are already proficient in trauma-informed care, working with trauma and abuse victims in the realm of relational violence, may only need supplemental education to feel proficient in working with those in cult recovery. Finally, this paper will also set out to identify areas in which cults could be included in existing prevention efforts that target relational violence.

Cognitive Behavioral Balance: An Integrative Approach to Cult Trauma Recovery

Ingo Michehl

Counseling Psychologist and former cult member Ingo Michehl explores the question how to regain cognitive balance of mind, heart and body after cult mind abuse. Having experienced the loss of freedom of mind as well as mental, emotional and physical trauma during 6 1/2 years of group involvement (Unification Church, known as the ‘Moonies’) from 1986 to 93, Mr. Michehl subsequently explored various ‘traditional’ psychological approaches such as cognitive, rational-emotive and behavioral therapy as well as well as alternative therapies such as hypnotherapy, katathym imaginative therapy (visualization), native American drum journeys and Zen meditation. The purpose of this presentation is to provide former cult members and

therapists with an integrative approach for healing cult trauma, combining cognitive and behavioral psychology as well as alternative approaches: Cognitive Balance Furthermore the purpose is to explore and share therapy experience and insights for regaining cognitive balance with former cult members and therapists. "While conducting individual therapy with clients at the prestigious Buchinger-Wilhelmclinic in Germany I found that kathym imaginative visualization journeys were highly effective in reframing and resolving past trauma in order to regain cognitive balance." (I. Michehl) As the American Psychologist Leon Festinger explained in his book *When Prophecy fails* (1956), human beings can only tolerate a certain level of stress created by conflicting beliefs, ideas or values. They then are motivated to reduce this dissonance and actively avoid situations creating it. Cults use this dynamic to push people off balance and manipulate them, causing paradigm and personality shift to creating a dominant cult personality (*Cult Trauma and Recovery*, Ingo Michehl, 1996). What is the solution? How can recovering cult members regain their inner balance and sense of well-being? To answer this question we need to first understand and define the original healthy state of a free human being. It would be the step before cognitive dissonance: a state of cognitive balance. To be able to help a patient a doctor needs to study the original healthy state of the body first: A system in balance. He then finds a way to restore that balance. When our thoughts, feelings and actions are in harmony, we are in balance, which is the natural state of being: cognitive balance.

Combining Identity Development Theory and Trauma Counseling in Helping Heal SGAs

Cyndi Matthews

Second Generation Adults coming out of a cult may experience many of the same developmental phases that individuals do as they grow and develop from infancy to childhood to teenage-hood to adulthood, with one major exception. As individuals come out of a cult, not only are they are growing and developing in their new identity and personality, they are also healing from major life trauma and abuse. SGAs often express feelings of naiveté as they come out of the cult in dealing with the world around them. Progress forward often entails working through enormous guilt, stress, depression, anger, and pain at the same time as learning new skills such as shopping, arranging finances, doing taxes, making decisions, finding and maintaining employment, and socializing outside of the cult. Personal counseling and support groups have been found to be effective ways of helping cult survivors through many of these issues as SGAs develop new identities. However, many counselors are not familiar with working with cult survivors, especially SGAs. This session will explore identity and trauma theories along with practical counseling applications in working and helping to heal SGAs through the counseling process. Case studies, discussion, and practical applications will be utilized during the session.

Cult or New Religion: A Case Study on "Xue-Shui-ShengLing" (Blood, Water and Holy Spirit)

Fan Hong

"Xue-Shui-ShengLing" (Blood, Water and Holy Spirit) , also called "Reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Spirit ", is a splinter group from Grace of Jesus Christ Crusade which was established by a Hong Kong film actress named Mei Qi in 1960s. In recent years, this group has been very active in China. Its leader declared in 2013 that the church has more than 300,000 believers in mainland China. Is it a cult or new religion? This case study will analyze the origin of this group, the role of the leader, the power structure or relationship between the leader and the followers, and whether or not the group uses thought-reform-like practices. In order to identify the nature of "Xue-Shui-ShengLing", we will use sociologist Janja Lalich and psychologist Michael Langone`s checklist as an analytical tool to review this group`s history, organizational structure, communications system, finance, and the leader`s thought and claims.

Cults and the Legal system: Obtaining Redress and Recovery

Breckan Scott

Bringing claims for injuries caused by cults is both a daunting and rewarding experience. The process not only provides a possible financial recovery, but can also be a positive tool in personal recovery via personal empowerment and obtaining accountability from the group. The presentation will provide an overview of both litigation and pre-litigation strategies to obtain redress for injuries caused by cults. The topics will include an overview of theories upon which to sue, including the Consumer Protection Act, RICO, basic breach of contract, employment practices, torts, and other well-established legal theories equally applicable to cult cases. In addition to the aforementioned theories, the presentation will also include a discussion of pre-litigation

settlement, including why it can be superior to litigation, how cult practices can be influenced both in pre litigation and litigation, and how to identify corresponding interests to obtain a favorable settlement. Finally, there will also be an update on the status of specific current cult-related litigation, including JZK, Inc. v. Coverdale, in which the Washington Court of Appeals recently heard oral argument. It is anticipated that some former and/or current clients may also be available to discuss their own experiences and personal recovery through the legal process.

Disillusionment with the Cause: Leaving White Power Environments

Tony McAleer

This paper will discuss white power groups, and practical experiences of working with individuals who are in the process of leaving white power groups. What do we know about young people's radicalization and engagement with white power groups? How does the influence of these groups form young persons' perception of the world and their belief in violent extremism? What forces can we see in these processes? What is the role of ideology in recruitment? How does gender play a part and what is the role of masculinity? What does it mean for an individual to leave the white power movement? How do members of white power communities leave their engagement and what needs to be dealt with in terms of world view, hatred, re-integration, and security from former comrades and enemies? The ideology of the group stands for an unquestionable truth; so how do members who wish to make a move from the environment handle the pressure and influence from their friends and surroundings in the white power environment when motivation to leave comes in mind?

Exit Counseling Cult Members in China's Modernization Process (1978-2015)

Ye Qing

The national modernization movement provides fertile soil for the breeding and spread of cults. For example, in China's modernization process, the anxiety due to urbanization development, ecological damage, industrial society, significant changes in people's standard of value, the new communication, dissemination of changes coming from the information revolution, and other factors led to the emergence and rapid development of cults. Since reform and opening up in 1978, the Chinese government has been under pressure to control cults and explore the exit of cult members. From 1978 to 2015, the way of handling cult crime has undergone several changes in the legal applicability, added 300 articles in the Penal Code in 1997, increased Judicial interpretation I, Judicial interpretation II; and amended 300 articles in the Criminal Code in 2015. As for the cult exit work funded by the government, its features are: (1) cult-exit with higher recurrent probability is a reversible process. (2) Consolidating after the exit is particularly important, in general, "30% owe to recovery, 70% to consolidate." Communities helping (such as the arrangement of work, to solution of difficulties in life) may well consolidate the results of the recovery, and avoid re-embracing of the group. (3) With regard to the effect on recovery, the closed environment is superior to the development of the open social environment, but the human rights and the will of the cult members must be respected. Nevertheless, cult members may be obliged to attend education and recovery classes with their families' signature. (4) The cost of government-funded cult-exit is high. (5) At present, it is necessary to explore more universal not personalized methods for improving work efficiency. If we view 1978 as a starting point of Chinese national modernization process, we could think what change happened to the disposal of the cult in the process? What change happened to the way of exiting cults? Specifically, we can divide the Chinese cult-exit into three phases: (1) the exploration stage (1978-2003): the methods are unitary, the effects are disappointing (2) the detention of the times (2003-2013): achieved substantive results, the effect is significant and normalization. (3) After detention era (2013-): The Chinese Government abolished reeducation through labor system at October 28, 2013, and the new situation gave rise to new problems. Based on the above 3 stages, we try to know what are the characteristics of these three stages? What are the main methods of cult-exit of the various stages? What is the improved progress? The most important problem is how the national modernization movement impacted on cult-exit work?

Gnosis, Faith, and Reason: Using Epistemology to Analyze any Cult Experience

Joseph Szimhart

To recover from any cult experience, it helps to understand how ways of knowing have been manipulated. One model proposes that gnosis, faith, and reason are the primary categories through which human beings know anything. Cults tend to attract followers with transcendent propositions and claims that tap our need for

certainty with a direct way to know the self and ultimate realities, namely with “gnosis.” Knowing through a creed or faith that defines what we should know and believe has powerful implications for framing thoughts and behaviors. Transcendent propositions are often supported with what appear to be reasonable and scientific criteria. This paper will break down this epistemological model by examining specific examples of cults and how misuse of knowledge can create problems with knowledge, conduct, and governance.

Growing up LGBTQ in a Cult – SGA experiences – Moving Towards Healing

Cyndi Matthews

With the passage of marriage equality by the U.S. Supreme Court, many religious organizations have come out very vocally against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) individuals. It is no secret that many conservative religious organizations believe that being gay is a “choice” and those that “choose to be gay” will go to hell. Researchers in general have found that conservative religious doctrines and/or reparative therapy, or trying to change sexual orientation, is harmful to the LGBTQ population, increasing the risks of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide. However, no researchers to this date have studied the effects of being LGBTQ in religious cults. Do cults practice their own brand of reparative therapy? What kinds of restrictions, if any, are placed on LGBTQ? Is being LGBTQ seen as a negative issue in a cult? Along with these questions, this presentation will seek to explore the effects and repercussions of being LGBTQ in a religious cult. Case studies and discussions will be utilized in exploring the lived experience of those who grew up LGBTQ in a cult environment. An emphasis will also be placed on helping LGBTQ SGAs work through and heal from their cult experience.

Heaven’s Gate: The Rhetorical Foundations of Religious Extremism

Cameron Berger

Many researchers and activists have engaged in protracted battles concerning the precise nature of controversial religious movements. Those who are said to be “cult apologists” have developed and drawn upon terminology such as the phrase “new religious movement” in order to describe this phenomenon as one being primarily non-normative in its worldview and way-of-life (Melton, 1998). For those who have remained critical of such groups, terms such as “cult” serve to accurately capture the excessive demands and unethical organizational structures that these groups utilize to control their adherents (Singer, 1995). However, a careful review of both of these positions, as presented in the literature, reveals that neither construct offers a wholly adequate account of the phenomena to be explained. That is, many who advocate that these groups are being condemned for holding to incorrect and unconventional beliefs ignore many of the factors raised by critics (Mooney, 2005; Lalich, 2010). However, many of those who are critical of these movements also fail to acknowledge legitimate concerns on the part of the so-called “apologists” (Melton, 1998; Singer, 1995). Therefore an alternative third view is required, in order to draw together these disparate and seemingly irreconcilable differences between the two positions. “Heaven’s Gate: The Rhetorical Foundations of Religious Extremism” demonstrates that appeals to criteria set forth by both “sides” fail to capture the necessarily sufficient conditions required to explain a group that engages in extremely unethical acts of devotion like Heaven’s Gate. This essay argues that the manipulation and control of an individual’s or group’s communication is both a pre-requisite and a necessarily sufficient condition for the formation of ideological totalism, and thus the rationalization necessary to willingly carry out acts otherwise understood to be highly unethical.

Identity and the Cultic Experience: About Changes, Transformations and Consolidation

Dianne Casoni

Identity transformation is seen as one of the most important changes to occur in those who engage in a cultic experience of some significance in their lives. Many authors have made significant contributions to its study, amongst which Singer and Lalich (1994) who have developed the concept of pseudo-personality to describe the changes observed, as well as West and Martin (1996) who refer to the notion of pseudo-identity in their discussion of similar observations, whereas Hassan (1998, 2000) has coined the expression dual identity to describe the type of changes that occur in members’ identity as they that are submitted to the pressure of group dynamics. All these authors stress the important role the cultic environment plays in bringing about such important changes in individuals’ identity. Belonging to a cultic group usually modifies the way individuals view themselves, the way they see others and the way they view the world, but it also transforms the way they

present themselves, as well as how they behave and what they value. Such major transformations can nonetheless appear to be of a superficial nature in some instances, whereas in other cases, the changes are such that those affected feel they have lost their prior selves and can never go back to whom they were, sometimes despite their wish to. This paper will examine the various types of identity transformations that are likely to be associated with adherence to a cultic group; it will discuss the nature of these transformations and the extent to which they can become consolidated and part of a new identity. The various dimensions of identity, such as social, personal, sexual, gender, religious and spiritual will be examined in light both of current theories on identity development and of the specificities of cultic experiences. Illustrations pertaining to various types of cultic involvement and experiences will be used to highlight issues related to how changes in one's identity occur, how extensive transformations take place and which conditions are likely to bring about consolidation of such modifications of a person's identity.

Learning From Former Members' Experiences of Receiving Professional Help: How Therapy Narratives Can Inform Practice

Catherine de Boer

Many individuals who leave high demand groups require therapy to successfully move through the disengagement process and achieve a good outcome; however that may be subjectively defined. Therapists can face presenting concerns that range from clients needing the basics in life (shelter, food, clothing and employment) to clients coping with the aftermath of ego destruction, abuse, trauma, depression and suicide ideation. As a therapist, what is the best way to help? Should the focus of therapy be on the unique aspects of treatment associated with recovery from high demand groups or would a broader focus on the specific presenting concerns be best? Is specialized training required or could any skilled therapist do the job? This presentation will offer a rare glimpse into the experiences of ex-members of high demand groups, who have received professional and paraprofessional support. They describe what a good outcome is, how it can be achieved and the specific aspects of the therapeutic process that can lead to recovery. Areas of discussion include the acknowledgement of pain, the opportunity to work through trauma, lingering issues and challenging emotions that may or may not have been associated with group membership. Ex-members spoke of the significance of the therapist's familiarity with the specific group they were leaving, the importance of working with a therapist who was able to respectfully challenge their distorted world views and thinking patterns, and the effect of therapy on their identity (trans)formation. The therapy narratives were taken from a broader study on social group disengagement (n=16) completed in 2007. The veracity of the findings was strengthened by comparing study results with nonreactive measures, specifically therapy narratives embedded in published memoirs and autobiographies written by individuals who had left high demand groups.

Logotherapy and Recovery from Religiously Abusive Environments

Patrick J. Knapp

During the author's past 30+ years of working with those affected by religious abuse, some have expressed interest in a spiritual dimension of recovery and some deny seeing any conceptual or practical relevance. Many of the author's clients have been influenced by a Totalist Aberrant Christian Organization (TACO),^[1] but others have come from more diverse backgrounds. As we all affirm, sometimes people are not yet in a place of readiness to address the transcendent or spiritual dimension of life. Principles found within psychotherapeutic logotherapy support the exploration of spiritual topics and the author affirms that eventually recovery requires it. A brief history and description of logotherapy is provided. This paper then briefly suggests how concepts within logotherapy can be helpful in understanding recovery from religiously abusive environments. This paper seeks to assist the reader in how one might conceptualize and then respectfully facilitate the process of movement from dismissal of all things religious to an increased exploration and deeper appreciation of the role and function of meaningful religious involvement.

Media, Victim-Blaming, Trauma, and Recovery: How Personal and Public Narratives Impact Survivors of Traumatic Psychological Manipulation

Christine Katas

In today's digital society, the most private matters of individuals can become sensational media content on screens around the world in a matter of hours. Far too often, stories in traditional media such as magazines,

newspapers, books and television networks take a survivor's personal narrative, modify it and exploit it for financial gain while amplifying a survivor's trauma. Since the rise of the Internet, social media and mobile technology, individuals can now humiliate or blame the victims at all times and in all places, with anonymity and often without consequence. Furthermore, the humiliation and revictimization of cult survivors can become virtually permanent via cyberspace, presenting tremendous risk for those in the various stages of post-cult trauma recovery. On the other hand, trauma-sensitive media stories can also present empowering survivor narratives and redemption sequences that bolster cult survivors' post-traumatic growth and recovery, helping victims solidify a positive, thriving self-concept. This presentation will integrate case studies, videos, research, photography, personal examples and audience participation to analyze the role of the media in helping or harming survivors of cult mind control. Topics covered will include media ethics and manipulations, media trauma, healing media, framing, victim-blaming, public humiliation, social media psychology and cyber-mobbing, the power of photography, persona branding, survival blogging, and guidelines for both survivors and journalists. Finally, attendees will learn tips to help survivors can take control of their media, maintain power over their personal narratives, and use digital media to foster their life victories.

Mild and Mainstream: Understanding and Mitigating the Damage Caused by the Milder, More Accepted, High-Control Organizations

Mark Giles

This paper will address the impact of the "mild" high-control organization, which blends into the faith-based mainstream. While these organizations may still demonstrate many of the characteristics of the harsher, more extreme cults, they often gets a pass in public opinion as members live, work and interact with mainstream society enough to appear "normal". The high demands, however, still include heavy financial and time commitments – and high levels of control of sexual and other behaviors – and hurt families and individuals, whether a member feels trapped inside or decides to leave and is shamed and shunned. The mild high-control organization has often already become an established religion, having built enough faith-based legitimacy, financial strength and political influence to be seen as somewhat mainstream. The faith-based legitimacy aspect is a key factor that distinguishes the milder organization from those seen by many as more harsh or extreme, such as Scientology. Accordingly, these milder high-control organizations attract less attention, and less help and empathy for those trying to get out. Often bringing in millions – or even billions – in donations, these high revenue-generating, often corporation-like organizations are well positioned to use major public relations campaigns and social proof to support their "truth" – and attract and retain members. While the information age and rapid expansion of internet access may have significantly increased awareness for potential new converts, thousands are still born into these organizations, indoctrinated from a very early age, and left with little-to-no choice but to follow the path already mapped out for their lives. Should we be concerned with the perceived legitimacy, power and influence of these milder high-control organizations that oversee vast financial empires and the lives of millions? If so, what can be done to diminish the hold these organizations have and help those trying to leave and recover?

Mormons Online: How Internet Communities Fuel the Exodus and Aid Post-Totalist Recovery

Luna Lindsey

With growing access to the internet and social networks in the past decade, tens of thousands of Mormons are discovering uncomfortable deceptions about their beloved religion. For devoted Latter-day Saints, online discoveries of disconfirming information can pierce the milieu and lead to a painful crisis of faith, which further leads to cognitive dissonance, triggered phobias, internalized shame, shunning by family, loss of community, and destabilization of identity, sense of reality, and moral framework – similar to issues experienced by former members of other high-demand groups. There is a dearth of helping professionals with the right skill-sets to guide them, so former Mormons often find support and validation in online communities, which serve as de facto stand-ins for exit counseling. Learn how these communities have unwittingly self-created support groups to assist one another as they during their vulnerable time of faith transition.

Open Discussion for Second-Generation Adults (SGAs)

(for former-member SGAs only)

Ann Stamler, Moderator

In this 90-minute session SGAs may ask questions and discuss whatever topics interest them.

Panel: An Empirical Research Program From China

Rod Dubrow-Marshall, Moderator

On the Causes of Cult Members' Recommitment: Psychological Withdrawal Phenomena and Their Intervention Strategies

Qinping Chen

Cult members are those who are not only considered physically trapped in destructive cult organizations but also suffering from degrading mental functions. Psychological withdrawal is known as psychic dependence or psychological dependence, i.e., if somebody is stripped of certain activities, he tends to experience some psychological withdrawal phenomena, such as erratic thoughts, anxiety, and body stiffness. Is psychological withdrawal phenomenon the reason that cult members are prone to recommit the same errors? What are the causes of these phenomena? This study administered a survey to 63 cult members from the experimental group and 69 people from the control group. Both groups were assessed with the Self-Rated Health Measurement Scale (SRHMS), the Interpersonal Trust Scale (ITS), and the Internality, Powerful Others and Chance Scales (IPC). We found out that (1) cult members' health score was 310.33 ± 45.65 , which was scored significantly lower than the control group in the total score of the SRHMS ($t = -4.66, p < 0.01$); (2) cult members' interpersonal trust score was 353.36 ± 60.02 , which was also significantly lower than the control group in the total score of the ITS ($t = -3.67, p < 0.01$); (3) cult members scored significantly lower than the Chinese norms in IPC scores, in which the score of I was $28.8 < 34.1$, the score of P was $15.2 < 17.0$, and the score of C was $19.2 < 23.2$. This indicates that most cult members belonged to the external-controlled psychological mode. The difference between the above two groups were statistically significant ($p < 0.05, 0.01$). This shows that the cult members have different mental activity characteristics from the experimental group, and these make the former susceptible to being misled and be a social problem.

The mechanism analysis of psychological withdrawal problems and repeating activities of cult members were also examined. On the basis of the results above, we attempted to give some explanations about the psychological withdrawal phenomenon and cult members' recommitment. (1) Psychosomatic dysfunction leads to psychological withdrawal phenomenon which induces cult members' recommitment. The central nervous system of human beings has a reward and punishment effect. Cult activities provide stimulation to the central nervous system, releasing the excitatory neurotransmitter such as dopamine, which reduces the perception of pain. As a result, some cult members feel better at first. This is the primary reward effect. But it will not continue to work, for it may cover the truth. In other words, once you terminate worship activities, you must feel badly caused by the reduction of neurotransmitter releasing. That is to say, the psychological withdrawal phenomenon is coming. (2) Poor interpersonal trust results in psychological withdrawal phenomenon and cults' recommitment. This analysis shows two aspects. First the members' doctrine mindset allows them to build interpersonal trust within the group, but a distrust of outsiders. Second, the members' mental-defense stereotype leads to strong xenophobic behavior under mind control, resulting in poor interpersonal relationships. (3) External-controlled tendency causes psychological withdrawal phenomenon and cults' recommitment. The I, P, C scores of the cult members indicate that they belong to external-controlled type of psychological tendencies. "External-controlled people are easy to suffer from anxiety and depression, and they are more difficult to cope with stressful living environment". This strengthened their dependence on the "leader" and their recommitment of cult activities.

The intervention strategies of psychological withdrawal phenomena.

Behaviorism theory emphasizes that human morbid psychology and behavior are reinforced by learning. Therefore, we can make use of re-learn, conditioned reflex and reinforcement to correct their worship behavior. The methods are as follows:

(1) "Dating training" strengthens interpersonal trust experience.

(2) "Psychological stability technology" enhances the sense of attribution control.

(3) "Token Economy" reconstructs the physical and mental health activities by following the recency rate and the law of frequency.

A Study of Token Economy Counseling on Cult Members' Stereotyped Behavior

Yichen Wang; Qingping Chen

This study investigated 63 cult members by using the Self-Consistency Congruence Scale (SCCS) and the Self-rated Health Measurement Scale (SRHMS). The results proved that cult members obviously have lower self-consistency congruence and lower health level. Their main symptoms are: lacking harmony between self-concept and reality-experience, having stereotyped behaviors on worship, and possessing low mental health level. Psychologist Rogers believes that people's self-harmony and unity and behavior serve as a prerequisite for maintaining mental health. Under the strengthening of mind control, cult members formed worship stereotyped behavior that is far away from reality, which finally causes psychological problems. Thus, a token economy can be used to deal with psychological problems. The token economy intervention insisted that cult members can improve their mental health level by strengthening the study of new ideas and new behaviors, as well as weaken and inhibit the original ideas and behavior. The concrete operation technology of token economy included: (1) Using the tokens to encourage members to adapt to society. (2) Using the tokens to reward members to reduce the frequency of worship stereotyped behavior. (3) Using social identity to encourage members to establish new ways of behavior to replace the original worship act. (4) Consolidating members' correct behavior. Thus, the transformation of members' behavior is realized, and the level of mental health is improved.

Correlation Between Psychological Characteristics and Worship Behavior of Cult Members

Yuran Luo; Qingping Chen

What are the psychological characteristics of cult members? Are there any correlations between psychological characteristics and worship behavior? In this essay, we aim to investigate the level of mental health, self-consistency congruence, interpersonal trust, and anxiety among cult members, and explore the relationship between psychological characteristics and worship behavior. The assent of 63 cult members and 69 from the control group were obtained before the survey was administrated. They were assessed with the Self-rated Health Measurement Scale (SRHMS), the Self Consistency and Congruence Scale (SCCS), the Interpersonal Trust Scale (ITS), and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). We obtained three important results: (1) Cult members scored significantly lower than the control group in the total score and the each dimension of the SRHMS. ($t=-3.22, p<0.01$; $t=-4.18, p<0.01$; $t=-3.49, p<0.01$; $t=-4.66, p<0.01$); (2) Cult members scored significantly higher than the control group in the self and experience disharmony dimension of the SCCS ($t=2.11, p<0.05$), and scored lower than the control group in the self-flexibility dimension of the SCCS ($t=-2.34, p<0.05$); cult members scored lower than the control group in the total score of the ITS ($t=-3.67, p<0.01$); cult members scored lower than the control group in the trait anxiety level of the STAI ($t=5.67, p<0.01$); (3) By regression analysis, we found that self-consistency and congruence could significantly predict the level of social health, and the total score explained the social health score of the 8.3% of the variance ($F=5.535, p<0.05$). Trait anxiety could significantly predict the total score of health, and it explained the health score of the 28.2% of the variance ($F=23.942, p<0.01$). From what have been discussed above, we tried to explain these results. First of all, due to their low degree of self-consistency and congruence, cult members did not form a rational cognitive style and had an inflexible way of thinking. Most of them hoped through worship behavior to achieve their aspirations, however, the cult behavior could not relieve the inner conflicts and contradictions, but increased their anxiety experience, which in turn affected the physical and mental health. Besides, the low level of health caused by the psychological characteristics made the cult members experience disordered thinking and cognitive behavior, which easily led to the cult commitment. After all, high self-disharmony, low interpersonal trust, and high trait anxiety of cult members are the endogenous factors of worship behavior.

Cult Members' "Three-Low-and-One-High" Symptoms and Their Solution-focused Brief Psychological Counseling

Juan Zhou; Qingping Chen

This study investigated 63 cult members and 69 ordinary people with the Self-Consistency Congruence Scale (SCCS), the Interpersonal Trust Scale (ITS), the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), and the Self-rated Health Measurement Scale (SRHMS). The results indicate that: Cult members have lower interpersonal trust,

lower self-consistency congruence, lower health level, and higher trait anxiety. The main symptoms are: Cult members contacted only with insiders, but showed interpersonal distrust to outsiders. They lack flexibility in thinking and are short of harmony between themselves and the experience. They are stuck in their concept of worship and have difficulty in extricating themselves. They are prone to anxiety and impulsive behaviors out of tension. These factors together led to a low level of health condition. For the "three-low-and-one-high" symptoms of cult members, we can use solution-focused brief therapy implementing counseling, which consists of an emphasis on problem-solving without an entanglement of the causes, and a promotion of the changes of cult members with a positive attitude. The specific operation technology is: (1) Understand the problem. Understand the emotional states and proven symptoms characteristic of cult members, help determine their motivation, establish a good relationship with them. (2) Set goals. Use miracle type questions to extend cult members' intervention goals to improve their cooperation and motivation of change. (3) Explore the experience. Mine the potential energy of cult members, stimulate their drive for a change, encourage them to think positively of the meanings of the shift. (4) Effective feedback. Assess the progress of cult members, raise track type questions concerning their feeling to enhance their confidence to value change. As a result, the goal we try to achieve is to help cult members be out of the worship of psychological symptoms to return to the normal social life.

The Relationships of Self-Consistency Congruence, Interpersonal Trust Characteristics and Health of Cult Members

Qingping Chen; Jiquan Zhou

This study aimed to investigate the internal relations and the reasons for self-consistency congruence, interpersonal trust characteristics, and health of cult members. Based on this, the government may carry out psychological assistance to provide theoretical and practical guidance. Self-Consistency and Congruence Scale (SCCS), Interpersonal Trust Scale (ITS), and Self-Rated Health Measurement Scale (SRHMS) were used to analyze self-consistency and congruence, interpersonal trust characteristics, and health levels of 63 cult members and 69 ordinary people to explore the intrinsic relationship between interpersonal trust levels and health levels about cult members. The results showed that: (1) the self-consistency and congruence level of cult members was significantly lower than the control group, of which the disharmony of self and experience dimension scored significantly higher than the control group ($t = 2.11, p < 0.05$), and the score of self-flexibility was significantly lower than the control group ($t = -2.34, p < 0.05$); the interpersonal trust of cult members was significantly lower than the control group ($t = -3.67, p < 0.01$), also their overall health dimensions including physical health, mental health and social health were significantly lower than the control group ($t = -4.66, p < 0.01$; $t = -3.22, p < 0.01$; $t = -4.18, p < 0.01$; $t = -3.49, p < 0.01$). (2) Correlation analysis showed that there was a significant correlation between self-consistency congruence, interpersonal trust, and health levels about cult members. The self-consistency congruence of cult members was significantly a negative correlation with health level ($r = -0.305, p < 0.05$), of which the disharmony of self and experience, self-stiffness and health presents a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.322, p < 0.05$; $r = -0.261, p < 0.05$); the interpersonal trust and psychological health were a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.271, p < 0.05$). (3) Regression analysis showed that interpersonal trust and self-consistency and congruence were the main factors that influenced physiological, psychological, and social health of cult members. The self-consistency and congruence had significant prediction effect on cult member's health status ($F = 6.237, p < 0.05$), and it could specifically account for 9.3% of the variance of the health status, in which the disharmony of self and experience has significant predictive effect on psychological health ($F = 7.034, p < 0.01$). This can explain the 10.3% variance of psychological health. The interpersonal trust can explain the 7.3% of the variance of the health factors ($F = 4.832, p < 0.05$). (4) Self-consistency congruence and interpersonal trust have significant predictive effect on health. In summary, the study confirmed that low self-consistency congruence and low interpersonal trust would affect cult members' health, especially psychological health. They showed suspicion, paranoia, and hostility. Thus, it is difficult for them to establish good interpersonal relationship and trust with strangers. Therefore, they need the help of the system of counseling techniques. These can help them recognize irrational beliefs and raise the level of self-consistency and congruence, which accordingly will rid them of cult organizations.

Panel: Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT), Elizabeth Clare Prophet, and the Gregory Mull Trial: A Review of the Coercive Persuasion Model.

Cathleen Mann; Steve Eichel; Erin Prophet

Dr. Cathleen Mann will present a factual overview of CUT history, including the lives of its founders, cosmology, and the surrounding controversies, and developments following the Mull verdict. She will also introduce the main speaker, Erin Prophet, the eldest daughter of Mark L. Prophet (1918-1973), founder of The Summit Lighthouse (TSL), and his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth Prophet (1939-2009), the sole spiritual leader and designated "messenger" for CUT from Mark's death in 1973 until her diagnosis with early-onset Alzheimer's Disease in 1998, and subsequent retirement. In a review of the 1986 CUT vs. Mull trial, Erin Prophet will evaluate theories of influence promoted by expert witnesses, with focus on mind control and coercive persuasion, and highlighting themes of autonomy, deception, and free will. The testimony of Margaret Singer on the topic of coercive persuasion will be evaluated, as well as that of opposing experts J. Gordon Melton and James Richardson. The case occurred during the time of maximum acceptance of theories of coercive persuasion in US courts. Prophet will refer to trial exhibits, including transcripts and correspondence between Mr. Mull and church officials, as well as her own experience as a member and leader of Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT). The suit resulted in a \$1.5 million judgement against the church specifically, and Elizabeth Clare Prophet, the church's founder. An ample discussion, led by Dr. Steve Eichel, followed by a question and answer period of up to 30 minutes will be included in the 90 minute presentation.

Panel: Colliding Worldviews: Ministering to Those Traumatized in Bible-Based Cults

Bob Pardon; Judy Pardon; Neil Damgaard

"If the Divine call does not make us better, it will make us very much worse. Of all bad men religious bad men are the worst. Of all created beings the wickedest is one who originally stood in the immediate presence of God." C. S. Lewis

Bible-based, cultic experience erodes the very core of one's existence and throws the victim into an existential crisis. Disconnected from one's self, others, and God dismantles the basic tenets of life and faith. It is not enough for the therapist to just lead the "client" to psychological "wholeness" if their soul/spirit is left untouched. All Bible based cults are not only thought reform environments, but specific "spiritual cultures" in and of themselves (language, beliefs, spoken and unspoken taboos, rituals, values and shared symbols). To be effective in counseling those "culturally" different there must be an awareness and appreciation of the vastness that exists between the ex-member's spiritual worldview and value assumptions, and that of the therapist. The Chinese character for crisis is made up of two symbols; one for opportunity and one for despair. The prepared therapist working with this "client in crisis" has an opportunity to help them begin to find healing and avoid despair. This workshop will explore issues and approaches that are specific to Bible-based cults:

- First contact; do's and don'ts, vulnerability and honesty, etc.
- Considerations (client); assessments, global spiritual functioning, fears and failures (spiritually), etc.
- Considerations (therapist); basic understanding, finding appropriate homework, basic books, specific group, resources, etc.
- Approaches; self-esteem issues, boundaries, destructive Biblical thought reform, etc.

Panel: Cults: Lessons From History

Tony Jenkinson, William Goldberg, Stephen Parsons

Cults are not a new phenomenon, nor even one originating in the twentieth century. Fanatical, high demand groups led by charismatic leaders have emerged, existed and disappeared for millennia. This panel will explore the history of some of these groups: how they began, what they were like and what happened to them; and what we can learn from them today.

Tony Jenkinson will present cults in their wider historical context, with examples showing how and why they have emerged, the nature of their beliefs and practices, the relationships between leaders and followers, and how these groups ended, sometimes in disaster and sometimes gradually dying away. Parallels with current issues will be drawn and may assist our thinking in dealing with cults today.

The other speakers will provide more detailed case studies.

Stephen Parsons will focus on a fourth century African death cult, the Donatists and Circumcellions. The Christian church in its early days was beset by numerous heretical groups which challenged its unity and orthodoxy. Much of the literature of the early period sought to fend off the schismatic teaching of these groups through theological argument. We learn little of their social dynamics from these writings. One group however, the Donatists, which was active in Roman North Africa from the fourth to the sixth century, threatened the wider church. This was not only for its rigorist heretical teaching, but it also was linked to a violent group

known as the Circumcellions. Members appeared to have had a religiously inspired obsession with death and martyrdom. This short paper introduces their beliefs and suggests links to the suicide-bombers of today.

William Goldberg will examine the practices of the Nazi party in Germany from the perspective of cultic studies. Similar to most cults and cult leaders today, the Nazi cult's propaganda machine, created by Joseph Goebbels, falsely portrayed Hitler as a simple and modest man who sacrificed his personal happiness and private life for his followers. Other cult-like aspects of Nazism include the party's origins in an esoteric system of belief, the mystical rites of the Secret Service and Hitler youth, the confidence placed in pseudoscience and magic, and, of course, the search for a scapegoat to explain why the German people's preordained exceptionalism was never achieved.

Panel: Ending Religious Child Maltreatment through a Child-Friendly Faith Project

Janet Heimlich, Charles Johnson, Cynthia Kunsman

Much attention has been paid to child abuse and neglect committed by religious leaders and other members of faith communities. These problems— which are sometimes justified as being religiously condoned or required— include sexual abuse, medical neglect, physical abuse, failing to report maltreatment, and such emotional abuses as terrorizing, shaming, and indoctrinating (exploiting). But what is the solution to protecting young people from religious child maltreatment? This panel—which includes a faith leader, survivor, and expert on religious child maltreatment—describes a model that includes educating and partnering with religious leaders and congregants toward the goal of fostering a Child-Friendly Faith movement. Churches, synagogues, and mosques, as well as faith-based schools and children's programs, would participate, by completing a rigorous curriculum that covers such topics as child development, maltreatment, and protection. The approach includes three components: 1) educating faith communities about these issues in a setting that allows members to feel emotionally safe; 2) designating organizations that complete the curriculum as Child-Friendly Faith Communities and promoting them as role models in child protection; and 3) encouraging participants to take an "evangelistic" role in getting other religious organizations to participate in the program and join this movement. Organizations that complete the curriculum enjoy numerous benefits. They can feel assured their teachings and practices are nurturing to children and do not cause harm. They also have the opportunity to improve their public image, reduce the likelihood of lawsuits, and grow their memberships.

Panel: Former Member Guilt and the Path to Self-Forgiveness

Nori Muster, Lorna Goldberg

When individuals join a dangerous cult, they unconsciously adopt the group's negative habits. Certain assumptions in the group's "perfect" dogma contribute to this process, for example, leaders might openly profess "anything is allowed if it's done for god," "the guru said it's okay, so it's okay," and "the laws of man do not apply to us because we dedicated ourselves to god." To prove themselves loyal, new recruits quickly learn to repress their gut feelings and rightly-felt doubts. Authoritarian groups operate under a "no talk" rule, where it is considered a grave sin to acknowledge shortcomings in the hierarchy. For example, in ISKCON, the Krishna consciousness organization, they called it "blasphemy of a pure devotee" to speak about anything the gurus did wrong. Meanwhile, gurus notoriously did dishonest things and involved followers in unethical behavior that would make any normal person feel shame. Gurus then use this shame to manipulate followers. While under the spell of the group, even good, honest people who join may internalize the attitudes of arrogance and denial. They may never uncover any reason to feel guilt. However, most often, former members who took part in crimes and abuses do feel guilt after they leave. Ex-members' guilt may be overly harsh, due to internalizing cult leaders' punitive and uncompassionate attitudes. In this presentation, Nori Muster will discuss her personal struggle overcoming post-cult guilt, and Lorna Goldberg and Nori will discuss reasons why former members may hold onto or deny the guilt they feel. Lorna will share self-forgiveness tools to help ex-members reframe their experiences, reduce their self-punishing attitudes, and free themselves from their groups once and for all.

Panel: From Demanding Duggar Cradle to Troubled Teen Home: Transcending the Independent Baptist Myth of Family

Cynthia Kunsman, Janet Hemlich, Joanna Wright, Susan Grotte

Cable television's Learning Channel publicizes the wholesome facade of family through the Duggar Family's "19

Kids and Counting" show, but few viewers understand the dark underbelly of their formulaic, high demand ideology. Considering this reality show family as a prototype and their deep roots in the Independent Baptist movement, this presentation will delve into the variety of extreme measures used to enforce their panacea of a mythical family ideal. With a special focus on corporal punishment and the incarceration of children in "troubled teen industry" homes, two Second Generation Adult survivors of this system will recount their experiences within this religious movement. This presentation specifically endeavors to highlight the unique recovery needs of those who have endured the profound trauma of the Baptist residential teen home experience. Janet Heimlich will explore the challenges of addressing and preventing this variety of Religious Child Maltreatment. Dynamic Bibliography Blog: [Redeeming Dinah](#). Specific blog post [About the Panel: Overcoming the Baptist Myth of Family](#) that will go live on June 29th: It will explain how to use the blog to find relevant info. [Slideshare Link](#) (for download).

Panel: Hare Krishna at 50 – Alive and Unwell

Nori Muster, Moderator

ISKCON and Beyond: An Updated Understanding of the Global Hare Krishna Landscape (Nitai Joseph)

A Fish Rots from the Head – How Bhaktivedanta Taught by Example (Eric Bernasek)

While the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has endeavored to distance itself from well-documented abuses of the past, and indeed made some progress, it remains a fertile organization for cultic dynamics and abuses. As the organization celebrates 50 years since its incorporation, this panel aims to illustrate how contrary to their internal narrative, the root of ISKCON's ongoing troubles lies in large part with its founder's teachings and those of the larger tradition ISKCON exists within. Additionally, the panel aims to give some overview of the various active offshoot and affiliated groups that are also now operating globally, many with their own share of scandals and ex-members, further illustrating abusive dynamics that exist in the shared ideology. Additionally, the panelists will touch on evolving methods of recruitment, recent scandals, and the experience of exiting and recovery from two related sects, as well as membership within the inner circle of an ISKCON offshoot.

Panel: Inside Out – One Group, One Fugitive Swami: Three Different Experiences Karen Johnson, Joseph Kelly, Patrick Ryan

Cults tend to become viewed in a broad stroke with a single identify. The cult that drank the Kool-aid. The cult that believes in Zenu and thetans. The cult that believes a space ship is coming to save the true believers. However, a single cult is usually not an entity with only one single identity. They typically have many complex identities. Not only do cults have different identities, but also their identities can change over time and place. As a result, different people will have different experiences in the cult. The International Society for Divine Love (ISDL) is one such organization. Its identity not only changed over time and place, but also it went by various names over time and place. This presentation will explore illustrate how one group can change over time by presenting three perspectives from three people involved with ISDL:

Joe Kelly met the ISDL guru in 1981 on the east coast when he first arrived from India. Joe remained a staunch follower until 1989. From the Philadelphia center, he witnessed the early state of the India-based group as it worked to create a stronghold in the U.S. After he left, he spoke out publicly and began helping others leave cults.

Karen Jonson met the same guru in 1991 on the west coast, moved to the guru's then-new ashram on 200 acres in Austin, Texas, and witnessed the organization's high-growth stage as it created the largest Hindu ashram in the U.S. After she left, she began speaking out, including writing a memoir of her experience.

Patrick Ryan observed it all as an outsider who was close friends with many of the guru's followers. He tracked the organization's manipulation and illegal activities from Philadelphia to India, confronted the guru with an ultimatum, and helped save many people from this cult and others.

This session will help people gain a broader perspective of the often-complex nature of cults — and how and why people have different experiences in the same group. This insight will help clarify the confusion that sometimes develops when multiple people share their different experiences of the same organization.

Panel: Life After the Cult: Struggles and Successes of People Born or Raised in Cults

Gina Catena, Moderator; Leslie Belcher; Dhyana Levey; Eva Meyrat

People born and raised in cults after their own parents joined, can go on to live successful and well-adjusted lives, despite facing enormous challenges when they leave their groups. Some SGAs have been rejected by their own families and struggle to fit into mainstream society. They may feel the need to hide their backgrounds, have issues with money, often a limited education, and struggle with anxiety and depression. Some are also thrust into the role of parent, which poses a unique set of challenges. However, SGAs have gone on to pursue respectable and even high-profile careers, become successful in the lifestyles that they've always desired, and turned into loving and effective parents. A panel of SGAs who have made progress with their careers and families will discuss their own stories, going over their successes as well as the problems they've had to face based on their upbringings. This will give the audience perspective regarding what it's like to face mainstream society after growing up in a cult. It will also give hope to other SGAs longing to keep a stable job and raise a family. Those raised in happy, stable homes outside of cults might not realize some of the struggles SGAs have with difficult personalities in the workplace, financial issues, insecurities, and lack of family support. However, it is possible for SGAs to pursue a high-profile career, have successful friends and raise well-adjusted families.

Panel: Life in a Dallas Cult

Rick Robertson, Doug Duncan

Ole Anthony, founder and leader of Trinity Foundation of Dallas, Texas, is a well-known figure in media and religious circles in Dallas and throughout the United States, first gaining notoriety in 1991 when he assisted Diane Sawyer in her exposé of three Dallas-based televangelists for the ABC news magazine PrimeTime Live. The Trinity Foundation, a self-proclaimed watchdog of televangelists, provided the investigative documents and videos for the expose of Robert Tilton, which ultimately brought down Tilton's \$80 million annual ministry. Since that time, Anthony has been involved in investigations of numerous religious figures, working with programs such as NBC Dateline and 60 Minutes. He and his group have been lauded in such media as, US News & World Report, The LA Times Magazine, and The New Yorker. He has been a near-ubiquitous commentator on all things religious for both local and national media outlets. However, behind the glamour of the televangelist investigations there is another face to Trinity Foundation. Two former members, Doug Duncan and Rick Robertson, will discuss their experiences in this group and will describe the characteristics and practices that support their opinion that Dallas-based Trinity Foundation is indeed a pseudo-Christian, Bible-based cult.

Panel: My Loved One Was in a Cult - A Discussion With Family Members

William Goldberg, Moderator; Karl and Suzanne Solum; Molly

When a family realizes that their loved one is in a cult or spiritually abusive group, they are often devastated and heartbroken. Fear, shock, emotional turmoil, panic, distress, and bewilderment are common emotions. Helplessness overrides many of these emotions because most individuals do not understand cult dynamics and blame themselves for their loved one's involvement in a destructive group. This panel discussion will explore the emotions and reactions of family members who have gone through the nightmare of seeing their loved one being drawn into a cult. They will discuss their perspective on what was helpful to them and what mistakes they might have made in trying to convince their loved one to leave. This will be a dynamic discussion with the moderator, Bill Goldberg, who often consults with families who are in the same position in which these family members have been. This will be instructive for people who have loved ones in cults, and for people who were in cults themselves who are seeking a better understanding of what it might have been like for their family while they were in the cult.

Panel: Providing a Haven for Spiritual Healing

Steve Kelly; Ron Burks

Pseudo-Christian, Bible-based cults are on the rise in the United States, and especially in the "Bible Belt." Many of these groups are small (200 members or less) and rarely come to the attention of the media or religious

community, but the damage they do to faith-seeking individuals is massive. Many former cult members have been spiritually abused and leave with a distorted view of God's character. Additionally, their understanding of Scripture has been misconstrued to fit the cult leader's agenda. Ministers, Christian counselors, and churches are seen in a negative perspective, which can prevent the ex-cultist from spiritual healing. Many of ex-members became involved in pseudo-Christian cults because of their desire to serve God and to know Him in a deeper way. After leaving a religious cult, many desperately want to reconnect with God but Christians and churches are not seen as safe places. Because of a dearth of understanding about religious cults among church and faith leaders, many former members feel misunderstood when they talk with them and are unable to see the church as a safe haven. A panel discussion of local ministers, faith leaders, and Christian counselors will discuss how the church can be a solace and source of spiritual healing for former cult members who have been psychologically and spiritually abused. These faith leaders will share their perspectives on helping former members find their way back to God and helping churches to become more aware of the presence of pseudo-Christian, Bible-based religious cults.

Panel: Workshop for Former Cult Members who were Parents in the Cult

Lorna Goldberg

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 the 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

Panel: Sexual Recovery After the Cult

Steve Eichel; Carla Brown

The distortion of sexuality in High Demand Groups (HDGs) is well-documented. Most HDGs have an extremely negative view of sexuality in general, and of sexuality minorities in particular. Cultic practices range from shaming, to suppression, to polygamy, to "sexual surrender" to leaders' to attempts to "convert" those with minority sexual orientations/identities/attractions (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual) to their vision of "normality." In the case of HDG-endorsed "conversion/reparative therapies," all major mental health organizations have condemned these practice as ineffective and/or harmful. Other, more normative sexual behaviors (e.g., viewing or reading erotica, masturbation) are routinely punished and shamed. Many groups also ban and/or deny access to science-based sexual material that veers from the group's dogma. Some cultic processes are used to manipulate members into sex work (e.g., the former Children of God, cultic groups or gangs that engage in human sex trafficking). Polygamous cults (e.g., Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints) promote lifestyles that subjugate women in general and female sexuality in particular, and/or engage in child sexual abuse. In a few instances, groups like Osho (Rajneesh movement) encourage pseudo-hypersexuality by demanding members engage in ego-dystonic sexual behaviors, (e.g., promiscuity as a method of personal/spiritual "liberation," opposite-gender sex). In this workshop, Dr. Steve Eichel (President of ICSA and an AASECT Certified Sex Therapist) will present a structured path to sexual recovery that can be applied to many former HDG members. Carla Brown, herself a survivor of destructive cultic influence on sexuality, will provide a more personal account of recovery. However, based on feedback from prior ICSA panels on sexual recovery, the majority of time will be spent inviting questions and discussion from therapists (many of whom may also be former members), questioning/former members themselves, and family and/or loved ones who are connected to current and/or former members.

Panel: Wrap-up for Former Members

Carol Giambalvo, Moderator

(for former members only)

In this 90-minute session, the moderator leads a discussion on what former members of cultic groups got out of the conference.

Paul Martin Lecture: Trauma, Healing and Forgiveness

Bob and Judy Pardon

“We attach our feelings to the moment when we were hurt, endowing it with immortality. And we let it assault us every time it comes to mind. It travels with us, sleeps with us, hovers over us while we make love, and broods over us while we die. Our hate does not even have the decency to die when those we hate die – for it is a parasite sucking our blood, not theirs.” Lewis Smedes, PhD. We tend to see life in terms of questions which need answering, in terms of problems which need solving; in terms of causes and effects. The problem for the trauma survivor is that there are many, many questions, and very few answers. If the trauma happened in a “Bible based” cult, life altering events strike at the foundation of the individual's version of self, world, and God. A crisis of faith is initiated. Profound questions arise, such as: Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning of life? How should I live in relationship to others? Is there a God? These and other questions demand livable responses if survivors are ever going to work through the effects of their wounds. Forgiveness is critical to the trauma survivor’s recovery. This paper will explore:

- What forgiveness is not and what it is
- Who benefits from authentic forgiveness, why it is critical
- Forgiving monsters
- Forgiveness and transformation/healing
- The end goal

Phoenix Project Exhibit of Ex-Cult Member Art and Literary Works

Diana Pletts

The Phoenix Project Exhibit seeks to reveal the truth of the cult experience and its effects on the individual by displaying visual art and literary works created by cult survivors in an exhibit room. It also provides a time of literary readings, music, and video works during its Phoenix Project (Mostly) Live! The works reveal the world of cult survivors, including their previous group experience, recovery, and aspects of their time of transition from their cult experience. The Phoenix Project seeks to empower former members by providing a time and place to exhibit their work and to tell their story in a way that might not have been allowed during their cult life. This can be a healing, liberating, and empowering experience.

Prevent and Channel: The UK’s De-Radicalization Program Embraces Brainwashing, Thought Reform and Exit Counselling: The Challenges and Opportunities for Cultic Studies

Rod Dubrow-Marshall

The UK Government’s PREVENT program for detecting radicalization and extremism has been rolled out and extended across successive administrations. The program now covers all public bodies including schools, colleges and universities and involves the training of staff in the signs and symptoms of growing radicalization and extremism. The growing number of young people becoming radicalized, some of whom are joining ISIS/ISIL/Daesh has led an active discussion of the perils of brainwashing and the steps involved which are much as described by Lifton’s work on thought reform (1951). The allied Channel program for mentoring and counselling also has much in common with the techniques used by exit counselors working with families and ex-members (Giambalvo and Henry 2010). This paper thematically analyzes the similarities and existing interactions between these areas of work and, through the use of case studies, demonstrates that the work of the cultic studies field (cf. Langone 1995, Dubrow-Marshall 2010), is being actively applied to de-radicalization work in the UK and the world over. The paper identifies important challenges and opportunities for the cultic studies field in further aligning itself to this government based agenda and sets out the mutual benefits that would accrue to all involved.

Prosecuting Child Sexual Abuse in Alternative Religions

Andrea Willey; Stephen Kent

In this article, we identify three different levels of court procedures (criminal, civil, and family) in which child sexual abuse allegations are most likely to appear within the context of sects, cults, and alternative religions. We then specify strategies that sects or sect members have used in their defenses, along with appropriate counter-strategies with which prosecutors have responded. Our position is that, if prosecutors can see such cases go to trial without further traumatizing abuse survivors, then they should do so. Trials' conclusions provide opportunities for clear (and often written) decisions that clarify what roles if any, the sects as organizations played in the abuses. Such decisions likely will impact remaining sect members and even potential recruits about the legal and moral dimensions of the groups themselves. An alternative position, however, is that groups' holding responsibility for child sexual abuse should experience pressure from authorities to compensate survivors without costly trials, since such trials may deplete resources away from survivors' assistance.

Psychospiritual Trauma and Integration: A Narrative Study of the Recovery Process of Second-Generation Cult Survivors

Mary Anne Rardin

This study explored the role of spirituality in the healing journey and integration into the mainstream of second-generation adult survivors of cults or fundamentalist religions. Participants were asked about their attitude toward spirituality and if spirituality was present, whether it was positive, negative, or neutral during their recovery process. There are many types of cults; this study, however, focuses on cults rooted in a rigid set of spiritual or religious beliefs. Survivors of traumatic ordeals often find comfort in their spiritual beliefs, but for survivors of religious cults, spirituality is the source of their trauma—a unique circumstance where the trauma is rooted in what would otherwise be a coping mechanism. The narrative method was used for this study. The primary inclusion criteria were (a) participants believe they were born into or raised in a restrictive group/cult with a religious or spiritual affiliation; (b) the group or leader had significant control and influence over their lives; (c) participants had been in the group for a minimum of five years; and (d) participants left the cult or restrictive group at least five years prior to this study. The eight participants chosen and interviewed are all Second-Generation Adults (SGAs). The transcripts were analyzed using the categorical-content form of narrative research. Nine primary categories emerged: Positive Attitude Toward Spirituality; Negative Attitude Toward Spirituality; Neutral Attitude Toward Spirituality; Role of Spirituality in the Healing Process; Aversion or Fear of Joining Groups or a Religion; Rejection of Cult Self, Dark/Difficult Time, Rebellion; Critical Thinking; Emotional Feelings and Residue; and Nature as a Form of Spirituality. Several subcategories were then developed from each category. For all but one participant, exploring spirituality was an important aspect of their recovery and integration process.

Recovery from Cults and High-Control Groups Through Writing Fiction and Poetry: A Case Study

K. Gordon Neufeld

The author argues that while writing memoirs and factual accounts of one's cult experiences is always helpful for former members of cults and high-control groups to assist in their recovery, it is also very helpful to approach one's own experiences through writing fiction and poetry, which provide additional psychological distance from the subject matter. The author examines his own creative works following his departure from the Unification Church in 1986, and looks at the development that occurred over time as he gradually came to grips with the reality that he had been exposed to mind control (a fact he initially denied). Particular works of short fiction and poetry will be cited to show this development of understanding over time. As well, the author shows how his development as a writer during this time conforms to the model of the emergence of the strong creative self described by Boeri and Pressley (*Cultic Studies Review*, Volume 9, No. 1, 2010). This essay is an adaptation of the essay that appears in my recent book, *Cult Fiction: One Writer's Creative Journey Through an Extreme Religion* (Virtualbookworm.com, 2014). It will be a somewhat shorter version that will address in more depth the general concepts of approaching personal subject matter in creative writing, but it will include brief quotations from my creative writings from 1990 to date.

Risks of Writing About One's Experiences with Cults

J. Shelby Sharpe, JD

More and more former members of cults and spiritually abusive groups are writing and seeking to publish their unique experience. While this can be a cathartic process, memoirists can face complicated legal issues when they write about aspects of their own lives that include details about their cult leaders. It is important for authors to understand what the legal pitfalls are and what could be actionable. In the current litigious environment of our society, writers should always seek legal counsel before publishing their memoir. Shelby Sharpe was the lead attorney who successfully defended Harvest House Publishers and authors, John Ankerberg and John Weldon, in the defamation suit filed by The Local Church. The Local Church and its publishing arm, Living Stream Ministry, alleged they had been wrongly accused of criminal conduct in Ankerberg and Weldon's book *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions*. The authors and their publishing company, Harvest House, spent six years in legal battles with significant cost, time, and emotional turmoil. Although they lost at the trial court, they won at the state appellate court level. The Local Church appealed, but the decision was upheld all the way to the US Supreme Court. No money was ever paid to The Local Church. In this session, "Risks of Writing About One's Experiences with Cults," Mr. Sharpe, will explain the legal definition of libel and invasion of privacy and discuss how authors can best protect their memoir from potential lawsuits.

Role of Legal Professionals in the Process of Cult Survivors' Recovery: Lawyers Roles and Survivors' Efforts

Masaki Kito

For cult victims, surviving through legal procedures is, in many cases, extremely tough. Reading through legal documents itself may be difficult immediately after leaving the group. Recalling details of their experience, making time-line of days and years with the cult, preparing declarations, reading opponents' irrational responses, encountering senior cult members in a court house, and standing in the court for oral examination all seem so stressful. The victims and their attorneys may even face counter lawsuits (SLAPPs). Yet, many victims find such experiences worthwhile. Enduring long-months and years of legal fights is not just a process of recovering financial loss, but also a process of mental and social recovery.

Searching for Healthy Faith

Doug Duncan; Wendy Duncan

Doug and Wendy Duncan were members of a Bible-based cult in Dallas, Texas which committed many of the errors in Scripture interpretation that are common to these kinds of groups. Bible-based cults are the fastest growing category of cults in the United States today, and they leave a legacy of spiritual damage that can render their victims hostile to Christianity and unwilling (or unable) to maintain a relationship with God. Using the group they were involved in as a template, the Duncans will show some of the subtle ways these groups distort Scriptures and how to point former members of Christian cults back to a sound hermeneutic and healthy spirituality. These cults depend on fear and intimidation to maintain their hold over group members. In order to control and manipulate followers, the cult leader portrays himself as the truth-bearer and group members are led to believe that God has specifically chosen him to bring light into the world. The cult leader's claim that God has imparted a unique and special revelation justifies his existence as the leader and his right to exercise control over his members. Followers are taught to accept the leader's authority as divinely mandated. Any doubt or questions are quickly extinguished by the leader utilizing intimidation, humiliation, and fear tactics. Over time, devotees adopt the cult's view of God and becomes fearful of leaving because of the fear that they are renouncing their faith and God. For individuals leaving pseudo-Christian cults, one of the most significant questions they struggle with in their recovery is what to do regarding their faith. There are unique complications for people in religious cults, because some were Christians before being drawn into the cult, and they would like to reclaim the positive aspects of their faith. Former cult members wrestle with the image of the god of the cult and their previous belief system. Redefining who God is and what that means to the ex-member can be a tumultuous journey.

Social Media's Impact on Jehovah's Witnesses: A Narrative Qualitative Research

Steve Guziec

The goal of this research is to understand the impact of social media on victims in or formerly in destructive cults and other harmful groups. Due to the vast realm of social media and cults in the world, I have limited the scope of the paper to only post-active members of the Jehovah's Witnesses. The paper will report on qualitative

research using a narrative and case study methodology. In destructive doomsday cults, such as the Jehovah's Witness, interacting with former members or researching dissenting opinions on the group is strictly forbidden, and a member can be punished for viewing such material. This research will look into understanding the following

- When did the member begin sourcing out Social media?
- What appealed to the member about the social media?
- What types of media were and weren't appealing?
- How did the member feel in the group and post the group viewing the material(s)?
- What did the member learn over all from the social media?
- How did social media help him/her?
- How did social media impede him/her?

Strategies and Methods for Recovering from Cults Based on Qigong and ESP

Li Jianhui

From 1979 to 1999, a fervent qigong and ESP movement was aroused in China and swept across the whole country. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese people were fond of exercising Qigong and hoped to get the ability of ESP from it. Many qigong organizations and qigong grandmasters emerged. People learned qigong from these organizations led by these qigong grandmasters. Some of the organizations evolved as cultic groups, and some of the grandmasters became leaders of the cult. Unlike most of the victims of foreign cultic groups, whose main purpose for joining is to get spiritual comfort, the purpose of the victims of Chinese cults based on qigong is to get good health and to get the ability of ESP. In the process of practicing qigong, the practitioners gradually experienced the goodness of qigong for their health, and sometimes got mystical experiences of qigong. In order to know why qigong is good for their health and why there are some mystical experiences, the leaders of the qigong group induced the victims to read their books and learn their cultic theory. Once the cultic theory was indoctrinated to practitioner's head, the leaders of cultic group could firmly control members who joined the cultic group. In order to help these victims recover, we need to let the victims know about the whole cheating process of the cultic group and know the harm and cheating of the cult. We also need to let them know what the real qigong is, what the reasons of the efficacy of qigong are for health, why the ideas of cults based on qigong are wrong and what kind of harms the cult based on qigong might lead to. Because most of the victims of the cults were brainwashed, the recovery work is complex and hard. After more than ten years of work on recovery from cult-based qigong, Chinese organizations for recovery from cultic qigong accumulated lots of strategies and successful cases. This research will generalize and analyze these strategies and cases and discuss useful methods for recovering victims from cults.

The Intersection of Cults and Terrorism

Chelsea Von Pasecky, Leanne Smith

This paper will explore the similarities between the recruitment tactics used by terrorist groups like ISIS and those used by other high control groups commonly referred to as cults. This paper will also compare the experience of conversion to (radicalization), and participation in, Islamist extremism as practiced by ISIS and the cultic experience of members of other high control groups. The purpose of this exploration is to determine if there would be any benefit to collaboration between individuals and organizations that study high-control groups/cults and individuals and organizations that are involved in deradicalization efforts with ISIS recruits. If so, decades of high-control group research may prove to be useful to those who study terrorism and extremism. To accomplish this, we will be pursuing the following methods:

- Conduct a literature review on the subjects of terrorist recruitment and the experience of radicalization.
- Establish contact with groups around the world that are working to deradicalize individuals who have been recruited to extremist groups, in an effort to gather information about the experiences they report.
- Conduct a survey of at least 30 of those individuals, close family members of those individuals, or organizations that represent those individuals, to determine methods used to recruit them.
- Of that sample, select a smaller number of individuals for case studies.
- Contact family members and friends of ISIS recruits to get their observations of the changes in their loved ones during the recruitment process.
- Conduct an analysis of the belief systems of ISIS to determine if the beliefs themselves are manipulative.

- Analyze terrorist communications to see if they include recognized techniques used by other high control groups.
- Conduct a review of online propaganda used by ISIS and compare it to propaganda of other high control groups.

Upon analysis of the information found from the above research we will draw conclusions about the potential benefits of a collaboration between the counter terrorism community and the cultic studies community. We wish to share our progress and initial findings at the 2016 ICSA conference.

The Lack of Research in Adolescent Group Settings: Psychological Pressures as Part of the Milieu in Controlling Institutions and Systems - Making Art out of the Inexpressible

Zack Bonnie

A short reading from his recent book. A snapshot into the creative and healing process of writing a detailed account of his own indoctrination at a high control group in the 1980's and early '90's. A short Q&A,

The “Oprahfication” of Rob Bell: New Ageism, New Thought, and the Postconservative Evangelical

Robin Willey

In a world that includes “flexitarians,” vegetarians who eat meat on occasion, and “flexisexuals,” hetro/homosexuals who temporarily alter their sexual orientation, it is not surprising that “flexidoxy” is a common practice even amongst Evangelicals. In his now famous analysis of the American upper class, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, journalist David Brooks defined flexidoxy as “the hybrid mixture of freedom and flexibility on the one hand and the longing for rigor and orthodoxy on the other” (2000, 224). Brooks haphazardly connected this term to a rugged Montanan conservatism against the New Ageism of his Bobos, forgetting that some classic New Age inspired movements developed in Montana alongside his Montanan flexidox Jews. This New Age connection to flexidoxy is further strengthened through the massive influence that media mogul Oprah Winfrey has on the American religious scene. Winfrey has displayed an open attachment to many aspects of New Ageism, including an attachment to aspects of the New Thought Movement—an important influence on American New Ageism. Over the years, Winfrey has extended her influence through a group of spiritual elites she has assembled, including New Age and alternative medicine guru Deepak Chopra, influential spirituality author Eckart Tolle, and Evangelical author and former pastor Rob Bell. New Ageism and New Thought are two of the primary influences on the flexidoxy of North American Evangelicals. I explicate this Evangelical move to the flexidox though the New Age influences expressed by my participants, and the continued “Oprahfication” of Rob Bell.

The Print Culture of Alternative Religious Groups

Carolyn Jervis

Notably, German Expressionism, an art movement dating from 1905-1937, used the print media for creative needs that painting and sculpture could not meet—they are not mass reproducible. Going back even further, Rembrandt and other Baroque period artists used the relatively new medium of lithography to disseminate their talents beyond their immediate geographic region. In the 1980s, zine culture emerged from the punk movement using the cheap and accessible photocopier to easily spread counter-cultural messages through underground independently produced means. From the Evangelical Jack T. Chick and his independent publishing house, to the printed materials of the now-defunct group, Children of God, small-scale, low-cost publishing has played an important role in distributing alternative religious messages widely. More than the written word, visual culture was a central tool for spreading their respective messages. Using materials found in the Stephen A. Kent Alternative Religions Collection at the University of Alberta Library, this paper explores the print culture of alternative religious groups, such as Children of God, as well as their influence on artists interested in small-scale print culture in a religious context. In particular, I will discuss a series of works by Canadian artist Blair Brennan that directly reference the Children of God comics.

The Serpentine Road From the USSR to the US and to Freedom: A Cult Survivor Story

Alex Gawkins

This paper will present the personal account of an SGA and first generation adult. I grew up in the USSR - a political cult. I'll explore why the USSR was a cult. During my freshman year in a university, I was recruited into a small family-based healing cult led by a relative who is a self-proclaimed psychic, a person with extrasensory perception and many other titles. My paper explores how I was forced by the newly created government of Latvia to become a refugee, the vulnerabilities that a bible-based cult, the New Generation Church, used to recruit me, and the tragic event that made me think about the church and my involvement with it and caused me to leave it for good. The paper will present a "map" of the twisted adventures that brought me to America. After arriving in the US I was re-recruited into the family healing cult. I left the aberrant multi-faced guru 6 years ago for good. My paper will describe what helped me in recovery. Learning about human rights and the US constitution has helped me break free from communist indoctrination. The tools in my recovery box include: learning critical thinking, educating myself about cults, using CBT, participating in individual therapy, attending support groups, making new friends among ICSA/ex-members, rediscovering my identity, volunteering, being present at ICSA conferences, and reading stories of other cult survivors.

The Socio-Historical Context of the October 1949 Revolution in China: Towards an Understanding of the Development of a Cult

Jeff Bryson

Lifton's work on the thought reform practices of the Chinese communists in the mid-twentieth century has provided a foundation for understanding the coercive control tactics of high demand groups. Yet Lifton's work focused on the tactics used against the victims, rather than the context that gave rise to the coercive tactics. This session provides a broad historical overview of the historical and social factors in pre-PRC China that led to the ultimate victory of the Chinese Communist Party, and the fervor that ultimately led to the use of coercion. Emphasis will be placed on filial piety, Chinese nationalism, the war-lord and emperor culture, and the place of western intervention in the cultural milieu of China in the 150 years prior to the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.

The Stories We Tell – Dispelling False Narratives for Cult Recovery

Eric D. Bernasek

Because all cults, especially those with spiritual or religious pretensions, attempt to offer their own convincing narrative to explain the purpose of the world and humanity's place within it, the specific power of narrative is central to why we join and how we stay in cults. In addition to a cosmological narrative, the narrative surrounding a cult's founder, the history (read: narrative) of the cult itself, as well as the unique personal narrative of each cult member all exert powerful forces upon those who hear, tell, and re-tell these stories. I propose that closely examining these narratives and, in particular, using facts and reason to dispel false narratives has tremendous potential to facilitate one's recovery after having left a cult. By carefully re-examining the stories we were told (and incessantly repeated to ourselves) while in the cult and by then soberly confronting their biases and inconsistencies – by, essentially, re-telling new, more truthful, versions of these stories – we can reclaim a sense of personal sanity and strengthen our connection with the world outside the cult. I will use the narratives of the Hare Krishna movement – of its founder, of the organization that worships him, and of its individual participants, my own and others' – to demonstrate how the stories we tell help to bind us and, more importantly, how debunking those stories can set us free, making it possible for us to write new stories for ourselves and our lives, post-cult. Though much of the content will be specific to the Hare Krishna movement, the overall concept and its application will be presented in such a way that former members of other groups will be able to see its utility in their own lives.

Treatment for Depression in Former Cultists

Sejal Mehta

Many individuals who have exited cults or spiritually abusive groups are plagued by symptoms of depression. Symptoms of depression include a persistent sad mood; loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed; significant change in appetite or body weight; difficulty sleeping or oversleeping; physical slowing or agitation; loss of energy; feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt; difficulty thinking or concentrating; and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide. Psychosocial and environmental stressors are known risk factors for depression. For former members of cults the psychosocial stressor of loss of relationships, structure, and sense

of purpose, etc. can trigger depression in vulnerable individuals. Evidence from neuroscience demonstrates that depression is a disorder of the brain. Modern brain imaging technologies are revealing that in depression, neural circuits responsible for the regulation of moods, thinking, sleep, appetite, and behavior fail to function properly, and that critical neurotransmitters -- chemicals used by nerve cells to communicate -- are perhaps out of balance. Depression is treatable. An overview of the diagnosis of and treatment for depression will be presented, along with the use of different classes of antidepressants and their side effects, and how these medications work in restoring brain chemistry.

Utopian Expectations and Shaping of Charisma: An Analysis of Biography of Leaders

Tianjia Chen, Guanghui Xu

In studying the embodying of utopia in the qigong craze in China, David A. Palmer points out that the charisma of leaders could be created through the mass production of extraordinary experiences and through the amplification of popular utopian hopes. Vincent Coossaert lists four idioms in charismatic relationships in which masters were expected to confirm their status through a combination of those four idioms. Based on perspectives from Coossaert on idioms of charismatic leaders, this study will introduce a framework for textual analysis of leaders' biographies authorized by their movements to the public. The key elements of the framework for examining the biography are as follows: miraculous and extraordinary power, morality and sacrifice, discipleship and genealogy, scholarship and knowledge, secular acknowledgement. The examination will reveal the unity and diversity of how leaders from various groups shape their charisma through biography, literally, the circulation of tales of miracles and what commitment is made to followers for fulfillment of utopian expectations. Finally, Coossaert's idioms of charismatic leaders will be complemented and discussed based on the findings of the study. The selected controversial movements and leaders are from U.S.A., P.R. China, Korea and India: Hua Zang Dharma (Wu Zeheng), Zhong Gong (Zhang Hongbao) , Fragrant Gong (Tian Ruisheng) , Falun Gong (Li Hongzhi), Church of Almighty God (ZhaoWeishan and Yang Xiangbin), Scientology (L. Ron Hubbard), Transcendental Meditation (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi), Unification Church (Sun Myung Moon), Osho Movement (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh). All the texts are acquired from official websites and public media of the movements.

Vulnerabilities and Techniques of Undue Influence

Patrick O'Reilly

Topics covered in this presentation include: What is Undue Influence? Charismatic Psychopaths. Gullibility and Distraction. Magical Thinking. Risk and Heuristic Decision-Making. The Gambler's Fallacy. Depression, Self-Esteem, Loneliness, and Fear. Group Dynamics, Peripheral Persuasion and Operant Conditioning. Science and Cognitive Dissonance. Lying. The Gambler's Fallacy, the Barnum Effect and Subjective Validation. Cold Readings and Hot Readings.

What Helps Former Cult Members Recover From an Abusive Cult Experience – Report on Doctoral Research

Gillie Jenkinson

This paper will present some of the outcomes of the speaker's qualitative doctoral research project. The presentation will focus on the themes and theories that have arisen. Project supervisors are Dr. Belinda Harris and Dr. Peter Gates of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, England.

Why did I Join and Stay? How did I Leave and Heal?

Marlowe Sand

In this presentation Marlowe Sand recollects 15 years spent in the cult of her spiritual teacher, Andrew Cohen. For a woman from the remote English countryside destined to be a wife, mother, and ordinary professor, the meeting with a modern day, radical Buddha bore extreme consequences for her and her children. Marlowe explores her interior experiences as she was drawn ever deeper into the cult setting of a charismatic and despotic guru. She invites the audience to share her experiences of love and liberation, pain and agony, and excruciating disillusionment which finally enabled her to leave. She will share the devastation of being left with

only remnants of her former life and forced to pick up the pieces of an utterly shattered self-esteem. She will discuss her recovery – documenting stages of grief, and gradual healing with the support of other ex-community members. Marlowe Sand doesn't blame, not even the controversial figure of Andrew Cohen. Instead she paints a picture of a complex, dangerous dystopia. While she is entirely unambiguous about the destructive nature of this communal setting and the responsibility each participant bears for its co-creation, Marlowe's interest is in the universal topics of power and dependence, choice and responsibility. The presentation will include a reading from the upcoming memoir, "A Promise of Perfection." Andrew Cohen's worldwide organization, EnlightenNext, run from his Massachusetts retreat center, is now disassembled. Andrew Cohen, now removed from power, has apologized for the pain and suffering he caused.

Why do Ordinary People Have False Perceptions of Being Rational?

Jose Fernandez

There are many ways of lowering our critical thinking, and all imply some form of suggestion, seduction, or coercion. Although a reduced capacity for critical thinking may be a major factor on certain occasions, the present paper will look at cases in which it is not. I will dissect how our thinking leads us to regular and systematic mistakes of judgment, the reason for which they are so difficult to see and correct. Therefore, this is a paper on how our cognition works. In my analysis, I will take as a basis the works of Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist awarded in 2002 with the Nobel Prize in Economics for his thesis on how humans confidently make decisions yet nevertheless unknowingly make the regular and systematic mistakes cited above. Kahneman, along with his colleague Amos Tversky, reflected on how people rely on what they termed heuristics, rather than on logic and statistics, to make decisions. Using those heuristics, people have a perception of being perfectly rational, when they actually are not. Heuristics are short paths to help us make good decisions, and usually are efficient ways to allow us to do so in everyday life. But there are occasions when heuristics will mislead us. Many of these occasions will occur in an environment of psychological manipulation. Actually, in those environments they will offer a seeded ground to psychological manipulation to appear and continue along time. I will describe some of these heuristics, or short paths to biased decision making, and their role in contexts of psychological manipulation.

Posters

A Comparative Study in the Helping Strategies and Means for Recovery from Cults Between China and the United States: A Study of People's Daily and The New York Times

Zengyi Zhang

Both China and the United States have made great efforts to help former members of cultic groups return to normal social life. However, there are differences in the helping strategies and means for recovery from cults because of cultural traditions and political systems in these two countries. In this paper, we are mainly concerned with the strategies and recovery approaches mentioned in print media coverage in China and US, especially in China Daily and the New York Times, and which ones are popular, and effective? What are the theoretical foundations which major strategies and recovery methods are based on, and what kinds of relationship major strategies and methods have with cultural traditions and political systems? I will first make a brief review of literature related to this topic, and clarify our research frame based on sociological and communication theories, such as social integration theory, persuasion theory, and analysis frame. Second, I define 1975-2010 as the range of time to be studied because media began to pay much attention to cultic groups since the late 1970s, and choose People's Daily and The New York Times as news resources to describe the strategies and means mentioned. Third, I will try to analyze the cultural and social foundations behind the strategies and means for recovery from cults by use of news resources, and other literatures. Finally, I will conclude that the family concept as a Chinese cultural core is the key to understanding Chinese strategies and means for recovery from cults.

Applying Routine Activities Theory to Cult Recruitment

Martia LaPalm

Cohen and Felson's famous Routine Activities Theory considers how the offender, victim, and lack of a guardian all converge to form the opportunity for a crime. Generally, Routine Activities Theory has been applied to crimes that happen on public streets. However, it might be possible to apply Routine Activities Theory to cult

recruitment and understand how a person might or might not be a good target for cult recruiters. Is cult recruitment simply bad luck or is it a calculated choice on the part of the recruiter?

Christianity Awareness Training for Clinicians and Helpers who are Working with Former Members Recovering From High Demand Christian Groups.

Autumne Kirkpatrick

Many in the therapeutic community are first-hand witnesses to the destructive effects of high control religious groups. To honor and respect those who come to us for help, let's take the opportunity to examine our own possible biases, including how we define healthy Christianity. There is much diversity of belief within Christianity. Our biases might include our thinking about what is "mainstream," and how loaded that language is. Perhaps Freud is mainstream and Jung is not? Understanding enhances our therapeutic intervention capability. Our attention and care helps us become part of someone's healing support system, instead of yet another person violating boundaries from an authority differential. Isn't that what happened to them in the cult? The Christian's relationship with God may have been distorted by the high-control group, but does that mean God or faith are the problem? An abused wife and her therapist will work cooperatively so she can thrive in future healthy relationships with men. A Christian seeking therapy doesn't necessarily want to jettison his or her God any more than that abused wife's health includes no more men. Do we see it as healthy when a Christian wants nothing more to do with God or faith? Are we intentionally faith-supportive of Christians who wish to retain or restore their relationship with God? If our bias is inflexible, can we abstain from working with that population so as not to cause harm? Recovery inherently challenges beliefs. This paper gives some perspective on history, present day challenges, and possible guidelines and educational solutions for clinicians who want to be a more helpful part of the support system for people recovering from high demand Christian groups.

Disciplinary Practices Among Children in Isolated Authoritarian Groups and Their Implications for Long-Term Psychological Well-Being

Ruben García-Sánchez, Carmen Almendros, Jose Antonio Carrobes, Omar Saldaña, Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira, Manuel Gámez-Guadix, José Manuel Martínez, María Jesús Martín-López, and Begoña Aramayona

A review of the main findings on socialization practices and discipline documented with people born and/or raised in "isolated authoritarian groups" (IAG) (Bardin, 2009), as well as their negative implications for long-term psychological well-being, will be presented. Though some research has been conducted on inappropriate disciplinary practices among children in IAGs, and the possible deleterious effects of these (e.g. Kendall, 2006), there is still much need of empirical efforts that would be informed by existent literature on dysfunctional parenting practices and their detrimental effects, while being relevant to the experiences of people born and/or raised in IAG. The adaptation of standardized instruments for the measurement of discipline dimensions, negligence, psychological abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, among other relevant variables, to be sensible to the specificities of these experiences, is proposed.

New Visual Angles for Guarding against Destructive Cults

Baoxiang Fan

Following the rapid development of 21st century Internet technology, both the technological hinder of cultural communication and natural cover of local culture are broken by human society. As the new route for the transmission of faith, the Internet widely disseminates the energy, but also provides a broader platform for cultic developments. Thus, destructive cults enter the active development time along with it. Destructive cults are extreme and misleading religious organizations, which are counter to social nature, show serious criminological trends, and lead to grievous social damage. This paper maintains that the Internet demands new visual angles to respond to and prevent the damage associated with destructive cults, in particular: (1) Research the special characteristics and the trend of development which the destructive cult disseminates. (2) Excavate the "spiritual control" new channels of the destructive cults. (3) Utilize interdisciplinary approaches to guard against the destructive cults effectively. (4) Purify the public opinion environment so as to build a healthy atmosphere.

Tamara Fosnight

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (APA, 2013) can be difficult to understand for those outside of the mental health field. Distinguishing between the various kinds of stressors and how those different stressors impact an individual are commonly misunderstood. The word stress has become vague catch-all for explaining what ails a person. This only adds to the confusion. The Glass Method is a simple hands-on exercise that identifies the different types of stressors and their impacts including traumatic stress. It gives a visual explanation why those who have experienced traumatic stress have difficulty managing the daily stressors of life. It also explains what can be done to begin to heal from traumatic stress. This exercise is simple. It was designed to help anyone, even children, understand the significance of traumatic stress and how it impacts an individual. It was not designed for the academic but for any one at any educational level. The Glass Method is ideal for someone recently diagnosed with PTSD by giving a simple overview of what their body is experiencing. It could also be used to teach a PTSD survivor's family or support network in an easy to understand format.

Survey on Exit Counseling with Community Help and Education

Wu Min, Ye Qing

This article is based on empirical research in cult-exit counseling of Chaoyang District, Beijing. The region's institutions that help people leave cults include government entities, social organizations, and community-based organizations. Their methods generally consist of: (1) Conversation skills - looking for "a breakthrough" by a comprehensive exploration of growth history, practice history, and family environment. (2) A video recorded family interview - a supplementary understanding of the growth history, family environment, and the problems or difficulties the cult member faced. (3) Learning and counseling - viewing the cult from another perspective; analyzing how founder-worship of cult leaders is established; exploring the motivation of the cult believers to make cult members understand the cult of "evil" and break through their psychological defenses. (4) Replacement policy - help cult members establish a correct outlook on life. On the basis of the above methods, the paper will investigate the following aspects of the help and education work. (1) What characteristics does exit assistance have in this community? What is the de-conversion rate? What is the criterion of success (or acceptance) of cult-exit? (2) The successful cases of exit counseling as well as the lessons learned from failures in this community. (3) Based on the data of all the exit counseling cases in this area in nearly 15 years (2000-2015), compare the impacts of age, gender, educational background (or discipline background), professional background, years believing in the cult, categories of the cult, etc., on conversion difficulty (or time of cult departure) in the same situation.

Taxonomy of Psychological Difficulties Experienced by Former Members of Abusive Groups

Omar Saldaña, Álvaro Rodríguez-Carballeira, Carmen Almendros, Emma Antelo, and Álvaro Torres

In certain group settings psychologically abusive behaviors are exerted in order to recruit and maintain followers. 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. The abusive strategies suffered within a group may lead to post-involvement psychological distress or other substantial consequences for the affected people. Despite several studies that have found evidences of such distress, a rigorous classification and definition of the whole range of these psychological and social difficulties is still needed. This study provides a taxonomy of the main difficulties experienced by people who have endured group psychological abuse. The taxonomy is focused on specific difficulties related to this field, rather than standardized psychopathological disorders. A first version of the taxonomy was proposed based on a review of the scientific literature. A board of 37 experts in the area evaluated the content of the taxonomy and judged the relevance of their components, as well as the adequacy of their names and definitions. Modifications in both names and definitions were performed based on their responses and suggestions. In a second phase of the study, experts evaluated again the content of the taxonomy, and judged the frequency and intensity in which each difficulty is commonly experienced by former members of abusive groups. The taxonomy showed adequate content validity and its final version includes 20 categories organized into four major areas that could be affected: 1) emotional difficulties (e.g., anxiety and fear); 2) cognitive difficulties (e.g., decision-making difficulties); 3) relational and social integration difficulties (e.g., lack of social skills); and 4) other specific problematic behaviors (e.g., sexual problems). According to experts' judgements, the most frequent and intense post-involvement problems are related to emotional difficulties, especially to grief and loss experiences. The taxonomy may contribute to a better delimitation and

evaluation of the psychological difficulties related to group psychological abuse experiences, which may be useful for both the academic and applied fields.

The Effects of Cult Membership on Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder

Jessica Lissette Perdomo

Knowledge is seriously incomplete regarding cult membership and the effects of it on those individuals who suffer from borderline personality disorder (BPD). It is important to find out if cult membership has a positive or negative effect on those individuals who have a distorted sense of identity. The concepts of "definition of self" and "own acceptance" depend on one another in order for an individual to be able to coexist in an environment where to others (mainstream society), he/she may be seen as deviant. With the use of the Group Psychological Abuse Scale (GPA), individual experiences in high-control group environments will be evaluated. The proposed research study will also document and assess the nature and scope of past and current cult members with borderline personality disorder. An overall sample of 150 participants (male and female) will be voluntarily recruited from the Cult Clinic, located in New York City. This research, in conjunction with an anticipated follow-up study, will provide valuable information for suggesting ways to develop group meetings for former cult members with BPD, where they do not feel stigmatized by mainstream society and are not compelled mentally, emotionally and physically by cult leaders.

The Evidence for and Against Hypnosis as a Thought Reform Technique

Steve 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