

# ICSA E-NEWSLETTER PRINT VERSION

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## **ICSA**

*Founded in 1979, the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) is an international network of people concerned about psychological manipulation and abuse in cultic groups, alternative movements, and other environments. In order to help affected families and individuals, enhance the skills of helping professionals, and forewarn those who might become involved in harmful group situations, ICSA collects and disseminates information through periodicals and Web sites, conducts and encourages research, maintains an information phone line, and runs workshops and conferences.*

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## **EDUCATION & RESEARCH NEWS**

### **Upcoming ICSA Workshops and Conference**

- Surviving and Moving on After a High Demand Group Experience: A Workshop for Second-Generation Former Members. Friday 3:00 p.m. April 17, 2009 to Sunday 2:00 p.m. April 19, 2009. Canterbury Retreat Center, Orlando, Florida.
- ICSA Annual Conference. University of Geneva (Switzerland), July 2-4, 2009. Pre-conference workshops for ex-members, families, mental health professionals, researchers, and Swiss organizations concerned about cults (in French) on Thursday, July 2, 2009.
- Recovery Workshop for Former Group Members. Friday 3:00 p.m. July 31, 2009 to Sunday 3:00 p.m. August 2, 2009. Franciscan Retreat/Conference Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- Assistance conference. Denver, Colorado, October 2-3, 2009. Two-day conference focused on sessions for ex-members, families, and mental health professionals.

### **Lorna Goldberg Message on Assuming ICSA Presidency**

It is with regret that I inform you of the resignation of Phil Elberg, the President of our Board of Directors. His willingness to serve as our leader was embraced and welcomed at a difficult time after Herb Rosedale's death. After Alan Scheflin's valuable and stabilizing contribution, Phil stepped in to guide ICSA and keep this organization moving in a productive direction. We will miss Phil's good judgment and thoughtful guidance. He was a leader whom we could depend on for wise counsel.

Phil has done outstanding work with issues and litigation related to preventing the abuse of adolescents in rehabilitation settings, and he wishes to focus his energies in this area. We wish him the very best in this endeavor and look forward to hearing about his future achievements.

I have agreed to assume the role of Interim President. I hope that I can count on you to provide me with the support and guidance that I will need in the coming months. I'm looking forward to working with you to achieve our common goal of helping those who have been harmed by destructive individuals and groups.

Yours truly,

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

### **Network and Organizational Meetings at 2009 Conferences**

As part of its long-range goals of increasing ICSA membership and expanding its volunteer network, ICSA will schedule the following meetings at its 2009 annual conference in Geneva, Switzerland:

- A membership meeting in which general discussion will occur after reports from the president, executive director, and chairs of committees. A membership meeting will also be scheduled during the Denver assistance conference.
- Meetings of ICSA's three major volunteer network categories: (1) mental health (2) research and (3) ex-member. In the future, when we develop family and education networks, we will schedule meetings for them as well during ICSA conferences.

- An Investigation into Cult Pseudo-Personality: What is It and How Does It Form? (Gillie Jenkinson, M.A.)
- Narcissistic Fraud in the Ancient World: Lucian's Account of Alexander of Abonoteichos and the Cult of Glycon (Stephen A. Kent, Ph.D.)
- Conflict Between Aum Critics and Human Rights Activists in Japan (Yoshihide Sakurai, PhD.)

**Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF).** EFF describes itself as "the leading civil liberties group defending your rights in the digital world." It concerns itself with, among others, issues related to free speech, transparency, and privacy. <http://www.eff.org/>

### **U.S. Religious Landscape Survey**

The Pew Forum on Public and Religious Life. Based on interviews with more than 35,000 American adults, this extensive survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life details the religious makeup, religious beliefs and practices as well as social and political attitudes of the American public. This online section includes dynamic tools that complement the full report. For a video overview and related material, go to the resource page: <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=279>

**Unanswered Prayers: The Story of One Woman Leaving the International Church of Christ.** Drew Bratcher. <http://www.washingtonian.com/articles/people/8429.html>

**Report from French Government Cult Watch Organization.** The fifth (2007) report of MIVILUDES, a cult watch organization of the French government is available online: [www.miviludes.gouv.fr/English-Report-Miviludes-2007](http://www.miviludes.gouv.fr/English-Report-Miviludes-2007). This report assesses the problems associated with the unabated fad favoring shamanic practices which call for the mostly uncontrolled use of hallucinogens.

## **BOOKS, ARTICLES & WEB SITES**

### **Memorial Collections for Herb Rosedale and Margaret Singer**

Five years ago Herbert Rosedale and Margaret Singer died, on November 4th and November 23rd, respectively. This was a double blow to ICSA (then called American Family Foundation).

These two pioneers in the cultic studies field shaped ICSA's identity and made it what it is today, an organization that applies research and professional perspectives to help people adversely affected by cults and forewarn those who might become involved.

Their impact on this field and this organization cannot be measured.

Five years after their death, their wise words still guide us. The warm memories we have of them are still vivid in our minds.

To honor them, we have compiled for ICSA members two special online collections of some of their writings.

If you knew these two towering figures, review the collections to remind yourself of how insightful and caring they were.

If you didn't know them, review the collections to understand why we still miss Herb and Margaret. Go here: <http://www.icsahome.com/bonus/default.asp>

You will need the following logon to access the collections: User name = bonus; password = icsa (all lower case).

### **38% of Adults, 12% of Children Use Alternative Medicine**

Rob Stein, Washington Post, December 11, 2008, page A02.

More than one-third of adults and nearly 12 percent of children in the United States use alternatives to traditional medicine, according to a large federal survey released today that documents how entrenched acupuncture, herbal remedies and other once-exotic therapies have become. The 2007 survey of more than 32,000 Americans, which for the first time included children, found that use of yoga, "probiotics," fish oil and other "complementary and alternative" therapies held steady among adults since the last national survey five years earlier, and that such treatments have become part of health care for many youngsters.

### **China Inspired Interrogations at Guantánamo**

New York Times, July 2, 2008. By Scott Shane

The military trainers who came to Guantánamo Bay in December 2002 based an entire interrogation class on a chart showing the effects of "coercive management techniques" for possible use on prisoners, including "sleep deprivation," "prolonged constraint," and "exposure." What the trainers did not say, and may not have known, was that their chart had been copied verbatim from a 1957 Air Force study of Chinese Communist techniques used during the Korean War to obtain confessions, many of them false, from American prisoners. . . The 1957 article from which the chart was copied was entitled "Communist Attempts to Elicit False Confessions From Air Force Prisoners of War" and written by Alfred D. Biderman, a sociologist then working for the Air Force, who died in 2003. Mr. Biderman had interviewed American prisoners returning from North Korea, some of whom had been filmed by their Chinese interrogators confessing to germ warfare and other atrocities. Those orchestrated confessions led to allegations that the American prisoners had been "brainwashed," and provoked the military to revamp its training to give some military personnel a taste of the enemies' harsh methods to inoculate them against quick capitulation if captured. . .

The sessions included "an in-depth class on Biderman's Principles," the message said, referring to the chart from Mr. Biderman's 1957 article. Versions of the same chart, often identified as "Biderman's Chart of Coercion," have circulated on anti-cult sites on the Web, where the methods are used to describe how cults control their members.

Dr. Robert Jay Lifton, a psychiatrist who also studied the returning prisoners of war and wrote an accompanying article in the same 1957 issue of The Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, said in an interview that he was disturbed to learn that the Chinese methods had been recycled and taught at Guantánamo.

In my previous International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) essay on philosopher Ken Wilber's Integral Institute, I used a convenient numerical cult evaluation system, originated by Isaac Bonewits, which is based upon one's own experiences in a spiritual group. I referred to this system as the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale. Based upon my experiences with the Integral Institute, I came up with a Cult Danger score that contributed significantly to my conclusion that Ken Wilber and his group did not possess significant cult dangers. Specifically, I placed Integral Institute in Neutral territory, between cult dangers and spiritual benefits; Neutral may also be referred to as Benign in this system.

In this current article, I extend my numerical experiential evaluation of cult dangers to five other groups, two of which have been the subject of other articles I have written for ICSA: Conversations with God, and Avatar. The three remaining groups I evaluate are groups that I have experienced within the past few years: Human Awareness Institute (HAI), in November 2004; Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), in August 2007; and The Center For Creative Consciousness (CCC), quite recently, in January 2008. Based upon my own experiences as reflected in my numerical ratings on the Bonewits Cult Danger Scale, I conclude that one of these spiritual groups (Avatar) has a Moderate degree of cult dangers, two of the groups (Center For Creative Consciousness and Conversations with God) are in Neutral/Benign territory regarding cult dangers vs. spiritual benefits, and two groups (HAI and ACT) are in the Favorable category in regard to offering authentic spiritual benefits.

Elliot Benjamin, Ph.D. **The Boundaries Between Cultic, Benign, and Beneficial in Five Spiritual Groups**

## EXCERPTS FROM THIS ISSUE'S ONLINE ARTICLES

. . . post-World War II America, and particularly the 1950s, is not without its own poster boy—a self-proclaimed messiah with a biography befitting the golden age of both Hollywood and the LAPD.

His name was Krishna Venta, and Monday, December 10, 2008, marked the 50th anniversary of his violent assassination, which all told ended ten lives.

Born Francis Pencovic in the San Francisco of 1911, Venta was an interesting candidate for messiah, having previously lived as burglar, thief, con artist, and shipyard timekeeper. This changed in 1946 when, following a stretch on a chain gang and a stint in the Army, Pencovic's body (or so he claimed) became the host vessel for the "Christ Everlasting," an eternal spirit being who had not only died on the cross at Calvary 2,000 years earlier, but had commandeered to Earth from the planet Neophrates a convoy of rocket ships whose passengers included Adam and Eve.

But in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, insisted Venta, such ancient history was irrelevant. This time around, his Earthly mission was to gather the 144,000 Elect foretold in Revelation and deliver them from an apocalypse heretofore unseen by mankind.

To draw attention to this cause, Venta donned a monk's robe, permanently discarded footwear, and thereafter forewent cutting both hair and beard. In the Truman and Eisenhower eras, Venta, who frequently made headlines for both his luck at the dog track and his repeated arrests for failure to pay child support, cut a unique figure. His message, however, could not have been more tailor-made for Cold War America.

Armageddon, prophesied Venta, would begin as an armed race war in the streets of America. (If Venta's vision of the future sounds oddly reminiscent of "Helter Skelter," it must be noted that strong debate exists regarding whether Charles Manson, who periodically lodged at the Fountain of the World circa 1968 and 1969, was privy to the teachings of the dead cult leader during his respites there.) In this conflict, Communist Russia, with its nuclear weaponry, would render military aid to African-Americans. But the Soviets would eventually reveal their true stripes, insisted Venta, by enslaving their African-American allies and terminating religious freedom worldwide. Still, fear was unnecessary, for Venta was actively gathering the 144,000, and knew of a hidden North American valley in which his Elect could hide during the bloodshed until the ordained day came for them to exit their secret refuge en masse, cast out the Soviet empire, free the enslaved, and restore religious freedom to mankind.

Until then, Venta could be found on the road spreading his gospel or at either the Homer, Alaska, or Chatsworth, California, outposts of his WKFL (Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Love) Fountain of the World communal colonies, where his 100-something faithful (primarily females) engaged in such varied works of goodwill as feeding the homeless, offering shelter to battered women, and fighting wildfires.

Tragically, in a twist of irony, Venta, who embodied America's post-war fear of nuclear weapons, was blown to bits in a Los Angeles suicide bombing, instigated on a December night in 1958 by two ex-followers with twenty sticks of dynamite and two very personal vendettas against their former leader. One assassin was jealous of Venta's power and position, while the other insisted Venta had alienated him from his wife.

Today, 50 years after his passing, Venta's story, although obscured by time, reminds us that, even with messiahs and prophets, there is really nothing new under the sun, but instead mere reiterations of choruses previously heralded. Nonetheless, it will unquestionably be interesting to see what manner of individuals take up the messiah mantle in the coming years.

Shawn Sutherland. **Krishna Venta**

Eighty-seven-year-old **Paul Schaefer**, already serving a 20-year prison term for child abuse at his Colonia Dignidad settlement, in Chile, was sentenced in November to seven years in prison for a murder committed during the Pinochet dictatorship (1973–1990), with which he allegedly conspired to detain, torture, and execute political dissidents.

Self-ordained pastor **Daniel Cormier**, who testified at his trial that his sexual relations with a 10-year-old were legal because he married her in his church when she was 16, has been found guilty of sexual assault of a minor. He was to have been sentenced in November.

Yedidiya Hawkins, an elder at the **House of Yahweh's** 44-acre compound in Clyde, near Abeline, TX, has been convicted of sexual assault of a child he molested while pretending to check her for cervical cancer. Sect leader Yisrayl Hawkins is awaiting trial on bigamy and child labor charges.

Two members of the **Grail Movement**, Klara Maueroova, 31, and her sister Katerina, 36, were sentenced to nine and ten years in prison respectively in Brno, Czech Republic, for the torturing and sexually abusing Klara's eight- and ten-year-old sons. The youngsters were kept in cages in a locked cellar, chained to tables, whipped with belts, partially drowned, and had cigarettes stubbed out on their bodies. Relatives skinned one of them and forced him to eat his own flesh. All of this was done, according to the prosecutor, "to make the boys blindly serve their [the women's] religious goals," and, said the judge, "to create a person with a completely broken will; Ondrej and Jakub were repeatedly psychologically and physically tyrannized." The Grail Movement claims to have hundreds of members in Britain [sic] and tens of thousands around the world.

Michael Baldasaro and Walter Tucker, who ran the **Church of the Universe**, in Hamilton, Ontario, have been sentenced to jail for two years and one year

## GROUP NEWS

*Additional information on news reports may be available in the ICSA E-Library.*

**Adi Da** Samraj, 69, the leader of a spiritual community based at Naitauba in Lau, has died at his home on the island. Born in the United States, Adi Da established Naitauba as his principal teaching retreat in 1983 and became a Fiji citizen 10 years later in 1993. Matt Wilson, a spokesperson for the Naitauba Trust said Adi Da's followers from many countries around the world would continue to maintain Naitauba as a centre for quiet study and contemplation for those who come there.

Demanding what he calls greater "transparency and accountability" from the controversial religious order known as **Legionaries of Christ** and their associated lay movement, Regnum Christi, Archbishop Edward O'Brien of Baltimore has directed both groups to disclose all activities within his archdiocese, and to refrain from one-on-one spiritual direction with anyone under 18. The ban on counseling minors, O'Brien said in an interview with NCR on Wednesday, is related to concerns that the Legionaries and Regnum Christi practice "heavily persuasive methods on young people, especially high schoolers, regarding vocations."

Kristen Skedgell, a former member of **The Way International**, has written a book about her fifteen years in the group during the 1970s and 1980s entitled *Losing the Way: A Memoir of Spiritual Longing, Manipulation, Abuse, and Escape*. The 200-page memoir characterizes The Way less as a Christian fundamentalist group than as a predatory cult, an organization designed to prey on the lonely and spiritually thirsty. Skedgell documents her experience, illustrating The Way's recruiting and maintenance methods — "brainwashing" — and how the late leader Victor Paul Wierwille manipulated her into a sexual relationship. Now a Columbia University-educated social worker, Skedgell gives advice to families with members in cults.

Hyo Jin Moon, once the heir of **Unification Church** leader Rev. **Sun Myung Moon** and head of the church's Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles, died of a heart attack at age 45 in October, 2008. He fell from grace following a divorce from his wife in an arranged marriage. She wrote a book in which she referred to Rev. Moon as a "false Messiah." . . . Harvard educated **Hyung Jin Moon**, second oldest son of Sun Myung Moon, took over leadership of the **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (Unification Church)** in April at a ceremony in Seoul. Church membership is estimated to be 250,000 — with a strong presence in the U.S., South Korea, and Japan — although the church claims ten times that number. . . Sun Myung Moon spent a day in the hospital in July following the crash of his helicopter, northeast of Seoul.

Two pairs of sisters among six girls taken in September from **Tony Alamo Christian Ministries** will remain in foster care, a judge ruled Tuesday. But reunification with their parents might be possible if economic, residential and employment ties are severed. "There was a lot of testimony concerning allegations of physical abuse," said Miller County Circuit Judge Joe Griffin. "The court felt like the parents were not proactive enough in protecting the children from serious risk in the environment they were living." Last Friday, Circuit Judge Jim Hudson issued a ruling identical to Griffin's concerning two other girls. All six of the girls seized by Arkansas Department of Human Services Sept. 20 have now been placed in foster care for at least the next 90 days.

Griffin said the DHS case plan includes resources for parents. "We're offering parenting classes and counseling," Griffin said. "We want to see them demonstrate a willingness to give priority to the protection of their children and their health, safety and welfare." Griffin said the punishment and discipline alleged in testimony from witnesses was "excessive." Witnesses also testified about marriages in the church, Griffin said.

Nineteen of 20 children taken by DHS from church members Nov. 18 are scheduled for custody hearings Jan. 12. The parents of the recently taken 20 are being permitted supervised visits with their children. Parents of children who are still breast feeding may see them every other day, while visits with older children are scheduled weekly.

As the parents of the children deal with the family separations, Alamo, the church's controversial pastor, remains in a cell in downtown Texarkana. Alamo's request for bail was denied.

A beating administered by evangelist **Tony Alamo** and the man described as his "enforcer," John Kolbeck, at Alamo's religious compound in Fouke last year caused "serious and permanent injury" to a teenager's left hand and wrist, according to a lawsuit

respectively for selling marijuana at the church. They said God tells them to smoke it and pass joints around. The judge said they were running "a marijuana convenience store that operates for profit like a prohibition-era speakeasy."

A Moscow court has found **Grigory Grabovoi** guilty of swindling followers and customers out of money and property "using methods of psychological pressure" and sentenced him to 11 years in prison. He promised victims he would resurrect the dead, including children who died in the Beslan School terrorist attack. His wife denies he ever made such promises. A 70-year-old retired follower said, "Once he put his name down for the presidential elections, a criminal case was immediately started against him."

William Kamm, known as **Little Pebble**, who claimed to be the Messiah, has lost his appeal to be released from a New South Wales prison, where he is serving a term of no less than 3.5 years following a conviction for raping and assaulting a teenager, his "mystical wife," in 1993.

Canadian Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes traveled to Berlin in October to attend a forum — "Does the **LaRouche** Group Present a Danger to Society and a Danger to the individual?" — as part of a campaign to prove that former LaRouche follower Jeremiah Duggan did not commit suicide as he ran from the group in 2003, but that he was murdered.

Ria Ramkissoon, also known as Princess Marie, and three other members the very small **1 Mind Ministries**, including supposed leader Toni Ellsberry, also known as Queen Antionette, have been charged with murder in the starvation death of Ramkissoon's 15-month old child, found dead by authorities in a suitcase in 2007. He was punished because he allegedly refused to say "amen" after meals. Ramkissoon's family says she shouldn't be held responsible because "She had no control over that situation at all." Her

filed by the teenager and another former church member. Eighteen-year-old Spencer Ondirsek said in the lawsuit that Alamo struck him three times during the beating. At one point, he said, Alamo taunted him, saying, "You think I like doing this ? I love doing this !" The lawsuit was filed by Ondirsek and Seth Calagna, who is also 18, on Tuesday afternoon in U. S. District Court in Texarkana. Both teens left the church this year and now live in the Spokane, Wash., area.

Their attorney, W. David Carter of Texarkana, Texas, said Alamo has made "millions" through his businesses in Arkansas, California and New Jersey, and the teens are hoping to put a dent in the organization. Carter said he's also hoping that other former members file similar suits. "Any organization that's going to oppress people like that, if you get a number of judgments against them, they're no longer going to be able to do that," Carter said.

Alamo, 74, has been incarcerated since his arrest in Arizona on Sept. 25 on charges of transporting a minor across state lines for sexual purposes after an investigation by the FBI and Arkansas State Police. According to his attorney, John Wesley Hall Jr. of Little Rock, Alamo is charged with engaging in sexual acts with five underage girls since as early as 1994. Alamo has pleaded innocent to the charges and has denied that the church administers beatings.

Authorities are still searching for Kolbeck, 49, who is wanted on a charge of second degree battery in a beating that Calagna said he received at a warehouse in Fort Smith earlier this year.

Authorities said dozens of children missing from **Tony Alamo** ministries in Fouke and Fort Smith, Ark., listed on a court order may be out of the reach of child welfare agencies if they've been taken across state lines. Not a single child was found on Alamo properties in Fort Smith after officials with DHS and members of the Arkansas State Police searched more than a dozen sites Tuesday. The orders authorizing removal listed many more children than the 20 taken Tuesday. The documents left at the Fouke compound referred to 126 children, some as "unknown" and others as "unknown juveniles."

The raid on the **Fundamentalist LDS Church's** YFZ Ranch and its aftermath have cost the state of Texas more than \$12.4 million, new figures provided to the Deseret News reveal. A spreadsheet outlining some of the costs for the sheltering of FLDS women and children in the aftermath of the April raid was provided by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on Wednesday after a request for an accounting. The figures for the "San Angelo Mass Care Event" do not include ongoing costs since the 439 children were returned to their families in June, including the salaries of caseworkers and attorneys still involved in the case, agency spokesman Patrick Crimmins said.

More than \$4 million was spent on goods and services at Fort Concho and the San Angelo Coliseum, where FLDS children and some of their mothers were housed immediately following the raid. The "unified command center" set up there cost nearly \$1 million. Another \$1 million was spent on buses to take the children to foster-care facilities scattered around the Lone Star State. Foster-care placement, security and Medicaid cost Texas more than \$3.3 million, the figures show.

The numbers do not include court costs in the nation's largest child-custody case. A judge in San Angelo recently signed an order approving payment to hundreds of lawyers appointed by the courts to represent the children from the Utah-based polygamous sect. "All attorney ad litem were advised prior to accepting appointments that their service would be voluntary and possibly without compensation, and that if compensation became possible, actual expenses and attorney's fees would be paid by the court at a reduced rate," 51st District Judge Barbara Walther wrote in the order signed last week. The judge's order sets a cap of \$4,000 for hourly billing and \$750 for travel and other expenses. Walther left open the door to approve higher fees if attorneys make their case to her for more money.

According to an October Swedish TV documentary, taxpayers have been indirectly supporting **Scientology** through government contracts worth \$1.4 million given to "front organizations tied to the organization." Most of the funds have gone to Narconon, which gives ten percent of its earnings to Scientology. Social Democratic council member Cecilia Lund, who reports that her Eslöv constituency has bought Narconon services for the past five years, says: "I don't actually think that politics can dictate what they do with their profits." . . .

Dmitri Guzner, 18, a student from Verona, NJ, has agreed to plead guilty to participating

mother adds, "My daughter [who is being held in a psychiatric ward] was a victim, just like my grandson. Somebody made that decision to not feed that child, and my daughter had to follow instructions. They made the rules. I don't think my daughter knew what she was getting into." When the child died, Antionette allegedly told followers to pray, and said that God would resurrect him.

Dr. Jill Mytton, of London Metropolitan University, reports her research on the **Exclusive Brethren** indicates that former cult members experience fear, guilt, loss, and alienation, among other emotions, when they leave their cult communities, according to a June article in *Inspire* magazine (UK). "There is very little known about the effects on children who are raised in cults and choose to leave when an adult," she says. "By continuing research in this area, we can gain a better understanding of those who leave religious cults, which will help therapists who work with them."

The **Rev. Robert H. Schuller** in October removed his son Robert A. Schuller as head of the *Hour of Power* television show due to a "lack of shared vision and the jeopardy in which this is placing this entire ministry." The younger Schuller's challenge had been to attract younger congregants and build membership through the TV program. He will remain senior pastor of the Crystal Cathedral.

Five women formerly associated with gurus of the **Barsana Dham** Hindu temple, south of Austin, TX, have come forward to accuse **Prakashanand Saraswati** (known as **Shree Swamiji**) and his spiritual master, **Maharajji Kripalu**, of many incidents of "intimate contact" during the past several decades. Earlier this year, Prakashanand was indicted in Hays County on charges of groping two women, in 1993 and 1995, when they were teenagers living in the Ashram. Last year, rape charges against

in a cyber attack on **Scientology** that took the organization's website offline. His action earlier this year, part of the Anonymous informal coalition's campaign against Scientology, could bring Guzner, who has agreed to pay \$37,500 in restitution, 10 years in federal prison. . .

Scientology's **Narconon** drug rehab home in Newport Beach, CA, whose neighbors have long protested noise and frequent deliveries associated with the facility, has agreed to close in 2010. Other rehab homes in town are similarly confronted with the newly legislated restrictions on recovery housing. . .

Mario Majorski, 48, was shot fatally in November by a guard as he tried to attack guests arriving at the **Scientology** Celebrity Center in Hollywood. Police said Majorski had been associated with Scientology in the "distant past." . . .

Germany will stop trying to ban the Church of **Scientology**, saying there is a lack of evidence that the group is engaged in illegal activity. The head of Berlin security stated that Scientology "is a lousy organization, but it is not an organization that we have to take a hammer to." . . .

French wariness of **Scientology** probably arises from a culture skeptical of religious organizations that require members to pay for services. Says Jean-Michel Roulet, head of the government agency charged to protect the public from cults: "This [money-making religion] does not fit with the French mentality." . . .

Scientologists hold senior positions in Prodata, a flourishing Denmark-based IT company that gives "a substantial 400-page manual of the [Scientology] founder **L. Ron Hubbard** to the numerous consultants engages for projects in Europe. [This according to *Politiken DK*, May 9 and 17, 2008.]

Members of the **Ahmadiyya** sect of Islam based in Silver Spring, MD, are upset by the town of Walkersville's rejection of their plan to build a worship center in the municipality. Mainstream Muslims worldwide, including the U.S., are hostile to the century-old Ahmadiyya, whose 70 million members believe their founder was the messiah. The sect has 40 mosques in this country, with 3,000 members in the Silver Spring establishment, and they have successfully proselytized on the East Coast. "The mainstream community went after them and basically said: 'Look, as long as you don't think that Muhammad is the last prophet, you have violated the creed of Islam . . . and you are not a Muslim,'" says Muqtedar Khan, director of Islamic Studies at the University of Delaware. Mainline Muslims in the U.S. sometimes discriminate against Ahmadiyya, for example, by refusing to buy at shops run by members of the sect.

Walkersville refused to rezone the 224-acre farm, on which the Ahmadiyya wanted to build not only a mosque, but a school and facilities to host 10,000 people for an annual three-day convention. Some local residents have expressed disdain for Islam and fear of Muslims.

A senior Liberal Party (Australia) source has confirmed allegations made in a new book, *Behind the Exclusive Brethren*, that members of the **Exclusive Brethren** tried to offer large donations, anonymously, to help the re-election campaign last year of Prime Minister John Howard. The source said, "What the Liberal Party stands for should not be confused in the mind of the electorate by the acceptance of donations from fringe groups." Brethren members, active lobbyists who are urged on principle not to vote, took advantage of the Howard government's lax disclosure law to put \$370,000 into a pro-Howard and anti-Green campaign in 2004.

An appeal court in Montreal has refused to award damages to **Falun Gong** members even though it agreed that *Les Presses chinoises* had published defamatory statements about the group. . . Falun Gong computer experts provided software to journalists and others attending the Olympics claiming that it would get them through any firewall devised by the Chinese government to limit the flow of information from the outside world.

Former **FLDS** member Carolyn Jessop says Jeffs' continuing hold on members is not simply religious; he is also at the center of a financial and business trust that involves them all. "So many are networked into his crime. Husbands were kicked out; ladies knew they were safe if they were obedient. If they had lots of daughters, they got handed out to everybody — it was like a feast." If a man resists the leadership, he risks losing his wife (or wives) and his home, she says. "If a woman does [resist], her children are taken from her. The coercive power of the FLDS is immense. Right now, leaving the FLDS is like

Kripalu in Trinidad and Tobago were dropped due to lack of evidence. Some of the behavior described by the women would not be considered criminal because it was between consenting adults, although Texas law provides for charging clergyman for "exploiting the other person's emotional dependence on the clergyman in the clergyman's professional character as spiritual advisor."

Two complaints against **The House of Prayer**, in Ireland, were withdrawn in November after the organization's leader, **Christina Gallagher**, returned \$192,000 to an elderly married couple and \$128,000 to another man. The couple said they had been impoverished after donating their life savings to the House of Prayer. Numerous complaints were lodged against the organization earlier this year when it was learned that Gallagher had use of a \$5 million mansion and a property portfolio. Gallagher, who founded the House of Prayer in the 1980s after claiming to have received prophetic messages from the Virgin Mary, presides over a chain of Houses of Prayer in the U.S., and thousands come to her church on Achill Island. The organization's spiritual director, John McGinnity, is a parish priest in Louth.

Evangelist, faith healer, and former drug addict **Todd Bentley**, known for his face piercings, neck-to-knee tattoos, and biker dude lifestyle, is taking a leave of absence from **Fresh Fire Ministries**, in Abbotsford, B.C., Canada. Fresh Fire says: "We discovered new information revealing that Todd Bentley [who is married] has entered into an unhealthy relationship on an emotional level with a female member of his staff." The church has canceled Bentley's planned tours for the coming year in the U.S. and Britain.

jumping off a cliff."

Fifty-six percent of Utahns polled in August believe that the federal government should help prosecute crimes in polygamous communities in the state, although members of the mainstream Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, who publicly disavow polygamy, were more likely to oppose federal prosecution than non-LDS respondents. One LDS member said: "If [polygamists] are working hard, holding down jobs, as far as I'm concerned, we ought to leave them alone." The Texas attorney general said a federal response would greatly diminish "the possibility that persons within the **FLDS** who may be predisposed to commit polygamy, or other crimes, will simply move their operations to another location. The poll followed Senate Judiciary Committee hearings focused on the FLDS, at which Sen. Majority Leader Harry Reid called the communities a "form of organized crime."

The **FLDS** filed suit in Utah in August seeking to set aside a 2007 judgment awarding \$8.8 to a trust, once controlled by Warren Jeffs and other FLDS trustees, which a court-appointed fiduciary found had been misused. The church says the judgment "is now being used to destroy the FLDS Church by systematically taking away its property." The fiduciary has identified, among other assets, 596 acres in Apple Valley that he says Jeffs transferred to private individuals in order to protect the property from court action.

The children of Vera Black in October asked the state of Utah to apologize to their mother for threatening to take them away from her following an anti-polygamy raid by authorities in 1953. The appeal came at a University of Utah College of Law debate on whether children should be taken from polygamous homes and placed in foster homes. A professor praised the 1955 Utah Supreme Court ruling that held polygamous homes are unfit for children. (The recent raid on the **Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** compound in Texas has been justified on this ground.) The court said in 1955: "The practice of polygamy, unlawful cohabitation, and adultery are sufficiently reprehensible, without the innocent lives of children being seared by their evil influence. There must be no compromise with evil." Utah court rulings have since that era tended to place fewer restrictions on polygamous families than in earlier times.

The daughter of a woman in New Haven, CT, who has broken all family connections says her mother has been lost to a cult, the **Order of Christ Sophia**, or **Center of Light**, which has chapters across the country. Reverend Michael, who runs the local group, based in an apartment building in town, says people are free to come and go. In response to the charge of a cult expert that Christ Sophia is "a destructive mind control cult where dependence and obedience is demanded," founder **Peter Bowes** says (on YouTube): "A cult is a new religion that people hate. I think we can say we are one then." Bowes, who was a psychologist in Wisconsin until he gave up his license, says there is sometimes strain between members and their families, but "We don't take people away from their parents." Reverend Michael maintains: "We teach meditation, and we have classes on the Bible." The New Haven woman's daughter says: "What it seems to me is that they are being taught to judge the people [family members] closest to them who have known them for years, and they [Christ Sophia initiates] are being taught to take in these new people [Christ Sophia members] as almost a replacement for the family that they used to have."

Ariana Huffington, who has for many years been involved with **John Rogers' Movement for Spiritual Inner Awareness** (MSIA), "made" two of her employees attend a seminar in 2007 run by **Insight**, which is closely associated with MSIA. Huffington is said to give ten percent of her income to the organization, a tax-exempt church that has been characterized as a cult. A follower told the *Los Angeles Times* that he happily gave the group \$500,000 without knowing how it would be used. The newspaper's exhaustive reporting in 1988 and 1994 on the organization portrays John Roger as a paranoid, highly controlling leader who wired the rooms at Insight headquarters, tapped phones, and warned that critics were "infested by a powerful and contagious negative force known as the Red Monk," a spirit that terrifies members. He reportedly removed their "negative entities" in an exorcism-like ceremony. The articles said followers were organized in a complex hierarchy that included a Melchizedek Priesthood and an inner, elite circle of attractive young male ministers known as "The Guys," some of whom had sex with Rogers "as an important spiritual favor."



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## **SELECTED SESSIONS: ICSA's 2009 GENEVA CONFERENCE**

- Public Policy and Cults in Europe - Francois Bellanger, Ph.D.
- Measuring Group Psychological Abuse in Japan, Spain, and the United States - Carmen Almendros, Ph.D., Moderator; Jose Carrobbles, Ph.D.; Kimiaki Nishida, Ph.D.; Alvaro Rodriguez, Ph.D.
- Overview of Mental Health Issues - Rosanne Henry, M.A., LPC
- Overview of Cultic Studies Research (Rod Dubrow-Marshall, Ph.D.)
- Critical Thinking's Greatest Challenge: Undue Psychological Influence - Russell Bradshaw, Ed.D.
- Introduction and Overview for Former Members of Cultic Groups (Open only to former members of cultic groups) - Carol Giambalvo; Joseph Kelly
- Families and Cults - William Goldberg, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.; Discussant: Patrick Ryan
- Psychology of Cult Leaders: A Case Study - Miguel Perlado, Ph.D.
- Open Discussion: Current and Future Research - Facilitator: Rod Dubrow-Marshall, Ph.D.
- Territorial Incidence of Magic, Esoteric and Spiritual Groups in Italy - Chiara Guarascio, Ph.D.
- After the Cult: Who Am I? - (Open only to former members of cultic groups) Leona Furnari, M.S.W.
- The Impact of Religious Shunning: An Exploratory Analysis of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Shunning Policy - Stephen J. Ferriss
- SGA breakout - (Open only to second generation former members) Michael Martella, Ph.D. & Joyce Martella, M.A.
- Groups for Former Cult Members - William Goldberg, M.S.W.; Gillie Jenkinson, M.A.; Colleen Russell, L.M.F.T.
- The Phoenix Project - Diana Pletts, M.A.
- Childhood Verbal, Physical, Sexual Victimization, Symptomatology and Family Environments within Coercive Groups and Resultant Treatment Outcomes - Paul R. Martin, Ph.D.; Lindsay M. Orchowski, M.S.
- Born into and Leaving - But Where to and What Now? - Amanda van Eck Duymaer van Twist, Ph.D.
- The Psychological Consequences Of Being Raised In And Leaving High Demand Groups: The Case Of The Exclusive Brethren - Jill Mytton, M.A.
- Clinical Roundtable for Mental Health Practitioners - (Open only to licensed mental health professionals) - Facilitator: Gillie Jenkinson, M.A.
- Correlates of Psychological Distress and Time Elapsed Since Leaving a Sect for First and Second Generation Former Sect Members Who Have and Have not Received Counseling Since Leaving their Sect - Lois Kendall, Ph.D.
- The Role of Hypnotic Responsivity and Interrogatory Suggestibility in the Creation and Maintenance of False Memories and False Beliefs: Scientific Evidence/Legal Implications - Edward J. Frischholz, Ph.D., ABPH; Alan W. Schefflin, J.D., M.A.
- Cultic Resurgence and Psychological Manipulation in Nigeria - Some Theoretical Explanations and Implications for African Educational Theorizing - Kola Babarinde, Ph.D.
- Developing the 'Totalistic Identity Theory' for Cults and Extremist Groups - Rod Dubrow-Marshall, Ph.D.; Paul R. Martin, Ph.D.
- Reconstructing Lives after the Cult: How the Internet Has Helped - Marybeth Ayella, Ph.D.
- The Unusual Situation of the Cult Problem in Japan - Masaki Kito, Esq.; Takashi Yamaguchi, Esq.
- The Metamorphosis of a Cult - Friedrich Griess