

ICSA E-NEWSLETTER

PRINT VERSION

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2008 Numbers 2

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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. Preconference 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.

New Support Group in Texas

Support group for former members of cults, high-demand groups, or spiritually abusive groups. The support group provides a safe place to discuss personal experience as a former member, a nonjudgmental group of peers, and basic educational information about cultic groups. The group meets on the 4th Saturday of the month from 3-5 pm in Dallas, Texas. Call 214-607-1065 or e-mail at info@dallascult.com for more information. Also see http://dallascult.com/index.php?page_id=266

ICSA provides information on support groups and other assistance as a service to the public. Such news announcements do not imply that ICSA endorses or recommends any particular assistance offer.

Death of Long-Time ICSA Advisor, Kevin Garvey

Pioneering exit counselor, James Kevin Garvey, formerly of Hamden, CT. and New York City, died after an extended illness on May 27, 2008 in Middletown, CT. His loving family was by his side. He leaves many grieving friends in the ICSA community.

Kevin was born in Flushing, New York on February 22, 1943, the son of the late Attorney Charles Augustus Garvey and Frances Lynch Garvey of New York City. He is survived by his children, Sean Garvey and Darragh Burgess Garvey, his former wife, Sheila Hickey Garvey, and siblings Frances Litton, Joan Smith, Mary Denig, Judith Boxley, and Charles Garvey.

During the past year, despite his debilitating illness, Kevin was working on a paper, "Alcoholics Anonymous: The Disorganized Cult?" He had hoped to present this paper at the 2008 ICSA Annual Conference in Philadelphia. Sadly, he was never able to make that conference.

Kevin's colleagues considered him to be a "walking encyclopedia" of modern and ancient cultic practices alike. Even a simple question could generate an extraordinary conversation over a cup of coffee, for which Kevin, a raconteur as well, was famous. His quick wit, great sense of humor, and loyalty will be missed by all who knew him.

Kevin's family has asked that memorials in his name be made to: International Cultic Studies Association, P.O. Box 2265, Bonita Springs, FL 34133 (www.icsahome.com).

Cultic Studies Review, Vol. 7, No. 2

- Contemporary Uses of the Brainwashing Concept: 2000 to Mid-2007 (Stephen A. Kent, Ph.D.)
- Innocent Murderers? Abducted Children in the Lord's Resistance Army (Terra Manca)

U.S. Religious Landscape Survey

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://religions.pewforum.org/>

Our Father Who Art in Bed: A Naïve and Sentimental Dubliner in the Legion of Christ

J. Paul Lennon's memoir of his life in this controversial group. BookSurge Publishing, 2008. Available on Amazon.

Wikileaks.org — a watchdog Web site that leaks corporate and government documents — hasn't officially launched. . .

So many were surprised when it recently turned its sights on two lawyer-heavy religious groups: the Mormons and the Scientologists.

Founded in December 2006, Wikileaks boasts of an archive of 1.2 million released documents, sent in by thousands of sources and posted so the public can help debunk, verify or publicize them.

The site is run by a scattered worldwide community of journalists, activists and Chinese dissidents and funded mainly by "people who have made a lot of money in the Internet boom."

BOOKS, ARTICLES & WEB SITES

Texas High Court Rules that Exorcism is Protected by First Amendment

The Texas Supreme Court ruled in favor of a Colleyville church Friday saying that church members involved in a traumatic exorcism that ultimately injured a young woman is protected by the First Amendment. In a 6-3 decision, the court ruled that the Pleasant Glade Assembly of God's efforts to cast out demons from Laura Schubert presents an ecclesiastical dispute over religious conduct that would unconstitutionally entangle the court in church doctrine.

In a 1996 lawsuit against the church, Schubert described a wild night involving the casting out of demons from the church and two separate attempts to exorcise demons from her. The 2002 trial of the suit never touched on the religious aspects of the case, and a Tarrant County jury found the church and its members liable for abusing and falsely imprisoning Schubert, who was 17 at the time. The jury awarded Schubert \$300,000 for mental anguish, but the 2nd Court of Appeals in Fort Worth shaved \$122,000 from the verdict for loss of future income.

But the church raised the question of whether the Fort Worth appeals court erred when it said Pleasant Glades' First Amendment rights regarding freedom of religion do not prevent the church from being held liable for mental distress triggered by a "hyper-spiritualistic environment."

A majority of the court agreed, with Justice David Medina writing that while Schubert's secular injury claims might "theoretically be tried without mentioning religion, the imposition of tort liability for engaging in religious activity to which the church members adhere would have an unconstitutional 'chilling effect' by compelling the church to abandon core principles of its religious beliefs."

Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson was among the justices that disagreed with the majorities ruling, and in a dissenting opinion states that a church will simply have to claim a religious motive to deny a church member from bringing a claim against it. "This sweeping immunity is inconsistent with United States Supreme Court precedent and extends far beyond the protections our Constitution affords religious conduct," Jefferson wrote. "The First Amendment guards religious liberty; it does not sanction intentional abuse in religion's name."

The FLDS Argument Will Not Hold Up

When Texas authorities entered the Yearning for Zion (YFZ) Ranch, one of the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints (FLDS) compounds, on April 3, they did so using a warrant based on calls from a person who alleged that she was an underage girl being subjected to physical and sexual abuse, including rape, at the ranch. . . . Lawyers for the FLDS members have been arguing in the press that the entry and removal of the children constituted a "massive" violation of due process. Others have argued that the authorities' actions represent the unfair targeting of one religion. Each of these arguments is singularly misguided. . . .

The key point here is that children were being abused and were very likely to be abused in the future. And, worse, this was occurring in an atmosphere in which the adults seemed incapable of apprehending the depth of the criminal behavior in question. . .

It is just as though the state had entered a drug den on the basis of reports about one child's abuse and discovered a bevy of children in a position likely to lead to neglect and mistreatment. In such a hypothetical, surely no one would contest the appropriateness of removing the children. The religious cloak does not forestall the proper operation of the child protective authorities. . .

The best interest of the child determines government action. That is obviously what is happening in this case, and the attempts to misleadingly shift the focus to the perpetrators' religious identity is not justified by law or basic decency. There is simply no religious defense to criminal behavior. That this behavior was so heinous makes using the cover of religion all the more appalling.

From: *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 4, 2008 (Professor Marci Hamilton)

EXCERPTS FROM THIS ISSUE'S ONLINE ARTICLES

In a recent newspaper article, a Quebec Provincial Minister had this to say about approaches to the issue of cults. "In France the question is looked at from a religious perspective. There is a political movement that wants to manage the cults whereas in Quebec we favour a North American approach based on consumer protection." The minister's views reflect the position Info-Cult has taken for nearly 30 years in protecting consumers. . .

Certain social, cultural and historical factors can help us understand why some governments decide to intervene when dealing with "cults" whereas some do not.

For example, a country's historical context can have a significant impact on the actions a government chooses to take with regard to the cult phenomenon. Consider the following:

During the course of its modern history, has the country come up against an anti-democratic or totalitarian group? For example many European countries have had first-hand experience of being occupied by a Totalitarian movement. The experience of "Nazism" during WWII has had a profound impact on the psyche of many European countries, and therefore it should come as no surprise that some of these countries have a lower tolerance to groups that are viewed as totalitarian. A totalitarian group, in contrast, has never occupied North America.

Another consideration is whether or not a particular country has ever witnessed violent acts such as mass suicides or murders or terrorist attacks, perpetrated by "cult" leaders and how they have reacted to these tragedies.

Kropveld, Michael.
Governments and "Cults"

This consensus [support of psychologists surveyed for a law against brainwashing – ed.] is important enough for me to digress into a concise but complete discussion of a law against brainwashing. How might such a law be formulated and enacted? Abusive practices, which might be addressed in such a law, were alluded to using Elizabeth Smart as an example, but the time is ripe to be more specific. The term "brainwashing" can be very general. In common usage, the term has become generic for all persuasion and influence. But let me specify. For the purpose of our discussion, we would use the more restricted connotation of brainwashing:

1. Brainwashing consists of orchestrated deception, constraint, and manipulation; and
2. Brainwashing is generally harmful. (The harm spectrum of brainwashing ranges from not necessarily being in the best interest of its subjects all the way to being frankly abusive to its subjects, even unto their death.)

. . . I have devised more precise terminology for the practices.

Abusive practices that might form the basis for a specific law about brainwashing are

1. Sustained, nonconsensual, mental and physical constraint;
2. Orchestrated, deceptive, and malicious manipulation; and
3. Subversion of the self-concept, or "attack-on-the-self."

Lottick, Edward, O'Brien, Jean, & Brooks, Charles. **A Remarkable Consensus**

In a democracy, state power should be applied judiciously. When a particular harm is concrete, specific, and contrary to existing laws (e.g., "I was raped and here are the bruises and witnesses to prove it"; "I was cheated out of \$100,000 and here are the financial records to prove it"; "These test scores show that my child's education in my ex-wife's group is grossly inadequate"; "My time card and the group's bank records show that I worked long hours but was not paid even the minimum wage"), the state may act to provide an appropriate remedy to a wrong. When, however, a particular harm is vaguely construed (e.g., "I was brainwashed"; "I was psychologically abused"; "I didn't receive the therapeutic help I was promised"), the exercise of state power becomes more difficult to justify, for when the state seeks justice for person A, it usually has to restrict the freedom in some way of person B. Democratic governments are rightly reluctant to restrict the freedom of its citizens.

Although in principle I am open to the possibility of crafting new laws to limit cult abuses, I am skeptical about the viability of legal remedies with which I have some familiarity, such as that recently suggested by Lottick [see above]. . .

Although these criteria are consistent with clinical observations of cult victims and are useful concepts in the treatment of former cult members, they pose insurmountable problems, in my view, as legal criteria for a crime. How does one objectively assess these criteria? Even if one used a psychological measure of self-concept, how can one determine if a given person's self-concept has been attacked when one has no pre-group test data against which to compare the current findings? If the manipulation is orchestrated and deceptive but not malicious, does the criterion apply? How does one determine if alleged manipulation is orchestrated, deceptive, and malicious? If recruiters are themselves manipulated, how can they be held responsible for manipulating new recruits? If, as usually occurs, a group member claims that he freely chooses his behavior, how does one demonstrate "sustained, nonconsensual, mental and physical constraint"? Who is charged with making these decisions? Furthermore, how does one prevent the law from being applied to situations for which it was not intended, e.g., parental alienation claims in contentious divorce cases? Will divorcing parents have to worry about criminal brainwashing charges in addition to their other legal burdens?

Langone, Michael. **International Cultic Studies Association, Cults, and Government**

The Supreme Court of Japan has rejected former **Aum Shinrikyo** member Yasuo Hayashi's appeal of his death sentence for conspiring with other members in the poison gas attack on the Toyo subway in 1995.

Hahnemann University (Philadelphia) physicians say, in the November 2007 issue of *Clinical Psychology Review*, that **eye movement desensitization** and reprocessing is merely the latest in a series of widely touted but unvalidated therapies for the treatment of anxiety and trauma. One of the authors asserts that such therapy is "the same stuff psychologists have been doing for 20, 30 years, exposing patients to the thing they're afraid of, and the reprocessing or cognitive restructuring.

Invoking eBay rules, **Scientology** has prevailed upon the trading site to stop hosting auctions for second hand "e-meters" — Scientology spiritual counseling devices — because the church says it owns the trademark and patent rights to the device. The church's legal right to demand this is being contested.

With 1.7 million square feet of office and residential space in Clearwater, and between 5,000 and 12,000 members living and working in town, **Scientology** is "turning the city center into a virtual Scientology campus."

Former religious teacher Samaria Ali, 57, a graduate of Al-Azhar University and a member of the **Sky Kingdom** "deviant" sect, has been found guilty of apostasy from Islam and sentenced by a Malaysian judge to a term in jail. Kamaria's refusal to respond to the judge's greeting — "Assalamualaikum" — indicated that she had not repented.

The ashes of **Transcendental Meditation** founder Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the "physicist-turned spiritual guru" who died in Amsterdam in February, were

GROUP NEWS

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

The **Rev. Carl Henry Stevens Jr.**, founder of the controversial The Bible Speaks church in Lenox, and later the **Greater Grace World Outreach** in Baltimore, died June 3, 2008 of congestive heart failure. He was 78. After a \$5.5 million lawsuit prompted Stevens to leave The Bible Speaks' sprawling campus on Kemble Street in Lenox, he formed Greater Grace, which lists more than 25 affiliated churches nationwide, including one in Lee. Stevens' ministry was marked by controversy, with former members alleging on Internet sites that the church practiced mind control, sexual misconduct, child molestation, fraud and extortion. In 1987, 11 years after Stevens brought the Bible Speaks to Lenox, a court ordered the pastor to repay a Lenox woman \$6.5 million that he had persuaded her to donate to his ministry. The suit accused Stevens of deceit. The amount was reduced to \$5.5 million on appeal.

Arizonans have no religious right to practice **polygamy**, at least not with minors, the state Court of Appeals ruled Tuesday. The judges rejected arguments by a member of the **Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** that he was legally entitled to have sex with a 16-year-old girl because she was his "celestial wife" as recognized by his religion. Judge Donn Kessler, writing for the unanimous court, said while the right of individuals to believe whatever they want is absolute, the right to act on it is not.

Tuesday's decision in the case of Kelly Fischer is not likely to be the end of the legal fight. Attorney David Goldberg said he expects the issue to eventually be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Goldberg acknowledged that the nation's high court has ruled there is no right to polygamy. But he noted that decision came in 1878. He said the Supreme Court, in various more recent rulings, has refused to use morality as a basis for deciding constitutional rights. As proof, he cited the 2002 decision striking down a Texas anti-sodomy law. Goldberg said he believes the Supreme Court, if presented with this issue, will make a similar ruling.

But Goldberg may have a problem not present in that Texas case, in which the participants were both adults. In the Arizona case, the victim of the offense was 17 when she gave birth in 2001 and listed Fischer, then 33, as the father on the birth certificate. . . . But the real key, said Kessler, is the 1878 U.S. Supreme Court decision. In that case, the justices said allowing individuals to decide that their religious beliefs trump statute would, "in effect . . . permit every citizen to become a law unto himself."

To date, CPS has dropped cases involving approximately 235 FLDS children removed last April from the Yearning for Zion Ranch, home to members of the Fundamentalist **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**. The Texas Supreme Court later ordered the children's release from state custody, finding a lack of evidence that they were all in danger. The dismissals have cited reasons that include teens turning 18, parents completing court requirements and a family's lack of history of underage marriage or abuse. Still pending are cases involving another 205 children. One girl has been returned to state custody - a 14-year-old apparently married to the sect's leader, Warren S. Jeffs, at age 12.

A handful of doomsday cult members on Friday crawled out of the damp cave in **Penza** (Russia) region where they spent six months waiting for the end of the world, which their leader had prophesied. The nine people were the last of a group of 35 men, women and children that had dug into a hillside near the city of Penza in November and threatened to blow themselves up with gas canisters if authorities tried to forcibly remove them. The last cave inhabitants left their Ural Mountains hideout after officials had found the bodies of two women who died in the cave. . . . Authorities said cult members left the cave after being warned that they could be poisoned by fumes from the rotting corpses. "We could smell the stench through ventilation holes," said Vladimir Provotorov, a local official involved in the negotiations, RIA-Novosti reported. "As we pulled out the dead bodies, we suggested that the others leave. They agreed." Cult members who left the cave earlier told local journalists that the women had died from cancer and exhaustion.

The July 31st Economist reports that **Campus cults in Nigeria** have emerged from the shambles of its once admired university system. "Having started life as confraternities for the most academic students, the cults deteriorated into gang violence. The Exam Ethics Project, a lobby group, says that inter-cult violence killed 115 students and teachers

in April "immersed" in India's Narmada River.

"Unanswered Prayers: The Story of One Woman Leaving the **International Church of Christ**." Long and interesting article on Jenny Lynch's experiences. <http://www.washingtonian.com/articles/people/8429.html>

K. Gordon Neufeld, author of *Heartbreak and Rage: Ten Years Under Sun Myung Moon*, briefly reviews his involvement in the **Unification Church** in the March, 2008 issue of *First Things*, and concludes that despite some headlines made by Moon in recent years, the organization is moribund and fading away. "Moon's movement never exceeded five thousand core members in the United States, and what remains are mostly families born to those weary parents who once pounded the streets so tirelessly selling Moon's wares."

Munich authorities have closed Scientology's Kinderhaus Child-care facility, saying, "The well-being of the children in the establishment was under threat because the education process was based on the principles of **Scientology**." The German federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has also closed down Neo-Nazi and radical Muslim groups with teachings deemed antithetical to a free and democratic society.

Three women raised in **Scientology**, including leader David Miscavige's niece, have launched a Website, ExScientology Kids.com, that accuses the church of physical abuse, denying some children a proper education, and alienating members from their families.

Scientology in March failed to get a court order in Clearwater to restrain further protests by the Internet-based anti-Scientology group Anonymous. The judge said Scientology had failed to link individuals named in the church's recent lawsuit with alleged harassing phone calls, obscene emails, and

between 1993 and 2003. The real number may be much higher. . . Some progress has been made in tackling the cults at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology, thanks to 200-odd security officers, covert surveillance and student informants. For the first time in over a decade there were no gunshots on the campus last year. Yet many students say the violence has not ceased; it has just moved to the streets."

Fifty-seven-year old Christhion Coie, **Tony Alamo's** stepdaughter, has spoken at length with the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Report (Spring 2008) about the origins of his cultic organization. She calls her late mother, Susan, a charismatic "con artist with a keen intellect and few morals" who worked with Tony to recruit and indenture marginal families and individuals on the West Coast, eventually building the cult into the anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, money-making ministry it became. Coie notes that the Alamos persuaded their followers not only to scrounge for food in dumpsters, but to collect welfare checks by convincingly demonstrating that drugs addled their minds.

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."

Jim Bakker has moved his TV show from a converted restaurant near Branson, MO, to a 600-acre development in Blue Eye named Morningside that includes "a surreal indoor streetscape of Italianate store facades and condo balconies ... a grand chapel at one end and a portico at the other, the entire scene playing out under a ceiling painted like a cloudless blue sky." The facility is similar to Heritage USA, the Christian theme park and resort in South Carolina that was the center of Bakker's PTL empire before his fall. Bakker, who still owes the IRS more than \$6 million, and says he has renounced his "prosperity gospel," has no registered ownership rights in Morningside. Many former followers still support him, including the "man behind Morningside," Jerry Crawford, who has given Bakker \$25 million. Crawford, who credits the evangelist with saving his marriage, denies that Bakker has "suckered" him.

Members of **The Family** [formerly **The Children of God**] in Uganda — like The Family communities elsewhere in the world still fighting the "sex cult" stigma gained in earlier years — say that they are more liberal than they used to be. For example, a parent allows her daughter to marry a Muslim. "We have changed our perception of non-members," she said, adding that the group no longer uses the term "systemites" to refer to non-members. The Family says there were 1,238 Family homes and 10,202 members worldwide in 2005. Stephen Kent, a professor of sociology at the University of Alberta, who has studied and written about David Berg, founder of The Family, believes Berg's repressed sexual emotions "exploded" after the death of a mother who had punished him for sexual experiments as a child, experiments he continued when he came to lead a group of free-love hippies. In *Lustful Prophet: A Psychosexual Historical Study of the Children of God's Leader*, published in 2002, Kent writes: "Berg, alas, is not a great religious figure, and his solution to his own childhood-based guilt brought havoc unto those who relied upon him for guidance. He alienated the older generation of his mother's friends, destroyed his own marriage along with the marriages of others, probably lost a son to suicide, "eroticized" the relationships with his daughters and granddaughters, and denounced his eldest daughter, all in the process of the pursuit of his own passions."

Scientology critic Keith Henson was recently released from a U.S. prison after serving four months of a six-month sentence in California for anti-Scientology activities that included criminal threats, picketing Scientology facilities, and posting copyrighted Scientology material on the Internet. Henson fled to Canada when charged and asked for permanent residence there on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. But Canada refused and he was deported to face U.S. law. His three-year probation agreement forbids him to annoy, harass, or come within a thousand feet of a Scientologist. "I still fear for my life," he says. "My problem is that I haven't been paranoid enough in the past."

The Utah legislature has voted more than \$300,000 to support a "Safety Net Initiative" aimed to provide services to people suffering abuse and neglect in **polygamous**

bomb and death threats. The suit also says that the alleged vandalizing of Scientology churches around the world has been encouraged by videos on YouTube. A statement sent to the *St. Petersburg Times*, purportedly from Anonymous, denied and condemned such acts or threats of violence.

Authorities say a teenager from a **faith-healing** family died from an illness that could have been easily treated, just a few months after a toddler cousin of his died in a case that has led to criminal charges. Tuesday's death of 16-year-old Neil Beagley, however, may not be a crime because Oregon law allows minors 14 and older to decide for themselves whether to accept medical treatment. . . . An autopsy Wednesday showed Beagley died of heart failure caused by a urinary tract blockage.

Self-styled seer and sect leader, William Kamm, known as "**Little Pebble**", has lost his High Court bid for freedom. Kamm, who sexually assaulted a 15-year-old girl he claimed as his "mystical bride" on divine instructions from the Virgin Mary, unsuccessfully appealed against his conviction in the NSW Court of Criminal Appeal. He was jailed in 2005 for at least 3 1/2 years for raping and assaulting the teenager in 1993. Kamm, 57, has claimed he can communicate with the Virgin Mary and established a commune for his believers, called the **Order of St Charbel**, at Cambewarra.

About **1 Mind Ministries** CNN reports that "after denying Javon Thompson food and water for two days because he wouldn't say 'Amen' after meals, the 1-year-old's caretakers waited for a divine sign that their message had been heard: a resurrection. For more than a week. . . the child's lifeless body lay in the back room of an apartment.

communities. An original bill was broadened to include residents of "underserved" and "culturally isolated" communities in Utah and northern Arizona that are not polygamous. The program coordinator said the measure "fits with the goals of the attorney general's office. We want communities to be healthy and people to be safe and know that help is available." Various agencies had cut back their services to the target population when a \$700,000 federal grant for a similar purpose was not renewed.

Having said recently that cults are "an inexistent problem in France," and that a parliamentary commission's 1995 list of cults was "disgraceful," President Sarkozy's chief of staff, **Emmanuelle Mignon**, now adds, in response to the controversy engendered by her remarks, that the list was compiled without "thorough verification" and "No one doubts today that certain groups should not have been included in that list. Just because a spiritual group is not officially linked with a traditional church does not mean that it is necessarily a cult."

Dr. Darshak Sanghavi, writing at length in *The Boston Globe Sunday Magazine* (3/9/08), tells the story of Maria and Jose Azevdo, a **Jehovah's Witnesses** couple he counseled who refused to allow life-saving surgery for their newborn, which would have involved blood transfusions. The Azevedos eventually acquiesced to a judge's "authorization," following the doctor's request for a court order, to allow the operation to go forward. The couple does not feel they have betrayed their religious principles, and the Jehovah's Witnesses "seem to endorse this end run around the transfusion ban for children," says Dr. Darshak.

Mississippi officials announced in February that they will close the **Columbia Training School** for troubled young women following charges by former detainees, and their advocates, of "horrendous physical and sexual abuse," even death while being restrained, at the hands of supervisors. Columbia, which was sued twice in the past on similar grounds, illustrates a widespread national problem: a survey indicates that there were 13,000 claims of abuse at **juvenile correction centers** from 2004 through 2007 — in a population of 46,000 detainees (2007) — although only some ten percent were confirmed by investigators. An expert says that training of guards could minimize or reduce the problem, and some states are reforming their systems.

Former members, especially highly ranking ones, are leaving the church. One who worked in the Office of Special Affairs for 20 years, and spent more than \$200,000 on **Scientology** courses, left because she was not allowed to take her epilepsy medication, even when Scientology methods couldn't cure her. She says members remain for a very long time because there's always another level in the organization to reach for. "You don't want to give up. It's a group fantasy." The departure of chief spokesman Mike Rinder, the Australian baritone — who told *20/20* in 1998 that Hubbard was one of the great men of world history — is like Goebbels leaving the Nazis," says another defector.

Fox News reports that Jason Beghe, the "G.I. Jane" actor who left the Church of **Scientology** in April after 14 years was invited by Germany's Department of Interior Affairs to be part of a three hour seminar on Scientology in Hamburg called, "That is Scientology! Reports from the USA." The program was organized by Ursula Caberta, whose title is "Head of Working Group, Scientology, Office for Domestic Affairs, Hamburg." According to the releases that have gone out, Caberta is importing a number of American Scientology critics including Beghe. Also on the list of guests are former Scientologists Larry Brennan and Mark Headley.

Moscow's Tagansky District Court found cult leader **Grigory Grabovoi** guilty of 11 counts of fraud Monday and sentenced him to 11 years in prison. Grabovoi swindled followers and customers out of money and property "using methods of psychological pressure," the presiding judge said. Prosecutors said he had bilked people out of money by promising to resurrect the dead, including children who died in the Beslan School No. 1 terrorist attack. Grabovoi had also sold information on how to treat terminal diseases and cure the incurable, prosecutors said.

Notorious cult leader Jung Myung-seok received Tuesday a six year prison sentence for raping and sexually abusing his female followers. The Seoul Central District Court said in its ruling, "Jung is senile and has no criminal record. But he repeatedly raped and sexually harassed several female followers who had trusted him as the Messiah, inflicting immense mental damage on his victims." Jung, who headed the cult **Jesus Morning Star** or JMS, was indicted in February on charges of sexual abuse.

**The Results of the International Cultic Studies Association's 2008 Questionnaire
for Former Cult Members**

**The Reverend Richard L. Dowhower, D.D.
Chair of the ICSA Religion Committee**

. . . More interestingly, among those who sought help in the past, only 41 (53.3%) found likely or very likely to have taken advantage of these services. Thirteen people (16.9%) who sought help in the past, would not be likely to seek the help described in the question, while 23 people (29.9%) remain uncertain. We would have expected that those people who sought help from a religious organization would have rated as likely or very likely the probability of taking advantage of the services if available.

A possible explanation is that some of them underwent a not as good experience when seeking help from religious organizations. From the 13 people who rated as unlikely or very unlikely to take advantage of these services, 7 (53.8%) rated the past consultation as "not at all helpful" and 2 (15.4%) as "somewhat helpful." From the 23 people who were uncertain, 8 (34.8%) rated the past consultation as "not at all helpful" and 13 (56.5%) as "somewhat helpful."

In reading through the comments of the 13 who wouldn't seek help and the 23 uncertain as to whether they would seek such services at a congregation, **I was painfully reminded of how often clergy and congregations are ill-prepared to understand and effectively respond to ex-members.** . These responses indicate how significant a training process this project would need to mount to adequately prepare local clergy and church members to be effectively helpful with ex-members.

ICSA wants to create a network of churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions that have been prepared to be supportive resources for former cult members (and eventually for families of cult involved persons) who seek a safe and supportive environment without hidden agendas. We do not want to ask religious organizations to take on added time demands. We would, however, seek to plug into relevant existing programs they might have (e.g., helping people find housing, get jobs, etc.) and offer training to select persons at the religious organization so that they would better understand the needs of former cult members and would know where to refer them for counseling and information. When appropriate, we also might ask religious organizations to provide a meeting room for an ex-member support group. Our ultimate goal is to have at least one cooperating church and synagogue in each metropolitan area in the U.S. and Canada, and eventually other countries. With the permission of the participating religious institutions, we would list them as resources on our Web site so that former group members would be more likely to find out about their services.

In order to assess the feasibility of this project, we disseminated a Web survey that inquired into the needs of former group members and their openness to seeking assistance from religious organizations. . .

. . .two hundred twenty four responses were included for this report. . .

Among ex-members, time in the group ranged from one month to 35 years with 11.2 years as the mean. In respect to the time from when they left the groups to the moment in which they responded to the survey, it ranged from one month to 37 years with a mean time of 12.7 years out of their group.

When asked to report the religion in which the ex-member was raised, we learned that 67% were either Roman Catholic or Protestant, 4 % Jewish and 11% none. Current practices reported that the Catholic-Protestant total dropped to 39%, and "None" has risen to 38%.

Eighty respondents (42%) sought help from main line religious organizations. Thirty two (40%) found these services not at all helpful, 17 (21%) rated the services as helpful or very helpful, and 31 (39%) rated as somewhat helpful.

Question #14 is key to the purpose of this questionnaire, namely to help the Religion Committee of the ICSA to determine the viability of a program proposed to establish trained congregational centers to assist ex-members in the recovery process. It reads, "*If assistance at a mainstream religious organization, such as a church/synagogue, had been available to ex-member when he/she left the group, how likely would he/she have been to take advantage of it?*"

Sixty nine (39%) indicated "likely" or "very likely," 59 (33%) chose "very unlikely" or "unlikely" and 51 (28.5%) selected "uncertain."

The data tells us that there is a significant group of former cult members who would have wished to benefit from the services we are envisioning. . .

Participants were asked to rate the degree to which the ex-member or others who left with him or her needed each of the 19 services listed when he/she left the group. Means and standard deviations indicated the greatest needs were "Specialist on Cults," "Information on Cults," "Support Group," "Therapist," and "Spiritual Guidance." Other needs identified were: "Housing," "Financial Guidance," and "Educational Guidance." Lowest on the priority list of wanted services were: "Child Care," "Paperwork" services, "Transportation," "Clothing," and "\$ Incidentals."

I am extremely grateful for the collaboration and the specific recommendations of Dr. Carmen Almendros, many of which appear in this summary report.



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POLYGAMY TIMELINE

1820s: Joseph Smith experiences visions and revelations.
1830: Joseph Smith founds the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York; the Book of Mormon is published.
1831: Smith has revelation on polygamy; church moves base to Ohio and Missouri.
1839: LDS church flees persecution to Illinois.
1843: Smith's disclosure of a "celestial plural marriage" doctrine increases persecution.
1844: Smith is killed by a mob in an Illinois jail.
1845: Mormons migrate to territories of Utah and Arizona.
1852: Polygamy becomes an official tenet of the LDS religion.
1862: Congress passes the Morrill Act to criminalize polygamy in U.S. territories.
1879: Supreme Court rules in Reynolds v. United States that a Mormon was properly convicted of bigamy, rejecting arguments that anti-polygamy statutes violate religious freedom.
1882: Congress passes the Edmunds Act, making plural marriage in U.S. territories a felony; more than 1,300 Mormons are jailed in Utah.
1887: Congress adopts the Edmunds-Tucker Act requiring plural wives to testify against husbands and abolishing women's suffrage in Utah territory.
1890: LDS church renounces plural marriages.
1896: Utah becomes a state after adopting a constitution that says "polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited."
1904: LDS church imposes excommunication for polygamy.
1912: Arizona attains statehood with a constitutional ban on polygamy.
1913: A splinter group, eventually known as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, settles in Short Creek (now Colorado City).
1935: Six polygamists are arrested at Short Creek for unlawful cohabitation.
1944: Federal agents conduct another anti-polygamy sweep in Short Creek.
1953: The most famous Short Creek raid breaks up families and incarcerates husbands.
1984: A conflict within the FLDS sect leads to schism, with The Work of Jesus Christ group moving to Centennial Park.
2003-08: Attorneys general in Arizona and Utah launch a joint campaign against child marriages and other crimes in Colorado City and Hildale. The effort leads to convictions of key FLDS figures.
2003: FLDS begin migration to Eldorado, Texas.
2004: FLDS church leader Warren Jeffs excommunicates 21 men, stripping them of wives, children and homes.
2007: Jeffs, known as the prophet, is convicted of rape as an accomplice for marrying a minor girl to an adult man.
2008: Texas authorities raid the FLDS compound in Texas, taking custody of 416 children. State Supreme Court orders children returned to parents.

Sources: Brigham Young University online timeline of Mormon history; Arizona Republic archives; Salt Lake Tribune chronology; "The Constitutionality of Polygamy Prohibitions" by Joseph Bozzuti.
