

## News from Info-Cult

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and still counting  
By Mike Kropveld

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### Thirty-three years... 80,000 requests and still counting

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

For over 30 years Info-Cult has been responding to requests from all sectors of society. Since its beginnings in 1980, Info-Cult has received over **80,000** requests, involving close to **4,000** different groups, individuals and subjects. We receive thousands of visitors to our website every month and, every year, Info-Cult receives over **1,000** requests covering a broad range of concerns.

Numbers are often what Info-Cult is asked about: How many groups are out there and how many people are affected by this issue? However, numbers don't reveal the varied nature of the interests and concerns that people have. What complicates matters is that there is also a perception of what a "cult" is, what it represents to the public, and how Info-Cult actually deals with the complexities of this issue.

Info-Cult offers help and information about cults, new religious movements and related groups and subjects. The nature of the requests Info-Cult receives range from internationally well-known religious and other groups having hundreds or thousands of members to small local groups with a handful of members. Subjects of interest range from the End of the World, Satanism, Alternative Therapies, Channelors to Wicca, Angels and Voodoo.

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### Education

#### 2014 Annual International ICSA Conference, Washington, DC, July 3 – 5.

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

[Call for Papers](#)

[Call for Art & Literary Works](#)

#### Info-Cult on Facebook



Our page can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/InfoCult.InfoSecte>  
If you are on **Facebook** and click on "Like" on our page you will get updates about new items that we've posted.

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

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

[http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/Options\\_EN.html](http://infosect.freeshell.org/infocult/Options_EN.html)



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## Thirty-three years... 80,000 requests and still counting

Here is a small sample of the requests we regularly receive:

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The nature of the requests Info-Cult receives range from internationally well-known religious and other groups having hundreds or thousands of members to small local groups with a handful of members.

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View of Washington, D.C.  
Location of the 2014  
ICSA International Conference.

- The wife of a former member called about her husband who had suffered physical and psychological abuse in the group he was involved in and had never talked about his experiences. Thirty years after leaving the group, his repressed experiences emerged, and he suffered a breakdown. Info-Cult was able to put him in contact with a professional who had extensive experience helping former members and who was very knowledgeable about the group he had been involved in.
- A woman called concerning her 76 year-old mother who, for 6 years had been receiving letters from "mediums" (psychics) living overseas. She was sending them money and performing rituals that she was given to do in order to improve her health and wealth. The family was concerned as their mother appeared to be very stressed at having to complete the rituals and was becoming less communicative. She was on a pension and after sending money to the mediums (psychics) she had little left for herself. Info-Cult suggested ways for the family to keep the lines of communication open without confronting their mother, as well as suggesting that they inform (call) law enforcement about the situation.
- A woman who was a member of an Evangelical group called about problems she was having with her husband. He was not a member of the group and her involvement was causing conflict in the relationship. She was open to talking and finding a way to deal with her husband. Info-Cult offered her suggestions on how to proceed in discussing the issue with her husband.
- A man working for a Catholic organization wanted to know about renting space in their building to a group that believed in Chakras. The organization had no policy regarding this request so Info-Cult discussed the pros and cons of how to respond to this particular situation. Info-Cult recommended that a general policy for renting rooms be put in place in order to avoid potential problems. We also suggested they consult a sample policy for renting rooms that is on Info-Cult's website. We have received this type of request numerous times over the years from public, private and community groups.
- Law enforcement officers requested information on a certain group whose documents were found at the home of a victim of an apparent suicide. They wanted to know if there was anything about the group that would change their minds or need to be pursued about the death. We checked and found that there was no information that supported the likelihood of foul play.

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### Thirty-three years... 80,000 requests and still counting

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As long as people need to believe and belong, there will be individuals and groups who will spring up to respond to those needs. Sadly, in some cases, there will be those who will exploit the needs of others, and cause a considerable degree of harm and misery along the way.

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- A woman who was receiving mail and phone calls from a Church trying to recruit her called Info-Cult because repeated requests by her to stop being harassed had not achieved any results. Having already established contact with this group, Info-Cult told her who to contact and to say we told her to call, which she did. She explained the situation and the problem was resolved – she no longer received any calls or mail.
- A woman called Info-Cult very concerned as she believed a certain group had guns and there was talk about the end of the world and suicide. Info-Cult put her in touch with a contact person in law enforcement who investigated the claim. Info-Cult later found out that, although there were concerns about the group's activities, there was no indication that it was planning any violence externally or internally.
- The sister of a group member who had died and been buried somewhere in the United States, had been trying to find out from the group where he was buried, but everyone she contacted was unable to help her. Info-Cult got involved and contacted a member of the group with whom we had contact and explained the situation. A few days later he was able to obtain the location of the cemetery which we passed on to the sister who was very grateful.
- A grandmother whose son was living in France and separated from his wife with whom he had an 8-year-old daughter called Info-Cult. The wife claimed the grandmother was in a cult and feared the child would be indoctrinated which was why she went to court to prevent the father from taking their child to Canada for a visit. The grandmother had physical problems and was unable to travel. The case was going to appeal and she called to see if Info-Cult would confirm that the group in question was not a cult. Info-Cult explained we do not identify groups as a cult or not. Info-Cult also discussed how France views the issue of "cults" and presented her with information and ideas to pass on to her son to help with the case. She was very distressed especially since she was not even a member of the group claimed by the mother to be a "cult".

In addition, Info-Cult receives a significant number of requests every year from families and friends who are concerned about a loved one involved in a group about which they do not know anything. In cases in which it is very difficult to provide any details about the organization, Info-Cult offers advice on how to maintain communication with the family member, including suggestions on what to do and what not to do, and how to develop a strategy they are comfortable with in dealing with their loved one.

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Info-Cult often suggests that family and friends approach the individual involved in the group, in a non-confrontational manner in order to gather firsthand information about the organization and her/his involvement.

As pointed out above this is just a small selection of the variety of inquiries Info-Cult receives. Each inquiry takes considerable time and careful thought. Taking the time to deal with each caller's concerns constitutes an essential aspect of the services we offer.

As long as people need to believe and belong, there will be individuals and groups who will spring up to respond to those needs. Sadly, in some cases, there will be those who will exploit the needs of others, and cause a considerable degree of harm and misery along the way. So long as this reality exists, there will always be a need for Info-Cult and its unique and irreplaceable services.

## Education

### INFO-CULT WEBSITE

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

**THÈSES/THESIS** by Poulin, Christiane [Enjeux identitaires et appartenance sectaire](#), Thèse présentée comme exigence partielle du doctorat en psychologie (psy.d.), Août 2010

**PRESENTATION** by Info-Cult's Executive Director at the past ACFAS Conference: Kropveld, Mike (2013). *Info-Secte*. [Présentation à l'Association francophone pour le savoir \(ACFAS\)](#), le 6 mai 2013

**REPORT** from Great Britain, [A rapid literature review of evidence on child abuse linked to faith or belief](#) – by Antonia Simon, Hanan Hauari, Katie Hollingworth and John Vorhaus, Childhood Wellbeing Research Centre (CWRC) Working Paper No. 15, October 2012

**LAW** in Italy [Regulations to support people's rights and their complete intellectual, psychological and moral freedom](#) (English translation)

Italian version: [Legge regionale 31 maggio 2012, n. 11 Norme per il sostegno dei diritti della persona e la piena libertà intellettuale, psicologica e morale dell'individuo](#) (Page 13 - 14)

**TV AND RADIO PROGRAMS** that already have been broadcast are [ACCESSIBLE ON LINE](#)

Bookmark our site: [www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org) and keep up to date

## Donate to Info-Cult

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

Online at:



<http://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=s37870&Language=en>

Or by:

**PayPal**

Go to [www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org) and click on **DONATE NOW**

Or by mail to

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



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

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



*Part of Info-Cult's library*