

# Annual Report 2012 - 2013



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## **PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

One of Info-Cult's major accomplishments was our hosting in July 2012 of the International Cultic Studies Association's annual conference. This is the first time a conference of this stature was held in the province of Quebec. This conference, open to the public, brought together some of the top experts from around the world on cults and new religious movement and provided former and current group members, families, mental health professionals, educators, and the public with the latest information and resources about this issue.

We were also very pleased in organizing this conference to have had the collaboration of the Université de Montréal, the International Centre for Comparative Criminology (ICCC) of the Université de Montréal, and l'Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes.

We received positive coverage in the media and more importantly numerous participants at the conference expressed their gratitude to us for having organized this event. The number of former members and families who attended and benefited from this unique opportunity was especially gratifying.

The success of such an endeavour is not possible without our volunteers who donated countless hours and we are very thankful for their hard work, without which a conference of this scope would not have been possible.

During the year two other important issues received wide media coverage. The first was prior to the end of 2012, and dealt with the public's fear concerning the purported "End of the World". This subject received a lot of media coverage and Info-Cult was often called on to comment. We responded with factual information to allay public fears and to downplay the sensational and often misinformed media reporting about this subject. The second was the media attention on charlatan healers / gurus and those defrauded and harmed in by them.

As we have done for the past thirty three years, Info-Cult continues to receive inquiries from every sector of our community including those looking for information for a family or personal related issue or from people seeking information for a school project.

Info-Cult is a unique organization. What we have accomplished and what we hope to achieve in the future is possible thanks to all the individuals, groups, organizations and institutions that continue to support us in our mission and to the many who have so kindly offered their time and expertise to Info-Cult.



Carolle Tremblay  
President



Mike Kropveld  
Executive Director

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# 1. INFO-CULT

## Profile

Info-Cult is one of the leading organizations involved in responding to questions and concerns about cults, new religious movements and related groups and subjects. Info-Cult houses one of the largest

collections in the world of information in this field and we provide a variety of services in response to individual and community needs.

## Objectives

The objective of Info-Cult is to promote the dignity and integrity of the individual, the respect of collective and individual rights, the freedom of thought and expression, and the right of access to information.

Our objectives are:

- To promote the study of cultic phenomena;
- To sensitize, inform and educate the public about these phenomena;
- To assist people with problems related to these phenomena.

## Board of Directors, Members, Volunteers, Staff

### *Board of Directors*

#### **Honorary President**

Laurent Picard, c.c.

#### **President**

Carolle Tremblay  
Lawyer  
Jolicœur Lacasse Avocats

#### **Secretary**

Maria Peluso  
Professor,  
Humanities, Dawson College

#### **Treasurer**

Jean-Pierre Fafard  
Lawyer  
Sylvestre Fafard Painchaud

#### **Directors**

Dianne Casoni  
Full Professor  
School of Criminology, University of Montreal

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Dianne Casoni  
Full Professor  
School of Criminology, University of Montreal

Michael Crelinsten  
Executive Director  
Jewish Public Library

Christophe Nowakowski  
Psychiatrist

Marie-Andrée Pelland,  
Assistant Professor  
Sociology Department, University of Moncton

Herschel Segal  
Businessman

#### **Executive Director**

Mike Kropveld

## ***Members***

There are 21 who include former group members, parents, academics, lawyers and mental health professionals who share a common concern about

the “cult” issue and are involved in supporting the activities and services of the organization.

## ***Volunteers***

Volunteers play an essential role in Info-Cult's daily operations. Many people assume that Info-Cult is a large organization with different departments. The reality is Info-Cult operates with a skeleton staff. This impression has come about as a result of the profile Info-Cult has attained and is in large part due to the countless hours that volunteers have dedicated to the organization. There are more than **30** volunteers who donate their time and expertise to our organization.

Volunteers are involved, in policy development and decision making, providing legal advice, publicity, office work, fund-raising, research, public education, helping to organize conferences, cataloguing of new acquisitions to our documentation centre, translation of documents from English to French and French into English, in constructing and maintaining our web site and in a very important area - support to ex-members and families.

Volunteers who are former members play an integral role and we cannot underline enough the time that

they have volunteered to talk with:

- Other former members in need of support;
- Families who were in a time of crisis; and
- The media in search of a former member's experience.

Volunteers include:

- Professionals (including educators, mental health professionals, lawyers, business professionals, etc.) who recognize the need for Info-Cult and its services.
- Concerned individuals who have taken the time to learn about the issue.
- Individuals who have, or have had a child, sibling, parent or friend involved in a cultic group and understand the harm that such a problem can cause.
- Former members who want to use their experience to alert others to the potential harm that involvement in a group can entail.

## Staff

Info-Cult's founder and Executive Director Mike Kropveld was the only full-time staff person, assisted by one part-time contractual employee.

The Executive Director serves on the:

- Board of Directors [since 2009]: **International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA)\***
- Board of Directors [2011 – 2013] **International Society for the Study of New Religions (ISSNR)**

He has been recognized for his work in this field by the:

**Government of Canada:** In 1992 he received the 125th Commemorative Medal *in recognition of significant contribution to compatriots, community and to Canada.*

- **ICSA:** In 2007 he received the HERBERT L. ROSEDALE AWARD *presented in recognition of leadership in the effort to preserve and protect individual freedom.*

\* The International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) founded in 1979, is the leading professional organization in the field. Based in the United States, ICSA is a global network of people concerned about psychological manipulation and abuse in cultic groups, alternative movements, and other environments. ([www.icsahome.com](http://www.icsahome.com))

## Decision Making and Funding

### Decision Making

The day to day operations and decisions are taken by the Executive Director. On matters that touch on policy and the direction of the center, Info-Cult's Board meets during the course of the year. Five

meetings were held during the year.

Alternative methods such as conference calls or email are used to reach a consensus on matters that require a rapid decision.

### Funding

Info-Cult receives funding from various sources. In 2012-2013, Info-Cult received its annual grant from the **Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services**. In addition, discretionary funds were received from our **provincial member of the National Assembly as Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Region of Montreal**, as well as from our provincial:

- **Premier and Minister of Youth**
- **Minister of Justice**
- **Minister of International Relations**

Other sources of funding included:

- Foundations,
- Companies,
- Religious communities and groups,
- Service fees,
- Individual donors.

Donations are also received via [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org) and **PayPal** simple and secure methods for donors to make online contributions.

Info-Cult is a registered Canadian charity - Revenue Canada No. 125754242 RR0001

## History of Community Service

Info-Cult was founded in **1980** under the name **Cult Project** and at the time was under the auspices of the B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation of Montreal. In August **1990**, **Info-Cult** was formed as an independent, bilingual, non-denominational centre run by a Board of Directors concerned by the impact of cult phenomena on our society.

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

Through the years, there have been numerous events of note. A few selected ones include:

- Since our inception, and again in 2012-2013, Info-Cult has assisted individuals and families looking for help and information.
- 2012: Info-Cult hosted the *International Cultic Studies Association* Annual Conference in Montreal. This conference is the only one of its kind in the world.
- Prior to December 21, 2102 Info-Cult responded

to questions and concerns from the media and families about the “End of the World”.

- 2010 marked 30 years of service to the community. Over that period Info-Cult responded to tens of thousands of requests, detailed in our Statistics section.
- 2009: Info-Cult ([www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org)) has been on line for 10 years, providing a wealth of English and French information and is constantly updated.
- Info-Cult in collaboration with two other Montreal organizations organized a 2 day conference at the University of Montreal. ***Du croire à l'extrême et des pratiques sectaires: prendre en compte et intervenir.***
- Info-Cult plays a key role in organizing ICSA international conferences. In 2011 the conference was held in Barcelona Spain and organized jointly with the Spanish group *Asesoramiento e Informacion sobre Sectas – AIS*. In 2012 it will be held in Montreal.
- The Publication in 2006 of Info-Cult's book by its Executive Director Mike Kropveld and Marie-Andrée Pelland, **The Cult Phenomenon: How Groups Function**. This was an updated English version of ***Le phénomène des sectes : l'étude du fonctionnement des groupes*** published in 2003. The two versions are



downloadable from Info-Cult's website at no charge. Production of this book was made possible thanks to a grant from Québec's Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration and the English version thanks to the support of Canadian Heritage.

- In 2005 Info-Cult celebrated its 25th Anniversary of public service. A booklet commemorating the event was published and

included congratulatory remarks from prominent individuals. The booklet is available on our website.

- 1999: [www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org) was launched.
- In the years 1994 and 1995 the world saw and heard about the tragedies related to the Order of the Solar Temple in Canada, Switzerland and France, the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas and the Aum Shinri Kyo in Japan. Info-Cult served as an important resource to the media and others for background information about those groups and to assist in providing a context to understanding these tragedies
- Info-Cult released its educational documentary *Beyond the Mirage* in 1994 an original English version of its French version *Au-delà des Mirages* which was launched in 1993

The documentaries were made for the general public, with a special focus on youth, to raise awareness about the cult phenomenon. The videos have been used as a teaching tool in schools across Canada and the United States

- Also in 1993, Info-Cult submitted a report to a Quebec Parliamentary Commission on "alternative therapies". In its submission concerns were raised about the harm associated with the practices of certain alternative therapies.
- 1991 a bilingual information pamphlet was published by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) in collaboration with Info-Cult. The pamphlet, entitled *Are You Vulnerable?* was distributed throughout Canada.
- In the 1980s different reports were completed, such as in 1987, on cultism in France, funded in part by the *Office Franco-Québécois pour la Jeunesse*; in 1986, on charitable solicitation in Canada, funded by *Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada* and in the same year on consumer problems related to new religious movements in Quebec, funded by a grant from *l'Office de la Protection du consommateur du Québec*. And in 1982, on cults in the Francophone sector in Montreal.

## Testimonials (Selection)

### 2012-2013

Bonjour,

Je voulais vous remercier pour notre conversation téléphonique et ces informations. Cela est très apprécié. Je vous ai trouvé très gentil et professionnel. J'ai décidée de ne pas y aller finalement. ..J'ai écouté mon intuition et mes rêves... Je vous remercie. Bonne continuation.

*Thanks for the info, will utilise all these resources. Nice to chat with someone that has a better understanding of what someone like me has been through. thanks again.*

Bonjour,

Merci encore une fois pour votre service hier vis-à-vis moi.

Vous avez parlé d'un document concernant le paternel de Roch Thériault, quel genre de bonhomme c'était. Pouvez-vous m'envoyer ce document pour que j'en prenne connaissance afin de m'aider dans mon travail pour l'Université.

Merci de votre aide. Au plaisir de se revoir.

### 2011-2012

*Bonjour Mike, je vous écris pour faire un suivi au sujet de mon frère X, finalement tout s'est bien réglé, nous nous sommes parlés et il a raconté pourquoi il avait écrit cette lettre, d'un autre côté nous avons pu lui exprimer ce que nous nous avons vécu (quand je dis nous, je parle surtout de mon père) alors tout est bien finit bien. Un gros merci pour vos bonnes paroles données si généreusement. Ce fut très utile.*

... Shunning is not a nice practice. This group doesn't blow people up but they promote emotional terrorism. Thanks for your help

*Vos courriels sont très appréciés. La réflexion que suscitent les différents groupes «sectaires» est essentielle.*

Je désire dans un premier temps vous remercier pour votre très précieuse collaboration pendant toutes ces années et vos messages envoyés.

Merci pour votre aide. Elle fut très appréciée.

L'heure de la retraite pour moi est arrivée. Je quitterai mes fonctions dans quelques semaines.

Je désire vous saluer avant mon départ et vous remercier mille fois. .... Merci encore une fois pour les efforts soutenus à mon endroit pour me tenir informé pendant ces années.

## 2010 – 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read this and other articles you've sent, some of which I've emailed to clients, who, like myself, are former cult members.

Thank you for your good work!

Best,

*... Vos courriels sont très appréciés. Votre travail contribue à la réflexion : qu'est-ce que la liberté, qu'est-ce que la liberté de religion, qu'est-ce qu'une communauté de foi.*

*Il ne faut jamais faire l'économie de la raison humaine. Merci pour votre travail...*

*Sœur...*

Pour l'aide que M. Mike Kropveld m'a apporté il y a quelques années avec une grande compétence, compréhension et aussi pour sa grande ouverture d'esprit. En espérant que ce don puisse aider le moins possible d'autres personnes.

J.

*Bonjour,*

*J'ai du abandonner la proposition de reportage dont nous avons parlé ...*

*Cependant, merci énormément pour vos explications. Cela m'a beaucoup aidé.*

*Bonne continuation.*

*Cordialement,*

*Étudiante en Journalisme*

## Previous Years

Hello,

Thank you so much for getting back to me. I would love to be able to speak with you directly as this is very important to me and has taken up much of my life since April. I see there are places I can make a donation to your organization and would love to do so simply because you took the time to get back to me. My email and questions were not exactly what we call to be normal questions so I thank you for not disregarding them.

A.

*Vous n'avez pas idée combien vos conseils me sont précieux. Je les avais tous notés après notre rencontre. C'est vraiment de ce genre de conseils pratiques dont j'avais besoin!*

*Merci encore, M.*

Dear Mike,

I hope all is well for you and Info-Sect. We are busier than ever... too busy really. I just wanted to let you know that we appreciate this news service that you provide. We look at it and utilize/download many of the articles. Thanks so much.

Take care,

Bob

*Bonjour Mike,*

*J'ai pensé te donner les nouvelles vu que ça fait longtemps qu'on s'est vus. Je suis maintenant certaine de ne plus vouloir être de « X ». Je ne fais pas de démarches pour me dissocier officiellement, mais je 'fade out' comme on dit. Et j'ai commencé à le dire à mon entourage, comme à mes collègues de travail, ma famille et mes amis proches (membres ou non).*

Bonjour Mike,

Je quitte mon travail demain après 35 ans de travail au secteur public et para-public. Je dois donc me désabonner de ton service d'information.

J'ai beaucoup apprécié les collaborations que nous avons eues au fil des ans. Non seulement ton expertise est unique mais la façon dont tu sais en faire bénéficier le public et les intervenants de tous les secteurs est remarquable. Tes conseils ont toujours été judicieux et ton approche a toujours témoigné d'un grand respect pour les gens que tu as aidés. Ce fut un plaisir de te connaître.

*Dear Mike,*

*...I will tell you that our son is now a practicing psychologist...You advised us...to Stay cool/that it did not sound like he was involved with a cult, and you were right. Best wishes for 2009.*

Madame, Monsieur,

Merci infiniment de m'avoir communiqué l'adresse (courriel) actuelle de Dianne (nom fictif). Cela m'a permis de reprendre contact avec elle. C'est vraiment sympathique pour moi.

*Je vous souhaite un bel été et une bonne continuation du travail indispensable et salué par beaucoup, que vous faites.*

*Encore merci.*

Dear Mike,

I always "mean" to send you more donations than I do.  
You'll never know truly how much I appreciate your organization and the work it does.

Sincerely,

Nancy

*Bonjour Carole, Bonjour Mike,*

*Je ne puis laisser passer l'occasion de la fin de ce merveilleux colloque des deux derniers jours sans vous remercier d'une façon toute particulière de votre dévouement à organiser cet évènement. C'était nouveau pour moi... je n'ai pas pu prendre la mesure de l'ampleur de l'organisation et avant de partir, je n'ai pas pu vous remercier tel que vous le méritez. Je vous ai trouvé vraiment attentionnés que je ne puis que m'incliner devant votre modestie et votre générosité. Merci de m'y avoir accueilli.*

*J'ai puisé dans ces conférences, des ressources nouvelles de compréhension que je pourrai vulgariser sur le terrain auprès des gens que je connais et à qui j'offre de l'écoute suite à leur passé dans des milieux religieux fermés.*

*Ces analyses de recherches qualitatives et scientifiques du phénomène sectaire religieux développées au cours de ces présentations donnent confiance dans le cheminement social sur cette problématique. Je trouve que vous faites un travail en profondeur depuis tant d'années, travail qui agit comme une vague de fond et qui nous mènera un jour pas trop lointain, espérons-le, vers une législation plus éclairée concernant les droits des enfants sur ce sujet très pointu. Mieux équipés, nous pourrons alors éviter à d'innombrables enfants les effets néfastes des expériences en milieux sectaires totalitaires, et par extension mieux accompagner les enfants-adultes qui posent le geste volontaire de quitter de tels milieux.*

*Je suis reparti mieux outillé pour la compréhension des effets et des étapes du parcours psychologique quand il s'agit d'enfants élevés en bas âge dans ces groupes, avec de meilleurs moyens d'intervention et avec une ouverture plus humaine sur des possibilités d'aide pour ceux qui font l'expérience du vécu en milieu sectaire.*

*J'espère avoir encore l'occasion de puiser à votre savoir.*

*Humblement,*

*David*

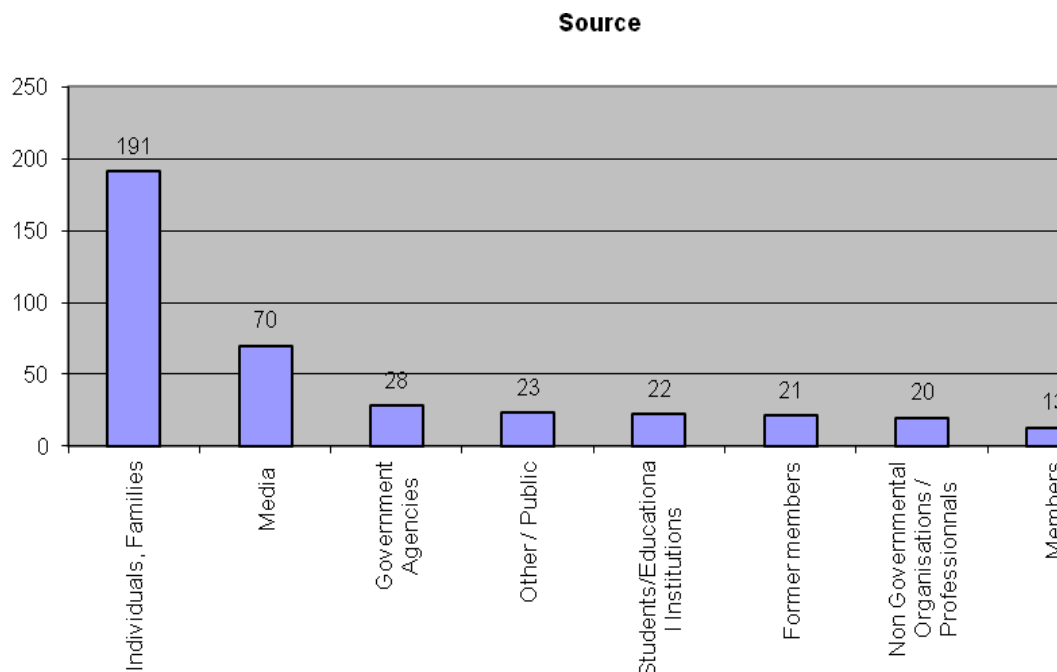
## 2. STATISTICS

Info-Cult received about **1187** requests by phone and email in **2012-2013**.

These requests represent; individual and family concerns about a loved one beginning to get involved in a group or presently a member, individuals asking for information about a specific group or looking for general information on the cult phenomenon. Requests from professionals, businesses, non-profits, and other private and governmental institutions relate

to a specific client, case, or situation. The media is quite interested in this issue and requests were for either interviews and/or information. In addition, members of groups (religious and others) contacted us with concerns about their involvement or to provide us with information about their organization.

### Breakdown of Tabulated Requests \*



\* Does not include a breakdown of email requests

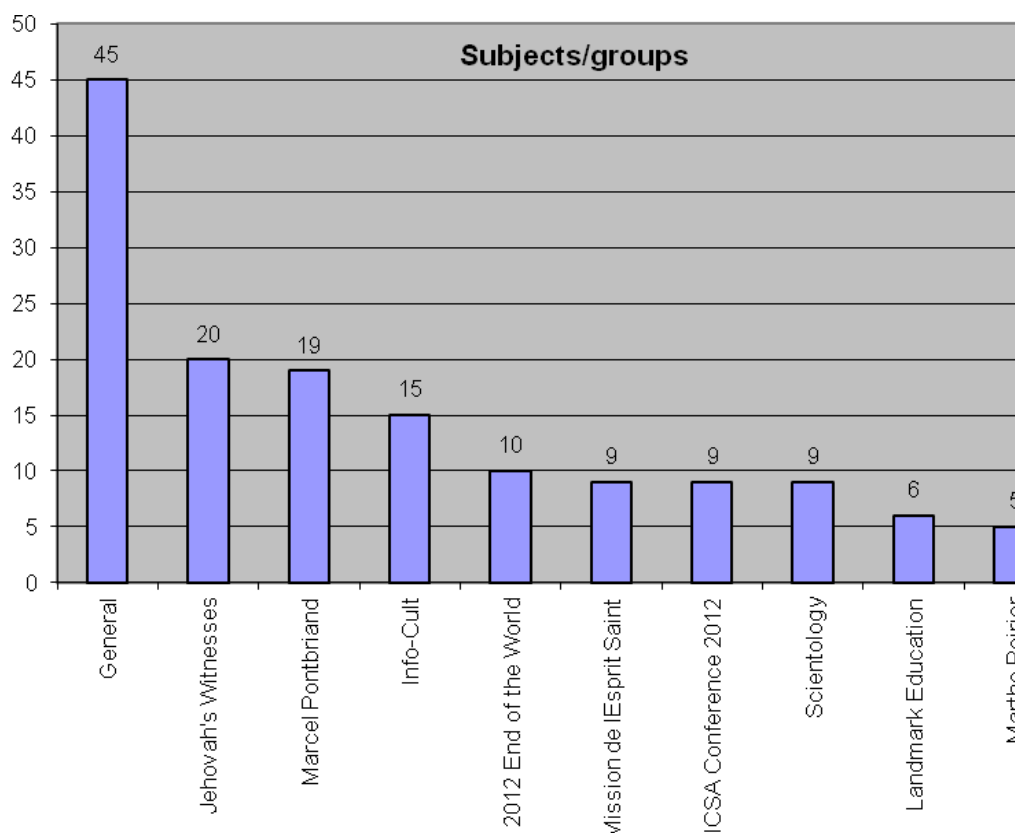
## Breakdown of Subjects/Groups\*\*

This year we received requests on about **168** different groups or subjects.

The most requested in 2012 - 2013 are indicated in the graph below. The majority of requests were either for general information on the cult phenomenon or concerned specific family situations.

In most of those cases the name of the group was known but in a number of situations the name was unknown.

For most of the subjects/groups calls were also received from the media.

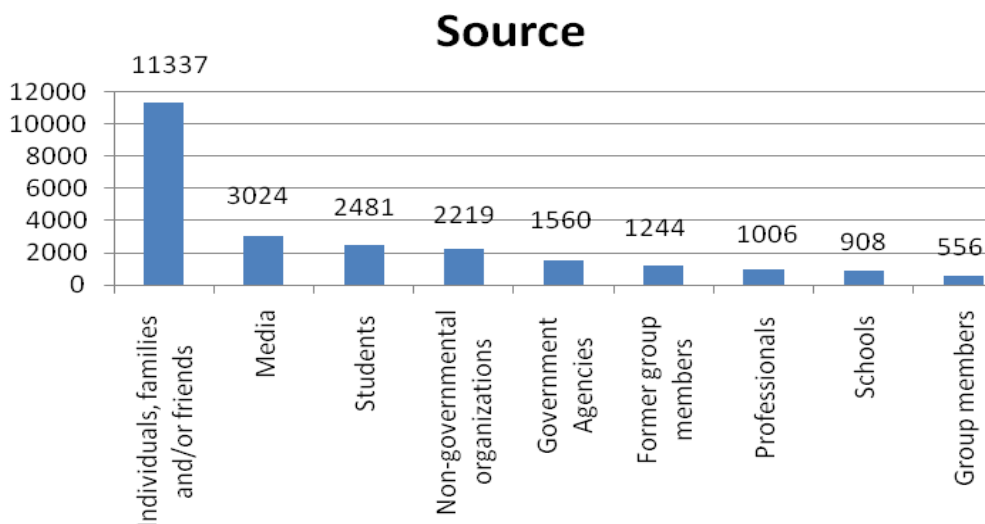


\*\* The inclusion of a group on this list does not denote that it is a cult only that an inquiry was received about it and does not include a breakdown of all email requests.

## Global Statistics: 1980 – 2010

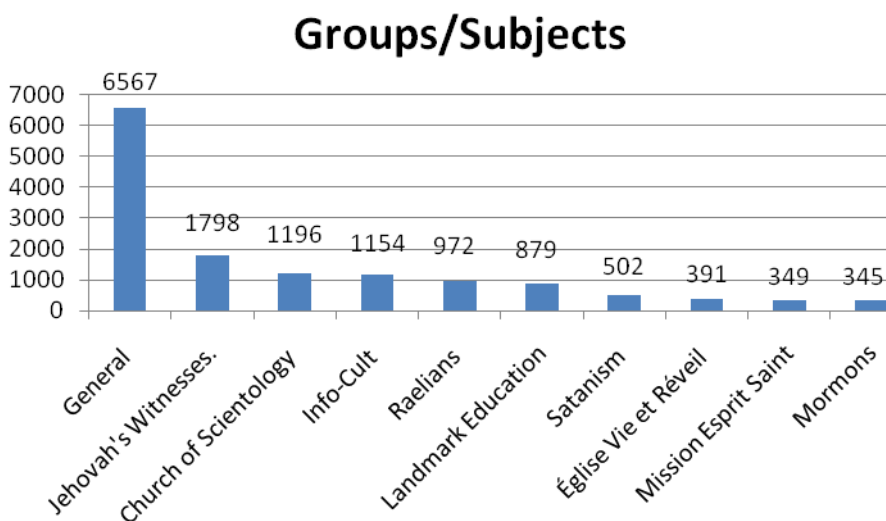
### 30 Years of Requests

During this period Info-Cult received more than **75,000** requests by phone, mail, fax and email. Of that number 31,814 were catalogued and a breakdown of the majority of the requests is shown in the graph below:



### Groups and subjects requested during the last 30 years \*\*

Requests were received regarding **3 768** different groups or subjects. The range of groups covered internationally well known ones with hundreds or thousands of members to very small local organizations with a handful of participants. Subjects asked about varied from Satanism and Wicca to Angels and Voodoo. The 10 most frequent requests during those years were.



\*\*The inclusion of a group on this list does not denote that it is a cult only that an inquiry was received about it.



### 3. SERVICES, RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Assistance and Support Services

##### *Overview*

Most people's first contact with Info-Cult is by phone though the number of requests by email is increasing every year. Over the last few years mail requests have diminished to a trickle being replaced by email. The use of the internet reflects the times we live in and we expect its use to grow in the future.

Many of the people contacting us are going through a difficult period, due to a loved-ones dramatic behaviour change on becoming involved in a group, former members who are desperately seeking assistance and support to deal with their experiences and a myriad of other callers that contact us for help. This is our most important service and the one to which we devote the most time.

In 2012-2013 we received **1187** requests for help and information. The requests come from people with different needs and from all walks of life. Among them are:

- **Former group** members who are having problems integrating or reintegrating into society. Increasingly over the past few years more callers include **second generation members**, (those born or raised in a group);
- **Families** who are worrying about a loved-one's

involvement in a group (requests come from among others, parents calling about their children, adults about their parents, husbands about their wives or vice versa);

- **Mental health professionals**, lawyers and, law enforcement officers, or community workers seeking our advice about a specific situation or to refer a client;
- **Regular callers** who are in need of someone to talk to when going through a difficult period.

With nearly every caller we provide the added dimension of preventive education by taking the time to explain how Info-Cult functions, and our view and position on the issue of "cults". We clarify that we do not simply reply that a group is or isn't a cult. Even though there have been extreme groups, the reality is that a simple answer in this area rarely exists. Our position is one that is moderate and balanced based on objective information as well as on our many years of experience in working in this field.

Info-Cult has assisted thousands of families and ex-cult members since 1980 and this year responded to **191** family related concerns, **21** former members and **13** current group members.

## ***Second Generation Former Members***

These are former group members who were born or raised in high demand groups. These Second Generation Former Members in contrast to other former members have no previous non-group identity and the problems they face often vary considerably from other former members. More time is required in providing them with support and assistance in helping them integrate into a world that in many cases is

foreign to them. We encourage them to seek professional help in dealing with the emotional, psychological, and financial problems they face. Major obstacles for most former members include: few professionals knowledgeable about their specific predicament, there are costs involved and they have little or no money, they have minimal marketable skills and often no support network.

## ***Missing Persons***

Every year we receive calls from families who haven't seen or heard from a family member in months or even years. Their disappearance has been reported to the Police but uncertain of what has happened to their loved-ones and not content just to wait, they call us. These are some of the saddest calls we listen to.

We are seen as a last resort, a family grasping at straws, hoping that maybe their family member who

disappeared is alive and in a "cult" and was influenced to cut off all contact with their past. The pain is evident in their voices as they describe to us the events surrounding the person's disappearance. We take the time to listen to them though the majority of these callers have no information that they can provide that would point to a group being involved in their loved ones disappearance. All we can do is empathize with their situation and indicate that if they do find any details possibly relating to a group they should feel free to contact us again.

## ***Reasonable Accommodation***

Over the years our society has become more culturally and religiously diverse. One effect of the changes has been that individuals and groups' religious beliefs and practices have sometimes come into conflict in the workplace, schools, hospitals, etc... Some cases have been widely publicized and on occasion gone before the Supreme Court of Canada.

Info-Cult's approach is to avoid conflict, if possible. Based on our experience and access to information on thousands of religious groups we have provided information and analysis to among others, businesses, landlords, schools, government and government agencies.

Some of the situations we have been asked about include:

- Religious holidays
- Working conditions
- Blood transfusions, vaccinations and other medical questions
- Head gear
- Schooling (public and private)
- Clothing
- Diet
- Behavior

In many situations our insight helped individuals, businesses, agencies and organizations to resolve their concerns and avoid potential problems.

## **Education and Information Resources**

### ***Information for Students and Teachers***

The subject of “cults” and “new religious movements” is included in the curriculum of many High Schools, Cegeps and Universities and we receive requests for information from students and teachers. Students are often referred to us and/or our website to obtain information and assistance for school assignments. This is an important step in the development of the study and understanding of how groups (cults, new religious movements and other related groups)

function and their potential impact on individuals and society. We take the time to respond to phone inquiries by students and frequently have students visit our offices. Student projects can range from one page written assignments, audio or video documentary projects to Master’s and Doctoral Theses. Students throughout the year from Montreal as well as from other cities in Quebec, have visited our offices.

### ***Educational Programs***

Staff and volunteers are regularly invited to provide educational programs and give workshops. Subjects covered include public awareness about cults and new religious movements and workshops on treatment issues for former members.

- Cours du système social (U de M)
- Distribution L’escalier
- Concordia University
- Collège Sainte Marcelline: Secondaire V

In 2012–2013, programs were carried out and included:

## **Info-Cult's Book**

Info-Cult's *The Cult Phenomenon: How Groups Function* was released in 2006. This book is the updated version of our French version, *Le phénomène des sectes : l'étude du fonctionnement des groupes* (2003). Both versions are downloadable at no charge from our website. They

## **Info-Cult's Videos**

The documentaries *Beyond the Mirage* and the original French version *Au-delà des mirages*, still continue to be used in high schools, Cegeps,

## **Conferences**

**ICSA Annual International Conference** In addition to conferences and presentations given by Info-Cult staff and volunteers, Info-Cult is one of the principal organizers of the Annual International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA - [www.icsahome.com](http://www.icsahome.com)) Conferences. ICSA conferences and workshops offer practical assistance, research findings, and information on cults, new religious movements and other groups from the leading professional organizations in the field. Attendees and speakers are diverse, including academicians, helping professionals, former group members, current group members, families, clergy, educators, and others.

ICSA Conferences were initially held solely in the United States; however, in response to interest from outside the U.S. conferences have been held in

have been purchased or downloaded by School Boards, Colleges, University libraries, students, community organizations, and professionals and have been discussed on TV programs, in articles and book reviews.

Universities and community groups as a tool to educate students and the public. Since 2012, both versions can be viewed on our website.

places such as Edmonton, Madrid and Barcelona, Spain, Brussels, Belgium, Philadelphia and Geneva, Switzerland.

Working with ICSA has reinforced Info-Cult's belief in the importance of international cooperation. The international representation at these conferences reflects the global nature of this issue and over the years the growing collaboration of individuals and organizations in other countries around the world has strengthened the work we are involved in and has helped to enhance the quality of the information and assistance we are able to provide to those in need. The conferences include forums for the exchange of information, specifically new approaches in helping individuals and families with someone in a high intensity closed group and in

treatment for those who have had a cult-related experience.

Info-Cult's involvement in the organizing of these conferences offers students and professionals from Montreal, the province of Quebec and the rest of the country the opportunity to participate and learn more about this subject and to present their work before an international audience. Our Info-Cult's involvement has helped to establish and strengthen our national and international contacts in this area. Info-Cult's Executive Director has been able to attend international conferences and meetings the past few years thanks to a generous annual donation from an anonymous sponsor.

This year Info-Cult hosted the International ICSA conference in Montreal. It was organized in collaboration with the Université de Montréal, the International Centre for Comparative Criminology (ICCC) of the Université de Montréal, and l'Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes.

### ***Meeting with Groups***

Since 2009 Info-Secte in conjunction with three other European organizations organizes **Meetings with Controversial Groups**. These meetings (participation is by invitation) are centred on topics which encourage discussion with groups often viewed as controversial or "cults" and have taken place on a yearly basis rotating among the participating governmental and non-governmental organizations. Besides Info-Cult the only representative from North America the other

Two hundred and fifty people from 16 countries attended and for about 40% of the attendees this was their first time participating at one of these conferences. Participants included academics, mental health professional, law enforcement personnel, families, media, members and former group members and the general public. There were six (6) sessions running simultaneously during every time block, so that there was always something of interest for everyone in attendance.

The conference provided a range of sessions for academics, mental health professionals, families and former members and highlighted the fact that there is still much to do especially as it pertains to the need for more specialized services for former members who often face great difficulty in integrating into mainline society after an extreme group experience.

Feedback Info-Cult received about the conference, especially from families, members and even former group members was extremely positive.

organizations are INFORM (Information Network on Religious Movements) London, United Kingdom – [www.inform.ac](http://www.inform.ac), CIAOSN (Centre d'information et d'avis sur les organisations sectaires nuisibles) Bruxelles, Belgique – <http://www.ciaosn.be/> and CIC (Centre Intercantonal d'Information sur les Croyances) Genève, Suisse – [www.cic-info.ch](http://www.cic-info.ch). Info-Cult hosted the 2012 meeting and INFORM will be hosting the next one in May 2013 in London on the topic of employment.

## ***Give But Give Wisely / A Policy for Renting Rooms***

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are distributed from time to time and posted on our website to encourage people and organizations considering donating to a cause to *Give but Give*

*Wisely* or for those institutions thinking of renting a room to a group to develop a *Policy*. These PSAs are posted on our website.

## ***Documentation Centre***

Info-Cult's documentation centre has acquired a vast quantity of materials on "cults", "new religious movements" and related groups and subjects. .

The documentation centre is the largest of its kind in North America and houses **thousands** of files, more than **1,200** programs on audio/video cassettes, journals, newsletters, government and legal documents, academic reports and more than **3,000** books principally in English and French with a smaller collection of documents in Spanish, Italian, Japanese, and German. The collection spans both critical and group generated information, books, journals,

audio and video cassettes and other materials which are obtained from sources around the world.

Since 1999, new acquisitions (government reports, books, journals, etc.) to Info-Cult's documentation centre are listed on our web site with links that provide further information about the materials or access to the entire document.

Over the years our collection, which continues to grow, has become increasingly well known internationally and has attracted visitors to our centre from other countries.

## ***Web Site***

Info-Cult's website ([www.infocult.org](http://www.infocult.org)) has been online since 1999 and is regularly updated. The site provides: information about Info-Cult's history and services, advice for those who have a problem, help for those who are thinking about joining a group, general information on the phenomenon of "cults" and "new religious movements", Info-Cult's publications (including our books, conferences, articles, etc.), a large collection of government reports from different countries, a list of upcoming TV programs,

conferences and other events.

Our web site provides an invaluable resource for those interested in learning about "cults", "new religious movements" and related subjects and is visited by tens of thousands every year.

The use of our website by people looking for information on specific groups and on the cult phenomenon in general demonstrates the importance of this service.

### ***E-mail information lists (English and French)***

To all those who are interested, Info-Cult provides a free and easily available email service whereby they can receive articles and other information on cults, new religious movements and related phenomena, announcements of upcoming conferences, television programs and updates about Info-Cult.

### ***Newsletter: News from Info-Cult***

For nearly 10 years we have published a newsletter in which we have expressed our views on specific subjects as well as highlighting some of our activities. The newsletter which is published on an irregular

### ***Research Service***

This service satisfies the needs of those who are looking for information on a group or subject and can not make it to our offices.

The information sent on the English and French lists is generally different. There are more than **300** subscribers on the English list and over **200** on the French list. Subscribers include individuals, former members, media, law-enforcement, community and religious groups, professionals (social workers, psychologists, lawyers, etc...).

basis is distributed primarily by email to **over three thousand** email addresses as well as mailed to selected organizations in the public and private sector, and posted on our web site. In 2012 – 2013 three (3) editions were published

Requests are received from the Montreal area as well as from the rest of the province, other parts of Canada and abroad.

## Media appearances

Over the years Info-Cult staff, board members and volunteers have given thousands of interviews to national and international television and radio programs and documentaries, or have provided information and interviews for newspaper and

magazine articles. In the past year, Info-Cult responded to **70 requests** from the media, for information or for an interview. Below is a selection of media in which Info-Cult has appeared.

### Radio and Television

#### Radio

As It Happens, C.B.C. Radio  
 B.B.C. Radio, England  
 C.F.R.A., Ottawa  
 C.F.R.B., Toronto  
 C.H.R.C., Québec  
 C.J.A.D., Montréal  
 C.J.F.M., Montréal  
 C.K.A.C. Montréal  
 C.K.N.W., Vancouver  
 C.H.O.I. Québec  
 Fastband.com  
 Internet Radio Network  
 N.T.R., Montréal  
 Newsweek Radio  
 Q.R.77, Calgary  
 Radio Autrichienne  
 Radio-Canada International  
 Radio France International  
 Radio RTBF (Belgium)

#### Television

BBC  
 Second regard  
 Claire Lamarche, **TVA**  
 C.T.V. News, Canada AM, **CTV**  
 Dateline, NBC  
 Droit de parole, Radio-Québec  
 Enjeux, Radio-Canada  
 Fox on Psychology, Fox News, **FOX**  
 Global News  
 Independent Satellite News  
 Infoman, Radio-Canada  
 Légendes urbaines, **Canal D**  
 Match de la vie, TVA  
 Montréal ce soir, Radio-Canada  
 National News, 5<sup>th</sup> Estate, CBC  
 Newsworld  
 National News, CTV  
 Sunday Edition, CTV  
 RDI  
 Grand Journal, TQS  
 Canal Historia  
 Canal D

#### Print Media

Agence France Presse  
 Baltimore Sun  
 Boston Globe  
 Canoe.com  
 Deseret News  
 Gazette  
 Globe & Mail  
 Journal de Montréal  
 Journal de Québec  
 L'Actualité  
 La Presse

Le Devoir  
 Le Droit  
 Le Figaro  
 Le Monde  
 Le Nouvelliste  
 Le Nouvel Observateur  
 Le Soleil  
 London Daily Telegraph  
 Maclean's  
 Miami Herald  
 New York Daily News

New York Times  
 Newsweek  
 Ottawa Citizen  
 Canadian Press  
 Québec Science  
 Reuters  
 Time  
 Toronto Star  
 Toronto Sun  
 USA Today  
 Wall Street Journal



## 4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND NETWORKING

### Community Relations

Info-Cult has established contact with many public and private organizations. We have built a network of groups with whom we exchange information, assistance, resources and referrals either on a regular basis or according to the need.

On an ongoing basis Info-Cult receives requests and referrals from a variety of organizations. Info-Cult is also cited as a resource by academic and city libraries, community groups and referral centers, and in books, newsletters and journals. Over the last number of years the internet has played a major role in providing the public with access to resources on cults, new religious movements and related groups and subjects and Info-Cult can be found listed on a range of websites around the world. Selected examples follow:

[arrondissement.com](http://arrondissement.com)

[quebec.cioc.ca/](http://quebec.cioc.ca/)

[cscapitale.qc.ca/bottindesressources/info-secte.htm](http://cscapitale.qc.ca/bottindesressources/info-secte.htm)

[quebechebdo.com](http://quebechebdo.com)

[recherche.211quebecregions.ca/record/QBC1262?UseEq=on](http://recherche.211quebecregions.ca/record/QBC1262?UseEq=on)

[apavecq.qc.ca/](http://apavecq.qc.ca/)

[icsahome.com](http://icsahome.com)

[ciaosn.be](http://ciaosn.be)

[sectes-info-gemppi.ifrance.com/](http://sectes-info-gemppi.ifrance.com/)

[awakeningscenter.ca/cults.html](http://awakeningscenter.ca/cults.html)

[cultinformation.org.uk/](http://cultinformation.org.uk/)

[apologeticsindex.org/i00.html](http://apologeticsindex.org/i00.html)

[factnet.org/cris\\_org.htm](http://factnet.org/cris_org.htm)

[einet.net/directory/43487/Cults.htm](http://einet.net/directory/43487/Cults.htm)

[victimsofviolence.on.ca/rev2/index.php](http://victimsofviolence.on.ca/rev2/index.php)

[ex-cult.org/](http://ex-cult.org/)

[dir.yahoo.com/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Religion\\_and\\_Spirituality/Cults/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Religion_and_Spirituality/Cults/)

[mcgill.ca/hssl/collections/links/subject/relstud/](http://mcgill.ca/hssl/collections/links/subject/relstud/)

[cultclinic.org/resources.html](http://cultclinic.org/resources.html)

[toile.com/search](http://toile.com/search)

[sciencepresse.qc.ca/cyber-express/286.html](http://sciencepresse.qc.ca/cyber-express/286.html)

[lautrevoix.com/pages/org\\_organisme.php?orgid=2326](http://lautrevoix.com/pages/org_organisme.php?orgid=2326)

[fecris.org](http://fecris.org)

Here is a selected list of local and regional organizations and groups with whom we have contact or who refer people to us:

- Consumer Protection Offices
- L'Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes
- CSSS throughout the province
- Option-Consommateur
- Youth Protection Departments
- Kids Help Line
- Centre de Référence du Grand Montréal
- Public and Institutional Libraries
- Law Enforcement Departments
- Health professionals (psychologists, doctors, social workers, therapists, etc...)
- Community organizations such as consumer groups, youth centres, women shelters, sexual assault centres and crisis intervention centres
- Missing Children's Network
- Quebec Sceptics
- Christian Direction
- Teachers (High School, Cegeps, and Universities)
- Clergy
- Religious and cultural communities (Catholic Community Services, Federation CJA, etc.)
- Shelter for Women and Children victims of conjugal violence
- Ecumenical Center

## National and International Networking

In addition to contact that Info-Cult maintains with a large number of individuals, agencies and organizations in the province of Quebec we have established relations with individuals, academics, professionals and organizations specializing in the area of cults and new religious movements in the province, across Canada and worldwide. This networking enables Info-Cult to exchange information and to be up to date with the current research, studies and activities in this area.

Some of the many organizations around the world with whom we have contact:

### Canada:

- Centre for Information on New Religions – CINR - Montreal)
- Edmonton Society Against Mind Abuse – ESMA

### United States

- International Cultic Studies Association – ICSA
- New England Institute of Religious Research – NEIRR
- Freedom of Mind Resource Center
- Wellspring Retreat and Resource Center

### Japan

- Mind Control Research Center
- National Network of Lawyers Against Spiritual Sales

### Europe

- Information and Advice Center on Harmful Sectarian Organizations – CIAOSN - (Belgium Government centre)
- Interministerial Mission of Vigilance and Combat against Sectarian Aberrations - MIVILUDES – (French Government centre)
- Centre intercantonal d'information sur les croyances – CIC - Switzerland (government funded)
- Asesoramiento e Informacion sobre Sectas – AIS - Spain
- Family Action Information and Resource – FAIR - England
- Information Network Focus on Religious Movements - INFORM - England (partly government funded)
- European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism - FECRIS – (government funded)
- Bundesstelle für Sektenfragen – (Austrian government office)

### Australia

- Concerned Christians Growth Ministries Inc.
- Cult Counselling Australia
- Cult Information & Family Support Inc.