



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

The Religion and Diversity Project/ Religion et diversité

New Religious Movements, Minorities, and Media

Thursday, March 17th and Friday, March 18th 2016

University of Montreal

Context and theme

In recent years, collective anxiety surrounding religious identities seems mainly to be concerned with “world religions”, especially Islam. However, another religious issue is also catching public attention, causing concern and attracting the interest of scholars: new religious movements (NRMs), frequently labelled as “cults”. With this framework in mind, the aim of the conference will be to explore the status of minority religious groups in the contemporary globalized context. More specifically, we will consider media treatment of small religious minorities, and the theoretical, methodological and conceptual issues surrounding the study of NRMs and varieties of media sources.

Program and participants

Thursday, March 17th 2016

Presidency: Dominic Larochelle, Member of the direction committee, Centre CROIR (Centre de Ressources et d’observation de l’innovation religieuse), Université Laval (<https://croir.ulaval.ca>)

SESSION 1: Religious Minorities, Internet and Social Media

Alain Bouchard, Lecturer (Laval University) and Professor (Sainte-Foy College). NRMs and YouTube. “‘Don’t Believe Me, Just Watch’, New Religious Movements’ Leitmotifs in a Globalized World?”

Fabrizio Vecoli, Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (University of Montreal). “Internet, Truth, Spiritual Progression.”

Presidency: Alain Pronkin, media reporter and member of the CÉINRC.



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SESSION 2: *New Religious Movements in the United States*

Donald Westbrook, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Church history, (Fuller Theological Seminary).
“The Art of PR War: Scientology, the Media, and Legitimation Strategies for the 21st Century.”

Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier, Ph.D. Student, religious studies (University of Montreal).
“Construction of Normality and Deviance in *Breaking the Faith* and *Escaping the Prophet*.”

Friday, March 18th 2016

SESSION 1: *Guest of honor*

Massimo Introvigne, Professor, Sociology of religion (Université pontificale salésienne de Turin). “Modern Art, Esoteric Movements and Media. Has Media Censored the Relationship between Modern Art and Esoterism?”

Presidency: Mike Kropveld, Managing director, Info Sect/Cult

SESSION 2: *Minority Religions and Media in Canada*

Maria Alekseevskaja, Ph.D Student, sociology (University of Ottawa). “Mass Media Coverage of Dutch Neocalvinists’ Activities in Canadian Socio-political Life.”

David Michels, Law Librarian and Researcher (Dalhousie University). “Seeing the Others: Alternative Religions in the News.”

Presidency: Martin Geoffroy, Department of Sociology, CÉGEP Édouard Montpetit

SESSION 3: *Expressions and Reception of New Religious Movements*

Connor Steele, Ph.D. Student (University of Ottawa). “Cult of Prison: Analysing Representations of New Religious Movements in *Orange is the New Black*”.

Susan J. Palmer, Affiliate Professor, Department of religion (Concordia University) and Research Fellow in the Faculty of Religious Studies (McGill University). “Media Treatment of NRMs in Quebec.”



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Presidency: Sara Teinturier, Postdoctoral Fellow, Religion and Diversity Project (University of Ottawa) and Chair for the Management of Cultural and Religious Diversity (University of Montreal)

SESSION 4: New Religious Movements, Discourse and Psychoanalysis

Guy-Robert St-Arnaud, Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (University of Montreal) and Member of the CÉINR (Centre d'écoute et d'interprétation des nouvelles recherches du croire). "Shamelessly Manipulating Desire: The Ethics of a Media Operation."

Lydwine Olivier, Volunteer Worker and Treasurer, CÉINR (Centre d'écoute et d'interprétation des nouvelles recherches du croire) and Ph.D. student, Faculty of theology and religious studies (University of Montreal). "Between Media Discourse and Research about Sects and Media, Where is the Place for the Testimony of those Involved in the Sectarian?"

Final discussion

Presidency: Solange Lefebvre

Panellists: Martin Geoffroy, Dominic Larochelle and Massimo Introvigne

Deliverables

Special number of the "Regulating Religion" journal. Texts by Maria Alekseevskaja, Lydwine Olivier and Connor Steele. Edited by Amélie Barras and Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier

Special number of the Canadian "Religious Studies" journal. Texts by Massimo Introvigne, David Michels, Susan Palmer, Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier, Fabrizio Vecoli and Donald Westbrook. Edited by Solange Lefebvre and Mathilde Vanasse-Pelletier.