



# The 2024 CESNUR Conference

## the Contribution of Minority Religions to Society

**Bordeaux, France,  
12-15 June 2024**

**Université  
Bordeaux Montaigne**

**Co-organized by:**

CESNUR, Center for Studies on New Religions

Université Bordeaux Montaigne

CLIMAS, Cultures et littératures des mondes anglophones

ISSNR, International Society for the Study of New Religions



UR 495 - Cultures et Littératures des Mondes Anglophones



# Wednesday June 12, 2024

## 9.30-10 / Registration

In front of Lecture Hall B 200

## 10-10.45 / Session 1 (Plenary) - Lecture Hall B 200

### Opening Plenary Lecture

Chair: **Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD**

Greetings by local authorities

● *Where in Heaven's Name Did That Come From? Innovative Contributions to Society by New Religious Movements*

**Eileen BARKER** (London School of Economics [em.], London, UK)

## 10.45-11.15 / Coffee Break

## 11.15-13.30 / Session 2 (Plenary) Lecture Hall B 200

### Asian New Religions' Contributions to Society

Chair: **Susan PALMER**

● *The Golden Mother of the Jade Lake: A Taiwanese New Religion Comes to New York*

**J. Gordon MELTON** (Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA [em.]

● *Peace, Love, and Tax Reform: Tai Ji Men's Global Outreach*

**Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

● *100 Years of Cao Dai: A Cao Dai Missionary's Reflections on Faith and Identity*

**TRAN Canh** (Cao Dai Overseas Missionary, Tay Ninh, Vietnam) and **Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD** (University of Bordeaux Montaigne [em.], Bordeaux, France)

● *A Qualitative Study on the Social Contributions of Korean New Religious Movements: Focusing on the Three Major Works of Daesoon Jinrihoe*

**BAE Kyuhan** (Daejin University, Pocheon City, South Korea)

● *Who is Wangchan Laozu?*

**Benjamin PENNY** (Australian National University, Canberra, Australia)

● *Wangchan Laozu in Weixin Shengjiao Practices*

**Fiona Hsin-Fang CHANG** (Weixin Shengjiao College, Nantou, Taiwan)

## 13.30-14.30 / Business Lunch

**14.30-16.30 / Session 3 (Plenary)** - Lecture Hall B 200

**"Storming Zion" Revisited: Militarized Raids and the Resurgence of Brainwashing Theory—Emic and Etic Perspectives**

Chair: **Rosita ŠORYTÉ**

● *"Government Raids on Yoga Students? What Were They Thinking!" A Comparative Analysis of the 2022 BAYS Case in Argentina and the 2023 MISA Case*

**Susan PALMER** (Concordia University, Montreal, Canada)

● *Anti-Cult Theories in the Discourses on Human Trafficking in Argentina: Some Discussions*

**Maria VARDÉ** (University of Buenos Aires, Argentina)

● *Strange Victims: Should Sacred Eroticism Be Outlawed?*

**Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

● *Tantra, Yoga, and Sacred Sexuality: Spirituality, Enlightenment, and Controversies*

**Alessandro AMICARELLI** (Attorney, London, UK)

*Discussants:*

● **Diana CACCIALI** (Institute of Applied Arts, Bahía Blanca, Argentina)

● **Camelia MARIN** (Soteria International, Copenhagen, Denmark)

● **Martin KRAJCA** (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

**16.30-17 / Coffee Break**

**17-19 / Session 4** - Lecture Hall B 200

**North American Contributions—and Concerns**

Chair: **J. Gordon MELTON**

● *Waiting for the Presidential Elections. Red God, Blue God: American Politics Meet the New Religious Landscape*

**Dyron DAUGHRITY** (Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, USA)

● *Unsettling Trends: Confluences and Differences in the Treatment of QAnon and New Religious Movements*

**Edward IRONS** (The Hong Kong Institute for Culture, Commerce and Religion, Hong Kong)

● *The Pragmatics of Peer Support Groups for Former Members of High-Control Groups*

**Sam DOWNS** (Info-Cult, Montreal, Canada)

● *Resurrecting a City, Catholic Style: The Case of Steubenville, Ohio*

**Marie GAYTE-LEBRUN** (University of Toulon, France)

**17-19 / Session 5 - Room E 004 (or in CLEFF CLE201)**

**Peace, Justice, and Tax Reform in Taiwan and Internationally:  
New Religious Movements, the Common Good, and the Case of  
Tai Ji Men**

*Introducing:*

**Eileen BARKER** (London School of Economics [em.], London, UK)

*Panelists:*

● **Linda CHEN** (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada)

● **Karolina Maria KOTKOWSKA** (Jagiellonian University,  
Krakow, Poland)

● **Lara HUANG** (Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan)

● **Camelia MARIN** (Soteria International, Copenhagen, Denmark)

● **Stella LIN** (Tax and Legal Reform League, Taipei, Taiwan)

● **Donald WESTBROOK** (San José State University, San José,  
California, USA)

● **Joyce HUANG** (Degree candidate, National Taipei University  
of Education, Taipei, Taiwan)

● **Rebecca WANG** (Tax and Legal Reform League, Taipei, Taiwan)

● **Peggy CHEN** (Federation of World Peace and Love, Taipei, Taiwan)

*Discussant:*

**Alessandro AMICARELLI** (Attorney, London, UK)

**17-19 / Session 6 - Room E 006 (or in CLEFF CLE212)**

**Buddhist and Other "New Old" Presences and Contributions**

Chair: **Carole CUSACK**

● *Buddhist Therapeutics: The Overlapping Logics of Religion and  
Medicine in Westernized Buddhism*

**Matteo DI PLACIDO** (University of Turin, Italy) and  
**Stefania PALMISANO** (University of Turin, Italy)

● *Production of Space and Accumulation of Cultural Capital:  
Material Religion as Cultural Heritage in Two European New  
Religions, the Aumist Religion and Damanhur*

**Giovanna RECH** (University of Verona, Italy)

● *Sanamahism of the Meitei: A "New Ancient" Religion of Manipur  
and New Traditionalism*

**Svetlana RYZHAKOVA** (Russian Academy of Science,  
Moscow, Russia)

# Thursday June 13, 2024

**10-11.30 / Session 7 (Plenary) - Lecture Hall B 200**

## **The Jehovah's Witness Test: Minority Religions and Religious Tolerance in the Contemporary World**

Chair: **J. Gordon MELTON**

*Panelists:*

● **Emily B. BARAN** (Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, USA)

● **George D. CHRYSSIDES** (York St John University, UK)

● **Joseph WEBSTER** (University of Cambridge, UK)

● **Zoe KNOX** (University of Leicester, UK)

**11.30-12 / Coffee Break**

**12-13.30 / Session 8 (Plenary) - Lecture Hall B 200**

## **The Unification Church and Japan: What Is Exactly Happening?**

Chair: **Eileen BARKER**

● *Introduction. The Post-Abe Assassination Crisis: An Outline*  
**Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

● *Testimonies: Emic Voices from a Global Crisis*  
**Tatsuki NAKAYAMA, Norishige KONDO, Moriko HORI**  
**Suzuko HIRSCHMANN, Michael BALCOMB**

**13.30-14.30. Lecture Hall B 200**

## **Annual meeting of the members of the International Society for the Study of New Religions (ISSNR). With lunch**

**13.30-14.30 / Business Lunch (for participants who are not members of the ISSNR)**

**14.30-16.30 / Session 9 (Plenary) - Lecture Hall B 200**

## **Book Session: Donald Westbrook, *Anticultism in France: Scientology, Religious Freedom, and the Future of New and Minority Religions* (Cambridge University Press, 2024)**

Chair: **Susan PALMER**

● *Scientology in France, 1954 to the Present: Origins, Resilience, and Religious Freedom*  
**Donald WESTBROOK** (San José State University, San José, California, USA)

*Panelists:*

- **Attila MIKLOVICZ** (Ph.D. candidate, University of Pécs, Hungary)
- **Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)
- **Éric ROUX** (European Office of the Church of Scientology, Brussels, Belgium)
- **Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD** (University of Bordeaux Montaigne [em.], Bordeaux, France)

**16.30-17 / Coffee Break**

**17-19 / Session 10 - Lecture Hall B 200**

**Latter-day Saints Contributions and the “Mormon” Image in Comics and Elsewhere**

Chair: **Jean-Paul GABILLIET**

● *“I Saw My Brother Alvin”: Socio-Historical Foundations and Developments in the Theology of Post-Mortem Salvation among Latter-day Saints*

**Carter CHARLES** (Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA)

● *Ancestor Worship and Mediumship in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in France*

**Pierre VENDASSI** (University of Bordeaux, France)

● *Mormon Communitarianism and Its Influence on American Social Welfare Programs: A Comparative Analysis*

**John POTTENGER** (University of Alabama, Huntsville, Alabama, USA)

● *“The Mormons Are Not All Fanatics”: The Mormon Image in Tex Willer Comics*

**Michael W. HOMER** (Attorney and Independent Scholar, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA)

● *“Theologically Innovative Comic Books” as Platforms of Religious Experience*

**Amy SLONAKER** (Pacifica Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara, California, USA)

**17-19 / Session 11 - Room E 004 (or in CLEFF CLE201)**

**Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Active Participation in Civil Societies: Value for Society Resulting from Efforts to Establish Rights Based on Freedom of Conscience**

Chair: **Zoe KNOX**

● *Defending Patient Autonomy and Leading Way in the Development of Progressive Blood Management Techniques*

**Samuel MANCUSO** (La Sapienza University, Rome, Italy)

● *Jehovah's Witnesses' Legal Battles and their Contribution to Establishing and Defining Religious Freedoms in Society*

**Shane BRADY** (Barrister, London, United Kingdom)

● *The Unsung Heroes of Ghanaian Language Literacy: The Jehovah's Witnesses' Contribution*

**Abigail AYIGLO-KUWORNU, Araba Ayiaba Ziekpor OSEI-TUTU,** and **Reginald Akuoko DUAH** (University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana)  
[**Esther Desiadenyo MANU-BARFO** (University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana) is a co-author of the paper]

● *Jehovah's Witnesses and Public Benefit: A British Perspective*

**George D. CHRYSIDES** (York St John University, UK)

**17-19 / Session 12 - Room E 006 (or in CLEFF CLE212)**

**Spirituality, Material Culture, and Devotions**

Chair: **Fiona CHANG**

● *Capitalism and the Contribution of Religious Innovation to Culinary Heritage*

**Alain BOUCHARD** (Laval University, Québec City, Canada)

● *The Path to Peace and Tranquility by Wangchan Laozu: The I-Ching (Book of Changes), Feng Shui and Religious Practice*

**CHOU Yu-Chun** (Weixin Shengjiao College, Nantou, Taiwan)

● *The Soap, the Whats, and the Godmother. Saint Death Devotion's Contribution to Mexican Society*

**Piotr MICHALIK** (Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland)

**17-19 / Session 13 - Room F003 (or CLEFF CLE032)**

**The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light: The Emergence of a New Religion\***

Chair: **Eileen BARKER**

*Panelists:*

● **Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Torino, Italy)

● **Karolina Maria KOTKOWSKA** (Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland)

● **David W. KIM** (Australian National University, Canberra, Australia - Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea)

● **Hadil EL-KHOULY** (The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light, UK)

● **Caroline HOEREN** (The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light, UK)

\*Note: The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light is a Shia-derivative new religion and should not be confused with the Sunni-derivative Ahmadiyya community persecuted in Pakistan.

# Friday June 14, 2024

All sessions in CLEFF

**9.30-11.30 / Session 14 - CLEFF Lecture Hall CLE041**

## **Esoteric Movements and Society**

Chair: **Massimo INTROVIGNE**

📍 *The Gurdjieff Work and Literary Cultural Production*

**Carole CUSACK** (University of Sydney, Australia)

📍 *SORRAT: The True Story of America's Most Active Séance Group, 1961-2015*

**Shannon TAGGART** (Artist and author, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA)

📍 *Communication Between Mediums and Spirits in Contemporary UK*

**Eriko KAWANISHI** (Professional Institute of International Fashion, Osaka, Japan)

📍 *Theosophical Pedagogy: Overlooked Contribution of the Theosophical Movement to the History of Education*

**Karolina Maria KOTKOWSKA** (Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland)

**9.30-11.30 / Session 15 - Room CLEFF CLE032**

## **New Religions and Korean Society**

Chair: **Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD**

📍 *A Comparative Study on the Social Responsibility of New Religions in South Korea*

**AHN Shin** (Pai Chai University, Daejeon, South Korea)

📍 *Cheontaejong and Park Sangwol: A Pro-Chinese Buddhist NRM and Its Socio-Political Impact*

**David W. KIM** (Australian National University, Canberra, Australia - Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea)

📍 *The Place of Choendogyo in the Development of Korean New Religions*

**Edward IRONS** (The Hong Kong Institute for Culture, Commerce and Religion, Hong Kong)

📍 *The Social Role and Secret Code of Prophecy: Focusing on Nostradamus and the Prophecy of Namsago*

**HAN Gang-Hyen** (International Academy of Neo-Humans Culture, Bucheon City, South Korea)



**9.30-11.30 / Session 16 - Room CLEFF CLE201**

**Islam, New Religious Movements and Society**

Chair: **Dyron DAUGHRITY**

● *Unveiling Islamophobic Agendas. The Case of Stop Islamization of Nations*

**Daive S. AMORE** (Italian Society of History of Religions, Rome, Italy)

● *Haram, Harmless, or Confirming Islam? Teaching and Learning about NRM's at a Moroccan University*

**Stefano BIGLIARDI** (Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco)

● *The Concept of as-Salām (Peace) and Neo-Sufism*

**Ina KISELIOVA EL-MARASSY** (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Vilnius, Lithuania)

**9.30-11.30 / Session 17 - Room CLEFF CLE212)**

**Jehovah's Witnesses: Adoption or Re-adoption of Religious Identities as a Tool of Empowerment**

Chair: **Zoe KNOX**

● *Overcoming Regional and Generational Trauma within the Jehovah's Witnesses Community in Hungary*

**Márk NEMES** (PhD candidate, University of Szeged, Hungary)

● *Individual Empowerment as an Outcome in the Process of Becoming a Member of Jehovah's Witnesses Congregation*

**Edward GRAHAM-HYDE** (University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK)

● *Reaffiliation and "Reconversion" to the Jehovah's Witnesses' Community: Motivating Factors Behind the Process*

**Ollimatti PELTONEN** (European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses, Selters, Germany)

*Discussant:*

**Joseph WEBSTER** (University of Cambridge, UK)

**11.30-12 / Coffee Break**

**12-13.30 / Session 18 (Plenary) - CLEFF Lecture Hall CLE041**

**La Luz del Mundo: Social Outreach in a Difficult Time**

Chair: **Susan PALMER**

● *Charity and Resilience: How La Luz del Mundo Continues Its Social Outreach Activities in Difficult Times*

**Rosita ŠORYTĚ** (European Federation for Freedom of Belief, Rome and Turin, Italy)

📍 *La Luz del Mundo: Liminality and Ethnographic Paths Forward*  
**Donald WESTBROOK** (San José State University, San José, California, USA)

📍 *The Luz del Mundo Complete Wellness Programs*  
**Delfino GUILLEN** (Educator, Houston, Texas, USA)

*Panel Discussion:*

📍 **Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

📍 **J. Gordon MELTON** (Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA [em.])

📍 **Bigvai ESTRADA** (La Luz del Mundo, San Diego, California, USA)

**13.30-14.30 / Business Lunch**

**14.30-16 / Session 19 - CLEFF Lecture Hall CLE041**

**Different Perspectives on the Unification Movement**

Chair: **George CHRYSSIDES**

📍 *The Contribution of Minority Religions to Society: Reverend Moon and the Ending of the Cold War*

**Thomas J. WARD** (International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership, New York, New York, USA)

📍 *The "Blessed Family" Concept of Sun Myung Moon*

**Mark BRAMWELL** (University of Nottingham, UK)

📍 *So How Are Individuals Doing Who Were Raised in Households Headed by Parents who Married in Unification Movement Mass Marriages?*

**Nicholas CHIAIA** (Attorney, Annandale, Virginia, United States)

**14.30-16 / Session 20 - Room CLEFF CLE201**

**Contributions of New Religious Movements to Society in Lithuania**

Chair: **Rosita ŠORYTĖ**

📍 *The Contribution of New Religions to Democratization? Three Cases from Lithuania*

**Milda ALIŠAUSKIENĖ** (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania)

📍 *Contemporary Pagans and Their Contribution to the Well-Being of Lithuanian Society: Pagan Discourse and its Reception*

**Eglė ALEKNAITĖ** (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania)

📍 *Worshippers of Culture and Mahatmas: About the Lithuanian Roerich Society*

**Audrius BEINORIUS** (Vilnius University, Lithuania)

**14.30-16 / Session 21 - Room CLEFF CLE212**

**Contributions and Controversies**

Chair: **Edward IRONS**

● *Fake News, Court Cases, and the Role of the Media: Focusing on the Netflix Series "In the Name of God" and the Case of the Providence Church*

**Li Zhen Ming** (IHuST, Institute of Convergence Studies of Humanity, Science, and Technology, Seoul, Korea)

● *Astronism, Cosmism and Cosmodeism: An Analysis of the Space Religions Espousing Transcension*

**Brandon Reece TAYLORIAN** (Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK)

● *Serge Raynaud de la Ferrière (1916-1962): The Vanguard of His Thought for a New Civilization and His Detractors*

**Rita SANTILLAN** (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada)

**14.30-16 / Session 22 - Room CLEFF CLE032)**

**Minority Religions and Society**

Chair: **Eriko KAWANISHI**

● *The Contribution of Macedonian Muslims as a Minority Religious Group to Contemporary Macedonian Society*

**Zoran MATEVSKI** and **Dushka MATEVSKA** (Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, North Macedonia)

● *Approaches of Alternative Spirituality in Present-Day Romania*

**Radu Petre MURESAN** (University of Bucharest, Romania)

● *Spirituality for Modern Times: Neo-Tantrism and Beyond*

**Martin KRAJCA** (Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic)

**16-16.30 / Coffee Break**

**16.30-18.30 / Session 23 (Plenary) - CLEFF Lecture Hall CLE041**

**"Next Year in a South African Jerusalem": African Prophecy, African Spirituality, and CESNUR 2025**

Chair: **Alessandro AMICARELLI**

● *IMboni uZwi-Lezwe Radebe and the Origins of The Revelation Spiritual Home*

**Massimo INTROVIGNE** (CESNUR, Turin, Italy)

● *Prophets and Spiritual Guides: A Comparison*

**Tshidiso GAMA** (African Hidden Voices Research Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa)

● *Differences between Religion, Universal Spirituality, and African Indigenous Spirituality*

**Palesa HLOELE** (African Hidden Voices Research Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa)

● *The Different Sectors of African Indigenous Spirituality*

**Thembi TULWANA** (The Revelation Spiritual Home, Johannesburg, South Africa)

● *Who Is Afraid of African Prophets? Religious Liberty Issues, the Aftermath of Kenya's Deaths by Fasting, and Problems in South Africa*

**Rosita ŠORYTĚ** (European Federation for Freedom of Belief, Rome and Turin, Italy)

● *Final Greetings*

**Bernadette RIGAL-CELLARD** (University of Bordeaux Montaigne [em.], Bordeaux, France)

## Saturday June 15, 2024

### **Field Trip**

A one-day field trip to the Vézère Valley in Dordogne-Périgord, east of Bordeaux. We will visit one of the first Tibetan Buddhist settlements in the West, the Côte de Jor Buddhist centers, above the world-famous prehistorical sites of the Magdeleine and the Moustiers. We will spend time with the Dhagpo Kagyu Ling community and will have lunch with them.

A few kilometers away, in Montignac, we will visit Lascaux IV, the perfect replica of the world heritage Lascaux Cave. Those who have already visited it, however, will skip the Lascaux Cave and visit instead the nearby unique Renaissance Château de Losse overlooking the Vézère river and its sumptuous park. Its previous landlady was Nhu May, Princess of Annam (Vietnam).

The bus will leave at 7 AM from 2 Allées de Tourny (in front of L'Intendant Grand vins) and return is expected at the same location at 8-9 PM.

Dinner: sandwiches provided on the bus.