

Editors' Preface

As this is the first issue of IJSNR 2013, we are already in our fourth year of publishing. This will be the last year with me and Carole Cusack at the helm, as we have the time limit of four years for editors in the articles of ISSNUR. From 2014 we will instead welcome Professor Asbjørn Dyrendal (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) and Dr Alex Norman (University of Sydney) as the new editors.

In Sweden we are now busy preparing the ISSNUR/CESNUR conference which will take place at Dalarna University between June 21st and June 24th. At that time we will also have the second membership meeting of ISSNUR with election of a new board and other organizational details. We are making all sorts of preparations to be able to welcome our international guests to the famous traditional cultural county of Dalarna for the traditional Swedish midsummer celebration. We just hope that the weather spirits will also be on our side at that time. Right now (the middle of April) we still have a lot of snow and it is really cold.

The present issue of IJSNR presents five articles on varying subjects relating to new religions. We have again succeeded to make, I think, a really interesting mix of different subjects. The first article is written by Pernilla Liedgren and Lars Andersson and deals with teenagers in one of the older new religions, Jehovah's Witnesses. The subject of children and teenagers growing up in new religions and how they are influenced by these environments is a very important one upon which IJSNR has published before, though not in the context of this religious group. Liedgren and Andersson in the present article discuss how the teenagers cope with the school situation and the encounter with the mainstream culture, and which coping strategies they may choose.

The second article, "David Icke's Reptilian Thesis and the Development of New Age Theodicy" by David Robertson, deals with the former sports journalist David Icke's well-known conspiracy theories. Robertson's article suggests that Icke's thesis that human-alien hybrids are in covert control over the planet may be seen as a kind of New Age theodicy. The New Age of peace and harmony has so far not arrived, but may have been prevented from doing so by extraterrestrial "others." Robertson claims that dealing with "evil" is a prob-

lematic issue within the New Age milieu; however, locating evil outside the conception of a holistic mankind may be acceptable. Robertson also suggests that this matter may give a clue to the popularity of New Age conspiracism.

G. I. Gurdjieff's teaching has diverged in several different directions, and the next article, called "A Gurdjieff Genealogy: Tracing the Manifold Ways the Gurdjieff Teaching has Travelled," written by Johanna Petsche, deals with this subject. Petsche expands on the existence and development of different kinds of Gurdjieff-centered groups. Petsche depicts a network or family tree of spiritual teachers and groups that stem from Gurdjieff and his work, starting from the second generation or those who met Gurdjieff in person. This is an under-researched area, and Petsche's article is an important contribution.

Could atheism be seen as a "new religion"? The fourth article, written by Cale Leslie Hubble, deals with the new atheism, and applies the Durkheimian paradigm to understand the collective identity of this group. The author suggests that certain celebrities, books and values like personal autonomy and rationalism are conceived of as significant and special, even sacred. The article also discusses atheist constructions of religion. The final article in this issue deals with reiki and issues of boundary-maintenance between religion and spirituality, complementary and alternative medicine, and Western scientific approaches to health. Jenny-Ann Brodin Danell, in "On the Boundaries of Medicine and Spirituality: Professionalization and Self-Regulation of Reiki in Sweden," presents the findings of her empirical research project in which she conducted qualitative interviews with representatives of two Swedish reiki organizations, Förenade Reikiförbundet i Sverige (United Reiki Association in Sweden) and Reikiterapeuternas Riksförbund (The National Association of Reiki Therapists).

Additionally, this issue of IJSNR also contains an interesting collection of reviews. Please enjoy!

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