



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ



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### **Research Statement**

My research area has always been in the field of new religious movements. I like to visit groups, live with them, conduct interviews, and participate in rituals. I am an ethnographer who writes articles, chapters and books on specific new religions, among them the Raelians, the Rajneesh, the Twelve Tribes, The Family, and Scientology. Some of my books focus on themes or issues in new religious studies, such as charisma, gender and family, millennialism, healing, the anticult movement. Most of my research has taken place in Quebec, the U.S. and in France.

#### The Social Control of New Religions

I was initially attracted to new religious studies as a weird, entertaining pastime. However, it becomes harder and harder to understand and ignore the fierce opposition to new religion. Thus I find my work tends to focus more and more on religious freedom issues, human rights, legal disputes involving religious minorities, *antisectisme* (in France) and anticultism (in the U.S.).

My most recent book, *The New Heretics of France* (Oxford, 2011), describes the rise of the government-sponsored antisecte movement in France, and the opposition and discrimination experienced by French citizens whose spiritual association was on the National Assembly's list of 173 sectes. My previous book, *The Nuwaubian Nation: Black Spirituality and State Control* (Ashgate, 2010), explores the opposition to a Black nationalist messianic movement whose leader tried to establish a "sovereign nation" in rural Georgia that was raided by the FBI.



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### Current Research

I am working on a book project called “Storming Zion: Exploring Government Raids on Religious Communities” with Stuart A. Wright, editor of *Armageddon in Waco*. I received a SSHRC standard research grant award this year to fund my research and am planning trips to groups in the U.S. and in France that have been targets of FBI raids.