

COLLOQUE DE RECHERCHE ISSR

Enquêter en sciences des religions:
psychologie, sociologie et sciences sociales des migrations

Résumé de la conférence de Carole M. Cusack

University of Sydney

Organisée en collaboration avec l'Institut d'histoire et anthropologie des religions (IHAR - UNIL)

Studying New Religions: The Church of All Worlds as Exemplary Case Study

The Church of All Worlds (CAW) was founded on 7 April 1962 by Lance Christie (1944-2010) and Tim Zell (1942-) at Westminster College, Fulton Missouri. This religion is based on Robert A. Heinlein's sf novel Stranger in a Strange Land (1961), in which Valentine Michael Smith, raised on Mars, preaches sexual liberation and religious pluralism to humanity. CAW is rewarding to study because it exemplifies many modern trends in new religions. Tim (now Oberon) Zell self-identified as Pagan in 1967 and registered CAW as a religion in California in 1968. From that date, in part due to Zell's friendship with Frederick McLaren Adams (1928-2008), founder of Feraferia, CAW became part of modern Paganism. In 1970 Zell had a vision that shifted the focus of CAW's theology from the polytheistic goddesses of Paganism to the notion that the Earth itself was the goddess, Gaia, a conscious entity incorporating all living being in which humans function as planetary consciousness. From that time, Christie engaged in environmental activism, and Zell and his wife Morning Glory Zell (b. Diana Moore, 1948-2014), explored spiritual travel to ancient Pagan sites and devoted themselves to the modern revival of mythological beings such as unicorns, the pursuit of a sustainable, rural and communal lifestyle, and the practice of polyamory or responsible non-monogamy. In the twenty-first century, CAW is a major voice in modern environmental Paganism, and leads the way as an invented religion that documents its history and cultural activities in print and online. CAW remains inspired by fiction, as its magical education system, the Grey School of Wizardry, based on J. K. Rowling's Hogwarts, from the Harry Potter novels, shows. My first article on CAW was published ten years ago and this lecture examines the religion in terms of fiction and invention, eco-theology and environmentalism, charismatic leadership, and online mediation, all major themes in the study of new religions in the twenty-first century.

Mardi 9 avril 2019
de 17h15 à 19h00, Anthropole 5033



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