

INFORM AUTUMN SEMINAR

Children, Minority Religions, and the Law

Date - Saturday, 17 October 2015; 9.30am – 4.30pm

Location – Clement House, London School of Economics

Registration is now open and can be done using a [credit/debit card through PayPal](#) or by posting a [booking form](#) and a cheque payable to 'Inform' to Inform, Houghton St., London WC2A 2AE. Tickets (including buffet lunch, coffee and tea) paid by 28 September 2015 are **£38 each (£18 students/unwaged)**. Tickets booked after 28 September 2015 will cost £48 each (£28 students/unwaged).

What is in the best interests of a child?

All states who are members of the UN (except the United States) have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which requires the State to act in the best interest of the child. Since ratification, there have been several occasions when States have intervened in what was perceived as infringement of the well-being and/or rights of children living in religious communities. But have these states (or their local authorities) acted in the best interest of the child?

While there are documented cases where children have been neglected and/or harmed when raised within religious communities (both new and old), some minority religions argue that what society proposes (in its culture, education, medical provisions) is not at all in the best interest of the child, and aim to protect their children from such negative influences. Who should decide on what is in a child's best interest? In this seminar we will concentrate on legal issues surrounding children in minority religious communities, from a variety of perspectives.

Provisional Programme

9.30 - 10.00 REGISTRATION

10.00 - 10.15 **Eileen Barker** (Founder and Honorary Research Fellow, Inform) *Welcome and Housekeeping*

10.15 - 10.40 **Amanda van Eck** (Deputy Director, Inform) *Introduction*

10.40 - 11.05 **Heiner Bielefeldt** (UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief) *Religious Socialization in Light of Article 14 of the Conventions on the Rights of a Child*

11.05 – 11.30 **Alain Garay** (Lawyer in Paris, France) *Children, Minority Religions and the European Court of Human Rights Case Laws*

11.30 – 11.55 TEA/COFFEE

11.55 – 12.20 **Jean Swantko Wiseman** (Twelve Tribes lawyer since 1983, USA) *Germany to Twelve Tribes Parents: You can Get Your Children Back if You Leave Twelve Tribes*

12.20 – 12.45 **Tony Brace** (Legal Department, Watch Tower Society) *Jehovah's Witnesses: Children, Blood Transfusions and the Law (Who Holds the Key or Controls the 'Flack Jacket'?)*

12.45 - 13.45 LUNCH

13.45 - 14.10 **Roger Kiska** (Senior Counsel, Deputy Director, ADF International) *Judicial Dogmatism: Home Education and the Rise of Humanist Statism in Europe*

14.10 - 14.35 **David Waldock** *Reflections on a Tennis Shoe*

14.35 - 15.00 TEA/COFFEE

15.00 - 15.25 **Anat Scolnicov** (University of Winchester) *Children, Family and Community - A Clash of Rights?*

15.25 – 15.50 **Lorraine Derocher**

15.50 – 16.30 GENERAL PANEL DISCUSSION