About the Contributors

Isaac Nahon-Serfaty is Associate Professor at the Department of Communication of the University of Ottawa. He has more than 25 years experience in health communication, campaign planning and implementation, public relations, and journalism. Prior to joining the University of Ottawa, Dr. Nahon-Serfaty was the Healthcare Practice Chair for Latin America at the public relations firm Burson-Marsteller, where he developed and implemented campaigns and communication programs in areas such as women’s health, breast cancer, cardiovascular diseases, pain management, mental health, HIV-AIDS, diabetes, and obesity. He worked at the Venezuela Ministry of Health as communications consultant in projects supported by the Pan American Health Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank. He was the Director of the School of Social Communication at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Caracas, and Lecturer in the Department of Communication at the University of Montreal, Canada. He has published extensively about health communication, public relations and political communication in English, French and Spanish. His essay “Actualidad del mito de la Independencia: en búsqueda de sentido en la Babel fragmentada” (2010) won the Banesco Award “La Independencia de Venezuela: 200 años después.” Nahon-Serfaty holds a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Montreal.

Rukhsana Ahmed is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, University of Ottawa. She has an interdisciplinary background with B.A. and M.S.S. in International Relations from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, M.A. in International Development Studies, M.A. in Communication Studies, and Ph. D. in Health Communication from Ohio University, USA. Dr. Ahmed’s research lies at the intersections of health, interpersonal and intercultural communication, media, religion, gender, and development. Dr. Ahmed has published in mainstream communication journals, nursing journals, health studies outlets, and in journals at the intersection of health, communication, and culture. She co-edited the books Medical Communication in Clinical Contexts (Kendall Hunt, 2012), which received the Distinguished Edited Book Award by the Applied Communication Division of the National Communication Association (NCA), USA, and Health Communication and Mass Media: An Integrated Approach to Policy and Practice (Gower, 2013); and co-authored the forthcoming book, Health Literacy in Canada: A Primer for Students and Practitioners (Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc). She serves on editorial boards of and reviews papers for journals in the areas of communication, health, nursing, and media.

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**Douglas F. Cannon** teaches public relations at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He researches how American faith groups practice public relations. Before going to Virginia Tech, Cannon worked for 33 years as a journalist and public relations practitioner. He was a daily newspaper reporter, U.S. Army public affairs officer, weekly community newspaper editor/publisher and United Methodist Church communication executive. He is accredited in public relations. He served three years as president of the Religion Communicators Council, oldest public relations professional organization in the U.S. He earned a BA in journalism and an MA from The Ohio State University. He is a graduate of the Information Officer Course at the Defense Information School and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He received a Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin.

**Ronald I. Cohen** served as National Chair and CEO of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) from 1993 through December 2011. In that role, he guided the Council from its infancy to its position as a principal component of the Canadian broadcasting system and was responsible for the preparation and release of the nearly 500 CBSC decisions that constitute the content policy of Canada’s radio and television broadcasters. He is the author of numerous broadcast-related articles, and co-author of *Regulating Screens: Issues in Broadcasting and Internet Governance for Children* (Toronto and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2013). His other writings include *A Bibliography of the Writings of Sir Winston Churchill* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006, 3 vols.), as well as numerous articles related to the British Prime Minister. He is a Senior Fellow of the Faculty of Public Affairs at Carleton University.
Judith E. Dietz holds a BA and MA in History from Saint Mary’s University, Halifax. Since 1973, she worked for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia and its predecessor, the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Arts. In her capacity as Manager of Collections and Gallery Services, she was responsible for the Permanent Collection and curated numerous exhibitions including historical, contemporary and folk art. In 2005, she opted to take early retirement to pursue personal study and research interests in the area of manuscripts and religious art. This research has taken her to England, Belgium, Italy and the Vatican Secret Archives. Her research findings have been presented at international conferences in Leeds, Copenhagen, Kalamazoo, as well as Ottawa and Halifax. Ms. Dietz is currently affiliated with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia as the Associate Curator of Historical European Art.


David Enrique Finol is a Photographer and an Associate Professor at the Cecilio Acosta Catholic University, in Maracaibo, Venezuela, where he teaches Semiotics, Photography and Basic Informatics, and coordinates the Academic Area of Foreign Languages since 2009. He is the author of several published scientific articles, and is the coauthor of Capillitas on the Borders of the Roads: A Funerary Micro-Culture (2009). His main research field is in Visual Semiotics, particularly Semiotics of Photography.

José Enrique Finol is emeritus professor at the University of Zulia, in Venezuela, where he has been teaching and researching since 1973. He has published more than one hundred articles in national and international scientific journals, has participated in more than one hundred scientific meetings, and edited several books. He is also founder of the journal Opción and the Research Laboratory on Semiotic and Anthropology. His main areas of research interests are anthropo-semiotics of the body, myths, rituals and funerary practices.

Néstor Luis Garrido is a Professor of Journalism in UCAB since 1995 and elected member of the board of Venezuela’s National Journalists Union for 2013-15 period and editor of Recuerda and Maguén-Escudo magazines. He has a B.A. in Mass Communication (1986), minor in Journalism, at Andrés Bello Catholic University (UCAB in Caracas) with a Diploma in Freedom of Speech and Access to Public Information (UCAB) in 2008.

Patrick Imbert, PhD., Ottawa, 1974, University of Ottawa Full Professor and Distinguished Professor, is also director of the University Research Chair entitled: “Canada: Social and Cultural Challenges in a Knowledge-Based Society” (www.canada.uottawa.ca/winwin). He has been Executive Director of
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the International American Studies Association (2005-2009) and President of the Academy of Arts and Humanities of the Royal Society of Canada (2009-2011). He is vice-president of the City for the Cultures of Peace and director of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded project (2010-2013) entitled “Établir des paradigmes opératoires pour comparer les variations discursives dans les Amériques.” He has published 31 books.

Pierre Lévy devoted his professional life to the understanding of the cultural and cognitive implications of the digital technologies, to promote their best social uses and to study the phenomenon of human collective intelligence. He has written a dozen of books on this subject that have been translated in more than 12 languages and are studied in many universities all over the world. He currently teaches at the communication department of the University of Ottawa (Canada), where he holds a Canada Research Chair in Collective Intelligence. Pierre Lévy is fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and received several awards and academic distinctions. His last book The Semantic Sphere. Computation, Cognition and the Information Economy (Volume 1) was published in 2011 by Wiley.

Ian Linden is Director of Policy at the TBFF, formerly director of the Social Action Programme, Faiths Act, and an associate professor in the Study of Religion at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in the University of London. He has published a number of books on religion in Africa and, recently, two major studies on faith and globalisation, A New Map of the World and Global Catholicism. He was for 15 years director of the Catholic Institute for International Relations and was awarded the CMG for work for human rights in 2000. He is a member of the Christian-Muslim Forum of the UK, worked in interfaith dialogue with Shi’a leaders, in Iran, and has acted as a DfID (UK government Department for International Development) consultant on matters of Faith and Development.

Guy Marchessault completed his studies in Philosophy, Christian Theology, and Communications Sciences and then became a full time journalist for nine years, specialized in religious questions. He is the co-founder of an important facilitation center in Montréal, the Centre Saint-Pierre, where he worked in Media literacy and public intervention. In 1995, he returned to university where he received a Ph. D. from the University of Ottawa and a Doctorate in Theology from Saint Paul University, Ottawa. He is a professor in Communications studies since 1989 at Saint Paul University. He gave distance courses online from 2002 to today. His specialization: media, religion, and ethics. His books (in French): Médias et foi chrétienne: l’image à l’épreuve de l’idolâtrie, Montréal/Ottawa, Novalis, 1998, 264 p. - Médias et foi chrétienne: deux univers à concilier; divergences et convergences, Montréal, Fides, 2002, 187 p. - (ed.) Témoigner de sa foi, dans les médias, aujourd’hui, Ottawa, Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2005, 463 p. - La foi chrétienne et le divertissement médiatique, Québec, Presses de l’Université Laval, 2007, 390 p. He published many chapters or articles in other books and journals. More recently, he became a novelist, publishing four books of fiction.

Susan J. Palmer teaches in the Religious Studies department at Concordia University and is a Member of the Religious Studies Faculty at McGill University where she is currently working on a 3-year research project, Exploring Government Raids on Religious Communities, supported by the Social Sciences and the Humanities Research Council, Dawson College. Her books, sociological studies of new religious movements, include: Moon Sisters, Krishna Mother, Rajneesh Lovers, Millennium, Messiahs.
and Mayhem (co-edited with Thomas Robbins), Children in New Religions, The New Heretics of France, and Aliens Adored. She is currently working on a book on raids, Storming Zion, with co-author, Start Wright, forthcoming with Oxford University Press.

Donn J. Tilson, associate professor at the University of Miami’s School of Communication, holds a Ph.D. in Public Relations from the University of Stirling, Scotland, the first in Europe to graduate with a doctorate in the field. Prior to UM, Tilson served as a public relations manager for AT&T/BellSouth for 16 years, directing the company’s charitable contributions and educational relations programs in Florida. A member of the Public Relations Society of America’s College of Fellows and past chair of the Society’s Professional Interest International Section, he has published and lectured internationally on corporate public relations and on public relations and religion. His book, The Promotion of Devotion: Saints, Celebrities and Shrines (2011, Common Ground), is a pioneering work on communication, religion and culture. Recipient of a 2013 Fulbright Award to the University of Ottawa, he is developing research, curriculum and programming on diversity and public relations including interfaith dialogue.

Richelle Wiseman is an experienced communications consultant and cultural commentator with expertise in world religions, strategic communications, media and public relations. She has led significant national inter-religious educational and dialogue initiatives across Canada. She is now the Senior VP of LACUNA Group International, an international consulting firm. Her business experience includes being a founder who helped launch VISION TV: Canada’s Faith Network, the world’s first multi-religious television channel. With her company, Inscape Communications, Richelle has been a consultant to several Canadian national and regional religious organizations. She has traveled to the Middle East several times and reported on interreligious issues and peace-building efforts for a number of Canadian media outlets. She has made presentations at the University of Calgary on the Middle East Peace Process, and published opinion pieces in the Canadian media on the UN and its human rights work. Richelle has a Masters in Communications and Print Journalism, and previously, she served for seven years as the Executive Director for Canada’s Centre for Faith and the Media.