



# St. Thomas University

School of Social Work, Fredericton, NB CANADA E3B 5G3

## **SPIRITUALITY IN THE MODERN WORLD**

**You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you decide, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as you want so that you are clear what is being asked of you.**

### ***What is the research about?***

The proposed research is about how people see and express their spiritual identity through the stories they tell (and are told) about their lives and their faith. We are interested in what spirituality means to you and how you came to the place that you are now in. The project is intended to promote awareness, knowledge, and understanding of religious and spiritual diversity in Canada, and to enhance interfaith dialogue.

### ***Who is conducting the research?***

Dr. Clive Baldwin is leading the research. He is Professor of Social Work at St Thomas University (STU). There are two co-researchers – Dr Matte Robinson from the Department of English at STU and Dr Brandi Estey-Burt, a Research Associate of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Narrative, of which Dr Baldwin is Director.

There are a number of Canadian and international collaborators on the project. The project team will also be assisted by undergraduate and/or graduate research assistants. Details of collaborators and research assistants can be found on the project website:

[www.narrativesofidentity.org](http://www.narrativesofidentity.org)

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board of STU. The letter of approval from the Board can be accessed here: <https://narrativesofidentity.org/participant-info/>

### ***Why have I been invited to participate?***

You have been invited to participate because you are a member or leader of a spiritual, religious or faith-based group or hold to your own spiritual beliefs and practices.

### ***If I am interested in participating, what should I do?***

If you are interested in participating, please contact me, indicating your interest and asking any questions you might have. You can do this by phone, e-mail, or regular mail:

Dr. Clive Baldwin,  
Rm 313, Brian Mulroney Hall  
St Thomas University, Fredericton, NB Canada E3B 5G3  
Phone: 506.452.9596  
Email: [baldwin@stu.ca](mailto:baldwin@stu.ca)

### ***What does participating in the research involve?***

In agreeing to participate in the research you are agreeing to take part in two interviews, each of approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours in length. The first interview will focus on how you came to your spirituality – your spiritual journey – and what it means to you. You will be able to tell your story in as much detail as you want. The second interview will focus on clarifying and expanding on things from the first interview and exploring particular aspects of your experience, the group of

which you are a part, and how others see you and that group.

At the end of the second interview, we may ask whether you would be willing to speak to us again if we have any follow-up questions. You do not have to agree to this.

We will also ask you whether you would be interested in participating in a podcast discussion panel with other participants. At that stage, we would only be seeking permission to contact you again regarding any podcast(s) and we would seek separate consent for your participation in those podcasts.

***What will happen to the information I provide?***

Interviews will be typed word for word (transcribed) and all information that could identify you (e.g. names, places, dates etc.) will be removed. The information will then be analyzed and used in reports, journal articles, conference presentations, educational materials, artistic and cultural works, podcasts, and online environments. All information will be edited so as to ensure that you cannot be identified (with the exception of audio and/or video recordings – see below).

***Will the information I provide be kept confidential? Who will have access to the information I provide?***

Yes, we are very keen to maintain the confidentiality of those participating in the research. Only those directly involved in the research – investigators, collaborators, and research assistants - will have access to the information you give us. Once you agree to participate in the research, you will be allocated a code which will replace your name on any files. All electronic files containing your information will be password-protected. A separate password-protected file linking your personal details with that code will be kept in case we need to contact you again about your interviews. Only Dr Baldwin will have access to the file that links you to your files.

Transcribers and research assistants will be required to sign confidentiality agreements. All information will be treated in confidence, unless you told us about another person being harmed or at risk of being harmed or about an unresolved or future crime.

All identifying information will be removed from the information you give us. If you so wish we can send you a copy of the transcript for correction and approval before it is included in the research. All members of the research team – investigators, collaborators, and research assistants will have access to the anonymized or de-identified transcripts of your interviews. Only Dr Baldwin will have access to the original transcripts. Members of the research team will also have access to the audio/video recordings as this helps with analysis. It is not possible to edit audio/video recordings to the same extent as transcripts so references to names and places will remain.

All hard copy information will be stored in locked filing cabinets in Dr Baldwin's office and electronic files will be password protected computer file and stored on the secure University OneDrive or on the password-protected laptops of the research team. All materials will be destroyed after seven years following completion of the research.

In addition to being asked to agree to being interviewed you will be asked also whether you agree to any audio and/or video recordings being used in conference presentations, for educational purposes, in academic publications, artistic and cultural works, podcasts, or in interim and final reports on the website. ***This consent is entirely separate from agreeing to participate in the research and you can still participate in the research even if you do not want the audio/video recordings to be used in this way.*** If you agree to these uses of the audio/video recordings we cannot guarantee that you will not be identified from the recording so please think very carefully about this. Once again, you do not have to agree to this – we can work with the typed transcripts alone.

A full data security protocol, approved by the Research Ethics Board of St Thomas University, is available on the project website ([www.narrativesofidentity.org](http://www.narrativesofidentity.org)) or can be sent to you upon request.

***Can I change my mind? And what will happen if I do?***

You are free to withdraw at any stage prior to the submission of materials for publication or the presentation of materials at conferences or through artistic and cultural works, educational and training materials, or release of podcasts. You do not have to give a reason. Prior to publication, presentation, or release, if you choose to withdraw you will be offered a copy of any transcripts and recordings before all information you have supplied and that can be attributed to you being destroyed. Hard copies of materials will be shredded, electronic files will be deleted.

Once such materials are submitted for publication, presented, or released, you will no longer be able to withdraw your contribution to those materials. However, you may still choose to withdraw your information from subsequent use.

***Will I be able to see the outcomes of the research?***

Yes, you can ask to be put on the list to be sent notifications of any updates, interim reports, academic articles or chapters, conference presentations, artistic and cultural works, and podcasts. Where copyright allows, these will be available on the project website [INSERT URL] or can be sent to you on request.

***Who do I contact if I have a question or want further information?***

Please feel free to contact me, the principal investigator, Dr. Clive Baldwin, by letter, telephone, or email:

Dr. Clive Baldwin  
Rm 313, Brian Mulroney Hall  
St Thomas University, Fredericton, NB Canada E3B 5G3  
Phone: 506.452.9596  
Email: [baldwin@stu.ca](mailto:baldwin@stu.ca)

You may also view the project's website at: [www.narrativesofidentity.org](http://www.narrativesofidentity.org)

If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Chair/Vice-Chair of the St. Thomas University Research Ethics Board, [reb@stu.ca](mailto:reb@stu.ca)

If during your participation you have any concerns about the conduct of the research or want to make a complaint, please address these, in the first instance, with myself. If you are not satisfied with the response, you may contact:

Vice-Chair Research Ethics Board  
[reb@stu.ca](mailto:reb@stu.ca)