

## **Mixed Blessings - the Un-Holy Alliance between Religion, Spirituality and Intellectual Property**

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Abstract:

The paper explores various trends in the use of intellectual property protection by religious and spiritual movements in order to assert doctrinal orthodoxy, deal with spiritual dissidents and acquire theological, philosophical and social legitimacy and recognition. While these trends in using business methods, trade mark, patent, copyright and confidential information protection strategies are featured in the IP portfolios of new religious movements which use IP as a way to establish themselves in areas where traditional and predominant religions have used political lobbying and legislation, increasingly a number of traditional religious organisations (like the Holy See) have developed their own IP legal framework. These two trends - legitimating of religious and philosophical structures and practices through IP in the absence of any other obvious legal means to achieve such legitimation and developing legally and politically established religious and philosophical movements into international brands represent a new distinctive aspect of creation of religious and spiritual group identity through the use of IP legal tools originally developed to protect industrial assets. These trends will undoubtedly change the ways religion and spirituality are legitimised as well as the purpose of IP protection.