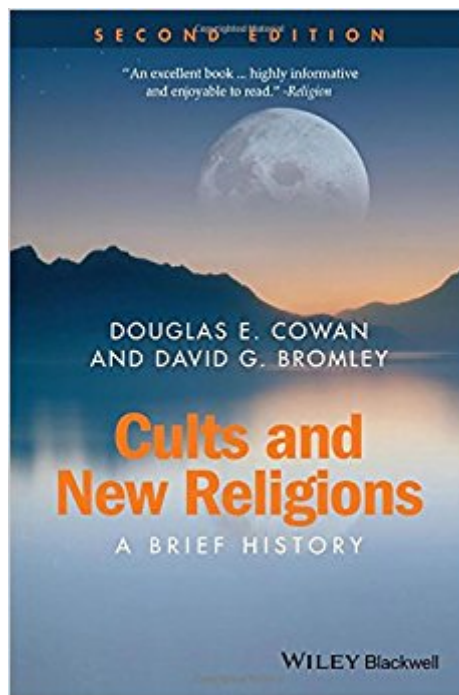




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Cults And New Religions: A Brief History (Wiley Blackwell Brief Histories Of Religion)



Synopsis

This unparalleled introduction to cults and new religious movements has been completely up-dated and expanded to reflect the latest developments; each chapter reviews the origins, leaders, beliefs, rituals and practices of a NRM, highlighting the specific controversies surrounding each group. A fully updated, revised and expanded edition of an unparalleled introduction to cults and new religious movements Profiles a number of the most visible, significant, and controversial new religious movements, presenting each group's history, doctrines, rituals, leadership, and organization Offers a discussion of the major controversies in which new religious movements have been involved, using each profiled group to illustrate the nature of one of those controversies Covers debates including what constitutes an authentic religion, the validity of claims of brainwashing techniques, the implications of experimentation with unconventional sexual practices, and the deeply rooted cultural fears that cults engender New sections include methods of studying new religions in each chapter as well as presentations on "groups to watch"

Book Information

Series: Wiley Blackwell Brief Histories of Religion

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Wiley; 2 edition (June 15, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1118722108

ISBN-13: 978-1118722107

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #189,003 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #102 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Religions, Practices & Sacred Texts > Cults #102 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Religious History #432 in Books > History > World > Religious > General

Customer Reviews

The world of new religions is notoriously complex and diverse. As such, an introductory text must simplify, but without simplification. This updated edition of *Cults and New Religious Movements* achieves this admirably. With an enviable grasp of contemporary scholarship, Douglas Cowan and David Bromley provide fresh insights into particular groups, events and controversies. This

wonderfully erudite and lucid volume should be required reading for all students of new religions. Christopher Partridge, Lancaster University An ideal source for those looking for a concise, authoritative introduction to the most important new religions of the past fifty years. The authors carefully and seriously tackle significant questions about the nature of new religions, helping readers navigate a controversial and complicated field. Benjamin E. Zeller, Lake Forest College The second edition of *Cults and New Religious Movements* is an astute and accessible textbook written by two eminent scholars of new religions. Through eight case studies the text examines key issues that arise in relation to new religious movements, thereby shedding light on the study of religions in general. This book is a valuable pedagogical tool that stimulates critical analysis and discussion in the classroom and beyond. Catherine Wessinger, Loyola University New Orleans

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This book gets four stars because of its extremely organized form and excellent facts. Although we feel the slight defensive nature of the findings, the team of Cowan and Bromley did a very good job of outlining what some of these people believed in. I especially liked the fact that they said Christianity was once a cult. It puts the whole realm of religious belief in perspective. I would highly recommend this book for every Sunday school teacher.

This is a scholarly book -- in fact, it is intended to be usable as a college textbook -- that treats cults

and new religions respectfully. The writers go into detail about just what makes these religious groups different from more established ones, and examine the folly of lumping them all into one category. They are very critical of the countercult movement and "deprogramming" in particular, rightly noting that "deprogrammers" attempt the same sort of "brainwashing" that they regularly (and usually incorrectly) accuse new religions of utilizing. They are also very critical of a sensationalistic news media that breathlessly reports on cults only when something bizarre happens, rushing to judge their leaders as crooks or kooks and their adherents as deluded zombies. The groups selected for profiles here are not taken at random or because they are the most controversial or extreme; each is meant to illustrate a different facet of new religion. The Branch Davidians and Heaven's Gate are here, but so are the Ramtha School of Enlightenment and Wicca. Even regularly scorned groups like Scientology and Unificationism get a fair hearing.

Good book, used it a lot every day in class. Was in good condition

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