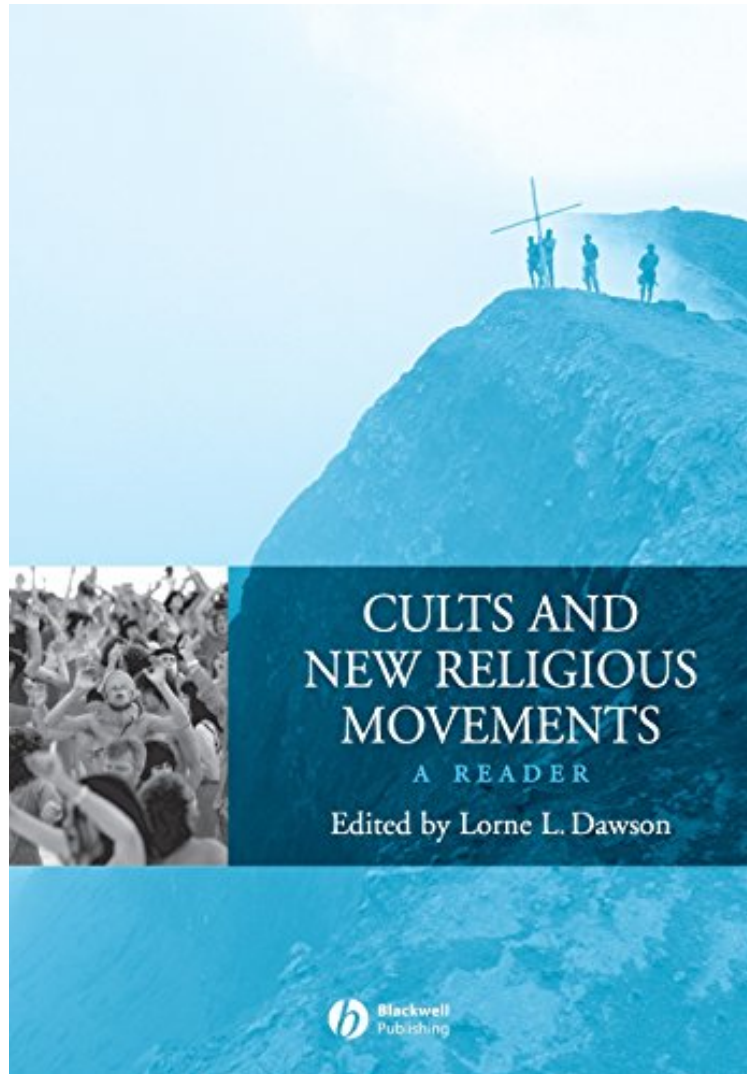


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between "world denying religious movements" and "world affirming religious movements" that are extremely helpful. The sociologist Rodney Stark's essay is also excellent. It discusses how the proclamations of cults function as "compensators" for general, and unachievable longings (such as eternal life). Lastly, this book is especially useful for reflecting on how the world's major religions (Christianity and Islam etc.) likely had their beginnings. In other words, the patterns typical of new religious movements are suggestive of how the old religious movements got their start. Short of a time machine, the study of contemporary new religious movements (cults) is as close as we are likely to get to witnessing the early beginnings, and evolution, of mature religions. This book is thus an excellent introduction to the scientific study of religion generally. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book was a requirement for a college class I ...By MorganThis book was a requirement for a college class I was taking. If your class requires the book it is a necessary read. However, difficult to stay on task when reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good condition.By CasondraBought this for a class. Good condition.

What is a cult? Why do they emerge? Who joins them? And why do tragedies such as Waco and Jonestown occur? This reader brings together the voices of historians, sociologists, and psychologists of religion to address these key questions about new religious movements. Looks at theoretical explanations for cults, why people join and what happens when they do. Brings together the best work on cults by sociologists, historians, and psychologists of religion. A broad-ranging, balanced and clearly organized collection of readings. Includes coverage of topical issues, such as the 'brainwashing' controversy, and cults in cyberspace. Section introductions by the editor situate the nature, value, and relevance of the selected readings in context of current discussions.

"This is a superb collection which will effectively introduce some readers to the field of NRM studies, and which is indispensable for any course on alternative religions. The volume really represents some sort of a milestone and its publication may indicate that the scholarly study of NRMs has 'arrived'." Nova Religio "This is a valuable reader and one which deserves to become part of the landscape." Gerald Vinten, European Business School, London "The book is very useful for students, scholars of different disciplines, and lay readers to get an idea of the scientific response to publicly debated issues about new religions. Furthermore, with bibliographies at the end of each article, it also provides an excellent starting point for further study." Marburg Journal of Religion "The editor has collected a number of fine writings by leading authors, theorists and researchers in the field of NRMs. One find understandable and accessible essays by historians, sociologists and psychologists of religion and other scholars well known for their work on the subject and/or famous in their disciplines ... For readers interested in the phenomenon the book is very readable and can open up a new world - a balanced world without prejudice." Journal of Empirical Theology copy sent 31/01/12: The Journal of Academic Researches in Religious Studies From the Back CoverWhat is a cult? Why do they emerge? Who joins them? And why do tragedies such as Waco and Jonestown occur? This Reader brings together the voices of historians, sociologists, and psychologists of religion to address these key questions about new religious movements. The volume opens with an introductory essay by the editor, and each section is prefaced by a brief essay outlining the issues at stake, the state of current discussion, and the nature, value, and relevance of the selected readings. The readings themselves are broad-ranging and include coverage of topical questions, such as the 'brainwashing' controversy, sexual deviance and gender issues, and cults in cyberspace. This collection enables readers to gain a clear understanding of the phenomenon of new religious movements in modern culture and to replace prejudice and speculation with reliable insights into the nature of cult activity.