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978-0-521-19650-5 - The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements

Edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein

Frontmatter

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

New religions emerge as distinct entities in the religious landscape when innovations are introduced by a charismatic leader, or a schismatic group leaves its parent organization. New religious movements (NRMs) often present novel doctrines and advocate unfamiliar modes of behavior, and have therefore often been perceived as controversial. NRMs have, however, in recent years come to be treated in the same way as established religions – that is, as complex cultural phenomena involving myths, rituals, and canonical texts. This *Companion* discusses key features of NRMs from a systematic, comparative perspective, summarizing results of forty years of research. The volume addresses NRMs that have caught media attention, including movements such as Scientology, New Age, the Neo-pagans, the Sai Baba movement, and Jihadist movements active in a post-9/11 context. An essential resource for students of religious studies, history of religion, sociology, anthropology, and psychology of religion.

Olav Hammer is Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Southern Denmark. He is author of *Claiming Knowledge: Strategies of Epistemology from Theosophy to the New Age* (2001), and co-editor of *Polemical Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others* (with Kocku von Stuckrad, 2007), *The Invention of Sacred Tradition* (with James R. Lewis, 2007), and the *Handbook of the Theosophical Current* (with Mikael Rothstein, 2012).

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

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Edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

Notes on contributors page ix

Introduction to new religious
movements I

OLAV HAMMER AND MIKAEL ROTHSTEIN

Part I *Social science perspectives*

1 The sociology of new religious
movements 13

DAVID G. BROMLEY

2 New religious movements and the evolving
Internet 29

DOUGLAS E. COWAN

3 Major controversies involving new religious
movements 44

JAMES T. RICHARDSON

Part II *Themes*

4 History and the end of time in new
religions 63

GARRY W. TROMPF

5 Charismatic leaders in new religions 80

CATHERINE WESSINGER

6 Rituals in new religions 97

GRAHAM HARVEY

7 Canonical and extracanonical texts in new
religions 113

OLAV HAMMER AND MIKAEL ROTHSTEIN

Part III *New religious movements*

8 Scientology: up stat, down stat 133

JAMES R. LEWIS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19650-5 - The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements

Edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*viii Contents*

- 9 Neopaganism 150
SABINA MAGLIOCCO
- 10 The International Raëlian Movement 167
SUSAN J. PALMER AND BRYAN SENTES
- 11 The Sathya Sai Baba movement 184
TULASI SRINIVAS
- 12 Neo-Sufism 198
MARK SEDGWICK
- 13 Satanism 215
JESPER AAGAARD PETERSEN AND ASBJØRN
DYRENDAL
- 14 Theosophy 231
JAMES A. SANTUCCI
- 15 The New Age 247
GEORGE D. CHRYSIDES
- 16 "Jihadism" as a new religious
movement 263
REUVEN FIRESTONE
- 17 New religious movements in changing
Russia 286
MARAT SHTERIN
- 18 New religious movements in sub-Saharan
Africa 303
PETER B. CLARKE
- Index* 321

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19650-5 - The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements

Edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

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Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19650-5 - The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements

Edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein

Frontmatter

[More information](#)x *Notes on contributors*

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978-0-521-19650-5 - The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Notes on contributors xi*

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Edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*xii Notes on contributors*

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