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# ALTERNATIVE RELIGIONS

A Sociological Introduction



Stephen J. Hunt

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# Alternative Religions A Sociological Introduction

**AW Chickering**



## **Alternative Religions A Sociological Introduction:**

**Alternative Religions** Stephen J. Hunt, 2017-09-28 Title first published in 2003 Alternative religions attract great public academic and government interest in our apparently post Christian society Yet how did all the alternatives develop what are their beliefs and practices and how significant is their impact in terms of the world s religions and society This book presents a comprehensive introduction to the major forms of alternative religions Cults Sects New Religious Movements the New Age Fundamentalism Pentecostalism Ethnic Religions and Quasi religions Stephen Hunt presents sociological insights into the rise of alternative religions their beliefs and practices their impact who joins them and how they are being classified and could be re classified in the future Public and legal controversies surrounding some alternative religions such as the so called dangerous cults are also explored This book offers students insights into contemporary themes such as secularisation post modernity links between religion healing and and changes in our global culture

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*Alternative Religions* Stephen Hunt, 2003 Outside the remit of traditional Christianity alternative religion is seen as controversial by many and equated with so called cults Stephen Hunt s study explains what these religions are and who believes what and practises what in their numerous manifestations

*Religion and Everyday Life* Stephen Hunt, 2013-01-11 This introductory text explores the historical and contemporary relevance of religion to social life through an examination of practice and belief Author Hunt reconsiders how theories and concepts are lived at the level of selfhood and cultural identity through religious and spiritual belief At the same time he looks at contemporary changes in religious life and how these are impacted by socialization institutional belonging and belief and at the significance of class gender age and ethnicity Individual chapters cover a range of issues such as religion identity and community secularization and pluralism traditional Christianity change and continuity globalization and the global context religion and ethnicity The text challenges much current sociological thought and deals with contemporary Christianity a range of world faiths and new and developing expressions of religion and spirituality With tables and diagrams to illustrate key points and trends it provides an accessible

and captivating introduction to the sociology of religion *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, Second Edition* Raymond F. Paloutzian, Crystal L. Park, 2014-12-19 Paloutzian experimental and social psychology Westmont College and Park psychology U of Connecticut provide a 33 chapter handbook on the psychology of religion and spirituality for social and clinical psychologists pastoral counselors and students and researchers in psychology and religious studies Psychologists and a few religious studies specialists from the US and some countries in Europe address the foundations including definitions core issues measurement assessment research methods psychodynamic psychology and religion and evolutionary psychology as a foundation for the psychology of religion religious and spiritual development across the lifespan and the neural and cognitive bases of religion and connections to emotion personality culture and social behavior They discuss religious practices and rituals conversion experiences prayer spiritual struggles fundamentalism forgiveness values and morality and implications for individual and collective well being in terms of health mental health coping psychotherapy workplace spirituality research terrorism and other areas New topics in this edition include cross cultural issues spiritual goals emotional values and mindfulness Most chapters have been redesigned or rewritten with 25 new and eight revised chapters The main themes of the book are more integrated and the introductory and concluding chapters argue that the application of religious meaning systems and the multilevel interdisciplinary paradigm can allow reconceptualization of the field and expand research Annotation 2013 Book News Inc Portland OR booknews com [The Columbia Guide to Religion in American History](#) Paul Harvey, Edward Blum, 2012-02-14 Introduction major themes in American religious history Paul Harvey and Edward J Blum Colonial encounters Linford D Fisher Native American religions Suzanne Crawford O'Brien Civil religion and national identity Andrew M Manis Theology Mark Noll Evangelicals in American history Douglas A Sweeney Religion and politics Jason C Bivins Religion and the law in American history Frank S Ravitch Religion war and peace Ira R Chernus Religion gender and sexuality Anthony Michael Petro Religion race and African American life Edward J Blum Religion ethnicity and the immigrant experience Roberto R Trevi o Asian American religions Timothy Tseng Alternative religious movements in American history Stephen J Stein Religion and the environment Lynn Ross Bryant Religion and popular culture Philip Goff Religious conservatism and fundamentalism Margaret Bendroth Catholicism in America Leslie Woodcock Tentler American Judaism Alan T Levenson The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints Mormons D Michael Quinn Islam in America Jane Smith **Globalized Religion and Sexual Identity**, 2014-04-24 Globalized Religion and Sexual Identity reflects on the ways religion gender and sexual identity are framed and regulated in multiple spheres across the globe Controversies in the public arena regarding religion and sexual identity often construct these categories as inherently oppositional or already in conflict As state policies regarding sexuality and sexual diversity develop promoting inclusivity and non discrimination it is imperative to develop a more nuanced discussion regarding the relationship of religion ideology to sexual diversity and sexuality The goal of this volume is to explore religion and sexual identity from a range of

countries across the globe focusing on the theme of religious ideological voices in state policies such as same sex marriage identification and education Contributors include Heather Shipley Rebecca Barrett Fox Chiu Man chung Kate Power Am lie Barras Dia Dabby Janet R Jakobsen Ann Pellegrini Ana Cristina Leal Moreira Lima Vera Helena Ferraz de Siqueira Marcia Bastos de S Riva Lieflander Shun Hing Chan Ping Huang Stephen Hunt Nina Rosas Cristina Maria de Castro Anna Strhan Nesochi Chinwuba Pamela Dickey Young Yvette Taylor and Ria Snowdon Historicizing "Tradition" in the Study of Religion Steven Engler, Gregory Price Grieve, 2012-02-13 This collection of essays analyzes tradition as a category in the historical and comparative study of religion The book questions the common assumption that tradition is simply the passing down or imitation of prior practices and discourses It begins from the premise that many traditions are at least in part social fabrications often deliberately serving particular ideological ends Individual chapters examine a wide variety of historical periods and religions Congolese Buddhist Christian Confucian Cree Esoteric Hawaiian Hindu Islamic Jewish New Religious Movement and Shinto Different sections of the book consider tradition s relation to three sets of issues legitimation and authority agency and identity modernity and the West *Counting Religion in Britain, 1970-2020* Clive D. Field, 2021-12-09 Counting Religion in Britain 1970 2020 the fourth volume in the author s chronological history of British secularization sheds significant new light on the nature scale and timing of religious change in Britain during the past half century with particular reference to quantitative sources Adopting a key performance indicators approach twenty one facets of personal religious belonging behaving and believing are examined offering a much wider range of lenses through which the health of religion can be viewed and appraised than most contemporary scholarship Summative analysis of these indicators by means of a secularization dashboard leads to a reaffirmation of the validity of secularization in its descriptive sense as the dominant narrative and direction of travel since 1970 while acknowledging that it is an incomplete process and without endorsing all aspects of the paradigmatic expression of secularization as a by product of modernization *Encyclopedia of New Religions* Christopher Hugh Partridge, 2004 A comprehensive and authoritative guide to over 200 new religions sects and alternative spiritualities **A Historical Introduction to the Study of New Religious Movements** W. Michael Ashcraft, 2018-02-02 The American public s perception of New Religious Movements NRMs as fundamentally harmful cults stems from the anticult movement of the 1970s which gave a sometimes hysterical and often distorted image of NRMs to the media At the same time academics pioneered a new field studying these same NRMs from sociological and historical perspectives They offered an interpretation that ran counter to that of the anticult movement For these scholars in the new field of NRM studies NRMs were legitimate religions deserving of those freedoms granted to established religions Those scholars in NRM studies continued to evolve methods and theories to study NRMs This book tells their story Each chapter begins with a biography of a key person involved in studying NRMs The narrative unfolds chronologically beginning with late nineteenth and early twentieth century perceptions of religions alternative to the mainstream Then the focus shifts to those early efforts in the

1960s and 1970s to comprehend the growing phenomena of cults or NRMs using the tools of academic disciplines The book's midpoint is a chapter that looks closely at the scholarship of the anticult movement and from there moves forward in time to the present highlighting themes in the study of NRMs like violence gender and reflexive ethnography No other book has used the scholars of NRMs as the focus for a study in this way The material in this volume is therefore a fascinating viewpoint from which to explore the origins of this vibrant academic community as well as analyse the practice of Religious Studies more generally

**Encyclopedia of Religion**, 2005

**Alternative American Religions** Stephen J. Stein, 2000 Through their role in the development of the First Amendment and their exercise of the freedoms it grants alternative religious groups have had a profound influence on American history As Stephen J Stein points out in this vivid overview the history of alternative religion from colonial Puritans to late 20th century Branch Davidians runs parallel to that of dissent in America Committed to fairness of representation Stein describes the evolution and structure of alternative religious movements from both sides the critics and the religious dissenters themselves He investigates obscure groups such as the 19th century Vermont Pilgrims who wore bearskins and refused to bathe or cut their hair alongside better known alternative believers including colonial America's largest outsider faith the Quakers 17th and 18th century Mennonites Amish and Shakers and the Christian Scientists Jehovah's Witnesses Black Muslims and Scientologists of today The book also covers the milestones in the history of alternative American religions from the infamous Salem witch trials and mass suicide murder at Jonestown to the positive ways in which these religions have affected racial relations and the empowerment of women Religion in American Life explores the evolution character and dynamics of organized religion in America from 1500 to the present day Written by distinguished religious historians these books weave together the varying stories that compose the religious fabric of the United States from Puritanism to alternative religious practices Primary source material coupled with handsome illustrations and lucid text make these books essential in any exploration of America's diverse nature Each book includes a chronology suggestions for further reading and index

**Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America** William M. Ashcraft, Eugene V. Gallagher, 2006-10-30 Most new or alternative religions are gravely misunderstood by members of the religious mainstream Labeled cults or sects groups and their members are often ridiculed or otherwise disregarded as weird and potentially dangerous by the populace at large Despite their efforts at educating the general public the various anti and counter cult activists have in fact promoted much more misunderstanding than accurate understanding of the religious lives of some of their fellow citizens Consequently they have helped to create a very hostile environment for anyone whose religious practices do not fit within a so called mainstream This set rectifies the situation by presenting accurate comprehensive authoritative and accessible accounts of various new and alternative religious movements that have been and are active in American society and it addresses ways of understanding new and alternative religions within a broader context Determining what actually constitutes a new or alternative religion is a subject of constant debate Questions

arise as to a new faith's legitimacy, beliefs, methods of conversion and other facets of a religious movement's viability and place in a given culture. How a religion gains recognition by the mainstream, which often labels such new movements as cults, is fraught with difficulty, tension, and fear. Here, experts delineate the boundaries and examine the various groups, beliefs, movements, and other issues related to new faiths and alternative beliefs. Readers will come away with a fuller understanding of the religious landscape in America today.

Volume 1: *History and Controversies* discusses the foundations of new and alternative religions in the United States and addresses the controversies that surround them. This volume helps readers better understand what makes a new or alternative belief system a religion and the issues involved.

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Volume 3: *Metaphysical, New Age, and Neopagan Movements* looks at Shamanism, Spiritualism, Wicca, and Paganism among other movements as they have developed and grown in the U.S. These faiths have found new and devoted followers yet are often misunderstood.

Volume 4: *Asian Traditions* focuses on those new and alternative religions that have been inspired by Asian religious traditions. From Baha'i to Soka Gakkai, from Adidam to the Vedanta Society, contributors look at a full range of groups practicing and worshiping in the U.S. today.

Volume 5: *African Diaspora Traditions and Other American Innovations* examines the various traditions linked to the African diaspora, such as Rastafarianism, Santeria, and the Nation of Islam, alongside traditions that are truly American incarnations, like Scientology, UFO religions, and Heaven's Gate. Some of the new and alternative religions covered in these pages include Shamanism, Wicca, Black Israelites, Santeria, Scientology, Elan Vital, Hare Krishna, Soka Gakkai, and many more.

[Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America](#) Eugene V.

Gallagher, William M. Ashcraft, 2006-10-30. Most new or alternative religions are gravely misunderstood by members of the religious mainstream. Labeled cults or sects, groups and their members are often ridiculed or otherwise disregarded as weird and potentially dangerous by the populace at large. Despite their efforts at educating the general public, the various anti- and counter-cult activists have in fact promoted much more misunderstanding than accurate understanding of the religious lives of some of their fellow citizens. Consequently, they have helped to create a very hostile environment for anyone whose religious practices do not fit within a so-called mainstream. This set rectifies the situation by presenting accurate, comprehensive, authoritative, and accessible accounts of various new and alternative religious movements that have been and are active in American society and it addresses ways of understanding new and alternative religions within a broader context. Determining what actually constitutes a new or alternative religion is a subject of constant debate. Questions arise as to a new faith's legitimacy, beliefs, methods of conversion and other facets of a religious movement's viability and place in a given culture. How a religion gains recognition by the mainstream, which often labels such new movements as cults, is fraught with difficulty, tension, and fear. Here, experts delineate the boundaries and examine the various groups, beliefs, movements, and

other issues related to new faiths and alternative beliefs Readers will come away with a fuller understanding of the religious landscape in America today Volume 1 History and Controversies discusses the foundations of new and alternative religions in the United States and addresses the controversies that surround them This volume helps readers better understand what makes a new or alternative belief system a religion and the issues involved Volume 2 Jewish and Christian Traditions explores the various new religions that have grown out of these two Abrahamic faiths Groups such as the Shakers the People s Temple the Branch Davidians Jehovah s Witnesses and others are examined Volume 3 Metaphysical New Age and Neopagan Movements looks at Shamanism Spiritualism Wicca and Paganism among other movements as they have developed and grown in the U S These faiths have found new and devoted followers yet are often misunderstood Volume 4 Asian Traditions focuses on those new and alternative religions that have been inspired by Asian religious traditions From Baha i to Soka Gakkai from Adidam to the Vedanta Society contributors look at a full range of groups practicing and worshiping in the U S today Volume 5 African Diaspora Traditions and Other American Innovations examines the various traditions linked to the African diaspora such as Rastafarianism Santeria and the Nation of Islam alongside traditions that are truly American incarnations like Scientology UFO religions and Heaven s Gate Some of the new and alternative religions covered in these pages include Shamanism Wicca Black Israelites Santeria Scientology Elan Vital Hare Krishna Soka Gakkai and many more

**Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America: Asian traditions** Eugene V. Gallagher,W. Michael Ashcraft,2006 IBSS: Sociology: 2004 Vol. 54 Compiled by the British Library of Polit,Compiled by the British Library of Political and Economic Science,2005-10-25 First published in 1952 the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences anthropology economics political science and sociology is well established as a major bibliographic reference for students researchers and librarians in the social sciences worldwide Key features authority Rigorous standards are applied to make the IBSS the most authoritative selective bibliography ever produced Articles and books are selected on merit by some of the world s most expert librarians and academics breadth today the IBSS covers over 2000 journals more than any other comparable resource The latest monograph publications are also included international Coverage the IBSS reviews scholarship published in over 30 languages including publications from Eastern Europe and the developing world User friendly organization all non English titles are word sections Extensive author subject and place name indexes are provided in both English and French

**Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America: Jewish and Christian traditions** Eugene V. Gallagher,W. Michael Ashcraft,2006 Annotation Most new or alternative religions are gravely misunderstood by members of the religious mainstream Labeled cults or sects groups and their members are often ridiculed or otherwise disregarded as weird and potentially dangerous by the populace at large Despite their efforts at educating the general public the various anti and counter cult activists have in fact promoted much more mis understanding than accurate understanding of the religious lives of some of their fellow citizens Consequently they have helped to create a very hostile

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**Religion in the Contemporary World** Alan Aldridge, 2013-04-03 In the new edition of this widely praised text Alan Aldridge examines the complex realities of religious belief practice and institutions Religion is a powerful and controversial force in the contemporary world even in supposedly secular societies Almost all societies seek to cultivate religions and faith communities as sources of social stability and engines of social progress They also try to combat real and imagined abuses and excess regulating cults that brainwash vulnerable people containing fundamentalism that threatens democracy and the progress of science and identifying terrorists who threaten atrocities in the name of religion The third edition has been carefully revised to make sure it is fully up to date with recent developments and debates Major themes in the revised edition include the recently erupted culture war between progressive secularists and conservative believers the diverse manifestations of fundamentalism and their impact on the wider society new individual

forms of religious expression in opposition to traditional structures of authority and the backlash against multiculturalism with its controversial implications for the social integration of ethnic and religious minority communities Impressive in its scholarly analysis of a vibrant and challenging aspect of human societies the third edition will appeal strongly to students taking courses in the sociology of religion and religious studies as well as to everyone interested in the place of religion in the contemporary world

**Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in America** William M. Ashcraft, Eugene V. Gallagher, 2006-10-30 Most new or alternative religious are gravely misunderstood by members of the religious mainstream Labeled cults or sects groups and their members are often ridiculed or otherwise disregarded as weird and potentially dangerous by the populace at large Despite their efforts at educating the general public the various anti and counter cult activists have in fact promoted much more mis understanding than accurate understanding of the religious lives of some of their fellow citizens Consequently they have helped to create a very hostile environment for anyone whose religious practices do not fit within a so called mainstream This set rectifies the situation by presenting accurate comprehensive authoritative and accessible accounts of various new and alternative religious movements that have been and are active in American society and it addresses ways of understanding new and alternative religions within a broader context Determining what actually constitutes a new or alternative religion is a subject of constant debate Questions arise as to a new faith s legitimacy beliefs methods of conversion and other facets of a religious movement s viability and place in a given culture How a religion gains recognition by the mainstream which often labels such new movements as cults is fraught with difficulty tension and fear Here experts delineate the boundaries and examine the various groups beliefs movements and other issues related to new faiths and alternative beliefs Readers will come away with a fuller understanding of the religious landscape in America today

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## Whispering the Secrets of Language: An Emotional Quest through **Alternative Religions A Sociological Introduction**

In a digitally-driven world wherever monitors reign supreme and quick interaction drowns out the subtleties of language, the profound secrets and psychological subtleties concealed within phrases frequently go unheard. However, located within the pages of **Alternative Religions A Sociological Introduction** a interesting fictional value sporting with natural emotions, lies an exceptional journey waiting to be undertaken. Composed by an experienced wordsmith, this charming opus attracts viewers on an introspective trip, softly unraveling the veiled truths and profound affect resonating within ab muscles material of each word. Within the emotional depths of this moving review, we can embark upon a heartfelt exploration of the book is key subjects, dissect its captivating publishing type, and succumb to the effective resonance it evokes serious within the recesses of readers hearts.

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