

'Cult Wars' in Historical Perspective

provides a broad characterization of the shifting religious contours over the past several decades. Offering an assessment of several important topics in the study of new religions, this book explores developments in well-known groups such as the Unification movement, The Family International (Children of God), the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and the Church of Scientology. Bringing together both insiders and outsiders from various academic disciplines and personal perspectives, this book takes account of the ways in which the cult question is defined and addressed in different countries. It offers a vivid depiction of how the cult wars or cult controversies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries first took shape; the transformation of deeply entrenched positions on cults and sects as at least some members of new groups, cult watchers, and academics entered into serious and sustained conversations about topics of mutual concern; the shifting foci and concerns of the general public, law enforcement and the courts, and academics in various countries; and the complex histories of individual groups in which many dramatic transformations have occurred despite their comparatively short life spans.

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