

Contesting the Boundaries of New Religion

Exploring the Dynamics of Religious Innovation

In a rapidly changing world, new religious movements are emerging and challenging traditional notions of faith and spirituality. These movements often push the boundaries of what is considered "religion," blurring the lines between the sacred and the secular and raising important questions about the nature of religious experience and the role of religion in society.



Free Zone Scientology: Contesting the Boundaries of a New Religion (Bloomsbury Advances in Religious Studies) by Aled Thomas

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2824 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 201 pages



The book "Contesting the Boundaries of New Religion," published by Bloomsbury Advances in Religious Studies, delves into the complex and fascinating world of new religious movements. Bringing together a diverse group of scholars from various disciplines, the book examines the factors driving religious innovation and the challenges faced by emerging faiths. Through in-depth case studies and theoretical analysis, the authors explore

the ways in which new religions negotiate their boundaries with established religious traditions, secular society, and the law.

Key Themes Explored in the Book

- **The Dynamics of Religious Innovation:** The book investigates the factors that contribute to the emergence and growth of new religious movements, including social, political, economic, and cultural changes.
- **The Boundaries of Religion:** The authors examine the ways in which new religions define and negotiate their boundaries with other religious traditions, secular society, and the law. This includes issues such as the recognition of new religions as legitimate faiths, the regulation of religious practices, and the accommodation of religious diversity.
- **The Challenges Faced by New Religions:** The book explores the challenges faced by new religious movements, including discrimination, persecution, and the need to establish legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the public and authorities.
- **The Impact of New Religions on Society:** The authors analyze the impact of new religious movements on society, including their influence on culture, politics, and social change. This includes both positive and negative effects, such as the promotion of social justice and the potential for conflict and controversy.

Case Studies and Examples

The book presents a wide range of case studies of new religious movements from around the world, including:

- The Church of Scientology: A controversial new religion that has faced legal challenges and accusations of cult-like practices.
- The Unification Church: A Korean-based religious movement known for its mass weddings and its founder's messianic claims.
- The New Age Movement: A loosely defined spiritual movement that emphasizes personal growth, mysticism, and alternative healing practices.
- The Satanic Temple: A controversial religious group that uses satire and activism to challenge traditional religious beliefs and practices.

Theoretical Perspectives

The authors draw on a variety of theoretical perspectives to analyze the dynamics of religious innovation and the challenges faced by new religions, including:

- **Social movement theory:** The book examines new religious movements as social movements that mobilize people around shared beliefs and goals.
- **Cultural theory:** The authors explore the ways in which new religions reflect and shape cultural values and beliefs.
- **Legal theory:** The book analyzes the legal challenges and opportunities faced by new religions in different societies.
- **Theology and religious studies:** The authors draw on theological and religious studies perspectives to understand the nature of religious experience and the role of religion in society.

"Contesting the Boundaries of New Religion" is an essential resource for scholars of religion, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. It provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of religious innovation and the challenges faced by emerging faiths. The book's interdisciplinary approach and diverse case studies offer valuable insights into the complex and evolving landscape of religion in the 21st century.

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About the Editors

Timothy Miller is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas. His research focuses on new religious movements, religion and violence, and the sociology of religion.

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