

ASHGATE

**INFORM** SERIES ON  
MINORITY RELIGIONS  
AND SPIRITUAL  
MOVEMENTS



# 'Cult Wars' in Historical Perspective

*New and Minority Religions*



**INFORM**  
THE INFORMATION NETWORK ON RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

**EUGENE V. GALLAGER**

# ‘Cult Wars’ in Historical Perspective

*‘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.

**Eugene V. Gallagher** is the Rosemary Park Professor of Religious Studies Emeritus at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut. He is the author of *Reading and Writing Scripture in New Religious Movements*, *The New Religious Movements Experience in America*, coauthor of *Why Waco?: Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, coeditor of the five-volume *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in the United States*, and author of many essays on new religious movements and religions in the ancient Mediterranean world. He is a co-general editor of *Nova Religio: The Journal of New and Alternative Religions* and associate editor of *Teaching Theology and Religion*.

# **Inform Series on Minority Religions and Spiritual Movements**

Series Editor: Eileen Barker, London School of Economics (UK)

Inform is an independent charity that collects and disseminates accurate, balanced and up-to-date information about minority religious and spiritual movements.

The *Routledge Inform Series* addresses themes related to new religions, many of which have been the topics of Inform seminars. The series editorial board consists of internationally renowned scholars in the field.

Books in the series will attract both an academic and interested general readership, particularly in the areas of Religious Studies, and the Sociology of Religion and Theology.

For a full list of titles in this series, please visit [www.routledge.com/religion/series/AINFORM](http://www.routledge.com/religion/series/AINFORM).

## **Spiritual and Visionary Communities**

*Out to Save the World*

Edited by Timothy Miller

## **Prophecy in the New Millennium**

*When Prophecies Persist*

Edited by Suzanne Newcombe and Sarah Harvey

## **State Responses to Minority Religions**

Edited by David M. Kirkham

## **Revisionism and Diversification in New Religious Movements**

Edited by Eileen Barker

## **Global Religious Movements Across Borders**

*Sacred Service*

Edited by Stephen M. Curry and Helen Rose Ebaugh

## **Minority Religions and Fraud**

*In Good Faith*

Edited by Amanda van Eck Duymaer van Twist

## **Legal Cases, New Religious Movements, and Minority Faiths**

Edited by James T. Richardson and François Bellanger

## **The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora**

*Imagining the Religious Other*

Edited by Afe Adogame

## **Visioning New and Minority Religious**

*Projecting the Future*

Edited by Eugene V. Gallagher

## **'Cult Wars' in Historical Perspective**

*New and Minority Religions*

Edited by Eugene V. Gallagher

## **New Religious Movements and Counselling**

*Academic, Professional and Personal Perspectives*

Edited by Hamish Cameron and Sarah Harvey

## **Minority Religions and Uncertainty**

Edited by Kim Knott and Matthew Francis

## **Minority Religions in Europe and the Middle East**

*Mapping and Monitoring*

Edited by George D. Chryssides

## **Fiction, Invention, and Hyper-reality**

*From Popular Culture to Religion*

Edited by Carole M. Cusack and Pavol Kosnác

# **‘Cult Wars’ in Historical Perspective**

New and minority religions

**Edited by Eugene V. Gallagher**

First published 2017  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2017 selection and editorial matter, Eugene V. Gallagher; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Eugene V. Gallagher to be identified as the author of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

A catalog record for this title has been requested.

ISBN: 978-1-4724-5812-4 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-57522-3 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo  
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

# Contents

<i>Contributors</i>	ix
<b>1 Introduction: “Cult wars” in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries</b>	1
EUGENE V. GALLAGHER	
<b>PART 1</b>	
<b>Watching and studying new religious movements</b>	7
<b>2 From cult wars to constructive cooperation – well, sometimes</b>	9
EILEEN BARKER	
<b>3 CESNUR: a short history</b>	23
MASSIMO INTROVIGNE	
<b>4 Are the cult wars over? And if so, who won?</b>	33
TIMOTHY MILLER	
<b>5 From deviance to devotion: the evolution of NRM studies</b>	43
GEORGE D. CHRYSSIDES	
<b>6 Writing on and researching new religious movements: a view from the American academy</b>	55
BENJAMIN E. ZELLER	
<b>7 The law, the courts, religious freedom, and the evolving pattern of jurisprudence in Western societies</b>	69
JAMES T. RICHARDSON	

<b>8 Is an anti-cult movement emerging in Croatia?</b>	81
DINKA MARINOVIĆ JEROLIMOV AND ANKICA MARINOVIĆ	
 <b>PART 2</b>	
<b>Developments in specific groups</b>	93
 <b>9 From the radical to the routine: the history and future of The Family International (Children of God)</b>	95
ABI FREEMAN	
 <b>10 The Family International: the emergence of a virtual new religious community</b>	108
CLAIRE BOROWIK	
 <b>11 The Unification movement: key issues in historical perspective</b>	121
RICHARD BARLOW	
 <b>12 The changing perception of ISKCON: ancient faith or dangerous cult?</b>	134
ANUTTAMA DASA	
 <b>13 From the Church of Scientology to the Freezone</b>	152
TERRIL PARK	
 <b>14 Scientology: from controversy to global expansion and recognition</b>	165
ERIC ROUX	
 <i>Index</i>	177

# Contributors

**Eileen Barker**, PhD, OBE, FBA is the founder of INFORM, the chair of INFORM's board of governors, and an honorary research fellow for INFORM. She is Professor Emeritus at the London School of Economics. A sociologist of religion, she has been researching minority religions and the responses to which they give rise since the early 1970s. Her study of conversion to the Unification Church (UC) for her PhD led to an interest in a wide variety of movements, and she has personally studied, to a greater or lesser degree, more than 150 different groups. As the first-generation movements aged, she became interested in the changes, particularly the arrival of second-generation members and those who leave the movements. For the past twelve years, she's been interested in differences between "cult-watching" groups and the dynamics within and between these groups and the religions. She has more than 300 publications, translated into twenty-seven languages. She travels extensively for research purposes, particularly in North America, Europe, and Japan, and, since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, in Eastern Europe and, more recently, China. She was the first non-American to be elected president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

**Richard Barlow** embarked on a quest while studying at University College, Rhodesia. He joined the Unification Church (UC) in London in the early 1970s. For two years he was a state director in America before being married by Rev. and Mrs. Moon in 1975. After a further period in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe as a missionary, he gave lectures in the United Kingdom on the UC's teaching, the *Divine Principle*. He and his wife then became missionaries to Trinidad (his wife's home nation), but in 1990 they returned to the United Kingdom to seek treatment for a daughter with leukemia. Increasingly disillusioned with the UC, Richard read for a degree in the study of religions at London University's School of Oriental & African Studies, before ill health forced him to give up in his final year. One of Professor Barker's original interviewees, during his long association with INFORM he gave talks at some of its seminars.

**Claire Borowik** is a communication consultant and grant writer for non-profits. She is the co-director of the nonprofit Web-based Worldwide Religious News Service, providing religious news to the academic and legal



communities, and has participated in numerous initiatives promoting religious diversity. She is currently a public relations consultant for The Family International. Claire served as the director of international public affairs for The Family International from 2006 to 2010, and previously managed legal and media affairs for the organization in South America for four years, and in North America for ten years. She has lived for twenty years in several countries of Central and South America directing mission centers, nonprofits, and schools.

**George D. Chryssides** is an honorary research fellow in contemporary religion at the University of Birmingham (UK). He was head of religious studies at the University of Wolverhampton until 2008, and has authored numerous books and articles on new religious movements, including the *Historical Dictionary of Jehovah's Witnesses* (2008), the *Historical Dictionary of New Religious Movements* (2nd edn., 2012) (Scarecrow Press), and *Jehovah's Witnesses: Continuity and Change*, (Ashgate, 2016).

**Anuttama Dasa** is the minister of communications for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), a monotheistic Vaishnava Hindu tradition. He has served as a member of ISKCON's international Governing Body Commission (GBC) since 1999, and was the GBC chairman in 2014. Dasa also serves as trustee of Bhaktivedanta College, ISKCON's first accredited college, located in Belgium, and on the board of Religions for Peace USA. He is the convener of the annual Vaishnava–Christian and Vaishnava–Muslim Dialogues held in Washington, DC, and the Vaishnava–Christian Dialogue in India. In the context of this book, he has attended the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) annual meeting for nearly twenty years, and spoken on multiple ICSA panels.

**Abi Freeman** was formerly a member and spokesperson of The Family International (TFI), previously known as the Children of God. She joined the movement in her teenage years, subsequently living in TFI communities in England, Iran, Turkey, the Indian subcontinent, and various parts of Europe, including Eastern Europe, until 2007. Her involvement with TFI now is limited to writing articles for TFI's evangelical magazine. Trained and qualified as a teacher/lecturer, she writes and edits faith-based books, and volunteers with various health-related charities.

**Eugene V. Gallagher** is the Rosemary Park Professor of Religious Studies Emeritus at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut. He is the author of *Reading and Writing Scripture in New Religious Movements: New Bibles and New Revelations*, *The New Religious Movements Experience in America*, coauthor of *Why Waco: Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, coeditor of the five-volume *Introduction to New and Alternative Religions in the United States*, and author of many essays on new religious movements and religions in the ancient Mediterranean world. He is a co-general editor of *Nova Religio: The Journal of New and Alternative Religions* and associate editor of *Teaching Theology and Religion*.

**Massimo Introvigne** teaches sociology of religious movements at the Pontifical Salesian University in Torino, Italy, and is managing director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR). In 2011, he served as representative of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) for combating racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerance and discrimination. Since 2012, he has served as the chairperson of the Observatory of Religious Liberty established by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr. Introvigne is the author of some sixty books and more than 100 articles and chapters in the field of new religious movements, contemporary religious pluralism, and modern Western esotericism.

**Dinka Marinović Jerolimov**, PhD, graduated in sociology and pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, where she also received her MA and PhD in the field of sociology of religion. She is a scientific advisor at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb and a principal investigator of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) for Croatia. Her main fields of interest are traditional church religiosity, new religious movements, and youth religiosity. She is the coauthor of, among other published works, the book *Vjerske zajednice u Hrvatskoj (Religious Communities in Croatia)* with Ankica Marinović and the book chapter “Mutual Relations between the State and Minority Religious Communities: The Case of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in Croatia, Poland and Slovenia” in Dorota Hall and Rafal Smoczinsky (eds.) *New Religious Movements and Conflict in Selected Countries of Central Europe*.

**Ankica Marinović**, PhD, graduated in sociology and comparative literature at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb. She received her MA and PhD at the same faculty in the field of sociology of religion. She is a scientific advisor at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb and teaches undergraduate courses on comparative religion at the University of Zagreb. Her main fields of interest are sociology of religion, particularly unchurched religiosity and religious experience, and sociology of media.

**Timothy Miller** is a professor of religious studies at the University of Kansas. He studies new religious movements in the United States, with a special focus on groups in the past and present that practice communal living. Among his books are *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America*, *The 60s Communes*, and the edited volume *America's Alternative Religions*. His *Encyclopedic Guide to American Intentional Communities* was published in 2012, and his edited volume in the Ashgate series, *Spiritual and Visionary Communities: Out to Save the World*, was published in 2013.

**Terril Park** first became interested in Scientology around 1965. He became a NED (New Era Dianetics) auditor, which is his highest level of technical training, around 1979. He joined the staff of the London organization toward the end of this training and stayed there for three years. In that time he went to Flag to do the OEC (Org Executive Course) and FEBC (Flag Executive Briefing Course), which are the highest administrative training

courses Scientology offers. Around 1991 he left the Church of Scientology, never to return. But he remained a Scientologist. Some seven or eight years later he undertook further training in Scientology in the Freezone/Independent area. He has been one of the most active promoters of the practice of Scientology outside of the Church of Scientology for many years and has formed two Yahoo! forums, one of which is the largest Yahoo! Freezone forum still.

**James T. Richardson**, JD, PhD, is a professor of sociology and judicial studies at the University of Nevada, Reno, where he directs the Grant Sawyer Center for Justice Studies, as well as the judicial studies graduate degree program for trial judges. He has done research for decades on various aspects of new religious movements, and has focused in recent years on social control of minority religions, including new religious movements, using legal and judicial systems. His recent books include *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from around the Globe* (Kluwer, 2004) and *Saints under Siege: The Texas State Raid on the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints* (New York University Press, 2011, with Stuart Wright).

**Eric Roux** has occupied many functions in the Church of Scientology in France for more than twenty years, including lecturing on Scientology at many levels. He is currently the president of the Union of the Churches of Scientology in France. He has worked on the topic of religious freedom for many years at national and international levels. He has been a speaker on this subject at many events, including at OSCE, Council of Europe, the U.S. Capitol, and so forth, and he works in various interfaith platforms. He is a member of the Steering Committee of the European Interreligious Forum for Religious Freedom.

**Benjamin E. Zeller** is an associate professor of religion at Lake Forest College (USA). He researches religious currents that are new or alternative, including new religions, religious engagement with science, and the quasi-religious relationship people have with food. He is author of *Prophets and Protons: New Religious Movements and Science in Late Twentieth-Century America* (New York University Press, 2010), *Heaven's Gate: America's UFO Religion* (New York University Press, 2014), coeditor of *Religion, Food, and Eating in North America* (Columbia University Press, 2014), and co-general editor of *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*.

# 1 Introduction

## “Cult wars” in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries

*Eugene V. Gallagher*

Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, “cults,” “sects,” or new religious movements have been a controversial part of the religious landscape in Europe, North America, and beyond. Members and supporters of innovative groups have eagerly promoted the new truths that they have discovered at the same time that parents of members, ex-members, and their allies have sounded alarms about the damage that such groups do to their participants. While academics sought both to contextualize the apparent rise in new religions in various ways and to test empirically some of the more dramatic claims made by and about new religions, they, too, were often drawn into broader public controversies, sometimes labeled “cult apologists” and accused of turning a blind eye to the harm that new or alternative religious groups can do to their members.

Taken together, the essays in this volume provide a broad characterization of the shifting contours of the “cult wars” over the past several decades, an assessment of the current state of the question about several important topics in the study of new religions, and accounts of developments in specific, 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. In keeping with INFORM’s practice for its conferences and seminars, this volume brings together both “insiders” and “outsiders” from various academic disciplines and personal perspectives. It also takes careful account of how the “cult question” is defined and addressed in different countries, at different times, and in different contexts.

The essays in this volume, with the exception of Anuttama Dasa’s contribution on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, were first presented at a conference marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of INFORM. Often in response to the conversations that they generated, the authors have refined their presentations for publication. This volume devotes particular attention to “cult-watching” groups, research organizations such as CESNUR (based in Italy) and INFORM (UK), and the legal situation of new religious movements in various Western countries. It also features an essay on the nascent anti-cult movement in Croatia. Several contributions examine the history of the treatment of new religions in both academic and more popular publications, particularly in the United Kingdom and the United States.

The essays on individual groups focus on their development over time, including their responses to the departures of members and the formation of schismatic perspectives or groups. They clearly show the dynamism of new religious groups, in response both to internal factors such as theological creativity or leadership transitions and external factors such as pressure from watchdog groups or legal challenges. In some cases, they show the potential for dialogue between cult-watching groups and the groups that they watch in which each side can deepen and complicate its understanding of the other and in which groups on either side can be led to take a hard look at their own practices.

As a whole, the essays in this volume provide 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.

The first part of this volume focuses on both cult-watching groups and the scholarly study of new or alternative religions. Eileen Barker chronicles the development of concerns about “cults” in the West and the crystallization of the cult awareness movement in response to the perceived dangers that new, minority, or alternative groups pose to the status quo. Alongside that, she traces the history of the scholarly interest in new religions from the 1960s to the present. Barker then maps in two stages the interactions between cult awareness groups, new religious groups themselves, and the scholars who study both of those groups, noting both the persistence of some entrenched positions and the halting steps toward cooperation that have the potential of diminishing the vitriol involved in the cult wars, if not totally eradicating it.

Massimo Introvigne charts the development of the Center for the Study of New Religions (CESNUR) as a research organization focused on new and minority religions. He mixes an autobiographical account of his own developing interest in the field with an organizational history of CESNUR. As CESNUR grew from its humble beginnings in an initial conference with three presentations and about a dozen attendees, it was drawn into cult controversies in several countries and those associated with CESNUR were branded “cult apologists.” Over time, CESNUR also broadened its focus to include more “mainstream” religions as well, thus at least implicitly making the case that new religions are religions just like their longer-lived and more established brethren.

Despite his distaste for the bellicose metaphor, Timothy Miller poses the question of whether we can identify a winner in the general controversies about “cults.” Miller observes that conflicts about new religions are endemic to human history and should not be viewed as the product of a single historical moment. To buttress his case, he provides a brief overview of the opposition

to new religious movements in the United States through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which provides a context for the emergence of the contemporary anti-cult movement in the 1970s. Miller, however, finds the conflicts over new religions to have died down somewhat in the United States today. Among the reasons he proposes are that increased immigration has rendered religions with an Eastern flavor less strikingly different, that the excesses of the anti-cult movement (e.g., in deprogramming) have undermined its credibility, that the focus on abusive behaviors has shifted to more mainstream religious groups such as the Roman Catholic Church, that, as Barker also notes, the anti-cult movement itself has modulated both its rhetoric and its practices, that new threats have come to dominate the public consciousness, and that at least some scholars have effected a rapprochement with the anti-cult activists. While acknowledging that conflicts about cults seem to have died down in some areas, Miller observes that in other areas they may be heating up. Thus, he concludes, there is still work to do to ensure religious freedom for new and minority religions.

George Chryssides focuses on the academic study of new religions, beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He notes that until after the Second World War new religious movements were mostly treated as dangerous heresies and sometimes as simply nonsensical. In the postwar period, however, a number of substantial and influential studies began to set the study of new religions on much firmer academic ground. Chryssides studies important themes like the failure of prophecy and the process of conversion and treatments of individual groups such as the Unification Church, the group that eventually became known as Heaven's Gate, and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Chryssides also notes a change in the literature written against new religions in which theological judgments played a less significant role and the focus shifted to coercion and even "brainwashing." Chryssides identifies several trends in the contemporary study of new religions, including the diversification of methodological perspectives beyond the sociological and the contributions from scholarly insiders from new religious groups. Chryssides concludes by pointing to areas of research that need further attention, such as the influence of new religions on the arts in general, something that has recently been a focus of interest for CESNUR, and what he calls "old new religions," such as the Christadelphians and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Benjamin Zeller also examines the contemporary scholarship on new religions, focusing on the shifting locations of new religions studies in colleges and universities in the United States. He notes how the study of new religions has only a precarious foothold in PhD-granting programs, with most of the prominent scholars of new religions in the United States not holding positions in graduate programs. Like Chryssides, Zeller notes the increasing methodological diversity as the study of new religions has moved away from being dominated by sociologists and has been taken up by a diverse array of scholars within the interdisciplinary field of religious studies, including historians of American religions and historians of religions. Zeller also chronicles the

institutionalization of the study of new religions in such forms as a successful program unit that offers multiple sections of papers at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the journal *Nova Religio*, which appears quarterly and is devoted to the study of new, alternative, and emergent religions.

James Richardson provides an overview of significant recent cases concerning new religious movements in both Europe and the United States. He emphasizes the pronounced differences in the treatment of religious freedom from one country to another in Europe and notes the variability among the states formerly dominated by the Soviet Union. When he turns to the United States, Richardson focuses on how since the early 1990s, the legal tide has decisively turned against admitting the brainwashing thesis in the courts. Richardson also maps the recent legal and legislative moves concerning religious freedom in the United States. In conclusion, Richardson suggests that there is an identifiable pattern of increasing tolerance in both Europe and the United States.

Of course, there are also counter-currents to the picture that Richardson sketches. Dinka Marinović Jerolimov and Ankica Marinović show how anti-cult activities are increasing in Croatia at the same time that they are decreasing in other countries. Their contribution underlines how “cult wars” are decisively shaped by local contexts, even though they are not isolated from broader developments elsewhere.

Contributions to the second part of this book focus on the histories of individual groups or movements. Both Abi Freeman and Claire Borowik focus on The Family International, formerly known as the Children of God, and both address the dramatic consequences for the group of the 2010 “Reboot” which dramatically altered the terms of membership and did away with communal living, and whose continuing effects are still being felt in The Family. Drawing on her familiarity with members, Freeman provides a composite account of the challenges that the Reboot has posed to long-term members. Despite those difficulties, she does not see The Family returning to its communal roots any time in the near future. Borowik’s essay takes more account of The Family’s ongoing interactions with its opponents as an element of the context for the Reboot. She agrees that the move toward theological rapprochement with mainstream Protestantism and the abandonment of communal living make it difficult to determine just what The Family International constitutes today.

Richard Barlow’s presentation at the INFORM conference drew on his years as a member of the Unification Church and his continuing familiarity with the movement after he left it. Sadly, he died before he could put the finishing touches on his essay. Professor Eileen Barker graciously worked with his wife and family to bring the essay into its current form. Barlow focuses on how, since Rev. Moon’s death in 2012, information about his life, particularly his sexual adventures outside of marriage, has become public. Although he notes that such practices have deep roots in Korean shamanism, Barlow observes that such revelations about Moon undermine the image he cultivated of himself as the True Parent and moral exemplar. As Barlow notes, the tarnishing of Rev.

Moon's reputation in some quarters is directly related to the ongoing crisis of leadership within the Unification movement.

Anuttama Dasa writes from the perspective of a continuing member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). In addition to reviewing the status of ISKCON as a new religious movement with deep roots in Hindu history, he provides a vivid account of efforts to open conversations with dedicated opponents of his movement. Anuttama Dasa shows how he has both learned several things from anti-cult activists and attempted to change their minds about what he sees as misconceptions about ISKCON.

This volume closes with two essays on Scientology. Perhaps no new religious movement has been as prominent in the recent "cult wars," in multiple countries, as the Church of Scientology. Like other contributors to this section of this book, Terril Park focuses on the leadership transition in the Church of Scientology, specifically the accession to power of David Miscavige. Park focuses on former members of the Church of Scientology who have become convinced that Miscavige has led the Church away from the true teachings of its founder and "Source," L. Ron Hubbard. Many of them have not wanted to give up on the practice of Scientology as they know it and have migrated to what has become known as the "Freezone," where a variety of individuals strive to implement the fundamental teachings of Hubbard independent from the organizational structure of the Church of Scientology. Eric Roux takes a very different approach. From his perspective, the Church of Scientology has not only survived but has prospered, despite an often hostile environment. He sees the October 1993 recognition by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States that the Church of Scientology has tax-exempt status as a religion as a turning point in the Church's history. Roux cites David Miscavige's statement soon after the IRS decision that "the war is over" as signaling a period in which the Church of Scientology could turn all its energies to providing individuals all over the world with Scientology's spiritual technology. In his view, the Church of Scientology has come out of the "cult wars" a stronger and more vigorous organization, dedicated more fully and successfully than ever to the dissemination of L. Ron Hubbard's original teachings.

The contrasts between the final two contributions to this volume drive home again some of the key insights into the contemporary "cult wars" that this volume provides. Perspectives on individual groups are thoroughly shaped by personal commitments and local contexts. One person's thriving religious group can be another's erring organization that has completely lost its way. Generalized social concern about particular groups can attain a fever pitch in one context only to burn itself out there and flare up in another context. From that vantage point, despite what some of the contributors see as a general tendency toward greater recognition of religious freedom for new and minority religions, it seems that as long as there are religious groups that challenge the status quo in a given context, there will be those who oppose them even to the point of denying their right to exist. If that is the case, then the cult wars may very well be with us for quite some time.



This page intentionally left blank

## **Part 1**

# **Watching and studying new religious movements**

This page intentionally left blank