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The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements, edited by Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein. Cambridge University Press, 2012. 341pp. Hb. $84.99, ISBN-13: 9780521196505; Pb. $29.95, ISBN-13: 9780521145657.

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This edited volume is a fairly comprehensive snapshot of the sub-field of Religious Studies focused on new religious movements (NRMs) in the twenty-first century. The eighteen chapters are all authored by major scholars with many years of engagement with NRMs, and the brief introduction by the editors draws attention to key debates (for example, are "new" religions really that different from "old" religions? why was there a moral panic regarding brainwashing, when all the evidence pointed to a quite low rate of conversion to NRMs? why do some NRMs become mainstream while others continue to manifest tensions with wider society? how much of 'new' religions is really new? what are the effects of globalization on NRMS? and so on). In Part I David Bromley's essay, "The sociology of new religious movements," sketches the contours of what he calls New Religions Studies (NRS) and focuses on three central issues: similarities and differences in the organisation of NRMs; the ways in which NRMs have developed over time; and general trends that have emerged in the fifty-odd years since the academic study of NRMs emerged in the 1960s.

The imbrication of NRMs with communications technologies is the focus of Douglas E. Cowan's "New religious movements and the evolving Internet" which commences with the fascinating 1999 Falun Gong protest outside the Zhongnanhai (Chinese government buildings) in Beijing, suggesting that the Internet was not in fact the crucial medium in disseminating information about the protest, but rather was only *imagined* to be so. The remainder of the chapter consider e-space (as he calls it) in terms of the development of subcultural Pagan identity, the attempts of the Church of Scientology to control the dissemination of information on the Web, and the way that the confirmatory bias of most people's online involvement (the "daily me") does not bode "well for new religions in the continuing battle of competing propagandas" (41). James T. Richardson's chapter, "Major controversies involving

new religious movements," covers aspects of recruitment, finance, children and family structures that have attracted the ire of various elements in mainstream society (representatives of mainline churches, government, morals campaigners and so on).

Part II opens with Garry W. Trompf's "History and the end of time in new religions," which explores the interpretations that NRMs have with time (such as, restorationism, dispensationalism, eschatology, and cosmic recurrence) across a range of movements, both Western and non-Western. Continuing a thematic approach Catherine Wessinger discusses "Charismatic leaders in new religions," a chapter that relies heavily on definitions and brief vignettes of certain types of charisma. Graham Harvey offers four examples (Paganism, ISKCON, Santo Daime and Soka Gakkai) in his treatment of "Rituals in new religions," and Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein's "Canonical and extra-canonical texts in new religions" investigates the status of text in NRMs, analysing new scriptures as diverse as the *Book of Mormon*, the writings of L. Ron Hubbard, the commentarial tradition of ISKCON which transforms existing Indian texts, and Rev. Sun Myung Moon's *The Principle* (also known as *Divine Principle*).

Part III consists of eleven chapters on specific NRMs or categories of movement, and includes "Scientology" (James R. Lewis), "Neopaganism" (Sabina Magliocco), the "New Age" (George Chryssides), "Theosophy" (James Santucci), the "Raelians" (Susan J. Palmer and Bryan Sentes), the "Satya Sai Baba Movement" (Tuliasi Srinivas), and "Satanism" Jesper Aargaard Petersen and Asbjorn Dyrendal). These chapters are all competent summaries of these new religions, written in a sober and scholarly fashion, that often debunk popular misconceptions and offer interesting methodological frameworks for interpretation of such innovative phenomena (this is especially true of Petersen and Dyrendal's chapter on Satanism). The chapters covering more dispersed movements are arguably less successful, in that they cast the net widely and often provide only skeletal accounts of a range of movements. This is apparent in Mark Sedgewick's chapter on "Neo-Sufism" and the late Peter B. Clarke's "New religious movements in sub-Saharan Africa." The two final chapters are Marat Shterin's "New religious movements in changing Russia," and Reuven Firestone's "'Jihadism' as a new religion." The latter might appear controversial, but is a quite solidly argued piece that addresses "the extent to which radically violent Islamist movements might be identified as a kind of new sect formation within Islam" (263).

While there is little in it that is genuinely new research, *The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements* will be useful to students and schol-

ars of new religions movements. The chapters are of a consistently high quality and the brief "Further Reading" lists at the end of each contribution directs the interested reader to places where s/he can find more information on themes or movements that are of particular interest. The volume should find a place in library collections the world over, and is highly recommend.