

INTRODUCTION

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American religion has been going through a great diversification and decentralization in the waning years of the twentieth century. Some of the largest denominations have been losing members; world religions other than Christianity and Judaism have in some cases grown substantially; new and previously obscure groups have found themselves front and center in the news. Even within the large, traditional denominations, the forces of diversification are strong: witness, for example, the very substantial charismatic movement in the Catholic Church and most mainline Protestant churches.

This volume is a study of and guide to many of the most prominent alternative, or nonmainstream, religions. Most of the religions surveyed here have already been written about abundantly, in many cases by the authors of these chapters. What purpose, then, does this book purport to serve? First, it seeks to provide, at moderate length, sketches that will provide straightforward introductions to the various religions. Second, it seeks to impart a sense of the historical development of the groups in question, recognizing that no human organization is static, but that all change and mature over time. Finally, it seeks to convey objective sketches of the religions covered, free from the taint of either adulation or vituperation. A great deal of the available literature on alternative religions—in this case they are usually called

“cults”—comes from those determined to eradicate them, often in the name of another religion held to be the One True Faith. This volume, written by scholars with detailed knowledge of the groups they discuss, seeks a balance that much anticult literature lacks.

Alternative Terminology

Many terms are popularly used to describe what are here called “alternative religions.” “Cult” is undoubtedly the most common; “sect,” used in a variety of ways, is not far behind. In academic discourse those terms are related. “Sect” usually refers to a dissident group that has separated from another, usually mainstream, religion (often proclaiming its intent to recover principles or practices believed to have been present in earlier times but from which the denomination has drifted away), while a “cult” is a small, intense religious group whose ties to mainstream religion and culture tend to be less pronounced, one that often espouses a belief system not rooted in Christianity or Judaism and often under the personal direction of a single charismatic leader.

Despite the fact that both terms have useful definitions widely accepted by scholars of religion and society, they are largely avoided in this book, as they generally

have been by scholars for several years, because in popular use they have become largely pejorative. "Cult" today typically means a group that the speaker does not like, considers potentially harmful, and wants to deprecate. "Sect" is less intense, but still typically pejorative.

Scholars have used a variety of terms to avoid the negative connotations of "sect" and "cult." Some have employed "marginal," a term certainly less pejorative than "cult," but still one that tends to minimize the importance and value of the group in question. "Nonmainstream" has had some following, but it is cumbersome. "New religious movement" has been generally embraced by scholars and by adherents of the nonmainstream religions themselves, but it has at the same time been the source of confusion: does it apply only to truly "new" (at least in the United States) religions, or does it apply to all nonmainstream faiths? The prevailing tendency has been for the term to apply to a wide spectrum of religions, old and new, but it remains ambiguous.

It may be that no perfect term exists to describe nonmainstream religions succinctly, but this book adopts a usage that seems to be properly descriptive without bearing heavily pejorative connotations: alternative religions. Like other alternative cultural institutions (alternative newspapers, alternative theatre, alternative schools), alternative religions differ from their mainstream counterparts, but they are not inherently inferior to them.

Mainstream and Alternative: Finding the Dividing Line

One could not speak of alternatives without a center in relation to which the alternative groups play counterpoint. Mainstream American religion consists of the major (the most populous and socially well established) Christian and Jewish organizations and their adherents. It is comprised of the Catholic Church, the major Protestant denominations and their principal offshoots, the three nationally prominent

movements within Judaism (Orthodoxy, Conservatism, and Reform), and, by most measures, Eastern Orthodoxy.

Defining the mainstream precisely is impossible, even if its general contours are reasonably clear. Protestantism, especially, provides many borderline cases. By the broadest definition, Protestantism encompasses virtually all of Christendom not encompassed by Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy, even including, at the widest casting of the net, such groups as Mormons and Unificationists, groups that have incorporated important Protestant elements into their faith and practice but have also added more components that render them distinctly unorthodox. What of the Pentecostals and faith healers, who believe devoutly in the teachings of the Christian Bible but have beliefs and practices quite alien to the majority of Christians?

Since a consensus definition of mainstream is impossible, this book imposes a defensible but arbitrary one: the Protestant mainstream consists of the various denominations of Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, Baptists, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ, along with the major groups with historical ties to those denominational clusters that have not veered sharply in new theological or social directions in breaking with the parent body—that is, such groups as the Churches of Christ and the non-United Church Congregationalists. We also deem mainstream many smaller groups with independent histories but social and doctrinal congeniality with the mainline denominations—the Reformed Church in America, for example, the contemporary descendant of the Dutch Reformed Church, whose mainstream standing goes back to early colonial days. Nondenominational churches also qualify in many cases. The mainstream is by no means monolithic; it includes a relatively broad spectrum of theological beliefs, from liberal to conservative, and liturgical practices, as well as a racially and culturally diverse constituency. If it has any single identifiable hallmark other than general identity with the overall Christian tradition, it is probably tolerance, a belief that the various mainstream groups, at

least, are all essentially legitimate expressions of the historic Christian faith.

Similarly Judaism has a recognizable mainstream, consisting of Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, and perhaps Reconstructionist variants; as with mainstream Protestantism, all temples and synagogues are not alike, but there is a reasonably wide tolerance of diversity, both in matters of belief and in the extent to which one chooses to follow traditional Jewish law in daily life.

Unlike Protestantism and Judaism, Catholicism is still largely a single organization, one that has a remarkable history of being able to keep its dissidents within its walls. Dissidents there are, nevertheless, and while some agitate for change from within, others do leave—or are expelled, excommunicated—and start independent organizations. The situation of Eastern Orthodoxy is similar but not identical; it is composed of some dozens of independent historic churches, united by a powerful sense of history and common cause. While some of its members do leave for other spiritual venues, Orthodoxy has a good record for having sufficient latitude to satisfy the needs of a wide variety of potential sectarians.

Any proper definition of the mainstream, however, has to be flexible. Groups do come and go and experience changes in status. Two hundred years ago the Methodists were decidedly unconventional, but today they epitomize the mainstream. Quakers have been around quite a bit longer, and have moved substantially toward the mainstream, but are not, at least in all their branches, entirely there yet. Pentecostals still have practices that distinguish them clearly from the traditional mainstream, but their growth has been so substantial that they will soon be—perhaps already should be—generally deemed a mainstream group (or, more precisely, cluster of groups) simply because the term “mainstream” ceases to make sense if huge masses of people are excluded from it.

Geography can make an impact on one’s assessment of mainstreamness. Buddhism might logically be deemed mainstream in Hawaii, but in Kansas it would

be decidedly unusual. For academics, discipline can make a difference: what the theologian sees as unorthodox might not seem so to the historian or the sociologist. Finally, one’s own perspective makes a difference as well. Most people think of their beliefs and practices as normal, if not necessarily exactly like everyone else’s, and have their own firm conclusions about what is conventional and what unusual. In any event, all analyses and boundaries must be fluid; different groups meet the needs of different people in different situations in different times, meaning that a sense of dynamism and development must be present in any analysis of the alternative religions. This book takes that dynamism as a central theme.

The Alternative Religions

Sociologists of religion have long tried to establish clear markers by which the mainstream denominations and the alternative groups may be distinguished. Categories in which such distinctions may fall have typically included the following:

1. Leadership: mainstream religions tend to have educated, paid clergy, while others tend to have charismatic and lay leadership.
2. Organization: mainstream groups tend to be highly structured and bureaucratized, while the marginal groups are less so.
3. Size: mainstream groups are big; non-mainstream groups are small.
4. Membership: mainstream groups tend to emphasize birthright membership and impose few specific standards of belief or conduct on members, while conversion and voluntary membership are the norm for alternative religions, which regard themselves as moral communities that exclude the unworthy.
5. Worship: mainstream groups tend to have orderly, calm, preplanned worship, while the marginal religions have fervent, spontaneous services.
6. Dedication to duty: mainstream bodies tend to be satisfied with once-a-week (or

less frequent) attendance, while other groups make more substantial demands on members' time, and tend to regulate members' lives more comprehensively than mainstream groups do.

7. Social status: the mainstream religions have intricate mutually supportive relationships with the wealthy and the dominant social classes, while the alternative groups often appeal to the poor, the uneducated, and the powerless.¹

While some of those generalizations may have some basis in fact, none of them is entirely—or even, perhaps, mainly—accurate. Today, it is abundantly clear that nonmainstream religions draw members from the socially well connected as well as from less influential strata of society; in many cases they have bureaucracies and paid leaders; some of them (the Mormons are the best example here), are not tiny in size but are among the largest religious bodies in the country. A comprehensive system for distinguishing mainstream from marginal is elusive and will probably never be developed satisfactorily. Bryan Wilson, a leading contemporary sociologist of religion, contends that it is time “to recognize the impossibility—in any terms that are not unduly vague—of any *general* theory of new movements.”² And Wilson does not regret the impossibility of the quest:

If our study of new religions produces no unified theory to explain, under one set of theoretical propositions, all such phenomena, wherever they are found, we need not regard such a conclusion with alarm. It is a sociological bias—and an unwarranted bias—to suppose that comparative analysis should always lead to unified theory and universally valid formulations. Such a conclusion can be produced only by ignoring the importance of empirical evidence and the historical diversity of societies and their cultures, and only by subsuming factually diverse contents under highly abstract summary propositions which obscure by their abstraction as much as they illuminate about social reality. New religions throughout the world undoubtedly have some

features and functions in common, but they also manifest manifold differences, and the parts which they play in different societies are likely to differ as much as do those societies themselves.³

The Alternative Scene

America's alternative religions number several hundred, or perhaps a few thousand. Their members number one or two hundreds of thousands, or perhaps many millions. It all depends on how one defines “alternative,” how one counts noses, and what threshold of size one uses in making up one's list (there are thousands of slightly offbeat local churches and equivalent organizations with handfuls of members; here we presume we are dealing with more substantial groups, those with at least a few hundreds of followers and more than one location). Those who decry the menace of the “cults”—whose book sales and platform invitations often depend on stoking public fears of a huge and imminently threatening network of cultic goons—tend to find more groups and members than most scholars do. Bob Larson, whose *Larson's Book of Cults* is an anticult bestseller, counts 1,500 to 3,000 “cult groups” whose “prolific growth” is “not likely to recede anytime soon.”⁴ A. James Rudin and Marcia R. Rudin count 1,000 to 3,000 groups with up to three million past and present members.⁵ Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman in 1978 counted three million members in 1,000 groups—in addition to six million meditators.⁶ Robert D. Hicks has found estimates ranging up to 3,000 groups and ten million members.⁷

While no accurate count can possibly be conducted, such figures are undoubtedly vastly inflated. Academic investigators David Bromley and Anson Shupe argue that “the claim that the new religions all have enormous memberships can only be accepted as the grossest exaggeration, and the further claim that they are spreading rapidly can be dismissed as virtual myth.”⁸ J. Gordon Melton, a ranking expert on alternative religions, provides

substantial evidence for smaller numbers. His *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, the most exhaustive compilation of its kind, lists 1,730 bodies, including all of the mainstream groups and a fair number of defunct organizations.⁹ Elsewhere, Melton concludes that some 500 to 600 groups could be considered alternative religions, and of them over 100 “are primarily ethnic bodies confined to first- and second-generation immigrant communities” that do not actively seek members from the general population. Noting that most of the groups have only a few hundred members each, he concludes that 150,000 to 200,000 is a reasonable estimate of membership in alternative religions¹⁰—a far cry from 3 or 10 million.

Other anticult claims tend to be similarly exaggerated. It is beyond the scope of this brief introduction to provide point-by-point analyses of all charges made by critics of alternative religions, but responsible scholars tend to agree that alternative religions are, although by definition unorthodox, not inherently evil in nature or intent; that they are not typically run by power-hungry leaders who utterly dominate zombie-like followers; that members are there voluntarily (if misguidedly, in the eyes of their detractors) and are not victims of brainwashing or mind control in any rational sense of those terms; and, importantly, that there are no reliable signs from which an outsider can accurately predict the rare case of a group’s going errant.¹¹ A generation that has seen the nightmare of nine hundred induced suicides at Jonestown and the flaming deaths of some eighty Branch Davidians at Waco has every reason to want to protect itself against groups and leaders gone crazy, but few outsiders had any reason to fear terrible occurrences in the Peoples Temple, a congregation in good standing of the quintessentially mainline Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or to foresee the federal assault on the Branch Davidians that touched off an inferno.

The anticult movement is composed predominantly of born-again evangelical Protestants, and much of their criticism is focused on the fact that certain religions

do not teach orthodox Christianity. If one believes that only Christians of a certain stripe are right with God, then the loss of the rest of the human race is of course tragic. In a nation committed to freedom of religion, however, the non-Christian and the unorthodox have every right to espouse their beliefs and perform their own rituals. They may legitimately be targets of conversion attempts, but they should not be denied free exercise of religion.

Hostility toward alternative religions is not new. The early Mormons were persecuted literally to death in many cases; their founder was among the victims. Being a Quaker was a capital crime for a time in Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the authorities executed a handful of Quakers for their religious witness. Ferocious persecutions stud the history of Anabaptists. The Shakers, widely idealized today for their quiet charm and sublime furniture, were once accused of battery, enslavement and exploitation of members, and even murder.¹² A mob could burn a Catholic convent in Boston, and avowed anti-Catholics could be serious presidential contenders in the nineteenth century. Centuries earlier, when Christianity was new, martyrs’ deaths abounded. Jews have suffered persecution unmatched in kind and scale. By comparison, the rhetoric and even the deprogramming aimed at American alternative religions are mild.

Still, intolerance does thrive. The rise of deprogramming is a relatively recent development that uses sophisticated forms of psychological and physical coercion to separate believers from their chosen religious bodies. While the motives of those hiring professional deprogrammers for specific jobs are undoubtedly high-minded (it is hard to stand by idly if one believes that a close relative is having his or her life destroyed), deprogramming has nevertheless become a grave threat to religious liberty in the twentieth century. It does not, however, seem to be eradicating the alternative religions; although names of groups and faces of members change, nonmainstream groups are as much a part of the landscape as ever.

Any religion, indeed any group, can have a downside; many religions cause problems for some of their members. Thus religious groups should be subjected to occasional external criticism. As long as both a group and its detractors operate within the law and within the generally accepted confines of civil behavior, the result of the dialogue between supporters and opponents should be productive. Religion, like government and every other human institution, should never be above close scrutiny. But adults also deserve the freedom to choose their own spiritual paths.

Why Do People Join?

What is the underlying appeal of the alternative religions? That question has as many answers as alternative religions have members. Some join out of intellectual assent to the group's principles. Some are idealists who see particular groups as good vehicles for improving society. Some join because they like the people they have met in a group and feel at home there, just as they might join a mainstream religion for that reason. Some join communal movements for the security they offer. Many simply join experimentally, checking out life's options, which helps explain why alternative religions' attrition rates are so high. It stands to reason that most converts join for some personal gain; many point to benefits they have received from membership, ranging from improved health (often in the form of escaping drug dependency) to education and self-improvement to a sense of warm community to—not insignificantly—profound spiritual experience.¹³

Many anticult activists allege that recruits often join "cults" because they are subjected to brainwashing, to some sort of mind control. While it is true that religions of all types (especially conversion-oriented evangelical Protestantism) use psychological pressure to try to induce persons to join (what is more anxiety producing than the threat that one will suffer eternity in torment if one does not join a particular religion?), there is no evidence that most

alternative religions use, on a systematic basis, conversion techniques more intimidating than those generally accepted as legitimate in more conventional religious circles. Moreover, it is of significance that the typical former member of an alternative religion who alleges that he or she has been psychologically abused by the "cult" typically left the group via deprogramming—an admittedly intense use of sophisticated psychological tools and techniques designed to induce one to change one's mind and behavior. As Eileen Barker has put it, some of them are "taught, while undergoing forcible deprogramming, that they were brainwashed."¹⁴

Certainly those who convert have some predisposition toward joining. Alternative religions often recruit among the young, whose lifeways are not yet firmly established and who are therefore open to new ways of thinking and behaving. Victor Turner and others have emphasized that the initiate joining a new religion or making other comparable life changes is in a state of liminality, of transition.¹⁵ A person unsure about his or her future (one nearing completion of college and not sure what will follow, for example), or one who has gone through a major life transition (the breakup of a serious romance, for example), may be more open to a dramatic change of direction in life than one who is more settled. The fact that one is predisposed to a life change prior to conversion, however, hardly means that the conversion process itself necessarily involves ethically repugnant levels and types of psychological pressure that could be deemed mind control. James T. Richardson, after surveying a wide variety of scholarly and popular literature on the subject, has concluded that

proponents of the brainwashing thesis . . . have not produced . . . hard evidence to support their position. From our perspective, the burden of proof is on those who proffer the brainwashing hypothesis. Until such evidence is forthcoming, we shall place confidence in the rapidly accumulating body of data which yields a more complex, if mundane explanation for the affiliation and disaffiliation processes.¹⁶

Many of those who allege mind control also decry the alternative religions for "totalism," for orchestrating virtually the entire lives of members. Certainly something like totalism exists in some religions, to some extent; as Bryan Wilson has written,

New religions tend to set spontaneity, immediacy, and sincerity over against the cultivated and measured responses of conventional religion. They call for total allegiance rather than more regular and regulated religious observance. Thus they mobilize enthusiasm at a level which is not usually attained in traditional religion and which, when it does abnormally occur there, is a source of embarrassment to other believers, with their moderated expectations concerning religious performance.

Wilson goes on, however, to note that religions tend to have problems maintaining such intensity, that they soon are forced to undergo the phenomenon of routinization and emphasize stability over ecstasy.¹⁷ In any event, it is worth noting that the most sustained example of "totalism" in the Western world has been Catholic monasticism, which demands obedience, voluntary poverty, total sexual abstinence, and lifetime commitment. The life may be intense and dedicated, but by no rational standard are most who choose to undertake such a path abused.

The brainwashing/totalism controversies aside, one can no more attribute conversion to a single cause than one can say that all married persons decided to get married for the same reasons. Humanity is more complex than that. Moreover, the world of alternative religions is a world of amazing diversity; groups differ enormously, and their appeal to specific persons varies widely. The peculiar chemistry of a particular individual and a particular group is different in each case.

The Groups Covered in This Book

Since five hundred or more alternative religions were candidates for inclusion in this book, a winnowing had to be undertaken

to keep the volume to an acceptable length. In many cases separate but related groups are covered in single chapters, so that well over one hundred are covered in all, either explicitly or by implication. Nevertheless, hundreds had to be omitted.

Several standards were observed in the selection process. First, an attempt was made to include the groups that have received substantial publicity and are manifestly of considerable public interest. Second, smaller and shorter-lived groups were generally not included; those discussed had to have substantial constituencies, usually in the thousands, and to have been present in the United States for at least a decade or two. Third, they truly had to represent some notable departure from the religious mainstream (the Local Church movement, for example, is not a subject of a chapter because, although it is of Chinese origin and the subject of some controversy, it is essentially orthodox in its theology and practice). Fourth, they had to be essentially religious groups, not special-interest secular organizations or movements or spheres of interest (such as astrology) with spiritual overtones whose central concern is not typically considered religious; some would define the Masonic orders as religious, for example, but the Masons themselves, while admitting a substantial religious content to their practices, tend to be members of regular churches and do not define their religion principally in terms of Masonry. Fifth, an attempt was made to convey a sense of the wide variety of America's alternative religions, to include groups derived from mainstream Christianity and Judaism and from most of the other major religions of the world, along with some that do not derive directly from any established world religion, but have been created by American founders. Groups included here are from the Western hemisphere, the Near East, the Far East, white America, black America, Native America.

Categories of Alternative Religions

This volume presents the religions it covers in categories. The selection and

arrangement of the categories, however, proved complicated. There are many possible bases for categorization: geography (grouping religions by places of origin), major world religions (from which major tradition did an alternative religion derive?), theology, leadership and structure, and others. Some authors contributing to the book urged that we dispense with categories altogether, simply listing religious bodies alphabetically or by date of origin. Others feared that a given religion might be misunderstood if its chapter stood in a section with one or more specific other religions: who, for example, would want to be in the same category as Satanism? In some cases, accurate categorization of a given group was a perplexing task: Swedenborgianism, for example, has a historical presence tied to groups in the category of Ancient Wisdom and New Age (some regard the movement's founder, Emanuel Swedenborg, as the original source, over two centuries ago, of what is now called the New Age movement), but its denominational churches today are conservative and relatively orthodox Protestant institutions. The categories we are using emerged after much discussion, and are intended to help the reader understand where religious bodies stand in relation to other bodies, but they should not be taken as inerrant.

Whither the Alternative Religions?

Do the alternative religions embody the future direction of American religion as a whole? Will they one day pass from the scene entirely? Or will they stay as they have been, a small but enduring part of the religious landscape?

From a historical perspective, the answer seems clear. Religious dissent can be tracked as far back as religion itself. Innovators—variously known as prophets, messiahs, shamans, evangelists, seers, and the like—appear in every age. In the vast web of human society, each event has an impact, even if not necessarily a very large one. Some founders of new movements—

Jesus is an obvious example here—set in motion world-changing currents. Others have limited influence and are not long remembered, except perhaps by graduate students looking for dissertation topics.

The influence of innovative religions is limited in part because of the essential conservatism of a settled society. Most persons, finding sufficient reward (or challenge) in such mundane daily realities as job and family, are not prepared to chuck everything for a world-changing crusade. The average American is happy with blue jeans and is not terribly interested in donning saffron robes or saris. The majority would rather use their money to buy new cars than to support modern prophets. But, on the other hand, we are not all alike. There are always some who are prepared to go against the flow, persons who, their curiosity ablaze, want to check out the exotic, the new, the unusual. Some satisfy such cravings in secular ways, while others explore religious options.

That is not to say that the conservative majority displays no interest in the new and unusual. The historic emphasis on individualism, among other things, in the dominant Protestant religions has meant that innovations have not been entirely confined to the margins of American religious life. Revivalism and Pentecostalism, to name only two examples, are religious innovations popularized in America that have had profound influence on the course of American and world religion.

Changes in the larger society have encouraged American religion to travel in new directions during the last few decades. The social upheavals of the 1960s opened the eyes of many young Americans to new political and cultural options; from the idealism and search for meaning of that era came members for a number of religions newly established in the United States. The repeal of the Asian Exclusion Act in 1965 complemented the social ferment perfectly, permitting holy men (and occasionally women) from the East to teach their ways to eager young Americans.

We end where we began: Since about 1960, substantial decentralization has been taking place in the religious marketplace.

The Catholic Church and several major Protestant denominations are at best static in membership and in several cases are losing members. The exception to the pattern of membership decline in large denominations is found among the Southern Baptists, easily the most diverse and raucous of the large Protestant families. Growth is focused in small denominations, in independent churches, in non-Christian religions. In decentralization, religion is running parallel to trends in other parts of American life, as cable television, for example, undermines the mass markets of the networks and desktop publishing enables the flourishing of a myriad of tiny periodicals.

Tomorrow someone will leave a main-line religious body and join an alternative religion, perhaps even marry someone with a very different religious background. Some friends and family members of the convert will be outraged by the move, but life will go on. The great vitality of religion in the United States will be alive and well.

For Further Reading

A bibliography of other books providing reliable information on alternative religions is provided following appendix 1 at the end of this volume.

Notes

I wish to thank many of the authors whose work appears in this volume for their useful comments on earlier drafts of this introduction. I also acknowledge with gratitude support from the General Research Fund at the University of Kansas for portions of my own work published herein.

1. This kind of distinguishing between mainstream and marginal religions, traditionally known as the church-sect typology, can be found in many standard works of sociology of religion. See, for example, Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960; first published in English in 1931), 331–43; Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1949), 218–31; H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Meridian, 1957; first published in 1929), chapters 2–4; Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), chapter 7; J. Milton Yinger, *Religion, Society and the Individual* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 142–55.

2. Bryan R. Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 204.

3. Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 147.

4. Bob Larson, *Larson's Book of Cults* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1982), 19, 22.

5. A. James Rudin and Marcia R. Rudin, *Prison or Paradise? The New Religious Cults* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 15–16.

6. Flo Conway and Jim Siegelman, *Snapping: America's Epidemic of Sudden Personality Change* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1978), 11–12.

7. Robert D. Hicks, "Police Pursuit of Satanic Crime." *Skeptical Inquirer* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1990): 378–79.

8. David G. Bromley and Anson D. Shupe, Jr., *Strange Gods: The Great American Cult Scare* (Boston: Beacon, 1981), 58.

9. J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 4th ed. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1993).

10. J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (New York: Garland, 1986), 6–7.

11. See the bibliography at the end of appendix 1 for scholarly books that examine, and refute, these charges in detail.

12. For a summary of the wide array of alleged Shaker misdeeds, see Donald E. Miller, "Deprogramming in Historical Perspective," in David G. Bromley and James T. Richardson, eds., *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy: Sociological, Psychological, Legal and Historical Perspectives* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1983), 18–27.

13. For a discussion of benefits various group members believed they received, see Barker, *New Religious Movements: A Practical Introduction* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1989), 25–31.

14. *Ibid.*, 19.

15. See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969). Scholarly works that apply Turner's insights to American alternative religions include Robert Ellwood, *Alternative Altars: Unconventional and Eastern Spirituality in America*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 28–32; J. Gordon Melton and Robert L. Moore, *The Cult Experience: Responding to the New Religious Pluralism* (New York: Pilgrim, 1982), 47–60.

16. James T. Richardson, "The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy: An Introduction," in Bromley and Richardson, *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy*, 11.

17. Wilson, *Social Dimensions of Sectarianism*, 211–12.