



Cults in America: A Reference Handbook

By James R. Lewis

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Since the early 1970s, alternative religious movements known as cults have been the focus of ever-increasing controversy in America. *Cults in America: A Reference Handbook* compares present-day cults to events in earlier American history, focusing on cults as a contemporary phenomenon. The key issue of mind control is covered, overviews of the most controversial churches, and biographies of their leaders are prominent features of this book. Legislative efforts and court decisions, particularly those surrounding the issue of religious liberty, are covered in detail.

Cults in America features a directory of organizations in both the United States and Europe, a selected bibliography, print and nonprint resources, a chronology with the dates of religious events in American history, and coverage of events such as the Solar Temple and Heaven's Gate incidents.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This addition to the publisher's "Contemporary World Issues" series concentrates on cults, or what Lewis calls new or alternative religions. It opens with a detailed historical, sociological, and psychological discussion of minority religions and the public perception of them. Following is a detailed chronology of American religious conflicts from the late 18th century through the Heaven's Gate mass suicide in 1997. Lewis also discusses 47 sects and movements, including the Black Muslims, Hare Krishnas, the People's Temple, the Unification Church, and voodoo. Excerpts from court decisions, legislation, and government actions follow, with supporting documents and statistics. The work closes with a directory of organizations concerned with cults, a listing of web sites, and a detailed bibliography of print and nonprint materials. Lewis has produced a handbook that complements his Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects, and New Religions (LJ 9/1/98) and updates J. Gordon Melton's Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America (Garland, 1992). Well researched and written, it is a valuable introduction to this topic for students and the general public. Recommended for public and academic libraries. Stephen L. Hupp, Urbana Univ. Lib., OH
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About the Author

James R. Lewis is a professional writer and academic.

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