

Introduction to Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review

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Only three decades ago, one could count the number of new religious movements (NRM) specialists on one's fingers, and read everything that had been published in the field in about one month. Since that time the field has expanded radically, even giving birth to a number of sub-specialties (e.g., Pagan studies and new age studies). The explosive growth of NRM studies has been matched by an explosive growth in the number of new publications. Major academic presses, from Brill to Oxford University Press, publish an increasing number of NRM titles.

The *Alternative Spirituality and Religion Review (ASRR)* has been created with the ambitious goal of providing NRM scholars with a vehicle for staying up-to-date with new publications in this expanding body of literature. Modeling itself on successful review journals such as *Reviews in Religion and Theology*, *ASRR* will be an online journal that publishes articles, book reviews, review essays, and literature surveys in the NRM area.

For the purpose of reviewing books in *ASRR*, new religions is defined broadly to include the diverse subfields that have developed out of NRM studies, including – but not restricted to – Pagan Studies, Studies of Western Esotericism, New Age Studies, Masonic Studies, and Studies of New Thought. *ASRR* also reviews studies of new movements within traditional religions, such as the Charismatic movement in Christianity and Guru movements in Hinduism, and new religious movements in indigenous societies. Additionally, depending on the author's approach and specific topic, *ASRR* reviews certain quasi-religious phenomena, such as implicit religion, the holistic health movement, and the like.