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# The Phenomenon of **CULTS**

*from a Scientific Perspective*



*edited by*

**PIOTR T. NOWAKOWSKI**



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## Introduction

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Piotr T. Nowakowski

I deliberately gave this book a longish and seemingly non-attractive title. *The Phenomenon of Cults from a Scientific Perspective* means that its contributors are scientists and independent researchers who deal with the problem of cults, new religious movements, and related groups and subjects. It means additionally that the content of this publication is directed to the same category of the reading public, that is, to those who do not perceive the problem of cults from merely the angle of yellow journalism. What is more, this publishing enterprise has been originally intended for the readers from Central-European countries who do not normally use English. This is why I do not expect the book to be a bestseller.

The assumption is that this publication will create common ground for exchange of experiences and information among experts (especially coming from North America), who have dealt with the problem for many years, and the academics for whom the cult issue seems to be a relatively new problem that needs further clarification. We must remember that cults were not frequently found within the former Eastern Bloc during communist times, but the situation changed nearly two decades ago. Romanian sociologist Laurentiu D. Tanase, who is by the way one of the contributors of this book, states it clearly: "The fall of the communist regimes in Europe, in 1989, constitutes a central event of the end of the twentieth century that changed the course of contemporary history and deeply marked the evolution of international relations. In addition, the European religious field was strongly influenced by these contemporary societal transformations, more particularly by the cultural acceleration caused by globalization, which supported the expansion of cults/sects and new religious movements."