



**Name: Thomas J. Ward**

**Project Title: New Religions, Cult Experts, and the Media**

**Abstract:** *While today’s media professionals are commendably cautious in reporting on incidents involving race, religion, or ethnicity, they lack such deference in their coverage of new religions. Today’s media leaders should come to terms with the implications of this extant dichotomy of standards.*

**Research Question:**

What theoretical frameworks and what assumptions animate the press coverage on new religions?

**Methodology and/or Research Methods used:**

1. Conferrals with Media Professionals; 2. Literature Review and Analysis of media coverage of a variety of NRM events and incidents.

**Findings:**

The Media relies far more on “cult experts” with no academic credentials and ignores input from religious scholars in addressing religions. While the refer to other minorities as per their requests, they impose pejorative, demeaning names on minority religions.

**Conclusions and/or proposed next steps:**

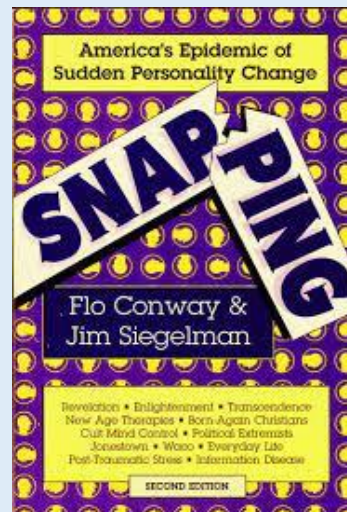
Guidelines on how new religions should be handled and examples of how these approaches have both worked and not worked.

**Major Sources:**

[Historical Newspapers 1700s to 2000s; Definition of Terms: Cults, Sects, Denominations. Religious Tolerance. \[.\] Ward, JUS, A Diagnostic America does not need,“ 2020..](#)

**Resulting Publications:**

Ward, [By Faith Alone:” New Religions, Cult Experts, and the Media;](#)  
Ward, [“New Religions, Cult Experts and the Media”](#)



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