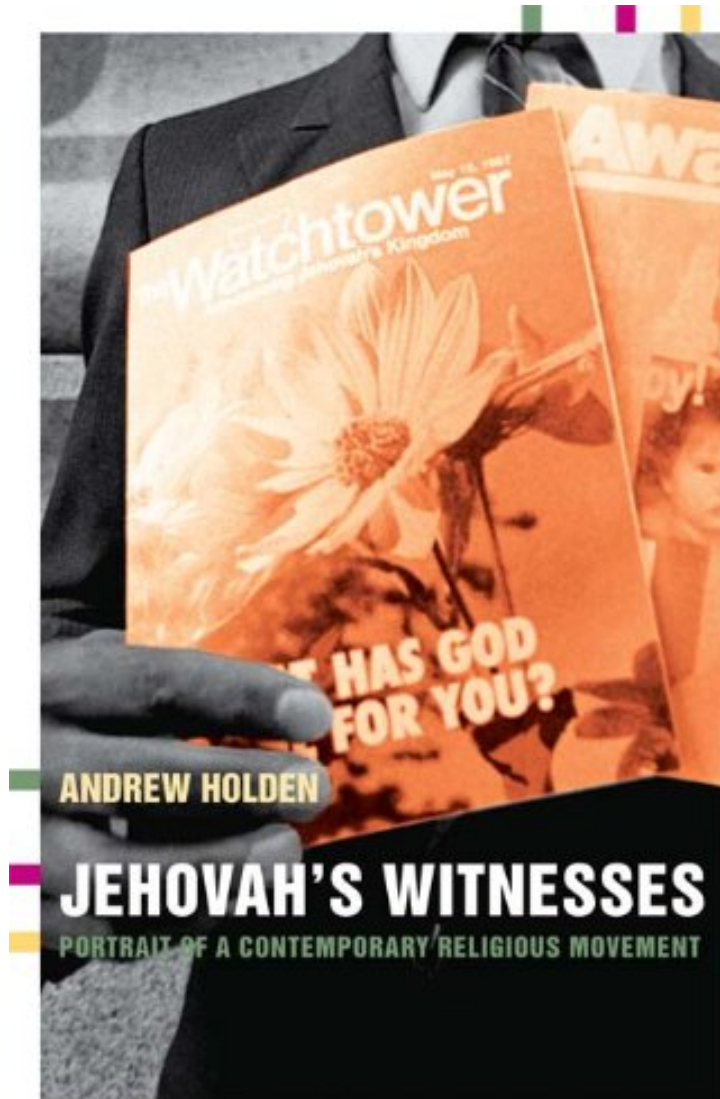


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Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement

Andrew Holden

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Andrew Holden : Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a Contemporary Religious Movement:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It would have made a far better journal article than a bookBy KayOnly one criticism: very very repetitive! It would have made a far better journal article than a book. However, the author offers theoretical explanation of converts, how such conservative movement stands to flourish in modern day,

and paradoxical relationship between JW and modernity. Highly recommended students of sociology of religion or religious studies.³ of 4 people found the following review helpful. A SOCIOLOGISTS STUDIES THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY AND ITS MEMBERS By Steven H Propp British sociologist Andrew Holden wrote in the Preface to this 2002 book, "And so to the objectives of this book. I write for an academic community, or indeed for anyone with a sociological interest in religious movements... In the pages that follow, I offer a glimpse of the modern world through the eyes of a group of religious devotees... The book is ethnographic and, as such, it is concerned with the Witnesses' version of reality... the book is not about comparative religion but about the lives of a group of people who claim to be IN but not OF the world." Here are some quotations from the book: "(Charles Taze Russell) also sold what he called 'miracle wheat' to credulous farmers at \$60 a bushel. The fraud was eventually stopped by the federal authorities, who made him refund the money." (Pg. 18) "If there was one feature of the Watch Tower community that occupied my thoughts in the initial stages of my fieldwork, it would have been the absence of mysticism." (Pg. 58) "...someone claiming to have had an experience of a transcendent nature would be most unlikely to find solace in a Kingdom Hall. At no point in meetings is time made available for individual prayer... Although short prayers are recited, these last no more than two or three minutes and serve mainly to open and close meetings." (Pg. 64) "Several members told me that they preferred to partake in those aspects of Witness life such as Bible study and attending large meetings rather than ministry work because of the rejection from large numbers of uninterested sceptics." (Pg. 75) "Young Witnesses who intend to undergo baptism rarely progress to college or university. This can be a source of regret in subsequent years among those who are reared in the organization but who later defect." (Pg. 135) "Speaking to a huge audience of Witnesses in 1976, (Frederick) Franz attempted to explain why the (1975) prophecy had failed. He told them, 'It was because YOU expected something to happen.'" (Pg. 152) "Any Witness found reading literature that attacks Watch Tower theology risks disfellowship..." (Pg. 158)

0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Beware of this anti-Christian religious movement By Milton Mohr Excellent resource to unmask the satanic claims of the Jehovah's Witnesses Governing Body. If you are a Christian read this book to add to your arsenal of weapons against this evil cult.

This is the first major study of the enigmatic religious society. By examining the Jehovah's Witnesses' dramatic recent expansion, Andrew Holden reveals the dependency of their quasi-totalitarian movement on the physical and cultural resources have brought about the privatization of religion, the erosion of community, and the separation of 'fact' from faith.

From Publishers Weekly Why do people convert to the Watch Tower Society? How can these Jehovah's Witnesses persist in their belief that the end of the world is imminent? In this academic study, Holden, a British sociologist, attempts to understand why the strict and austere Watch Tower Society continues to enjoy rapid growth. This is neither a primer on the danger of "cults" nor an endorsement of the Witnesses' distinctive beliefs, but a balanced ethnography that draws upon interviews with both adherents and ex-members to help readers understand what it is like to be part of the Society. Holden's main thesis that the Watch Tower is engaged in careful and ongoing negotiations with the secular culture that surrounds it is a nuanced one, especially compared to previous studies that have depicted the movement as little more than an extremist rejection of modernity. The study bears the marks of the dissertation that it once was: it overexplains how data were collected and analyzed, surveys the historiography of the topic (which, as Holden points out, is all but nonexistent in the case of the Witnesses) and relies heavily on a few theorists (in this case, Clifford Geertz and Mary Douglas). But the topic is compelling enough that readers who are interested in the Watch Tower will be obliged to put aside Holden's academese and be grateful for what he has given them: a thoughtful book that takes the Witnesses' own beliefs and words seriously. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. '... a thoughtful book that takes the Witnesses' own beliefs and words seriously.' - Publishers Weekly 'It is a clear, accurate, well-constructed, high-quality academic, sociological analysis of a modern millenarian movement ... The author is a skilled and experienced sociologist, and this book is an example of the clearest writing and the best research that can be produced by this important academic discipline.' - The Revd Thaddeus Birchard, Church Times

About the Author Andrew Holden (PH.D) has taught sociology at various levels of further and higher education. He has been conducting fieldwork on millenarian belief systems for over a decade.