

Chapter 1. Background and method of this study

The purpose of this study is to promote knowledge and understanding of the group spirituality expressed in associations that are or have been in Santa Cruz County.

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One matter which I think the user of this study will find helpful here in the beginning is a working definition of *spirituality*.

Let us, then, say that *the spirituality of people includes the conviction that*

1. *there is more to the world they live in than what the eye sees,*
2. *they themselves can relate to the unseen aspects of it,*
3. *in so doing their own being is enhanced.*

Thus conceived, spirituality, no matter how diverse the forms it takes, is shared by all the groups listed below. The notion of spirituality is treated at length in Chapter 5 Particulars.

Background of the project

This project owes its origin to Researchers Anonymous, a non-incorporated, non-codified group of Santa Cruz County people who care enough about local history to delve into it, share their findings with one another, and commit the findings to one or another permanent, retrievable form. The home of Researchers Anonymous is the Santa Cruz County Museum of Art and History. Retiring to Santa Cruz in 1996, my wife and I found ourselves to be captivated by local history, and we soon joined Researchers Anonymous. After gaining some experience in using local resources, I realized that I was in a position to make a special contribution because of my education and professional activities. Besides being a Catholic priest for 15 years I had earned the Ph.D in philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University of the Vatican City, and I had taught college level philosophy with a particular interest in ethics over a period of 35 years. Thus I suggested to Researchers Anonymous in 2002 that I could do the history of local spirituality. Noting that this has never been done, the group received the proposal enthusiastically and has given me nothing but encouragement and fruitful suggestions ever since.

By the end of 2004 I had sufficient material to want to make it available to others and did so on a personal website and in a few copies distributed to libraries and historical museums. A year later I had so much new information that I put out a second, revised and amplified, edition in the same way. At the end of 2006, however, I had so much more material that I not only added it, but I rewrote large parts of the second edition and rearranged others to make the whole more user friendly. The third edition went out publicly on the Worldwide Web as a form of ebook.

I wish to thank the Researchers Anonymous members who have been particularly helpful in one way or another: Amy Dunning, Ross Gibson, Rachel McKay, Bob Nelson, Frank and Jill Perry, Marion Pokriots, Phil Reader, Judith Steen, Stanley Stevens, Wayne Thalls. My deep gratitude also to the Santa Cruz Public Libraries for using this book at the reference desk, for cataloging it, and for including the present edition in their website. Inclusion in the website has been made possible by the diligent collegial collaboration of Ann Young, Library Webmaster, and Diane Cowen, Senior Library Assistant.

Thanks, too, to other persons who have read and critiqued manuscripts, David Burge, Burton Gordon, Colleen LeCour, and Sarah Ross. Most of all, however, I wish to thank my wife, Miriam Beames, who has been a tireless sounding board and a merciless editor.

Sources of information

Research into this topic involves (1) the history of local groups and (2) information about the origins and development of their particular parent religious denominations

1. Local history. I began by collecting general histories of Santa Cruz County and monographs about particular people and locales. This was a good start, but it left huge holes, some of which I filled by consulting histories of church congregations and other organizations found in libraries. Next, newspaper clippings offered much information about some groups, although they passed over many others in total or near total silence. The gaps which were left I began to fill in by consulting directories: city and county directories, business directories, telephone directories. In fact, I ran down the lists of churches in all such directories that are kept in University of California Santa Cruz Library, the Santa Cruz Public Library, and the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. Even so, I probably failed to notice some church entries which appeared once, and only once, in the telephone directories. Another source of local information was the Museum of Art and History's archival collection of the Santa Cruz County Articles of Incorporation from 1850 to about 1980. Nearly one out of ten of the approximately 4700 incorporations was of a religious organization. All the local sources which contained information about more than one particular association are listed in the general bibliography. Many local associations now have their own Internet websites which contain information useful for this study; these websites are cited with the entries for the local associations.

Topping off, and breathing life into textual material is, of course, personal contact with the associations: visits to them and conversations with leaders and members. This has mostly to do with existing associations, although visits to the sites of defunct ones are often rewarding. I have been able to gather information on about a quarter of the existing groups in this time-consuming way, and I intend to initiate many more of these contacts in the future.

2. Origins and development of parent religious denominations and of relevant general movements of spirituality.

I have tried to include sufficient material to enable the reader to understand the historical and doctrinal position of each association. This involved the use of authoritative sources, which are listed in the general bibliography or, if they are highly specific, here and there among the entries. Furthermore, the Worldwide Web has become an enormous resource for this kind of information. Practically every religious denomination or spiritual movement one can think of has an official website now, and many scholarly organizations such as universities have reliable studies, articles, and even whole books about religion and spirituality on the Web.

In accord with the goal of producing a practical manual rather than a mammoth academic tome, I have had to keep the wider historical

explanations and allusions short. In a few cases I was not able to resist writing more than a thumbnail sketch; the resultant essays are in Chapter 5 Particulars.

I have been very careful to cite the source of all statements of fact about the associations and their backgrounds. This extends to the simple, practical question of whether or not a group actually exists now, not last year, and my most frequent source of information about the current status is the latest printed telephone directory. Of course I cannot guarantee that all the statements which I document are accurate, but if there are inaccuracies in them, the reader at least knows the source of them. No doubt I have also introduced inaccuracies due to my misinterpretation of some of the statements. Where I make conjectures, regarding, for instance, the connection between two church congregations which have different names, but the one of them appears to be the continuation of the other, I state that this is a conjecture.

Numerous citations are worked into the text, such as, "According to Polk 1960 this congregation ..." Others are pointed to, such as, "There is additional information about this denomination in www.thischurch.org." How many of these text flow citations there are I do not know, but there are also over 1300 citation notes. These notes are not in the form of footnotes at the end of pages or endnotes at the end of chapters in the traditional sense, but they are set apart in two ways. In one the source is cited parenthetically in the text; in the other it is listed at the end of a paragraph or at the end of a longer block of text. For the sake of uniformity and because of caution about the transfer of electronic file formats, I have used plain parentheses for both kinds of note.

Principles of organization

1. The range of associations

The classification system is borrowed from J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*. Detroit: Gale Research Co.: 2nd ed., 1987. Dr. Melton's "families" of religious bodies are in the first place groupings of traditional American church organizations according to their doctrine and to their genealogy or pedigree. Beyond these, however, are the families of non-traditional groups, such as Communal, Spiritualist, New Age, and Buddhist. He treats all these as organizations that have a certain history and certain group beliefs. His theoretical framework for all of them is based on a factual and non-judgmental attitude which promotes understanding of all of them. My work, I trust, is as unbiased as his, but I am adding the notion of spirituality found in all of them. For the meaning of spirituality see the note above or Chapter 5 Particulars.

The families listed in the table of contents are precisely those of Melton's *Encyclopedia* with three exceptions. (1) The "Magick" family I have renamed "Nature Reverence." (2) I do not divide the "Middle Eastern" family into two parts. (3) For convenience in dealing with the local situation I add a 21st family or group: "Other." The *Encyclopedia*, being the compendious work that it is, has many subdivisions of the families, and I follow these, applying to them a numbering system of my own devising for the practical purposes of this study. A couple of the subdivisions, both of which originate in the *Encyclopedia*, may be surprising. Thus, placing "Episcopalian" and "Roman Catholic Church" in the same family may not please everybody, but it reflects accurately the historical situation of the two churches. Similarly, putting churches of the American Restoration Movement "Christian Church/Disciples of Christ/Church of Christ" in the Baptist family derives from the basic likenesses between the two groups. This is not to say that Episcopalians are Roman Catholics or Disciples of Christ are Baptists.

I cite Melton often, and in two ways. The one, written for instance as "Melton, *Encyclopedia*, p. 100," refers to page numbers in his "Part 1 - Essays," and the other, written for instance as "Melton, *Encyclopedia*, *500," refers to the list number of the organization in his "Part 2 - Directory Listings," which consists of 1347 "primary religious bodies."

There are other comprehensive classifications of religious groups in the United States. American Church Lists is an organization which provides the addresses of churches in the country for those who wish to reach them by mail. Its 2003 brochure presents 19 groupings which contain 235 religious bodies, which in turn represent 385,817 individual congregations. Unfortunately for the purposes of the present study, all Non-Christian congregations fall into only two groupings, "Metaphysical" and "Miscellaneous/Classified," and the latter's main subdivision is "Non-

Classified Affiliation," which numbers fully 50,745 of the 385,817 total congregations. Details are in www.ameranchurchlists.com 2008.

A more revealing comparison can be made between Melton's classification and that which appears in the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. In this random digit-dialed telephone survey of 50,281 American residential households in the continental U.S. 94.6% of those contacted were willing to state their religious preference. "The primary question of the interview was: What is your religion, if any? The religion of the spouse/partner was also asked. If the initial answer was 'Protestant' or 'Christian' further questions were asked to probe which particular denomination." Sixty-two categories emerged from these questions. Of these, 35 were Christian, 26 were non-Christian, and one was "no religion." The Christian groups were easily identifiable as the Christian families of Melton's classification, and all the Non-Christian groups fitted neatly into the rest of Melton's families, except that there were none from the Ancient Wisdom family and there was a group called "Deity," which is not found in the *Encyclopedia* at all. An account of this study is on the website www.gc.cuny.edu 2008, under the search command "american religious identification study."

As each family and each subgroup within the family is presented in the lists, I preface it with a little explanation of its history and its distinguishing characteristics. Some of these explanatory statements are quoted from a particular source, but others are such general and well-known observations that I do not give a specific source, although I have relied to a great extent on Melton's *Encyclopedia*, Frank S. Mead's *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, and Christopher Partridge's *New Religions*.

It does not seem necessary to preface the entire range of the Christian group of families with an explanation of the general development of the Christian religion into its main components, the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, and the Protestant Churches. There are, nevertheless, two strong currents in Christianity which cut across family lines: Evangelical and Fundamentalist. An account of these two is given in the essay "Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christianity" in Chapter 5 Particulars.

2. Classification of associations

Finding the best place for each of the associations in Melton's encyclopedic scheme, or in any scheme, for that matter, seems at first sight to be a simple matter. Indeed it is for the Calvary Episcopal Church and for Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall of Felton. But what about the Full Gospel Tabernacle or the Church of God? Or which Baptist group does the First Baptist Church of San Lorenzo Valley belong to?

In general the more information I have about an association the more I can be sure I am putting it in the correct place. The websites in which particular associations tell their own histories help greatly, as do articles - not just church directories - in local news media. Another historical aspect of importance is the spiritual heritage of an association. Although it may no longer belong to a denominational body it came from somewhere and will be presumed to have the characteristics of that somewhere until the contrary is proven.

Unfortunately, city directories, telephone books, and newspaper church directories are the only source of information I have about many of the associations listed in this study: especially those which both appeared and disappeared in the course of the twentieth century. In most cases the groups have been placed into categories which I accept because I think it is safe to assume that the associations themselves were asked how they chose to be listed. Some city directories, however, had generic categories that tell us nothing more specific than "Protestant Christian." In some of these cases I follow clues of history and name and am reasonably certain that I categorize the association correctly. If I am not that certain, but think that I am making a reasonably valid conjecture, I note that fact. If all fails, I place associations in Other, the twenty-first family

3. The type of activity in which groups, associations, or organizations engage as they express their spirituality.

Churches are not the only places where spirituality exists, and worship is not the only kind of spiritual activity; we can distinguish five types of group spiritual activities in places specific to them:

1. Worship in places of worship: People congregate for the purpose of expressing faith in a communal or individual way, such as churches, temples, and other places considered sacred.

2. Conferences and retreats in suitable centers: People gather together for a while, such as a weekend, a week, or a month, for instruction and solitary or shared reflection, in formats ranging from spiritual retreats to religious summer camps.

3. Education in schools of all kinds. Preschools, however, I have included only if they form part of a complete program of education.

4. Service organizations which offer services other than education, such as health care facilities and social service organizations; includes businesses, the profitability or non-profitability of which is not essentially pertinent to their spirituality.

5. Communal living: communes, monastic societies, and other group living arrangements; by extension, ethnic groups and peoples.

The great majority of the associations listed in this study belong clearly to one or another of these five types. Many, it is true, are primarily of

one type and secondarily of another, such as churches which sponsor retreats or conferences in their place of worship. Where it is not clear if the facility is primarily a retreat center or place of worship, which is especially true of Buddhist centers, I have listed it under the one or the other according to the particular information I had about it, although I also presume that worship is a core activity in a retreat center. Religious congregations of all kinds tend to offer group activities for their members, and many of these efforts are in social services, but as long as the activities are organized as branches of one congregation I am not listing them separately in this study. If the organic structure of these activities transcends the worshipping congregations, as is the case with Protestant collaborative social services, or if it is independent of them, as is the case with Catholic hospitals, I do list them separately. It is understood, however, that these are activities in which people engage because of their spiritual principles.

There are also organizations the members of which are required to share certain spiritual principles, but which have goals that of themselves are not spiritual, such as retirement homes which serve only members of a certain religious denomination, and I do not include these. In some of such organizations, however, such as the YMCA, the relationship between the spiritual background and the type of activity is so interesting that I give some information about them in Chapter 5 Particulars. This includes a few organizations that look like they are spiritual, but are only vaguely or apparently such. A problem arises sometimes because the terminology an organization uses to describe itself does not make it clear whether or not it is spiritual. "Yoga," for instance, is fundamentally a spiritual activity but using Yoga used simply as a means of physical therapy is a health service, not a spiritual service. Another example is Magic, which can be deeply spiritual, but which can also be simply a technique of playfully deceiving people; either kind can have its organization. I have tried to understand organizations so as to include in this study the spiritual ones and leave out the others.

Classification by size has not been attempted. Few congregations, past or present, state publicly the number of their members. An exception is the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church, which has this information on its website. Membership information on websites and other public information, however, is so rare that it did not seem to me fair to include it for the few.

Use of the list

The list of associations can be consulted quite without reference to any other part of this study, and I expect people to do this for practical purposes. A few comments here concerning the list will prove to be, I think, useful.

Many groups have changed the name of their association. For such I list the association under the name which seems to be dominant. The other name or names are included in the entry, and are prefixed with the symbol "<". Each is given a line in the alphabetical index.

The first line of each entry locates the association in place and time. The time span given, it needs to be noted, represents the years only to the extent that my research has found them. If, for instance, I discovered that a group was founded in 1950 and still exists, I put 1950-[the present year]. If, on the other hand, I found no date for it earlier than 1950, but I suspect that it was established before that, I use italics: *1950*-[the present year]. Similarly, if I know that an organization was founded in 1950 and no longer exists, but I can trace it only to 1980 and suspect that it lasted longer than that, I put 1950-1980. Regarding another type of imprecision, I wish to point out that the first or the last year an organization appears in a directory listing may differ slightly from the true first or last year of its existence.

To eliminate the imprecision about the beginning and ending years of some of the organizations which have ceased to exist would be an enormous task, although it goes without saying that I will add any such information which I am able to find. It is possible, however, to be more precise about recently founded groups, those which have appeared since the first edition of this study. As a policy I am not including a new association in the first year of its appearance in the written or visual sources. If it appears the following year it is entered in the lists. This is no small matter: in 2007 no fewer than fifteen spiritual organizations made their first documented appearance in Santa Cruz County. These are included in the 2009 update of the list if they were found to exist in 2008.

Every association is identified with a local community. If the name of the association does not include the name of the community, I add it. In some cases the association has moved in the course of time, and if this has happened the local community named here is the one that seemed primary in view of its history. The complete roster of Santa Cruz County communities included in the list is: Aptos, Ben Lomond, Bonny Doon, Boulder Creek, Capitola, Corralitos, Davenport, Felton, Glenwood, La Selva Beach, Live Oak, Mount Hermon, Santa Cruz (i.e., Santa Cruz City, 2006 city limits), Scotts Valley, Soquel, Watsonville (2006 city limits). If an association lies outside the recognized limits of any of these communities, I list it under Santa Cruz County. A few associations lie just outside the County, but they are closely associated with it. For these I do indicate the county they are in, which is either Monterey County or Santa Clara County.

Caution: The City of Santa Cruz began using a new street address numbering system in 1948. Then, for instance, 17 Elm Street became 117 Elm Street.

To make it easier to locate associations by using computer "find" commands, I begin each family and each family subdivision with the symbol "#", and this symbol is used only for this purpose. Thus, for example, the Advent Christian Church is listed under #11.1. Throughout this work references are to the symbol "#" classification numbers, and not to page numbers. Perusal of the presentation and of the alphabetical index will be sufficient for locating the information about many associations. Moreover, this work from its first edition has been on a website that permits the use of a word processing "find" command for all words in it.